

Transoniq

Hacker

The Independent News
Magazine for Ensoniq Users

MR Sound Tweaks

Ray Legnini



Many users go for years using only the sounds that are programmed at the factory, never venturing into the wonderful world of sound creation. Many times you can tailor a sound to your music by making a few simple tweaks. That will be the focus of this article: *Programming for the Parameter-Impaired*.

The MR synths (by this I mean the MR-Rack and the MR-61 and MR-76 keyboards) contain a powerful synth engine. You can create your own sounds from scratch, but this can only be done from a computer running the Unisynx software. We'll focus on tweaks you can make right from the front panel. If you have MR-Rack OS 1.50 or higher, you can save these tweaked sounds to RAM or to a Bank on a PCMCIA data card. MR keyboard users can save to RAM, Flash or to disk.

Okay, the usual setup stuff is in order: blah, blah, turn on controller, yaddi yaddi MR-Rack or MR keyboard and blah, blah, woof woof, your audio system, blah, blah headphones, etc. MR keyboard owners are ready to go as soon as you turn the keyboard on — it defaults to bringing you to Sound-Finderx, ready to select sounds. (For keyboard owners, these parameters can also be found in the 16 Track section, with a complete set for each of the 16 tracks. These are saved with every sequence.) MR-Rack user need to select the "Play Sounds" Performance. You can find it at location ROM 004:000. A shortcut for MR-Rack users is to hold the Sounds and Performance buttons simultaneously. This takes you directly to this Performance without scrolling. This will get everybody out there in the *Hacker* reading audience to the same place so we can all make the same tweaks and get the same results.

Select the sound "Fat Pad" found at location ROM 004:081. The edits we'll make are all available from the front panel, so we need to get into the MR's Parameter pages. Hit the button marked "Params" in the lower left group of buttons (MR-Rack users). MR keyboard users, hit "Edit" in the Sound-Finder section. Turning the Parameter knob will scroll through the list of

In This Issue ...

Articles:

- MR Sound Tweaks
Ray Legnini cover
- Customizing Your KT - Part IV
Robby Berman 4
- Ensequencing - Part III
Jack Stephen Tolin 6
- Simulated Sequence Strings and Strums
Joe Travo 10
- Questions From The T-Net - Part II
Garth Hjelte 12
- Your First Synth...
Dan Rohde 17

Reviews:

- InVision: CDR-10 Pop/Rock
Clayton Lewis 9
- Basement Tapes: Clark, Waltz, Evitts & Pangaea World Orchestra (Frybarger)
Steve Vincent 15

Regular Stuff:

- Random Notes 3
- Hypersoniq 3
- Classifieds 19
- Hackerpatches - *Jeff Jetton*
SQ/KS/KT: Rave Glide 20
- The Interface 21
- Current O.S. 23
- Transoniq-Net 27
- Hacker Booteeq 31

editable parameters. Let's say, for our example, that we want to take this pad sound up an octave, brighten it up a bit, slow down the attack time of the envelope controlling the filter, and alter the release time. Scroll to the parameter marked "Octave Shift =" Setting this to a value of "+1" with the Value knob takes the sound up an octave. Now scroll to the right with the Parameter knob to the screen that says "Filt Env Attack=" Set this to a value of "57." This will slow the rate at which the filter opens up as you play a chord. Go ahead, try it, I'll wait..... Okay, great, let's move on. Hey, you!, Berman, in New York!, I said LET'S MOVE ON!

Scroll back one window and you have the Filter Cutoff display. Set this to "+42." What this really does in the background is to add an offset to the filter cutoff value in every layer, regardless of how many layers the sound has. Scroll left again with the Parameter knob to the screen marked "Amp Env Release" and set this to a value of "-18." This will take away some of the release time; again this is an offset to all the values in every layer of the original sound. Experiment with these values. When you're happy with them, save the changes.

One other quick and easy tweak is to stack two identical sounds on the same channel and then chorus them by using the "Random Detune" pitch table. This pitch table takes every chromatic note on the keyboard and tunes it either sharp or flat by a few cents. You can do this by setting the "Part MIDI Chan" parameter to the same channel for both (MR-Rack). Select the sounds you want to work with, set the MIDI channel for the second sound to same as the first one. MR Keyboard users should use the "Layer" feature, simply selecting the same sound twice. Now, scroll to the parameter screen marked "PitchTbl=" and set this to "RandomDetun." Simple, but effective. Obviously, you can do this with any combination of sounds. It's fun and easy.

That's it for now. Let the *Hacker* editors know what kinds of MR articles you'd like to see. Maybe your idea will get used. ■

Bio: Ray Legnini is the originator of the snappy wisecrack bio, accept no substitutes. Blah, Blah, Blah, blah...

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Front Panel

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Hacker News

We'd like to invite all you cutting-edge MR owners to consider writing articles for the *Hacker*. That's how everyone here got started. If you're interested, give Jane a call (503-227-6848) and she'll be happy to chat about it.

And a little reminder that If you've been holding back your Basement Tape until the backlog was finished, now's the time. First come, first served.

Ensoniq Announcements

The MR-61 and MR-76 are now at Version 1.61. This new O.S. version includes the following enhancements:

- Fixes the random jumping to PAN page on display.
- Better timing between sequences.
- Fixes the APPEND TRACK function.

Owners with earlier versions should call Ensoniq Customer Service (610-647-3930) for a free upgrade kit.

HYPERSOVIQ

New Product Announcements

Rubber Chicken Software Co. announces several new products for Ensoniq. The *EPS/ASR Sampler Guide* is a full-fledged manual designed to help you apply your EPS/ASR sampler to serious studio work and creative live performance. Included are programming tips, product descriptions, "secret" parameters, and a good overall perspective on the abilities of the Ensoniq line of samplers and how anyone can use them to their full effectiveness. The product will be available December 1st — suggested retail price will be announced next month.

Also new is *TS/MR Tools for Windows*. This program essentially creates an EPS/ASR interface for your samples, and allows you to edit them directly to disk for use in your TS-series or MR-series keyboard. No more Edit files! It also enables your PC to read/write/format floppy disks and SCSI devices, with an Explorer type interface. *.WAV files can be converted to Ensoniq-style wavesamples, and you can loop them yourself. The product is now shipping, with a retail price of \$39.95.

On the hardware side, RCS is announcing a price drop in the *Chicken ASR CD-ROM Drive*, from \$149.95 to \$129.95. The unit comes in a sturdy desktop case (rackmount available for \$150 extra), switchable

SCSI#, reads Roland, Akai, and Ensoniq formats, and comes with all needed cables. Now shipping and fully in stock.

Also available are many more sound products and accessories for Ensoniq samplers. The three products mentioned above are available only from Rubber Chicken Software Co., 714 5th Street SE, Willmar, MN 56201. Phone: 1-800-8-PRO-EPS or 320-235-9798. E-mail: chickenEPS@willmar.com. Web page: <http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps>.

Back Issues

Back issues are \$2.00 each. More than 10: \$1.75 each, more than 21: \$1.50 each. (Overseas: \$3 each.) E-mail copies of back issues are available for all issues since #118: \$1 each (anywhere). Orders for e-mail issues should be sent to: issues@transoniq.com.

Issues 1-40, 61, 67-74, 77, 79 and 82-85 are no longer available. Permission has been given to photocopy issues that we no longer have — check the classifieds for people offering them. A free back issue index is available which contains the tables of content for all issues since #43.

ESQ-1 coverage started with Issue #13. SQ-80 coverage started with #29, (although most ESQ-1 coverage also applies to the SQ-80). EPS coverage got going with #35 (and also applies to the ASR-10). VFX coverage (which also applies to the SDs) got started in #48. The SQs got going in #63. (SQ articles also apply to the KS-32 & KT-76/88.) DP/4 coverage started in #88 (much of which also applies to the ASR-10, and most of which also applies to the DP/2 & DP+). TS-10/12 coverage got going with #98 but owners should also check out sample reviews for EPS/ASR sounds. The MR-Series coverage really started with #136 — but earlier sample reviews may also be useful.

Shouting Above the Five-Pin Din

Customizing Your KT-76/88 (Part IV)

Robby Berman

Hello again. It's been a while, but let us continue on our journey through the System*MIDI pages of your KT-76 or KT-88. In the earlier articles in this series, we discussed the collection of handy options for making the KT fit your hands like a well-worn glove. The good old daze are over, folks: it's MIDI time. Get out those 5-pin DIN plugs and start interfacing.

If all the other articles have discussed ways of getting the KT to do your bidding, this one is about teaching your KT to get along with its neighbors (what's next, obedience school?). It's a-gonna be of interest mostly to those of you with other MIDI devices, for sure; the rest of you lot, well, the *Hacker's* full of other interesting articles.

The next few System*MIDI pages in the KT are all about setting up the way it will send out MIDI messages to other MIDI devices, and about how it will operate on the receiving end, as well.

Turning Base Channels to Gold (Channels?)

Press the System*MIDI button and the button below the "4" on the front panel. We're now looking at a couple of options that control the behavior of the KT's base channel. What's a base channel? Allow me to go a little wide and come back to that question.

First of all — ow, my head's starting to hurt — sending out MIDI messages from the KT and receiving same are handled by intertwining, though separate controls. Owieowie.

As far as sending out MIDI, the KT has two basic modes of operation: you're dealing with Sounds, or you're dealing with the sequencer. Simple enuff. When you're using the sequencer, each of its eight tracks has its own MIDI channels and settings for sending out the stuff. When you're in Sounds mode, you play just one Sound at a time, and so you only need one MIDI trans-

mission set-up to take care of business. Rather than confuse things by making you use a sequencer track just to send out MIDI when you're not doing anything relating to the sequencer or sequencing, the KT has a separate MIDI path for those single-Sound situations. That's where the base channel comes in: it's the MIDI channel that the KT uses to send MIDI information when you're playing a Sound and not sequencing.

The base channel can also receive MIDI messages that will play whatever Sound you've got selected in Sounds mode when you want to play that single Sound from some other MIDI device, like your MIDI kazoo or tricycle. We'll talk about receiving MIDI messages a little later on. For now, let's just deal with sending MIDI out of your KT.

Now, then, the top line of the screen offers a straightforward choice: what MIDI channel do you want to transmit all that MIDI splodge on when you're working with a single Sound? I'm thinking of a number between 01 and 16. Of course in the, shall we say, "highly flexible" world of MIDI, there's more to the story than just setting a MIDI channel.

Time out. Before we go any further, let me state: in spite of my sardonic tone when discussing MIDI, I actually think it's a great thing. It's just that along with greater power inevitably comes greater responsibility. For that reason, I'd say that the best thing you can do for your creative self is to take the time to go through things like setting up base channels and so on some day when you feel like vegging out. That way, when inspiration strikes, all that will stand between you and its realization is the flick of a couple of power switches. On with the story.

Status Symbology

The bottom line of this display is where we start to step in it. Now we get to decide what the base channel will actually do. That is, how and when will it actually send

out the MIDI instructions with which we intend to control our little MIDI worlds.

The Status parameter can be set to any of four settings that determine what MIDI messages go out of the KT, or just stay put, lay there, do nuthin'.

If you set the base channel status to BOTH, the KT will send out MIDI messages on its base MIDI channel when you play a KT Sound or twiddle any of its controllers (pitch wheel, mod wheel, etc.). It will also respond to incoming MIDI when the stars are right (I promise we'll talk about this later).

If the base channel status is set to LOCAL, no MIDI at all will escape from your KT while you play single Sounds.

If the base channel is set to MIDI, when you play the KT's keyboard, you won't hear anything from your KT — only MIDI data will be produced. And transmitted. But wait. Incoming MIDI will play the Sound you've got selected (again, if the stars...). This seemingly silly arrangement comes in quite handy if you're using the KT as keyboard controller with an external sequencer (perhaps a computer) and you want that sequencer to play the KT Sound. In this scenario, you wouldn't want both the KT and external sequencer to play the Sound; you'd be hearing it twice: once on the way out, and once on the way back in.

The final option (oh, that sounds so grim) is *EXT*. If the base channel is set to this puppy, playing the KT keyboard will only send out MIDI data and the KT will not produce any sound. Period.

MIDI Digging In

Press the button below the "5" on the KT's front panel. Here's our final base channel choice: PRESSURE. This is all about what kind of MIDI pressure will be transmitted by the KT's keyboard. It also determines the kind of pressure the KT's sound engine (rrrrrrr, rrrrrr) will respond to.

The choices are three.

