

Transoniq

Hacker

The Independent News
Magazine for Ensoniq Users

A First Look at the ASR-X

Sampling Comes to Ensoniq Again

Garth Hjelte



Sometimes it's said that we live in a period of "ever-increasing expectations." That's what happens when you receive something but you always want more. I'm sure that's the way the Ensoniq sampler community felt the last couple years. The ASR can do a great job, no doubt, but we wanted more. The principal wants were increased RAM, resonant filters, and 16-channel multi-timbrality.

It's finally here — in a little different package. "Little" in the sense that the ASR-X is a Linn-Drum-like desktop case and "different" — this is new Ensoniq territory. That "trinity" of wants — memory, filters, and 16-channel — are all manifest here.

So let's take a First Look at this machine. The unit started shipping the

beginning of June — so please forgive if we've missed something.

First I want to mention the matter of comparisons. I admit, it may be a case of apples and oranges to compare the ASR-X with the ASR-10. The "X" is basically a downscaled MR with sampling designed in. But for this article, I will compare the X with the EPS/ASR. The mistake would be to think that the X is "the replacement" for the EPS/ASR — that certainly isn't the case. Ensoniq describes the ASR-X as a "Groove Machine" — meaning that it is designed to provide quick-playability and sequencing. Ensoniq is obviously addressing the modern dance/percussion market, competing with the likes of the MPC-2000 and the MC-303 types of machines (which it beats "pads" down). But I also recognize that it can be more than that, too. I admit it is not completely fair to compare the ASR-X with the ASR-10, because the X's specialty is percussion sounds, as you'll see. But then, Ensoniq did give it the ASR name, so forgive the liberty we take in using the ASR rather than the MR as the mode of comparison. But remember, it is a different machine. Besides, you'll see the price later on....

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Basic Specs and Architecture

To review, the basic specs are: 32 voices, 34Mb maximum RAM (2Mb comes standard), 2Mb ROM, support for MR expansion boards, 16-track sequencer (compared to the 8-track sequencer in the EPS/ASR), stereo/mono 44.1kHz sampling, patch selects, two effects processors (one reverb only, the other with 50 "insert" effects), MIDI, SCSI option (not available yet — it will read Roland and Akai formats as well), DOS disk format, reads AIFF and .WAV (RIFF) files, one octave worth of "finger pads" on the front panel.

Architecture-wise, the setup is the same as the EPS/ASR: 1 LFO, 3 Envelopes, 2 4-pole Filters in serial, 15+ modulation sources, Amplitude and Wave parameters. Here is what's been added:

- Two modes on the filter: 2L/2L Resonant, and 2B/2B Resonant (BandPass)
- Three additional XCTRL mod sources, now called SysCNTRL
- Env 2 and 3 can now be applied as modulators to sources
- True Polyphonic Glide (distinguished from the PEDAL mode in the EPS/ASR)
- 10 Velocity curves (Quick Rise, Convex 1-3, Linear, Concave 1-4, Late Rise)