When the base channel pressure is set to NONE, the KT will just not send out any MIDI pressure information

'tall (nor will it respond to any incoming MIDI pressure messages).

KEY stands for key pressure, or polyphonic pressure, where each key on the keyboard sends and responds to its own individual pressure messages. This would allow, for example, one note to start wiggling from pressure, while the note right next to it remains straight-arrow solid. The KT keyboards don't actually produce or transmit key pressure. You'd only set your base channel to this setting if you were going to be sending key pressure into the KT — it does respond to this kind of MIDI message, even if it doesn't produce the stuff itself.

The third pressure option is CHANNEL, the very kind of pressure the KT keyboards do create and transmit. With channel pressure all of the notes on a keyboard respond as a group to pressure messages. To expand on our earlier example, send channel pressure from a single key, and all the notes commence to wigglin'.

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Incoming...

Apologies for the length of this article, but I don't want to leave you hanging by your MIDI cord. You've got to have some way of directing incoming MIDI to the single Sound or to the eight tracks in the sequencer. But just how dooz it no what you want to do? Press the button below the "6."

This top line is the key. You've got five choices. Let's just discuss the first three for now (the last two are a whole 'nother ball of wax we'll get to next time).

When MIDI mode is set to OMNI, you can send the KT MIDI data on any of the 16 MIDI channels and the Sound you've got selected in Sounds mode will respond to your call.

When the mode is POLY, the single Sound will only respond when you address it on the base channel's MIDI channel.

And here's how to send MIDI messages over to the

sequencer: select MULTI as your MIDI mode. In MULTI mode, each track will respond on the MIDI channel you've assigned it to. Oh, and you do want to set your eight tracks to MIDI channels other than the base channel's channel.

All Ashore That's Going Ashore

Sorry to leave you in the middle of modes, but, no doubt, it would be a good thing if there were room for other articles in this issue of the *Hacker*. Next time, we'll pick up where we left off. ■



Bio: Robby Berman is a musician living in New York's scenic, if currently quite muddy, Hudson Valley. His most recent album is "Rings and Rings."

Ensequencing

Part 3: The Non-Conformist Oath

Jack Stephen Tolin

*"Repeat the non-conformist oath:
I promise to be different.
I promise to be unique.
I promise not to repeat things other people say."
— Steve Martin*

All right. So I admit it. Any endeavor to be entirely unlike anyone else puts me into a group often referred to as the non-conformist. As we all know, there are certain particulars that are apparent in all members. So, are they really non-conformist? I mean, they do all strive to lead the same kind of life in that they strive to not be like anyone else. Doesn't that mean that they are all alike to some degree? Well...

A while back, there was an editorial in *Keyboard* magazine written by Wendy Carlos. She mentioned

something that I thought was rather interesting. Did you notice that despite all of the time signatures that exist on this planet, most people compose music in 4/4? Carlos likened this phenomenon to a grid of squares on a floor. There are many people in the room, and there is lots of space in the room, but, for some reason, everyone decides that they want to stand on the same square. A little bit too far off the deep end to be a realistic analogy you say? Well...

As I was reading the article, "Sequence Skating," by one of my favorite *Hacker* writers, Pat Finnigan, in Issue 132 of this here rag, I reminisced about the days of sequence templates for me. When I first started out, everything I did was your traditional intro-verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-guitar solo (Oops! Must have been a typo!) -etcetera and so on. The good ol' days. It sort of

brings warm fuzzies to my... um... well, you know what I mean.

So, I thought about the way things are now. The kind of instrumental music I do is the kind of music you would never hear on a radio station. Not even those new age ones either. I don't just experiment with music, but I experiment with sounds. The sounds become a part of the "piece" itself. That's not to say that the music doesn't go anywhere. I've got a bass that dances around and some drums and percussion to make you want to dance (unless you are Nazarene I guess). During different sections of a piece, the instruments change, the tempo changes, the feel changes, the mood changes, different melodies arrive, old ones move out for a time, stereo effects abide, old melodies integrate themselves back in, and so on. In short, my music is very contemporary in feel even though it manipulates different styles of music and sound.

I am unique. That doesn't mean that no one else makes music like I do, but each person is different. I like being different. I have discovered some tricks to make pieces unique and give a sequence a special-ness to them unlike earlier copies might have ended up. This should integrate easily into what Mr. Finnigan has already suggested in his aforementioned article.

One of my big rules is to never, ever, have the same sequence play twice in exactly the same way. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. You will notice that they all can be mixed and matched. Without further um-do:

Use song tracks. This method is always the last resort (for me anyway). I generally like to fill my sequences full and then allow the music to progress from one sequence to the next. If a sequence were to repeat itself, one can always add things over different sequences by adding something to a song track. For example, after your initial chorus, or first time through your verse-chorus combination, add a solo instrument, organ, etc over the next verse-chorus combination adding harmony (or percussion maybe) to what is there. For additional ideas of what to put on a song track, read on.

Use empty sequence tracks. It may not be uncommon to find yourself with extra sequence tracks after you have completed the initial music for the sequence. I generally add things at this point — maybe a little extra percus-

sion, some special effects sounds you never really thought you would ever use, even a staccato guitar pluck rhythmically placed. Experiment with pan, effects, and volume settings. Remember, the key here is to add things that will distinguish this sequence from any other — no matter how bizarre some of the ideas may seem at first. Just make sure to listen and shape the music so that, even if you are adding something bizarre, everything adds to the music and does not detract from it.

Use drop-outs in the music. This method is fairly straightforward. Something like a drop-out in music may only include everything except drums and bass for example. Another popular example may involve dropping out everything except the solo instrument. This method may last for a couple beats or maybe just for less than one beat. With the newer Ensoniq sequencers, this is a fairly simple procedure utilizing the Erase Track function and then specifying range.

Use drum fills. This is another popular method. This may work well by simply adding some extra percussion that may not be there in another sequence. It may also work well by using this method in conjunction with the previous method — a drum fill during a drop-out in music.

Change part of a bass line. In one particular sequence of mine, the bass was playing staccato half notes for a few bars. In a copy sequence with which I started off, I changed the last four staccato half notes into two legato whole notes which ended up being a nice lead into the next sequence. Another way to alter a bass line might be to add notes here and there or change syncopation. You may even want to try adding one slap bass track to the sequence and every now and then add a slapped note where the other bass drops out. In another of my sequences, one of the major changes made to a sequence from its copy is that there are more syncopated notes added thus creating a slap-dancing bass boogying around. Of course, something like this will change the feel of the sequence at which point you will become inspired as to what to change next.

Use brass stabs. A staccato fourth or fifth forcefully planted to accent certain points in a melody or rhythm will do wonders to heighten the excitement already present in your sequence. At one point in one of my sequences, I use a drop-out for just under one beat and add two consecutive bass notes, two brass stabs, and two

crash symbols for emphasis, all syncopated together. That change made to just one sequence allows me to play both sequences in the same song and keeps my conscience in good health as a result of not having any guilt feelings resulting from the thought that I have somehow robbed the listener of the pleasure of hearing at least something a little different from what they have already heard in the same song. (Big breath.)

Last, and most important, always, but always, program all of your music in 1/4. This is actually just a staple of mine. It may not make too much sense at first. For example, the locate function in most Ensoniq synthesizers and samplers allow the user to find a particular bar, beat, and 96th part (whatever they are called, I forgot. I don't generally pay any attention to them anyway). In this kind of set-up, bar and beat are really the same thing. The reason I program all my music in 1/4 is simply this: I find it much easier to add one beat here, take off one beat there, and so on, if everything can be divisible by one beat. There is no way that anyone will be able to do that if they are programming in 4/4, 6/8, 3/4, or even 2/4. The only exception is if you create a one-beat sequence that you can just add on anywhere —

but be careful of the instruments you choose to place in it! Or you could simply program one sequence of whatever time signature you are programming in and then just speed up that one sequence by raising the tempo to simulate one beat. Groan! (And I used to do that, too!) Of course, this still does not allow for deleting one beat anywhere. By programming in 1/4, you can always change the length of a sequence per beat and not just per bar.

Using all of these methods, or a variety of them, help each individual sequence sound unique. No need for sequences to sound exactly the same ever again. They can each individually say something a little bit different than any other, and without reciting any oath either. I can testify, the entire song will develop a much more expressive character than you can get any other way. Have fun experimenting, and keep those sequences on track! ■

Bio: Jack is currently attending Seminary in Kansas City, MO, works for Sprint, programs progressive music with a contemporary flavor, and takes experimental sequencing, synthesis and sampling to new heights (for himself anyway).



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If you remember way back in June, Pat raved about Invision's *Orchestral CD-Rom* and it came out with the judges giving high marks in almost every area. This month we'll see if Invision can go for gold again with their *Pop/Rock CD*. Perusing the back cover I found that TH's Clark Salisbury is, once again, one of the programmers — with assistance from Erick Hailstone.

First things first. As with the *Orchestral* disk I would recommend having an expanded board to audition many of these sounds. There are some *big* ranges of samples here from the tiniest 25 block Synth Bass 3 to a FAT 10606 MIDI Brass. I'm using a fully expanded TS-12 for this review but, unfortunately, 10k is slightly out of my range. I'm certain, however, that with such a huge file the sound has *got to be killer!!*

I have just one gripe (minor as it may be) that I must get off my chest. The bulk of this CD is guitars and basses with a taste of brass and saxes. Before even opening the case I was expecting more variety — what with a title like *Pop and Rock*. Where are the keys, synths and percussion? In all fairness, these are titles of subsequent CDs. Perhaps this disk would've been more appropriately named *GUITARS/BASSES*. There, I said it — now I can move on...

The GUITARS are broken down into three sub-groups: acoustic... clean electric... and distorted electric. The acoustics carry the traditional 6- and 12-string varieties, *all* of which sound very good. "6-STRING 2" is a real standout. You can almost feel the strings as you play. Check out the patch select "xo." Actually be sure to sneak-a-peek at the patch selects for all the sounds. There are some nifty goodies underneath the main patch. The "7569 SLIDE GUITAR" is just awesome. String

noise included!!

"CLEAN ELECTRIC" has its share of strats, gibsons, and few jazz guitars. "BEEFY STRAT" is just that... a big, juicy, well done piece of stratocaster. This one is going into my songwriting file. The velocity scaling on these sounds is fabulous. Soft fingers will get a fat mute and heavy hitters will find a full out string pluck with noise included. Great job. "GRETCH TENNESSEE 1" makes a choice rhythm guitar. "XX" select puts you in stereo. "JAZZ GUITAR 2's" lower register is so warm I think I heard the A/C kick on. Patch Selects creates a groovy octave patch.

"DISTORTED ELECTRIC" was the one I was looking forward to the most. I'm always looking for a guitar patch that will knock the little Eddie Van Halen wanna-be next door right out of his prepubescent socks. "BLUES GUITAR" comes close. It's got some fuzz around it but still I want more. Check out the velocity scaling on "DIRTY STRAT." Some good ol' chunkin' up to a distorted pluck. Very cool. "METAL FX" is a grab bag of distorted odds and ends like pick slides and hammer-ons. Could be useful to throw in one or two when sequencing your next death metal tune. Ah-ha!!! What's this? "3242 SCREAMING GUITAR." This could be the one... It's a good raw distorted patch but before I call up the brat next door lemme run this through some of the onboard guitar FX in my trusty TS. WWWWOW-WWWWOW!!!!!! I ran it through FX #69 (shut up...). Distort +Chorus --Rev, made a few tweaks to variation and NOW I'm ready. Go ahead punk!!!! Make my day.

The BASS category is broken down into the traditional, acoustic, electric and synth variations. I have a ton of bass sounds so I wasn't too enthusiastic about finding anything new here. But what the hay, I could always use some more. Of the three Fender variations, I loved the "737 FINGERED." The sound reminded me of an old bass player I used to hang with. There's also a nice slide and stereo effect with the patch selects. Another one that I must mention is the "SLAP STEINBERGER." *Seinfeld* is one my favorite show themes because the whole score

is bass riffs. When I hit the first note on this sound I fell down in laughter.. I've always wanted that sound... and now I have it.

The CD rounds itself out with a few brass and reed samples. I wish I had an ASR to check out the "MIDI BRASS." Mine choked out after 8k. The ones I can load are pretty decent. If you play them in the correct range they sound realistic but step out of the range and ugh!!! They're not the type I would use on a funk or fusion tune but more with an orchestral score and I... wait a minute... Well, those sneaky devils... The two brass sections are the same ones that appear in the *ORCHESTRAL CD*. Hmmmmm... Two demerits for being repetitive.