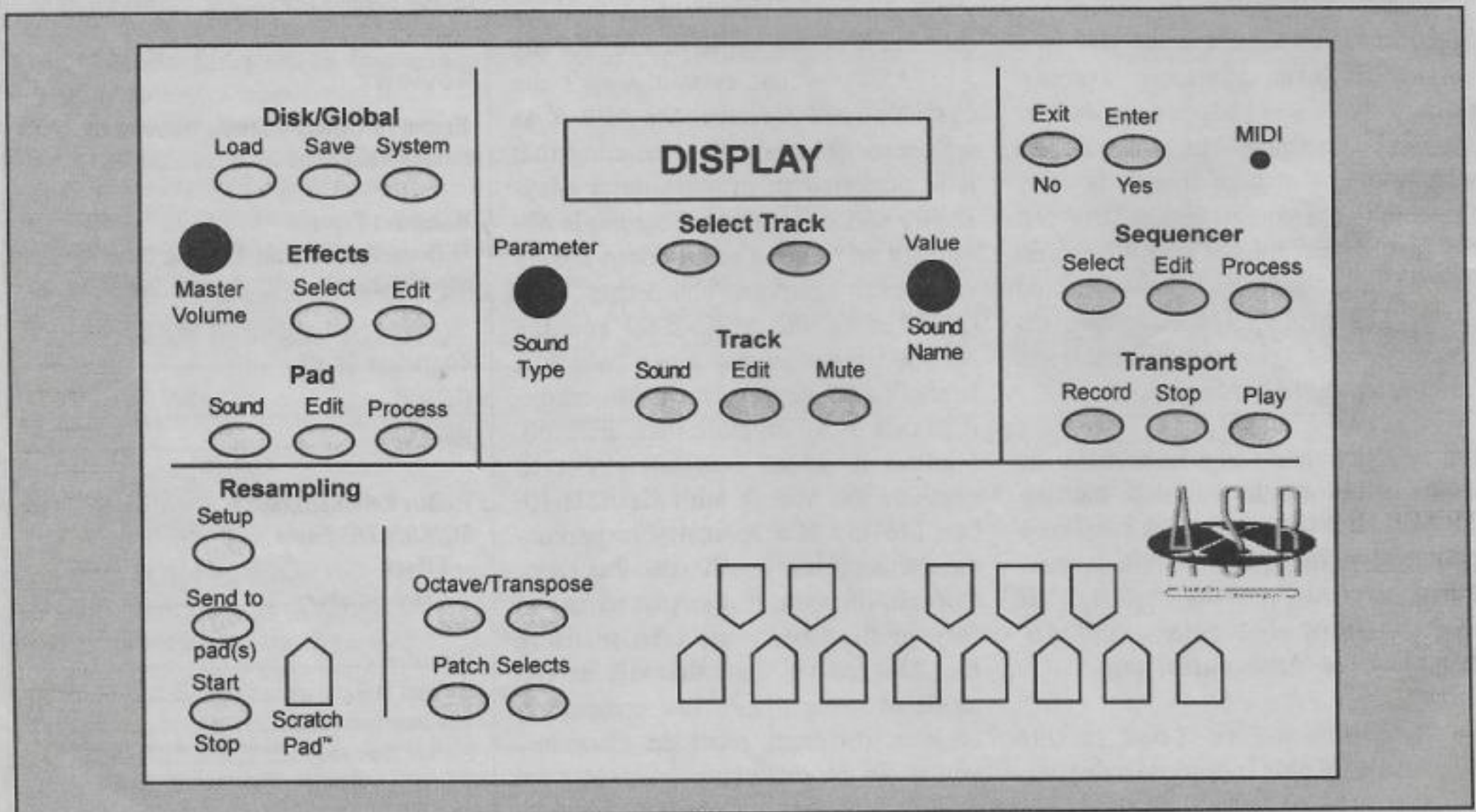
Here's what's been omitted:

- No Loop End parameter (no big)
- No Loop and Release parameter

A couple of various observations: All functions go to 127 instead of 99 now; there is a MIDI light on the front panel (I was hoping that Ensoniq would incorporate the MIDI Bug into its professional line of keyboards...), MIDI Tuning Change Standard support and TONS of eclectic pitch tables (which means your rave tune can be in Arabic 19-tone); there is a spiffy ROM demo starring Joel Brazy on ASR-X — it notes it on startup. (I think it would be my life dream if my name could be immortalized in the firmware of an actual performance instrument — I'm jealous, Joel.)

Operation

Figure 1 shows the front panel. It doesn't look like the EPS/ASR, but in fact the functions are similar. There are no separate track buttons, but you scroll through each track using the LEFT and RIGHT buttons under the display. See the knobs? Think of the SOUND TYPE knob as the UP button — it scrolls through the different pages. The other knob sets value. By the way, both knobs are continuous scrolling and are indentated — they feel good to use. Just grab 'em.