Another instrument that's hard to reproduce is the saxophone and Invision has done a pretty good job with the ones here. The "BARI SAX" has a great tone. Useful for doubling up on the bass line. My favorite would have

to be the "BREATHY TENOR." Nice, mellow sexy sound. Good job!!!

Well there you have it. The judges give their scores and... Invision has another gold medal. For only \$99.00 (about half the price of most CDs) you get some pretty cool sounds. All the sounds were sampled with the utmost of care. You won't find any zipper noise or loop clicks here. I recommend adding this one to your collection. If you don't already have a player, let me say that CD-ROMs are way more efficient than shuffling a bunch of floppies around. And with the cost of CD-ROM players quickly falling I suggest you consider ambling on down to your nearest music or computer store and pick one up that's compatible with your synth. You'll wonder how you ever got along without it. ■

Bio: Clayton Lewis is the owner/operator of BNM Productions and still says "groovy!"

Successfully Simulated Sequenced Strings (and Strums)

Or — What Works with Which Waves, and Why

Joe Travo

The production of accurate, convincing string parts, both section and solo has frequently been a problem for me in sequenced music. Guitar parts (especially rhythmic parts) have posed the same difficulty, in both sequencing and live environments. While doing a conversion from my hardware sequencer to my PC software sequencer, I discovered a trick that has pretty much solved most of these problems and has given me the insight I need to do a better job live.

With the advent of better-sounding samples, we all have the necessary sound tools to create music. The manner in which we use those tools can make the difference between a convincing sequenced composition and one which sounds unnatural. The basic reason for unnatural sounding string and rhythm guitar parts seems to be literally in the way we keyboardists attack the instrument, whether guitar or strings.

We're all aware that to correctly phrase a convincing sax or horn part, there are certain physical laws that can't be violated, like the need for brass and reed players to breathe. Run-on horn lines without a pause for breath are a basic tip-off, and one we all avoid. Less obvious (to me anyway), but just as revealing is the phenomenon I call "simultaneous string bowing." The fact that there's physical space between the strings on virtually all stringed instruments makes it impossible for those strings to be bowed simultaneously. Same with string sections. There's no way that numerous string (or horn) players are going to hit their notes with the same accuracy that a keyboardist's ten fingers can. There's also the fact that different instruments are: a) played differently, and b) laid out differently, both from each other and from the piano-style keyboard.

It takes time for the bow or pick or finger to get from

one string to the next, and harmonics continue to ring on previous notes while new ones are being attacked. String sections often bow back and forth on rapid passages. Likewise, it's almost impossible to do a fast strum on guitar without strumming up at least part of the time. (Try it) In addition, there are intervals that are difficult to play, if not impossible, on the real instrument. Keyboardists regularly violate these physical laws, and although the ear may not know exactly why, it knows something's wrong. When five or eight fingers hit a string or guitar patch or sample all at the same time, that's exactly what it sounds like, a keyboard sample. Emulating the playing style of the instrument is critical to a convincing simulation.

As frequently happens, I discovered all this not because I'm particularly smart or insightful, but pretty much by accident. I was importing a sequence I had created on my Alesis MMT8 into my PC-based Power Tracks software sequencer, and the first 16 bars was a slow solo string line, which appears below.


This piece, as you can see, was originally recorded at 16 bpm to take advantage of a very slow drum pattern (a slow march). When I imported it into my computer I recorded it at the same tempo, then promptly forgot that "The Bridge" (the song I was using it in), was 120 bpm. There's the accident that taught me something. If you do the same thing I did with the notes above (just change the tempo to 120 after you record it at 16), you'll see what I mean. It sounds like that string section is hitting those notes just far enough apart to be human, but still rhythmically correct, and sawing back and forth (notes ascending and descending) to keep up the pace. This sounds very different from the results I get when I try to get each of my fingers to simulate this style.

A guitar part gets basically the same type of treatment. Hitting all the notes simultaneously is to tip-off that regardless of the quality of the sample, what you're hearing is not a guitar. I find that the technique of "rolling" the fingers gives a much more realistic simulation. The specific technique used depends heavily on the material being performed or sequenced. A medium or slow-tempo ballad might require only regular "down-stroke strums." Emulating down-stroke guitar strums on the keyboard requires rolling the fingers up the keyboard, while "up-stroke strums" require the reverse, rolling the fingers down the keys, because of the way guitar necks are strung. Fast-moving rock tunes will require a combination of both.

Listening to what various real instruments are doing is the key to convincing technique. Frequently, though, it's difficult to hear exactly what's going on in a tune for a number of reasons. The tempo is too quick to pick out specific events (notes or chords) and strumming or bowing techniques, or the other instruments tend to take up sound bandwidth and mask what's going on with the instrument we're trying to emulate. I've developed two techniques for analyzing parts that exhibit these problems:

Solution #1 — The Sequencer

If you have access to a professionally sequenced version of the tune you're working on (or one like it), slow down your sequencer to the point where you can hear what's going on with that instrument. Soloing the specific instrument track can also be extremely helpful in hearing the target instrument without the distractions and "masking" that comes with other instruments in the mix. Finally, notating the part (if your sequencer can do this) can give some very helpful insights.



The image shows a musical score for a bass line in 4/4 time. The notation is spread across two staves. The first staff contains measures 1 and 2, and the second staff contains measures 3 and 4. The music consists of a series of chords and single notes, with some measures featuring a 'roll' of notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece is identified as 'The Bridge' by Joe Travo, with a copyright notice for 1996 and a 'REPEAT MUSIC' instruction.

"The Bridge" by Joe Travo , Copyright 1996 ||: REPEAT MUSIC :||

Although this technique works fine when the appropriate composition is available in sequenced form, all too often it's not.

Solution #2 — The Multitrack

When you're doing original music, there's obviously no access to the "correct" version of the piece. "Correct" is based on how you want the piece to sound. Most of us do have a concept of how we want our music to sound, though. Find a style of music in which the instruments and technique resemble what you're trying to do. Record it on the fastest tape speed available onto a 4-track tape, using whatever's available on the recorder (EQ, L/R split, etc) to isolate the instrument(s) you want to really hear. Although the EQing and channel separation are helpful, the part of this solution that really helps me is playing the tape back at half speed. This especially allows me to hear specific bowing, strumming or picking techniques. Anyone who's ever figured out note-for-note solos

knows that slowing the tape speed by half is the way to go. Doing this also helps me to hear specific intervals, something that's really important for convincing simulations. The ear "knows" what sounds right and what doesn't, and it isn't easy to fool. Remember, slowing the tape down this much lowers everything by a full octave, so correct for that or you create a whole new set of problems.

The bottom line for both of these techniques narrows down to some relatively simple concepts: listening actively, being aware of exactly what you're hearing, and figuring out how to recreate it accurately for your specific purposes. ■

Bio: Joe Travo composes and performs original music and plays keyboards with "Slip of the Tongue," a rock/country/blues band in Visalia, California, where he's Marketing Director for KEY HEALTH PLAN (notice the name, "Key").

Questions From The T-Net

Part II

Garth Hjelte

QUESTION: *I have an MR-Workstation and it's great. I LOVE loading ASR-10 samples into the machine, and playing them. When is the SCSI going to come out for it?*

ANSWER: Apparently time-travel is in vogue lately. You can tell this person came from the future, because you can't load samples into the MRs until Ensoniq finishes the Flash-ROM packages (\$299.95, per 4meg), which should be in next few months.

SCSI will not be offered for the MR series. Boy, it would sure be nice — but for some reason, there will be no SCSI. Maybe it's because of a future product...

QUESTION: *The ASR-10 is supposed to read Akai CD-ROMs with the S-1000/1100 format, right? I have several Akai CD-ROMs, and some sounds load in, but others won't. The ones that won't load are small — I know it's not a memory issue.*

ANSWER: Although S-1000/1100s are file-format com-

patible, meaning that you can always read the directory, sometimes there are files that were saved within the CD-ROM that are "not compatible," perhaps saved with an S-3000 or other newer version. Perhaps the best thing to do with a Akai CD-ROM would be to check all the files to see if they load right after you buy it, and then make the decision whether you want to keep the CD-ROM. (Be sure you've bought it from a place that allows you to return it.)

QUESTION: *I bought this Ensoniq CD-ROM, and the sounds are great, but it seems that those jokers didn't even program any effects into the instruments. All of them are Hall Reverb with the default settings. There was this sound called RealDistGtr, but all it was was a clean lousy-sounding guitar. I don't think I'm going to buy Ensoniq CD-ROMs — I'll think I'll try Rubber Chicken's next. P.S. I have a 16-Plus.*

ANSWER: GREAT IDEA — COULDN'T AGREE WITH YOU MORE — OUR NUMBER IS... no, wait a minute. There's a better explanation for this. Behind it

needs a discussion on file-types.

Although every Ensoniq sampler can always load each others samples, each sampler (EPS, 16-Plus, and ASR) saves their instruments under their own file-type. Since there is no way on the Ensoniq keyboard itself to tell what file type the file is, sometimes this causes confusion. Below is a list of how each sampler responds to different file-types:

EPS, when reading...

16-Plus file type	will ignore certain parameters* and the effects
ASR file type	will ignore certain parameters* and the effects will only read DS/DD disks

16-Plus, when reading...

EPS file type	reads perfect — even sounds better
ASR file type	will ignore effect setting,** otherwise perfect will only read DS/DD disks

ASR, when reading...

EPS file type	reads perfect — even sounds better
16-Plus file type	reads perfect — effects are translated

* Certain parameters are WS Boost, Layer Delay, Layer Restrike, MINIMODE, TRIGGER, and TRNSWAVE Glide modes, Pan Mod, Pan Mod Source, Output Bus, and Filter Cut-Off settings above 127.

** Note: even if the effect is one that the 16-Plus has, like CHR-REV-DLL, it still will be ignored.

So from the chart, you can see that even though your 16-Plus can read the file from the CD-ROM, the effects are not translated, because it was saved in ASR file-type. Now, call 610-647-3930, and apologize to Ensoniq for your outburst.

QUESTION: *What kind of computer software is available for my (insert here: EPS, ASR, TS)?*

ANSWER: GOOD — let's get off the hardware questions. Your question has many answers, but let me get on a soapbox first, and then steer you in the right direction.

First, the funniest thing in the Ensoniq SCSI manual is that they dedicate a certain amount of space demonstrating how to hook the EPS/ASR to a computer via SCSI. So what's funny about that? Very few programs can communicate via SCSI to the EPS/ASR — the original Alchemy can't talk to the ASR, Alchemy3 has problems (so I've heard), and SampleVision for Windows has problems too. The only ones that seem to be successful are the

disk-management programs — EPSm, scEPSi (pronounced SKEP-SEE), and the Ensoniq Disk Manger 1.1. The best thing about SCSI was that you could transfer wavsample information with the speed of light. But what happened to all the editors?

You want computer software? Well, what for? I would suggest that your needs drive your decisions to do additional things with additional equipment. More gear adds learning curves, taking you away from your music.

Instead of mentioning all the Ensoniq-specific and non-specific software available (that has been done; check out my *From Cyberspace To Your Ear* article in TH #134 — beware, the article is somewhat out of date now — you can find an up-to-date list at the RCS web site — <http://members.aol.com/chickenEPS/computer.htm>), here are a couple of main categories of software that will hopefully lead you in the right direction:

Sequencing Software

This is probably the most common and immediate help to the EPS/ASR. Although the EPS/ASR has a better-than-average sequencer, a computer sequencer has some great advantages. Visual editing, far greater quantization schemes, more versatile tempo changing, and other goodies will convince you that once you've switched, you'll never go back.

I recommend one of the larger sequencing packages, not because you'll use all the features (you probably won't), but because it's probably easier to use. Larger programs have more comprehensive Help files, are more logical and have more room for you to grow.

Available programs: PC: Cakewalk, Logic; Mac: Performer, Master Tracks Pro; PC and Mac: Cubase. *This is not a complete list* — look around for more possibilities.

Hard-Drive Recording Software

Let me editorialize for a moment (*Digression Alert!*). Many people call Rubber Chicken Software, asking if we sell the new 1 Gig Jaz removable cartridge drive. RCS is pretty much an Ensoniq-only specialty company, but we don't sell the Jaz drive. The reason? We figured this: If you are going to use the Jaz for sound storage, why not just get a fixed 1 Gig drive (MUCH cheaper), or the Zip removable drive (100 megs, probably cheaper in the long run)? Or if you are going to use the Jaz for hard-disk recording consider this: If you have the \$500 to shell out for the Jaz, perhaps you should think about doing your HD

drive recording on your computer, where it is much more capable of doing that function. Sure, it's neat that the ASR-10 can record two tracks of digital audio direct-to-SCSI. But how much editing is it able to do? And how reliable is it? For a free update to an OS, the ASR's HD functions do a great job.

But if you *really* want to start recording digitally, perhaps an ADAT should be your choice, or the new dedicated HD recorders (the new Fostex and Roland's prices are really low!), or more courageously, to a computer-controlled HD recording system. Check out recent articles in *Keyboard* and *Electronic Musician*. Direct-To-Disk recording is a very real option from the professional down to the amateur. It's a large learning curve, but well worth it.

I thought I'd mention all this because it is a very hashed-over topic on the T-Net. I get many calls asking for assistance with the HD-recording functions of the ASR. Either the people are interested in building their studio around the ASR, or they don't understand why they keep getting time lags in their sequences containing DiskTrack data. I believe (this is only my opinion) that the DiskTrack option on the ASR is a helpful utility and can serve as a great scratchpad for small projects. But I wouldn't rely it for major stuff.

Disk-Management/Conversion Software

Although the EPS/ASR does a relatively good job at managing the external storage systems (floppy and SCSI), there's a lot more it can do. Disk-management software can read an instrument file of a floppy/SCSI, turn it into a computer file, and send it out over the Internet to your friend who's been waiting for that sound or sequence you want to send him. This type of software can convert computer sound formats, such as .WAV and others, to and from the Ensoniq format. It can also completely format and write files to a SCSI drive, so your TS series keyboard can hook up to it via SCSI and read the instruments. Other programs allow you to specifically alter one or two parameters direct-to-disk, doing away with those bothersome edit files on the TS series instruments.

Want more? Some programs allow you to grab instrument files from an Ensoniq-formatted CD-ROM in your PC/Mac CD-ROM drive and write it to a floppy, overcoming the Original EPS's inability to communicate with CD-ROM drives. And you can even see the individual construction of a file, giving you A's in computer class.

Available programs: Ensoniq Disk Manager/Extractor, EPS/ASR Tools for Windows, EPSm, scEPSi, SoundVert,

Awave, Epsilon, Atari Disk Wizard, EPSPC. *This is not a complete list* — ask/look around for more possibilities.

Visual Editing Software

These either grab the waveform from your EPS/ASR, mangle and fandangle it in the computer while you audition it on your computer's sound card, and allow you to send the wavesample back to the EPS/ASR, or they remote-control the EPS/ASR, making it do the work while you work with it on the computer monitor and audition the sound through the EPS/ASR itself, or they mess with a sound resident in your computer, and you need to use a conversion utility (see above) to get it to your board. If you are sick of looping/editing your EPS/ASR from the small 22-character screen, check into these programs — they are a real help.

Available programs: Alchemy3, SampleVision for Windows, EPS/ASR Tools for Windows, Epsilon, Cool Edit, Sound Forge, Goldwave. *This is not a complete list* — look around for more possibilities.

QUESTION: *Where can I get a service manual?*

ANSWER: Oh, yes — *another* one of those hotly-debated topics that used to fly around The Interface (the back section of the *Hacker* where we get to ask questions). Hey, you old-time Hackers, leaf through those old copies (yes, I know you still have them all), and check out Issue #33. A Mr. Jay Meyers tore off a two page letter (somewhat like this two-page article) accusing Ensoniq of "lining pockets," and other things.

No matter what anybody says, Ensoniq is going to stick to their module-replacement policy. It's obviously worked for them for the past 10+ years. It can be a benefit to the customer, because then problems are more likely solved, and more easily troubleshooted. And it evens itself out — the price you pay to have the problem troubleshooted is pretty much what you pay for the module-replacement. The only people "out" are the people who know enough to fix it themselves, but need the schematics.

Oh, yes, your service manual — nope, it's not available for the same reasons mentioned above. Ensoniq wants the ASC fixin' you 'chine, not you. That's put a little too blatantly — we should say, "that's their repair policy." ■

Bio: Garth Hjelt is the owner and operator of Rubber Chicken Software where he spends his time wondering who it was that Nick Longo spent all his time and resources suing.

Stuart Clark, Patrick Waltz and Mitch Evitts Pangaea World Orchestra (Duane Frybarger)

Tape: *Hog House Country Demo #1*

Artist: Stuart Clark, Patrick Waltz and Mitch Evitts

Contact Info: c/o Hog House Records, 343 Parkridge Rd, Hartford, KY 42347, Ph: 502-298-4834; Email: 75377,517@compuserve.com.

Equipment: Ensoniq TS-10, Roland R-5, Tascam Midi 688, Tascam DA-30 DAT, JVC TD707 dubbing cassette; microphones: ElectraVoice RE20, 3 Shure SM58s, and others; GNL (Modified) Electric Guitar, Washburn, Alvarez acoustic guitars, both with built-in pickups; Peavey Studio Chorus 210 guitar amp, BBE Sonic Max 422A, Rane DC24 stereo compressor, Audio Centron PSR stereo compressor, Symetrix Stereo compressor, Behringer Multicom Quad Compressor, 2 Mono DBX de-essers, ART Pro-Verb, Alesis MicroVerb, Alesis Quadraverb GT, Digitech Vocalist VHM5, White 4675 EQ, Alesis MEQ 230, Electra 535GA EQ.

This four-song demo presents the songwriting and performance talents of Stuart Clark, Pat Waltz and Mitch Evitts. Their style is decidedly country. Mitch Evitts is the crooner for this trio, and his voice is classic country — plenty o' twang, with that just-about-to-cry scoop on the tear-jerkers, yet enough composure that you're not going to call the crisis line on the guy. His pitch is perfect; a completely pleasant voice to listen to. Here is a sample of their work from the four-song demo:

1. *"I Wanna Know"* — A tear-jerker ballad, *"I Wanna Know"* shows some lyrical promise ("I wanna know, do you think about me when you're dancin' slow"), but occasionally settles into ho-hum lyric-land.

2. *"Hold You Again"* is another minor-key heartbreak song that starts out with a cliché *"House of the Rising Sun"* progression on the verses, but moves to some tasty, creative changes in the chorus. Evitts' vocals and guitar join forces to add a classy layer.

3. *"Long Gone"* — Country boogie shuffle. Evitts' vocals bust loose with some bluesy energy on this danceable crowd-pleaser.

4. *"Waitin' On A Call"* — This is a classic country ballad about a sad woman holding out for some word

from her non-committal man. Evitts' vocals shine, and the backing vocals are perfect: thick and lush, dead-on pitch, and placed expertly in the mix. The tasteful lead guitar track was mixed a little hot, especially when juxtaposed with the far-less intense piano solo.

Rough edges: Every now and then the keyboard embellishments utilize some mildly cheesy sounds, as in the bridge on *"I Wanna Know."* Similarly, on the percussion tracks, it's the embellishments (e.g., the cowbell "fills") that bleat "I'm a sequence!" In fairness, Stuart Clark stated in his email to me, "My drums suck." He would prefer to use live drums (and bass), but the intent of this demo is to showcase the trio's songwriting chops in hopes that, as Stuart states, "an up-coming or established Country artist might record our material." His drums don't "suck," in fact, the percussion tracks on *"Long Gone"* are quite human. Keeping the arrangements simple, without the telltale electronic signatures, will keep the vocals and arrangements up front where they belong. Composition-wise, if all the lyrics stay on Hog House's high quality side, this songwriting team will be a force to be reckoned with.

Tape: *On The High Road* (c) 1994, 1995

Artist: Pangaea World Orchestra (Duane Frybarger)

Contact Info: Duane Frybarger, 890 Geary St #25, San Francisco, CA 94109, Ph: 415-928-7976, Email: duane@creative.net, Website: <http://www.creative.net/~duane>.

Equipment: Ensoniq ESQ-1 (all sequencing), Mirage rackmount, Roland U-110 and TR-505, Emu Piano module, ART FXR reverb, dbx 266 compressor/gate.

In the world of music reviews, classification (read "pigeonholing") is a necessary evil, and will be with us until the day, hopefully soon, when audio and video will seamlessly accompany our electronic 'zines. That said, I must say my initial exposures to "world music" left me feeling, shall we say, uninspired. After all, I have heard steel drum bands in Trinidad, listened to balalaika players in Kiev, and have marveled at gamelan orchestras in Chiang Mai and the forlorn and simple drone of the

khlan played by the humble Yao tribespeople of northern Thailand. The first time I heard a shakuhachi accompanying a pop tune (a la David Foster and Peter Gabriel), I thought, Oh no... now indigenous music will get assimilated into a nondescript "world music," like those computer-morphed facial images which combine the correct percentage of each culture's features into a generic face. Well, I was right, but my fears were unfounded: the original musics are still very alive and well, thank you, and their wannabe cousin, "World Music," is in a niche of its own.

Duane Frybarger's tape "*City Lights*" was reviewed in the March 1996 *Transoniq Hacker*. This latest project, "*On the High Road*," continues his musical journey and reflects many changes. Duane now records under the name "Pangaea World Orchestra," a metaphor for the "one world" community which technology, and the Internet in particular, has helped create. Here is a brief track-by-track of the tape:

1. "*High Road*" — This is a latinesque, mildly hypnotic tune.
2. "*Amazon Babies*" — A sort of hybrid bamboo flute/shakuhachi predominates over a synth pad chordal bed with standard drum kit percussion, and a lounge piano solo. A potpourri of musical elements.
3. "*Juicy*" — Proves that the good old ESQ-1 can still hold its own in the brass pad department. Unfortunately, sampled sax predominates in this catchy tune.
4. "*St. John's Way*" — More ESQ-1 brass pad beds, more sampled sax. This hits me as fitting in the "British sitcom theme" genre.
5. "*Mushroom Man*" — A minor-key, arabesque instrumental with Middle Eastern themes running throughout, and melodies played on ESQ brass pads and sampled strings.
6. "*A Warrior Within*" — Raise "*Mushroom Man*" a step, add marimba comping, and you've got "*A Warrior Within*." More ESQ brass.
7. "*Bydebay*" — A laid-back, relaxing piece. Simple melodies over a mellow bed of brass pads.
8. "*Pinay*" — Back to the "*Mushroom Man*" and "*Warrior Within*" formula, but this time we get a heavy dose

(make that a double dose thanks to digital delay) of, you guessed it, sampled sax.

9. "*A Little Loose*" — Compositionally and production-wise, the most interesting track on the album, departing from the "world music" genre.

Duane's arrangements are refreshingly open; he doesn't succumb to the temptation to fill every nook and cranny of the sonic environment with sound, but leaves plenty of breathing room. This has its advantages and disadvantages: on his tracks where the melody is memorable and played with a nice patch and voicing, it works great, but in passages using cliché or unconvincing patches, the melody gets caught exposed with nothing to support it (or hide it). I would suggest substituting just about any sound for the sax patches. In the right context, these samples may "work," but the sound is simply overused on this project. Ditto for the ESQ brass pads. Many of these songs have a light and lilting melody set in an open sonic space; Duane's choice of patches is too heavy-handed: growling sax and heavy brass just don't fit. His flute sounds work best. With the incredible palette of sounds at his disposal, Duane should be able to use a different and interesting patch on each tune, and never have to repeat a sound. Since a number of his arrangements are very similar from track to track, this kind of variety would help differentiate between tunes.

You can download clips of four different tracks from "*On the High Road*" at Duane's website at <http://www.creative.net/~duane>, and his tape is available for \$8.00 (plus tax in California). ■

Tapes Recently Received

Strike the Iron — Kevin Capito

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



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

So You've Bought Your First Synth...

Dan Rohde

I once read a newspaper article about a guy who bought a woodburning stove to save on heating bills. He found one on sale at Save-mart, and picked up a brass wood basket, poker, and brush set while he was there. The fireproof brick wall in the den that city code required wasn't cheap, but it looked great with the carpet. Soon he'd acquired his own axe and chain saw. He even bought a pickup truck to help carry the wood. He liked his new wood stove lifestyle, but then he tried cleaning the chimney himself. Replacing the sooty carpet wasn't so bad. No, his wife really hated that damn stove by now, and it was the divorce settlement and lawyer's fees that got him. He died soon after that in a skidrow gutter.