RND ()

Ensoniq Announcements

Ensoniq's New Web Site

Ensoniq has been investing much time and resources enhancing our website (www.ensoniq.com). Most recently we included all of our fax-on-demand documents to our website at <http://www.ensoniq.com/html/mifod.htm>. Most of our customers prefer to access these documents via our website due to the web's ease of use and ubiquity. Since then, activity on our fax-on-demand system has been minimal. At the same time, usage on our website has been increasing. Accordingly, we will be discontinuing our fax on demand system on July 30, 1997. Looking up these fax on demand documents on the web has never been easier. The documents are categorized by product, which will enable faster access.

In addition, we are upgrading our firewall web server. This should allow for quicker access during peak hours. Again, this enhancement is a result of the popularity of the www. Contact our webmeister regarding any comments and suggestions.

ASR-X

We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to the ASR-X. Preliminary reports from the field indicate that dealers can't keep them on the shelves. We are trying to increase our production, but the high demand may cause some delays.

Upgrade To E-Prime

We recently introduced the E-Prime which includes many new pianos, the best of the KT series sounds and a run time version of E-MAGIC's Soundiver. We've had many requests from KT owners to add these features. As a result, we are offering an upgrade path for KT owners to an E-Prime. The upgrade will be available in July, 1997 and only at authorized Ensoniq repair stations. The suggested list price is \$149.95.

Below these are the TRACK buttons. These are like the TRACK button on the EPS/ASR — they provide the parameters for MIDI-In channels, Transposition, and other "override" parameters for each track. The X uses the term "Prog" for when the track pays attention to the programming inside the "Instrument."

To the left we see the System/MIDI button has survived, containing Master Tune, MIDI Base Channel, In Mode (all the regular modes), but to the immediate left of that

PARIS Tour Dates

Ensoniq is reworking the PARIS tour dates posted last month. The dates listed are no longer valid. Since there are so many people on vacation in August, the tour will be postponed. Also, since the AES show is in late September, and Ensoniq is introducing several accessories at the show, it is likely that the tour will not occur until October.

Hacker News

In a similar vein... A lot of the big 'zines have a sort of summer hiatus where they'll skip an issue or combine two months. Every year about this time we re-discover why. (Duh.) *Everybody's* gone or otherwise occupied. Due to an exceptional bunch of dedicated writers we've managed to pull this summer issue together (special thanks, folks!) — but we would like to give a little warning here that next month's issue may have to go to 24 pages. That'll be our *Special Summer Issue*. Meanwhile, this would be a Really Good Time for all you wannabe writers to start sending in your efforts — hey, we *do* pay.

Oh, sorry there's no MR-specific articles this month, but a patch sheet may be in the works for these critters and that should start yet another ball rolling. (Robby?)

HYPERSOBIQ

New Products

MIDI Mark Productions has just released Volume 2 of "Powerhouse," the CD-ROM for Ensoniq EPS-16+, ASR-10/88/X, TS-10/12 samplers. It features over 300 megs, 1,300 instruments, and 3,000 samples. Sounds include piano, organ, synth, lead, bass, strings, fx from styles like Rap, Hip Hop, House and Techno. A full listing can be found at their web site of floppies and CD-ROMs. Price \$199 plus \$3.50 s/h. Call for a copy of their new 1997 catalog. Contact Midi Mark Productions, P.O. Box 217, Whittier CA 90608. Phone: (562) 699-0095 Fax: (562) 699-0864, www.midimark.com.

are LOAD and SAVE buttons. These deal with the disk only. Below are the Effects buttons, and below them are the Pad buttons — in which the EDIT button reveals all the parameters of the ASR sound programming engine. (It's the secret button. Sssh....) Sound selects that Pad's sound and Process deals with the resampling.