When you buy your first synthesizer, it's a little like the stove story. You vaguely realize you'll need to pick up an additional item or two beside the keyboard before you leave the store, but you aren't sure what. As with virtually any other avocation, including golf, photography and goat-surfing, you can run up your VISA as high as you're willing to pass your debts on to your children. But this is not intended to be one of those whiny "why is it so expensive?" articles. My purpose is to show the neophyte electronic musician a glimpse of the necessities and various options s/he has to choose from, to provide an overview of the big MIDI picture, which is pretty honkin' big. The prices listed are meant to be only general indicators.

What you gotta have...

Ensoniq offers a wide variety of synths, from the venerable SQ to the late model ASR, TS, or other lines. Let's suppose, for instance, you just got a heckuva deal on a used KS-32, a good entry level synth. Playing it on your lap is pretty uncomfortable, and it's a little heavy to wear with a shoulder strap, so you gotta have a keyboard stand. The portable models that you can break down and put together quickly start at

around \$50; the black formica laminated particle board stand costs a little more, maybe \$100, but looks cool. If you mean to merge with the menagerie of multimedia merchandise, you can get one of those ergonomic work station/junglegyms with the stands, clamps, (and optional gerbil wheel) for \$250 and up. The problem, in other words, is not whether to get one but which one to buy. The key is knowing how you'll be using your synth.

You probably have a music stand already. If not, get a sturdy one. Some are available with lights that cost over \$50. (The person who markets a large music stand that attaches to any Ensoniq keyboard is going to make some money.)

To actually hear your keyboard, the least you'll need is a set of headphones. Nice ones cost around \$100. The little foam Walkmen work okay but can't do justice to Ensoniq's great sounds.

For safety's sake, get a surge suppressor. The \$10 variety might protect you from lightning, but don't count on it. Though I was using a suppressor, a voltage "sneeze" that occurred while I played at a local hotel bar scrambled both my onboard sounds and sequences. Reinitializing fixed everything, so maybe it could have been worse. Computer magazines offer a wide variety of better surge protectors from \$50 to \$250. One kind that can be installed at your home's main breaker box (\$60 including service call) can help protect all the electric gizmos in your house. The best device of this type is called a line conditioner (\$400). You can get by without one, but if you do you'd better make sure you have insurance.

What you oughta have...

You say you want to hear your music without headphones? Again, the amplification system you buy all

depends on how, where, and what for you'll be using your synth. Playing at home? Jamming at Joe's garage? Yet another Carnegie Hall appearance?

There are many excellent keyboard amps to choose from, each with a different combination of such features as parametric or graphic EQ, compression/limiter, preamp, multiple inputs, headphone jack, recording line out, effects, which run from \$100 to \$1,000. Electric bass amps and acoustic guitar amps can also work pretty well since they are designed to amplify the entire frequency range. Forget using electric guitar amps, though; they kick out the mid-range frequencies fine but sound awful with keyboards. For many reasons, home stereo systems don't work either. (However, one Ensoniq user I know says he runs his keyboard first through a little mixer — under \$50 — then into his home stereo system and says that it works fine. Hard to believe, but he's happy with it.)

Powered monitors are yet another way to go. Though they usually don't offer as many features as a keyboard amp, the smaller ones designed for keyboards sound great. They can be placed on stands or in bookshelves to spread out a stereo sound (\$400 – \$1,000).

A “get by” version of powered monitors is powered computer speakers. For \$100 – \$200 you can get a surprisingly full, stereo sound, but they are not usually designed for the rigors of professional performing.

Definitely in the oughta-have list are three more items, all from Ensoniq: the Control Volume Pedal, the Dual Sustain/Sostenuto Pedals, and A RAM Storage Card. For many reason, these three items could just as easily be on the gotta-have list. Total suggested retail is about \$200, but can be found for considerably less.

There's also a Sequencer Expansion Kit available for \$200 installed, but increasing sequencer memory still doesn't enable you to save your sequences to floppy disks. Portable MIDI storage devices that save to disk go for around \$300. Here again, each device has slightly different features. If portability is no concern, any computer works fine. Find a refurbished Mac Plus with 40 Mb HD (\$200), a MIDI interface (\$50), and a universal librarian program (\$50 and up), and you're on your way.

Look into the many great SQ sound libraries from Ensoniq and other private supporters that advertise in this 'zine. Each runs from \$40 to \$100.

Consider investing in a few years of *Transoniq Hacker* back issues at about \$2 each. How could anyone learn to use your KS-32 without them? At least write for their free index that lists article titles.

If you plan to carry your keyboard around at all, get a good case. I'd recommend the gray plastic one because it's so light and durable (\$300). I saved a couple bucks by buying a cheaper, heavier wooden case. I got what I paid for.

A dust cover (\$15) is nice to have.

This article can't really do justice to the many different MIDI applications that exist, but here are a couple directions you could go. Notation software runs from \$100 to \$500 or more. Computer sequencing software costs about the same, but remember you already have a powerful sequencer in your keyboard. Standard MIDI sequences can be purchased from many companies to play on a KS, but they will need conversion software (Giebler) that only works with IBM compatibles. You might get by recording to an analog tape deck or small analog mixing deck for as little as \$200. Digital recording devices and other high end stuff can cost a lot more.

Whether or not you plan to perform in public, consider buying a PA (public address) system. A smaller, stand-alone PA offers plenty of features. Many music stores and magazines offer package deals that include an amp head, two speakers, cables, and even microphones starting around \$700. Add another \$100 for stands. A smaller 50-watt amp is plenty for a low volume solo keyboard gig. No matter what amp you use, you can't sound any better than your speakers. Also realize that owning a PA greatly increases your chance of playing with certain bands. (“Whoa, you gotcher own PA? You're in the band, dude!”)

For my finale, I'll list a few items more commonly used by professional musicians, by which I mean they get paid. We'll start with a place to store these electrical goodies, a compact, durable “rack,” which can hold about anything except speakers. For this stuff you

definitely need a quality surge suppressor, mentioned above, with a light and multiple outlets (\$100 - \$400). Add, in no particular order, a power amp (\$300 and up), an equalizer (\$100 and up), a compressor/limiter (\$200), maybe an effects processor (\$200), a sound module or two (\$500 - \$1,500), and maybe a drawer (\$100) to store the MIDI cables (\$20). Oh, and don't forget that pickup truck you've wanted for so long (\$500 used). (But I suppose you woodburning stove owners already have one, eh?)

Yeah, it all adds up. Most musicians probably accumulate their stuff gradually. I may have lost my perspective on money, but consider it as an investment toward your creative potential. You can get by on as little as \$200 - \$300 beyond the initial price of the

keyboard. Or, you can spend as much as you want.

The real problem is (1) knowing what your options are and (2) knowing where to buy what you need at the good price. Ideally, we'd all know dozens of other MIDI heads who love to swap used keyboards, sound



modules, and rack gear. The Internet offers some of that now. Less than ideally, though, it's just you and your local music dealer who hasn't necessarily even heard of Ensoniq. In any case, I hope this article has given you some useful ideas on where to go with your first synth. ■

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Wanted: I would like to purchase an Ensoniq SD-1 keyboard. Must be in good condition and must have the expanded memory update. Call CESAR at 509-786-2323 (after 6 pm PST).

Wanted: ASR-10 Rackmount. 213-613-6412.

WANTED!! Hammond XB-2 organ. Will pay for shipping. Clay: (410) 850-4230 or email: CLewis2041@aol.com.

ESQ-M, 2 Eproms, \$400. Kwai K1m, \$100. Alesis 1622 mixer, \$400. Perfect condition, mainly home use. Contact Jonathan, (208) 983-2876 evenings, (208) 962-3271 days.

SAMPLES/PATCHES/SOUNDS

DRUM PATTERNS!!! Over 200 BUTT-

If you're selling your gear...

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

KICKN' original patterns from Afro-cuban to Funk for only \$19.95!!!. Give your midi files a boost!!!! Available in SMF and Ensoniq formats (TS series). Call now and receive 50 extra patterns absolutely FREE!!! PLUS any additions made to library since the offer!! Email for a quick demo in SMF format Call (410) 850-4230 or email BNMproduct@aol.com.

3D SOUNDS. Sampler Bank CD-ROM — 500 plus megs of samples for the ASR/EPS/TS/MR samplers, available in Ensoniq direct load or PC disk extractor formats; \$49. Vintage Synth Bank CD-ROM — 250 plus megs of samples for the ASR/EPS/TS/MR samplers, available in Ensoniq direct load or PC disk extractor formats; \$39. MIDI Resource Bank CD-ROM — 1000+ instrument wave files, 7000+ MIDI files, patches for Ultrasound, Samplestore and many synths; \$39. 10 Severn Ave., Kitchener, Ont, N2M-2V2, Canada. Email: dwhite@in.on.ca. Web: <http://www.in.on.ca/~dwhite/3dsounds>.

4000+ sounds for SQ-80 on original disks (not copies). \$200. Wanted: used sounds for SQ-80 and EPS-16+ (any condition). Consider trades. G. Dannah, PO Box 1875, Andrews, NC 28901.

WANTED: MIDI sequences of East Indian rhythms — especially tabla — and African rhythms. Robert Williams, 5580 La Jolla Blvd., #427, La Jolla, CA 92037. Phone:

619-454-7144. Email: Row108@aol.com.

Your ultimate source for synth samples for your Ensoniq Sampler. Moog, Korg, Oberheim, Yamaha, Sequential! Send SASE for free catalog: Tom Shear, 41 Mary Fran Dr., West Chester, PA 19382.

OUT-OF-PRINT BACK ISSUES

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

FREE CLASSIFIEDS!

Well — within limits. We're offering free classified advertising (up to 40 words) for your sampled sounds or patches. Additional words, or ads for other products or services, are \$0.25/ word per issue (**BOLD** type: \$0.45/word). Unless renewed, freebie ads are removed after 2 issues. While you're welcome to resell copyrighted sounds and programs that you no longer have any use for, ads for *copies* of copyrighted material will not be accepted. Sorry — we can't (we won't!) take ad dictation over the phone!

Prog: Rave Glide

By: Jeff Jetton

Notes: The mod wheel changes the chord from minor to major.

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	On	On
Wave Class	BreathWv	BreathWv	BreathWv
Wave	VclOoohs	VclOoohs	VclOoohs
Delay Time	000	000	000
Wave Direction	Forward	Forward	Forward
Start Index	00	00	00
MODSCR	Veloc	Veloc	Veloc
MODAMT	00	00	00
Restrk Decay	50	50	50

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	30	30	03
Noise Rate	00	00	00
Level	25	25	25
Delay	00	00	00
MODSRC	Keybd	Keybd	Keybd
Wave	Sine	Sine	Sine
Restart	On	On	On

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	99	99	99
Peak	99	99	99
Break	99	99	99
Sustain	99	99	99
Attack	03	03	03
Decay 1	00	00	00
Decay 2	00	00	00
Release	03	03	03
Vel-Level	00	00	00
Vel-Attack	00	00	00
Vel Curve	Quikrise	Quikrise	Quikrise
Mode	Normal	Normal	Normal
KBD Track	00	00	00

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	0	0	0
Semitone	0	+03	+07
Fine	0	0	0
ENV1	00	00	00
LFO	+02	-02	+02
MODSCR	LFO	LFO	LFO
MODAMT	00	00	00
KBD Pch Track	On	On	On
Glide	Legato	Legato	Legato
Glide Time	06	06	06

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	3LoPass	3LoPass	3LoPass
Filter 2	1HiPass	1HiPass	1HiPass
FC1 Cutoff	127	127	127
ENV 2	00	00	00
FC1 KBD	00	00	00
MODSCR	LFO	LFO	LFO
MODAMT	00	00	00
FC2 Cutoff	000	000	000
ENV2	00	00	00
FC2 KBD	00	00	00
FC1MOD-FC2	On	On	On

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	80	80	80
Boost	Off	Off	Off
MODSRC	LFO	LFO	LFO
MODAMT	00	00	00
KBD Scale	00	00	00
Key Range	A0-A0	A0-A0	A0-A0
Output Bus	FX1	FX1	FX1
Priority	Med	Med	Med
Pan	00	-70	+70
Vel window	000	000	000

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

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	-	-	-
Peak	-	-	-
Break	-	-	-
Sustain	-	-	-
Attack	-	-	-
Decay 1	-	-	-
Decay 2	-	-	-
Release	-	-	-
Vel-Level	-	-	-
Vel-Attack	-	-	-
Vel Curve	-	-	-
Mode	-	-	-
KBD Track	-	-	-

EFFECTS —

(8-Voice Chorus, use default settings.)

The Hack: Many of the past hackerpatches lately have feature voices tuned to various intervals. Far be it from me to buck the trend. If you've listened to more than about 45 seconds of any current dance music, you've probably heard a sound like this one. It's meant to emulate the no-frills sound of a sampled chord, which is why the envelopes are pretty much "on and off," and the filters are wide open. Just the thing for playing with one finger, or, for more dramatic effect, your nose. Although, to bring out the legato glide more, I recommend using the entire hand.

Each voice is set up more or less the same, with the exception of the pitch section, which gives each voice its own note to play in the chord. Only voice 2, which plays the third of the chord, is modulated by the wheel. The amount by which it is modulated has been carefully set to tune it up from a minor to a major third.

Personally, I like the glide effect, but if you don't, just set the glide setting in the pitch section to "off." However, if you're planning on doing a techno version of "Lucky Man," feel free to bump the glide time up several notches.

This is a very basic patch that can be used as a master recipe for other similar patches. Start by trying out different waveforms. String, brass, and other breath-family waves are natural choices. You might also want to switch to the "Chorus + Reverb" effect if the dryness of the current effect doesn't fit in with your particular musical application.

Bio: Nashville-based keyboardist Jeff Jetton has toured with several country recording artists, including Victoria Shaw, John Berry, Michelle Wright, and Tanya Tucker. His last name gets mispronounced only slightly less than Garth Hjelte's.

Hackerpatch is intended to be a place where patch vendors can show their wares and musicians can share their goodies and impress their friends. Once something's published here, it's free for all. Please don't submit patches that you know to be minor tweaks of copyrighted commercial patches unless you have permission from the copyright owner. All submitted patches are subject to consideration for mutilation and comments by our resident patch analysts. If you send in a patch, please include your phone number. Requests for particular patches are also very welcome.

The Interface

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

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

Electronic mail - GENIE Network: TRANSONIQ, Internet: interface@transoniq.com. In many cases a quick answer can be obtained by posting to our interactive, on-line Interface at our Web site (<http://www.transoniq.com/~trnsoniq/interface.html>) or calling Ensoniq CS at 610-647-3930.

This is probably one of the most open forums in the music industry. Letter writers are asked to please keep the vitriol to a minimum. Readers are reminded to take everything with a grain of salt. Resident answer-man is Clark Salisbury (CS). Letter publication is subject to space considerations.

Hi there!

I read in the *Hacker* 9/96 about the latest versions of the OS.

For the **TS-10/12** you wrote about OS version 3.10. I have version 3.05. Is there really a newer version or is it only a mistake?

Thanks a lot,
Herbert Lacina
Herbert.Lacina@blackbox.at

[TH - According to Ensoniq's OS list at their web site, 3.10 is indeed the latest version.]

[CS - You can upgrade to the latest OS for any Ensoniq product for little or no charge (depending on the upgrade). Check with your local dealer or Ensoniq authorized service center, or contact Ensoniq Customer Support (<http://www.ensoniq.com/contact.htm>), phone: 610-647-3930.]

TH -

I am fairly new to the ASR, the BOSS DR-660 and MIDI (in its broad usage). I have two questions that I hope someone can help me with.

I have the ASR and 660 locked to tape via a MIDIMAN SYNCMAN and the chase lock seems to work pretty well. However, the tone will start the ASR (MIDIMAN MIDI OUT to ASR MIDI IN) but will not start the 660 (ASR MIDI OUT TO 660 MIDI IN) and the 660 will not chase lock along with the ASR. Do I have something set wrong??? Before I upgraded to the 660 I used the 550 and had no trouble with starting or locating (I guess it was MIDI Idiot proof).

The other problem, seemingly, is the fact that I can't get the ASR to select the appropriate song on the 660 when I load a particular song to the ASR. Anyone have any step-by-step instructions? I followed the manual(s) and still can't seem to get what I need to happen happen.

Thanks for the help!
Chris

[CS - I'm afraid I have no experience with either of the Boss products. Have you tried contacting Roland Corp, (<http://www.rolandus.com/>), phone: 213-685-5141? They can tell you what's up with Boss products.]

[Ensoniq - Try hooking the MIDI Thru of the ASR to the 660's MIDI IN. This way the 660 gets the exact same sync messages that the ASR will get. If this doesn't do the trick, then the problem is with the 660. The 660 should sync anyway to the ASR, but give this a try.]

Hi -

I am a current subscriber to your paper and enjoy it. I am a novice at everything and have a **TS-12**.

Could you give me an opinion? I would like to buy two speakers or monitors for my keyboard for home use (to play back my sequences and an occasional jam session with my grandkids in my living room). So what would be best? Two monitors with speakers and horns along with a PA head? Or just a keyboard amp - 12" or 15"? I think I would like stereo sound.

Thank you,
Darrell Such
afccov@winaweb.com

[CS - While good monitors or a good keyboard amp will work with your TS, in my opinion these aren't the ideal systems to use in a small space such as a living room. With performance gear, the design emphasis is on power and projecting sound into a large area. With less expensive speaker systems (under \$1000 or so) this emphasis on projection can come at the expense of well-balanced sound in smaller areas.

I might suggest you consider using a pair of quality stereo speakers, or even a good pair of recording monitors. These will give you much clearer, more detailed and balanced sound in a living room (unless your living room is the size of the Mormon Tabernacle).

Recording monitors tend to be the most accurate, but most inexpensive monitors (\$300 - \$1000 per pair) are designed to focus the most accurate sound directly at one spot; this would normally be the spot where the recording engineer might sit.

Stereo speakers in the same price range, however, will generally attempt to provide the most uniform sound throughout a room, so it seems to me that this might be the way for you to go.

As far as amplification, you could use your existing stereo system, possibly, or you could spend some of the money you would have spent on a PA head. An added bonus is that your CDs, tapes, and records will benefit from the improvement in your sound system as well.

To narrow down the search to specific products, I'd recommend locating a Hi-Fi dealer you feel comfortable working with, and explain what you're trying to do. Any reasonably competent dealer should understand perfectly, and should be able to suggest some things that

might work for you.

One thing that might also prove helpful would be to make a tape of the ASR to take with you. Make the recording directly from the ASR's outputs, being careful not to generate any distortion on the tape. Record some music or a sequence or two that you're familiar with. You can then play this tape back on a variety of stereo systems to get an idea of how the ASR will sound through each system (try to ignore any tape hiss; it won't be there when playing the ASR directly into a stereo system).

Also, make sure that there is some sort of return or exchange policy. Speakers can sound very different from one room to the next, and something that sounds glorious in your dealer's showroom may not cut it in your living room.]

[GNormand@aol.com - I purchased some powered speakers from Radio Shack for about \$60. I think they are supposed to be for computers. I fashioned a stereo jack going into two mono 1/4" plugs and thus can play my TS stereo into the amplified speakers. It's loud enough to fill the room (no earth shaking bass, of course) and I write and practice with them all the time.]

eTH — A Faster, Cheaper Hacker

If you can receive e-mail via the Internet, you can take advantage of avoiding the post office and get a faster, cheaper, e-mail version of the Hacker. The e-mail *Transoniq Hacker* contains all of the same information and advertising as the printed version, but it's only \$20/year — anywhere on the planet. Plus, if you convert over from the printed version you'll get extra issues added to your sub. Interested? Just send a message to us at eTH@transoniq.com and we'll e-mail back complete subscription information. Let us know if you'd like a free copy of the current issue and we'll send one along.

HELP!!!

I have acquired an old **Mirage** — minus the instruction manual. I am having a hard time deciphering the functions by trial and error. If you could please help...

Thank you,
Tom Boetjer

[TH — The place to go for vintage Ensoniq accessories and sounds is Syntaur Productions, (800-334-1288). Sam should be able to help you.]

[CS — Not to put too fine a point on it, but Sam should be able to provide you with both the original *Mirage Musician's manual*, which details all the stuff you need to know to use your *Mirage* for performing, sequencing and basic editing, and the *Mirage Advanced Operations manual* (actually, it might be called something else, now that I think about it; Sam would know), which takes you into the nitty-gritty of sampling and sample-editing.]

[Sam Mims, Syntaur Productions — Actually, the *Mirage Musician's Manual* — the one that tells what buttons to push to load sounds, etc. — is only available from Ensoniq directly. I'm not sure of the price.

The Advanced Sampler's Guide — a 100+ page book on advanced multi-sampling techniques — is only available from Syntaur Productions. It costs \$19.95, and comes with the MASOS (*Mirage Advanced Sampling Operating System*) disk.

Kind of confusing. Basically, Ensoniq turned over to Syntaur everything for the *Mirage*, *ESQ*, *SQ-80*, and *EPS Classic* — except for the actual owners manuals.]

[Ensoniq — We are working on getting the *Mirage* and *ESQ* manuals to Syntaur. Presently it's available from our Accessories Department at 1-800-

553-5151. The price in the US is \$17.95 + \$5.00 shipping and handling. The *Mirage* parameter reference card is located on our fax retrieval system (800-257-1439) as document 1025. We just created this fax document today, as a result of this letter. Keep giving us ideas for what you would like to see on our fax retrieval system. These ideas will benefit you in the long run.]

TH —

I now am an owner of an MR-76. It's a good thing I survived the past horrors of the VFX-SD. It has taught me great patience. Good thing, because you're going to have to have patience with all the new bugs. I've found out the manual is being revised as well as new upgrades to resolve the great mysteries of this new and wonderful beast. As soon as Ensoniq has it paper-trained (New Manual) I'll be much happier. Hang in there MR Workstation owners, it truly is a great board with lots of potential.

Ric Castleman
Ricky Blues Productions
rickiblues@aol.com

[CS — Uh... thanks for the encouragement, Ric.]

[Ensoniq — We contacted Mr. Castleman, via the Internet, on October 10th about the latest version of the *MR-76 musician's manual*.]

Hi —

I don't know if this is the right place for this kind of question, but here goes anyway:

I have been playing music in rock bands for some time and have recently gotten heavily into electronic/ambient groups such as the Orb, who are currently my favorite. I want to buy a synthesizer/sequencer and start producing my own electronic material, but have

no idea what sort of gear I need. A friend highly recommended Ensoniq, which is how I ended up here.

I would like something in the neighborhood of \$2000, with the ability to sample, sequence and construct waveforms. I'm good with programming and hardware, but would like something that is not overloaded with a ton of features I don't need, but not something that I will end up outgrowing and needing to replace in six months.

I own a PC with a MIDI sound card but don't even have a clue as to what capacity I would use that in conjunction with the synth.

If you can, give me a clue here!

Thanks,
Marc Elliott

[Eric Lewis (elewis@access.ch) - Well, my bet would be to buy a Korg Prophecy for the electronic sounds and an Ensoniq ASR-10 for sampling and the great effects (I love 'em!). For constructing waveforms, try out SimSynth on the PC, it's an analog synthesizer in software. I don't know where to get it, though... I got it from the German magazine, Keys. (<http://www.keys.de/ftpout/cdibm.html>, get it there... get Cool Edit as well! Great program!)]

[CS - Last things first. You should be able to use the sound card in your PC to connect the PC to whatever external MIDI devices you might acquire - the synth you're planning to purchase, for instance.

Once your PC can communicate with your synth, you can use it for a number of applications: sequencing, editing and storing sounds for your synth, and downloading sounds you might buy or find on the net are the first things that come to mind.

Not being familiar with the music produced by the Orb, it's difficult for me to advise you on what synth (or

sampler) might be the best bet for you. However, \$2000 buys a lot of machine these days, so you'll find a number of choices. You might start out reading whatever you might find in publications such as Keyboard. You should be able to find interviews and features on groups you like, and Keyboard makes a point of listing equipment used to produce the sounds.

Also, try to get some hands on with everything you can. This probably means spending some time at your local dealer listening to the sounds produced by the various instruments within your price range. This should give you a feel for what sort of sounds the various machines are capable of, and most likely you'll find yourself gravitating one way or another. Also, a good salesperson should be able to help you match your needs and budget with the right gear.

Finally, if you find yourself interested in something specific and want additional input, write and we'll do our best to provide it. Or, if you find yourself confused by features or terminology, write, and we'll try to help you sort it out.

Bottom line, though, is listen. Features come and go, but if you don't love the sound of whatever you end up with you'll be unhappy in the long run.]

TH -

I'm currently the sole musician for a production of "The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas" here at West Chester University (in West Chester, PA, a scant 20 minutes or so from Ensoniq's HQ). I'm using a TS-12 and an ASR-10. A pedal steel guitar sound is essential for this show. Alas, looking through the EPS/ASR Sample Library sheet doesn't present any obvious sounds. Does anybody out there have/know where I can get a good pedal steel guitar sound for the ASR or TS? It would be ideal if the sound were free

or cheap, being a college student on a limited budget. (Especially after forking out the bucks for these boards.) And I'm pretty sure the theater department won't pay for it. Any help would be greatly appreciated. The faster, the better.