On the very lower left hand corner is the Resampling area. Sampling is done into a separate buffer called the Scratch Pad. Sample in, or load a .WAV (RIFF) or AIFF

file in, (when you load a .WAV (RIFF) file it is stored in the X as an AIFF file, and saved that way also), and it shows up on the Scratch Pad. From there, you need to assign the sample to a Pad. A Pad is, of course, a pad on the X itself, but it is also one of the 127 MIDI Note numbers. Whenever you see the word Pad, it means MIDI Note number, really.

In the middle are the actual Pads, one octave worth. These feel so nice they may be the reason to get the unit in the first place. Very cool. You can play them polyphonically too. Top marks. There are Transpose buttons to the immediate left; you will use these frequently. Below are the Patch Selects.

Moving over and under, you see the TRANSPORT controls. Again, standard Record, Stop, Play/Continue. Above that you will see the Sequence function controls, and above that, the Enter/Yes — Cancel/No buttons. The 1-9 keypad buttons are gone, but they are not really needed in this scheme. So really, most everything in the EPS/ASR is represented on the board.

Function

As Robby Berman, famous Hacker writer, most eloquently puts in the ASR-X Reference Manual, Tracks are "central to life" in the X. (What if you live across the tracks?) This means that there is always an assigned sound on each track — there is no such thing as an empty track. Tracks are where the instruments are selected, are used in reference to the sequencer, and so forth. You can play one sound at a time from the pads. You can change sounds by either changing the sound assigned to a pad(s), or change the track, where another sound will be assigned.

You have full control of the 127 note MIDI key range. You can assign any sound to any MIDI note. That means unlimited splits of anything. I know I'm splitting hairs here. Because of the unlimited mapping, multisamples are "native" to the X.

Sampling is alternately called Resampling many times in the ASR-X Reference Manual (wonderfully written by Robby Berman), which is kind of redundant (you get a stutter if you sample too many times — Re-Re-Re-Re-Sampling — sounds like you are in the '80s). Just kidding there. But it is a strongly suggested feature with the X — you can resample anything — make your own sampled loops out of the sequences you do, etc. The X carries on the fine ASR feature of sampling itself.

Sampling is easy, just as in the EPS/ASR. Input level is adjusted on the back, and there is a retro-looking switch that toggles between Mic and Line. Nothing more to report.

Sounds

The X has a bunch of ROM sounds, about 200. Most are percussive sounds. The intention of the X is Groove Station — which is a drum machine PLUS. The sounds are really nice — although most keyboards sound great these days. Some sounds that caught my ear were Zee Snare (that ringy high-pitched snare I like), Orgcussion (a B3 clicky looped organ), and of course Gizmo Kit (lots of drum and dance percussion stuff — the Internal Demo uses the kit). Many sounds use the Resonant Filters very effectively — for me, it's so nice to hear that type of sound come out of an Ensoniq board again (although the WaveBoy Rez Filter effect and Transwave Library do the job really well also). Bummer point — the ROM sounds are non-editable in and of themselves (with the exception of the overrides in the Track areas). It doesn't seem like you can copy a ROM sound to a RAM or buffer location, and then have access to all the parameters.

There are also RAM sounds. These are AIFF formats with the extension .SBX. These are in MS-DOS disk format; you can insert an ASR-X disk into a PC and see the directories and files. (Sorry, no Long File Names; maybe in the "ASR-X 95 32-bit"...). Apparently, the .SBX files are stereo or mono AIFF files with the programming information built into them. Just "plain" AIFF files can be saved as well, that only have the wavedata in them.

There are additional RAM sounds available from the Ensoniq floppy disk. The RAM sounds are editable with the ASR programming engine.

Lastly, there are sounds under the banks name CUSTOM, which are the sampled sounds YOU sample (yes, you are responsible). These are editable. You do have the option of saving your sampled sounds as raw AIFF files, without the program data.