Thanks loads,
Brian Bernardini

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - Check out Rubber Chicken Software (link can be found on this site). Garth has a killer pedal steel sample that I think costs around \$30. I think you also get a lot more killer stuff along with the basic sample. It includes an assortment of samples that I think you will find very useful for your production.]

[CS - You might also consider checking with the major third-party sample vendors: Eye & I (<http://www.voicecrystal.com/>), East-West (<http://www.eastwestsounds.com/>), InVision

Current Ensoniq O.S. (Disk/EPROM)

EPS	2.49/2.40
EPS-M	2.49/2.41
EPS-16 PLUS	1.3/1.00F
MASOS	2.0
MIRAGE	3.2
ESQ	3.5
ESQ-M	1.2
SQ-80	1.8
VFX	2.30
VFX-SD	2.1/2.00
SQ-1	1.11
SQ-1 32	2.03
SQ-1 PLUS	1.15
SQ-R	1.20
SQ-R 32	2.03
SQ-R PLUS	1.15
SQ-2	1.2
SQ-2 32	2.03
SD-1	4.10/4.10
SD-1 32	4.10/4.10
DP/4	1.15
DP/4+	2.05
DP/2	1.02
KS-32	3.01
ASR-10	3.53/1.5
ASR-88	3.53/3.50
KMX-8	2.00
KMX-16	1.50
TS-10/12	3.10
KT-76/88	1.62
SDP-1	1.70
MR Rack	1.50
MR-61/76	1.61

Interactive (<http://www.cybersound.com/>), Ilio (<http://www.ilio.com/>), Big Fish Audio (800-717-3474), Northstar (503-760-7777), and so on.

Or, do what I do. Edit an existing guitar sound to soften the attack and increase the sustain. Then plug in your volume pedal and (most important) learn a few authentic pedal-steel riffs.]

Hi.

I am looking for a replacement disk drive for my EPS. Can someone please point me in the right direction?

My Ensoniq dealer wants \$225, which is ridiculous!!

Any help would be great.

Thanks in advance,
Rob
702-457-3302

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - I've had good luck replacing my EPS drive with a DS DD disk drive out of a spare Atari 1040 ST computer. Atari used a number of different manufacturers (Teac, Sony) but they all work in the EPS. All you have to do is plug in the Atari drive and go. And yes, where do I get one of these Atari 720K disk drives?

Go to Toad Computers: <http://www.ataricentral.com/>

And they should be able to fix you up for way under \$100. You probably will have to settle for a used one or perhaps one of the techs at Toad can tell you how to adapt a regular HD disk drive to the double density format. In that case you are looking at less than \$30. I agree, \$225 is way out of line.]

[Ensoniq - While we don't suggest that customers do their own repair work, we can't prevent customers from buying their own disk drives direct

from the disk drive manufacturer or a distributor. However, allow us to give you some reasons why customers might consider using an authorized repair station for all repairs. (1) All repairs, both in-warranty and non-warranty are covered for a period of 90 days. So if there is a problem with the part, you're covered. (2) Authorized technicians have the latest documentation and service bulletins. (3) Authorized technicians know what preventive maintenance and modifications to make to specific units. On some older Ensoniq units this is very valuable.]

Hi there,

As a very proud owner of an ASR-10 and, last, but not least, a PC, I encountered a strange error message on the display of my ASR when trying to save an instrument file (3475 blks) to a Nomai MCD 540 MB cart. The display shows: BAD FAT SIGNATURE and I really can't help myself - I don't know what that means. (German, and computer beginner.)

So my Questions:

1. What does this message mean and how can I get my file saved to the disk?
2. Where can I get a complete list where the error messages are explained?

My next question is a bit more complex since it concerns my PC/SCSI connection to my ASR. The main thing may be that I can't boot up my PC before the ASR as written in the manual because it sticks. So I had to boot up the ASR first then the PC - which works fine except I can't correctly access the two external devices (MCD & ROM D). Either I can access them from the PC or from the ASR but not alternately.

I have the internal HDD at SCSI ID 0, the Tekram DC390 at SCSI ID 7, the

external ROM D at SCSI ID 4, the ext removable MCD at ID 2.

What settings in the SCSI adapters configuration or what else must I check?? Can I do it by myself or do I have to get another SCSI adapter?

In expectation of your very appreciated help,
Yours,
Udo, UPSTAR

[CS - The message BAD FAT SIGNATURE refers to the File Allocation Table which contains information the ASR must use to locate information on the disk. In my experience, there's no way to resurrect a disk in this condition - at least not without having access to some fairly technical software. Best advice is to try reformatting the disk, and use it cautiously.]

There should be explanations for most of the text-based error messages (such as DISK NOT RESPONDING) in the owner's manuals for your ASR and for your ASR SCSI interface. As far as a complete list of numbered error messages (such as the dreaded ERROR 29 - REBOOT?), none is available. Most of these error codes only indicate something in general about the state of the ASR when it encountered a problem. Even the techs at Ensoniq can't tell you what might have gone wrong just from the error message. But the message can help a tech track down a problem using other diagnostic tools.

As for your problems accessing SCSI devices from both your PC and your ASR alternately, in my experience it can't be done. Once a device has been accessed by either the ASR or the PC, it thereafter "belongs" to that device. The only way to open up a SCSI drive for use with another device is to reboot it (and possibly the rest of your system, too).]

[Ensoniq - For a list of all Ensoniq system errors and their definitions, request document 0003 from our fax

retrieval system (800-257-1439).]

TH -

I am interested in upgrading my TS-10 to 8 meg from the 2 meg that is now installed. If I called a computer memory supply house, what exactly would I tell them I am looking for, and is it really that beneficial to upgrade to 8 meg for anything other than sampled sound storage?

Dennis A. Smith dasmith@scana.com

[CS - The essential thing when purchasing memory is to ascertain what the vendor's return policy is in case your new memory doesn't work out for some reason.

Apart from that, I believe you want 30-pin SIMMs, the kind used in older Macintosh computers. Speed requirements should be listed in your manual, but I'm sure 70 nanosecond (or faster) will suffice. Also, avoid composite SIMMs; they've been known to cause problems.

The main advantage to having more RAM in your TS-10 is primarily to let you load more and bigger samples into memory. There may also be an increase in sequencer memory available (we'll get back to you on this), but that's pretty much it.

Bottom line? If you don't need more memory for samples, adding memory might not be the most effective use of your music dollar.]

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - If you go to <http://www.thechipmerchant.com> you will get a price list of RAM memory. I got my memory upgrade from them and if you tell the salesperson that you are upgrading your TS-10, they will give you the exact memory that you need. Excellent prices too, I might add.

Rubber Chicken Software is also selling used RAM upgrades for the ASR-10

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by mail: 714 5th Street SE, Willmar, MN 56201

by Internet: chickenEPS@willmar.com

and TS-10/12 keyboards. You can find their link here in the "related sites" area.]

[GNormand@aol.com - I got my SIMMS from Toad Computers - forgot what it cost, but it should be cheaper now. The extra RAM allows you to load 10-20 samples in the S banks. Once you have them loaded, power down, then turn the keyboard on again. The question comes up "Auto load samples?" If you say "yes," it will direct you to insert certain disks in a certain order. Allow 5 minutes for the entire thing to load...bummer. But once the samples are in, WOW!]

Hello Ensoniq users!

I have been playing on a used VFX-SD for two years now and what I really need is a MIDI implementation chart. The users manual tells me to write to the regional distributor but they do not respond. So if one of you has the chart (ROM version 2.0) scanned for computer please send it to me.

More questions:

* Is it possible (and worth it) to upgrade to a higher system version than 2.0?

* I have got sequencer OS-versions 2.00 and 2.10 but on the disk label both versions are described as to use only with VFX-SD II. Could this become a problem since my VFX is a VFX-SD only?

Thanks for your help,
Konrad Cernohous,
kcernoho@radon.mat.univie.ac.at

[CS - You probably have the latest software for your VFX-SD. You should be using EEPROM version 2.0, with disk OS 2.10 (which you have).

If you're not sure what EEPROM version you have, press and hold the Presets button, then press Master, and

the VFX will display the EEPROM version number. If necessary, you can upgrade to EEPROM 2.0 through your local authorized Ensoniq service center, or directly through Ensoniq Customer Support (<http://www.ensoniq.com/contact.htm>), 610-647-3930).

Ensoniq can also provide you with details regarding the VFX-SD's MIDI implementation. Send them a request (in writing) for the VFX-SD MIDI spec. Address your request to the MIDI Spec desk, Ensoniq, 155 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern PA 19355. You might also be able to locate a copy via their fax-back system (800-257-1439), or perhaps on their web site.]

[Ensoniq - For a MIDI specification document, simply call Ensoniq at 1-800-553-5151, or write to us at The MIDI Specification Desk, 155 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern, PA. 19355.]

TH -

I have been spending the longest time learning to use my TS-12. I just haven't had the time needed to devote to it. I have all the manuals, but hoped I'd find a video that could take me through writing/adjusting programs.

In *Transoniq Hacker* last year or so, there was an ad for a video that taught everything about the TS-12. I called the 800 number and found it disconnected.

I know Ensoniq makes basic videos for the TS-12, but I suspect I'm past the majority on theirs. Is there a video out there that teaches the basics plus much, much more?

How about musicians to contact in the New York City area who might want to get together to exchange knowledge on the machine?

WindMG@aol.com

[TH - Covert Videos has indeed gone

away. Rumor has it that another third-party vendor may be working on producing some videos. Maybe they'll have a response...]

[CS - For Ensoniq synth programming articles, you can't beat the Hacker. Although there may not be tons of stuff devoted to the TS-12, articles on programming almost any Ensoniq synth will have applications for your machine. In particular, look for articles about the TS-10, SD-series, and VFX-series (from whence the TS developed). Much of the info contained therein will directly apply, and almost all of it relates in one way or another.

Also, a couple of years ago I published an article in *Electronic Musician* detailing applications for the Hyperwaves. Unfortunately, I can't remember exactly when it came out. If you're so inclined, though, try contacting *Electronic Musician* (510-653-3307). I'm sure they'll be happy to locate a copy for you.]

[Ensoniq - We still have EVS-3 (Sound programming) and EVS-4 (Sequencer manipulation) videos available. Contact our accessory order department at 1-800-553-5151.]

Dear Transoniq Hacker,

I have an ASR-10 with SCSI interface and I haven't been able to get them to work together!!! I changed the cable, tried every SCSI ID, etc... etc... I get the "Unconnected SCSI Device" message all the time and Error 129. Since my SP-3 SCSI interface was installed (4 months ago) I haven't enjoy this option. Is there somewhere on this planet someone who could help me ?

Thank you very much,
Yves from Montreal home of the Montreal Canadians

[Paul Miller (paul.miller@fujitsu.com.au) - I also use the SCSI port

available on the ASR-10. I'm using a Syquest EZ-135 Removable Hard Disk Drive and have experienced no compatibility problems with the ASR-10. Did you get an ASR-10 manual which covers using the SCSI port? If not, get one. There are some subtle set-up requirements that you will need to know... For example, SCSI is not very forgiving if you don't use the correct bus termination impedance and configuration. It's also important that you use an Ensoniq recommended SCSI device, such as the Syquest EZ-135 product. Good Luck.]

[CS - You don't provide much information to go on. What kind of SCSI device are you trying to connect to (not all are compatible)? What all do you have connected to the SCSI bus besides the ASR? How long are your cables? Are you terminating properly?

At any rate, here's the generic version of SCSI tips; perhaps something here will be of help. If not, you might try contacting Ensoniq Support in Canada (in the States, it's 610-647-3930).

Some general SCSI-type tips:

1) Ensoniq devices use a SCSI ID of 3; you can use any ID other than this for your SCSI peripherals.

2) Be sure to terminate properly. The first and last devices in a SCSI chain should be terminated. For complex systems some sort of active termination (such as the SCSI Sentry from APS) may prove helpful.

3) Use the shortest SCSI cabling possible. SCSI chains should not exceed 20 feet in length, and can become troublesome even at shorter distances.

4) Make sure your SCSI cables are functioning properly. SCSI cables seem to have an inordinately high failure rate.

5) It may seem obvious, but power up your SCSI devices before your Ensoniq

instrument. The ASR will check for SCSI devices as part of its boot routine. If it finds none, it will assume none are attached. SCSI devices cannot be mounted once the ASR has been powered up.

6) Ensoniq has tested drive mech-

anisms from several manufacturers. The list of approved fixed-drive mechanism manufacturers is: Fujitsu; Conner; Seagate; and Quantum.

If your drive mechanism does not appear on this list, that doesn't mean that it won't work; it may be simply that

Transoniq-Net

HELP WITH QUESTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

your drive has not been tested.]

TH -

Can anyone give me some advice?

I own an ASR-10 and an MR-61. I have had the ASR-10 for a year and have yet to understand it. I now am crying over the MR-61 manual. I have a hard time understanding this stuff. I had a Roland JW50 and it was so easy. It was like the difference between MAC and DOS.

Anyone want to let me borrow their brain or something??

Thanks,
jfk (harmala@iglou.com)

[CS - Sorry - mine's leased as it is. Watch the Hacker, though. There are sure to be MR-61 articles in upcoming issues. Also, if you haven't been able to get the help you need from the dealer you purchased the machine from, you can always give Ensoniq Customer Support (<http://www.ensoniq.com/contact.htm>), phone: 610-647-3930 a call.]

[Ensoniq - For technical help, your best bet is to contact the dealer where you purchased your keyboard. If you need further assistance, our Customer Service department is available to answer your questions between 9:30 AM and 6:30 PM EST. We also have available a newly revised MR-61/76 Musician's Manual.]

To all Ensoniq owners:

I am writing this letter because in the past, I've been somewhat critical of the Ensoniq Corporation with regards to their warranty/service policy. In the past, Ensoniq always required you to take your instrument to an authorized repair facility for upgrades. This was fine if your repair station was down the block or at least in the same city. For

those of us who live in remote areas far from a service center, this was a major pain. Notice that I say "was a major pain."

I recently bought an MR-61 synthesizer sight unseen. I was confident in doing so because of all the excellent gear I've gotten from Ensoniq in the past. Not to long after I received my MR-61, I learned that there had been a ROM/software upgrade to correct some minor glitches in the keyboard's operating system. Oh Boy! Here we go again! Another long drive and a whole day wasted to get my brand new synth updated. Why do I have to go through this I thought to myself? I was delighted to find out, that after making a simple call to customer service, my new upgrade ROM was on its way directly to my doorstep. I quickly and easily installed the new EPROM in my MR-61 and was back up and running and creating my music.

This is a major milestone in the evolution of a major keyboard manufacturer. Now we all can enjoy another marvelous keyboard and at the same time take advantage of improvements Ensoniq makes to the MR-61/76 as they evolve.

Ensoniq is a company that deserves our support. They not only listen to our requests and complaints but implement our suggestions in new products.

Sincerely,
James Rosand
jrosand@olympus.net

[CS - Thanks for writing. It's nice to hear of a happy ending.]

[Ensoniq - Thanks for the kind words. What makes the MR-61 and MR-76 EPROMs user installable are a few design changes. In the MR-61 we had ensure that customers wouldn't be exposed to hazardous voltages when the lid was opened. We did this by encasing the power supply. While there have been only a few customers who dam-

aged their main boards, most of the installations have been uneventful. This new posture is a definite win/win situation. Be sure to use a wrist strap to ground yourself. ESD is serious stuff. For more detailed information on ESD, request document 0011 from the fax retrieval system (800-257-1439). Anyone interested in a pamphlet or brochure about ESD awareness contact Kerstat Inc., 156 Prospect Ave, Lansdale, PA 19446. Phn: 215-393-7290, Fax: 215-393-7291.]

Hello...

I'm scanning your useful website, and hoping you might be able to answer a quick question...

What I'm looking for is a front-end Macintosh editor for my Mirage Rack-mount unit. (It's the old Ensoniq Mirage DMS-8 unit.) What I really want to do is take sounds I've recorded in my Mac (Performa 636, FPU, 20M RAM) and upload them to the sampler. Hopefully, edit as well. You know, backup diskettes, etc.

One gent I queried said for the trouble, I should just go out and buy a used EPS. Is this true?

I have an Opcode Studio Plus Two Midi interface box. And I backup my Proteus this way. I am a MIDI violinist, worked with Adrian Belew. Is there some shareware (or a CHEAP application) that will enable me to do this?

Any advise/help/suggestions/websites where to look you know of would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely looking for help,
biff blumfurngange
fiddlebub@aol.com

[CS - Your best bet, in my opinion, is a program called Alchemy, available from Passport Designs (<http://www.mw3.com/passport/passport.htm>). It

will allow you to transfer samples between your Mac and your Mirage, and provides a number of fairly sophisticated editing tools. You cannot, however, edit or store Mirage program parameters (envelope settings, filter settings, etc.); as far as I know, there's nothing available that will allow you to do this.

On the other hand, it's been a while since I've looked for anything of this nature. You might search the web. Try starting with Michael Hyman's Ensoniq Resources on the Internet guide (<http://www.op.net/~mikeh/ensoniq.html>).

TH -

By the way, do you know where I might be able to get Ensoniq MR-Rack instrument definitions for Cakewalk?

J. Kraus
202-296-4610
jkraus5@ix.netcom.com

[CS - No.

But you might try a little browsing at the Cakewalk home page (<http://www.isvr.soton.ac.uk/People/ccb/Cakewalk/>).

Hi folks -

Is there anyone who can explain how in the heck I can hook up a Zip drive to my EPS-16+? I've experienced nothing but confusion! Also, does anyone know if the EZ drive is worth it? I hear they are not too reliable, but I'm getting desperate. Any help would be most

appreciated!!!

Paul Sanchez
cpie5@linkonline.net

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - I have an EPS-16+, Zip drive and EZ-135 drive. I've had problems with getting the EPS-16+ to recognize the Zip drive. Garth Hjelte of Rubber Chicken Software pointed me in the right direction as to getting the Zip drive to work with the 16+. If you use the Zip drive in combination with another SCSI harddrive you will get better results. Since you probably don't have an extra harddrive at your disposal, it's rather a moot point. The other option is to use a SCSI sentry, which I have no experience with. To get a detailed explanation of what you're up against here, download this file by Garth:

http://members.aol.com/chickenEPS/rcs_tips.htm#ZipDriveTips
Read the section "16-Plus Approved."

As far as the EZ-135 drive goes, it just ALWAYS works! I'd put my money on a Syquest removable any day. Rubber Chicken sells them or you can get them at your favorite computer hardware store. I plugged my EZ-135 into my EPS-16+ and have had no trouble whatsoever.

Hope this helps.]

[CS - Good call, James. And if you're looking for more detailed information, check out Garth Hjelte's article from the August and September '95 issues of the Hacker, "From Cyberspace to your Ear," available at the Hacker's ftp site.]

TH -

I have an MR-76 and have just received the Unisyn Patch Editor. When I start the program I get a "Bad MIDI Header" message. If I click on "Cancel," the program comes up. If I try to "Get Patch," I get "Deviant Data Received." Also, when tweaking on the parameters in the program it causes the MR to start saving all of its sounds. I have the MR connected to a Soundblaster 16. Is this a compatibility issue with the Soundblaster or the Unisyn software? All of my other MIDI programs are working okay. (Cakewalk, Musictime, etc.) I talked to MOTU Tech Support and they said to update the Soundblaster drivers. I did that and there is no change. Any ideas?

Wzaidle@ix.netcom.com
Wes Zaidle
972-271-1180

[John Seboldt - I get the "bad header" box also with my MR-61 and Unisyn (Mac), but I cancel and then all is fine. It does frequent autosaves of course... When it writes to the flash bank it takes eons every time, but if you copy what you want to the RAM bank and edit it there, it goes quite fast and smooth. Try it!]

[Ensoniq - Make sure you upgrade your MR to 1.45, as we had the same problem with earlier versions. Bad MIDI header is something that just happens when using Unisyn with the MR keyboards. It's no big deal as long as you press cancel. (The profile was originally written using MR-Rack.) The reloading in the MR signifies that the FLASH (or INTERNAL) Bank was

Change of Address

Please let us know at least four weeks in advance to avoid missing any issues. The Post Office really will NOT reliably forward this type of mail. (Believe us, not them!) We need to know both your old and your new address. (Issues missed due to late or no change notification are your own dumb fault - we mailed them!)

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

somehow edited. The amount of sounds in FLASH memory has a lot to do with LAYERS within each sound in that bank. If you adjust Layers after getting patch from the INT or RAM, it can cause the FLASH to reload its data. I like to start out erasing all the FLASH memory (implemented from the Librarian button-Erase Memory Banks) then sending a patch from other banks. You have a backup of the original FLASH Bank on disk so don't worry about losing it. If you start out with an empty FLASH buffer, you won't have to worry about memory concerns of FLASH. Start out by GET Patch from a ROM location. Then edit it and send it back. You should have much better results.]

Hello Hackers:

Just thought I'd update you with my progress with Ensoniq with regard to my MR-61.

I had a conversation with Steve Coscia at Ensoniq and he personally sent me a new EPROM chip for the MR-61. The OS is up to V1.45 now. The "panning" jitter problem seems to have been corrected with V1.45.

Steve has promised further improvements with newer OSs currently in development. They are "working" on it. I supposedly will also be receiving the new reprinted owner's manual, although it hasn't shown up yet. I'm disappointed that I haven't received my Windows version of the Unisyn Editor from Mark of the Unicorn. This appears more to be more a problem with MOTU rather than Ensoniq.

I think we need to show a little patience here as far as Ensoniq goes. As the MR-61/76 evolves, I think we are going to have a real winner here. A comment about the fact that the MR-61/76 has an open ended operating system is also very reassuring. I know I'm very anxious to get the "Flash RAM" because I want to use some of my samples from my EPS-16+. All of

us MR-61/76 owners get the benefit of using this great keyboard while Ensoniq is improving the instrument.

According to Ensoniq Customer Service, people should be receiving the "Flash RAM" modules by the end of October.

Another satisfied customer.
James Rosand
jrosand@olympus.net

[CS - Words of wisdom once again, James. (Want a job?)]

[Ensoniq - It looks as though the FLASH Expander may be delayed a bit longer. We're sorry for the inconvenience. By the way, MOTU has satisfied all of the orders they have received from Ensoniq. That's good news!]

Sirs:

I wish to transfer sounds from an IBM-compatible PC to an SQ-80 and an EPS-16+ and back to the PC. Can you suggest how and who would supply the necessary equipment?

Thanks,
G Darrah
Andrews, NC

[CS - For detailed information on the transfer process, take a look at Garth Hjelte's article from the August and September '95 issues of the Hacker, "From Cyberspace to your Ear." While the article's aim is to provide information on downloading sounds from the net, the transfer issues are pretty much the same. And Garth lists lots of software - both commercial and shareware - which can aid you in these endeavors.]

TS-12 Question:

I have recently increased my TS-12 memory from 2 to 8 Megs and have started to experience problems (i.e., system lockups, clicks and pops while

playing samples loaded into RAM).

Please could you tell me whether the installed RAM is tested by the TS-12 during the power-on initialization? Is EVERY location write/read verified?

If the memory isn't tested, I will remove it and verify its operation elsewhere. If the memory is self-tested by the TS, I will pay more attention to the symptoms I am experiencing and report back with more questions!

Regards,
Dan Sullivan

[GNormand@aol.com - I received my two SIMMS chips and the keyboard wouldn't work correctly. It turned out to be one bad SIMM chip. Once it was replaced, all is fine. There is a possibility that when you (or whoever) installed the chips, too much pressure was applied to the board and cracked it slightly, or messed up a solder joint. See if you can see anything with a magnifying glass. Good luck.]

[CS - Sounds reasonable to me. Check that memory first...]

[Ensoniq - Based on incoming calls we receive from customers, electrostatic discharge (ESD) also contributes to SIMM malfunctions. Don't underestimate the damage that ESD can cause to memory modules. Handling SIMMs too often, without being grounded, can cause cumulative damage. This means that the damage doesn't occur all at once. A little ESD today and a little more tomorrow and a little more the day after that and soon SIMMs will stop working. Use a grounding device such as a wrist strap whenever handling SIMMs or other memory modules. For more detailed information on ESD, request document 0011 from the fax retrieval system (800-257-1439). Anyone interested in a pamphlet or brochure about ESD awareness contact Kerstat Inc., 156 Prospect Ave, Lansdale, PA 19446. Phn: 215-393-7290, Fax: 215-393-7291.]

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