All these can be accessed and categorized using an Ensoniq creation called SoundFinder. This simply categorizes all your sounds, whether they be ROM, RAM, or Custom in various sub-categories pre-selected by Ensoniq, such as Brass, Bass, etc. In the programming for each sound you select where in the SoundFinder it is categorized. This is a great idea.

The X right now cannot read EPS/ASR disks — a free update is planned possibly by mid-summer to allow this. SCSI will be available around the same time. OS is ROM-based. Ensoniq is continuing the new tradition started with the MR of allowing you to open the case to replace the OS EPROM or add/replace SIMMs. (NOTE: The OS is not on Flash ROM, as with several other instruments, meaning that the chips must be replaced, and can't be updated by you with software.)

And guess what? Play-While-Load seems to be gone! At least when I tried, loading an AIFF file or RAM file caused the pads to hush up. No word on what will happen with that.

Sound Editing

As far as sound editing goes, you have plenty of editing capability. You have the entire ASR programming engine, the best in the business, to work with — I looped a repeating wa-wa guitar pretty easily and it was fun using the rez filter to alter sampled sounds. (BTW, how do you spell REZ? Ensoniq apparently thinks Res — that's what's silk-screened on the X's front panel. Perhaps we need a vote...)

The coarse percentage and fine tune adjustments are there. Ensoniq has renamed the start/loop modulation parameters — it is now called StartEndIndex. There is a bit-reduction function too, for the grainy people in the audience. There is a Copy and a Scale function included.

There are several things lacking, though, as far as editing. First, there is no Auto-Loop Finding — which limits your loop selections to zero-crossings. But then, that's understandable, considering what the X is meant for. Secondly, there are only a few data editing choices, but fortunately, they are the most important ones. Normalize Gain and Truncate Wavesample are still alive and well, but unfortunately most everything else is gone. To me, that's all right — many people don't use them. I will, however, miss crossfade looping and Auto-Loop.

Lastly, where are the layers? There is a reference to layers on page 20 of the Reference Manual (skillfully written by *Hacker* writer Robby Berman — did I already say that?) — saying that some of the ROM sounds use multiple layers, and that custom-sampled sounds use one layer for mono sounds and two for stereo sounds. But there is no reference to layers elsewhere, and there is nothing in the interface that suggests it. The ROM sounds have different "patches" under the patch select buttons... so where is the

access to the layers?

It would sure be a bummer if each "instrument" in the X only had one (or two identically programmed) layer(s) to it and just one keymap. No velocity switching, no multiple sounds on one pad (or key), etc. But I have a feeling that Ensoniq will add "layer access" with the OS update that will implement the reading of EPS/ASR disks. Unless it will be read-only/no-edit (please no).

The Sequencer, The Effects, and Editing Them

I didn't have a complete chance to work through the sequencer, but I did some quick single phrase things, and yes, it is very easy to work with. The display gives you good feedback on where you are, and there isn't much guessing to it. There are many different quantization functions, which is important considering this is a Groove Machine — better get the groove from somewhere if you don't have it.

There is a Global Reverb (no Global Chorus like the MRs), and what Ensoniq calls an Insert Effect, available simultaneously. Since Ensoniq has made major commitments to DSP, of course these are all very strong and flexible. There are 50 effect algorithms total. No word on whether there will be additional effect algorithms via disk or ROM upgrade. There are many parameters to edit.

One aside — a large chunk of the manual describes the effects. This was the case with the ASR as well. When it comes to effects, there's a lot to talk about, and it also shows the strong effort Ensoniq has made in this area.

Impressions

If your scene is modern dance/percussion music, you want this machine. It is powerful and is pretty much made just with you in mind. The set-up allows easy composition of very cool groove tracks.

The display is small, but it's easy to use. Reminds me of a D-50. It gets the job done well. I got used to the knobs really quickly. There still is a lot of page surfing to do, but it's easy enough. Ensoniq user interfaces are the best in the business, IMHO. No word on editing software yet.

I can't say enough about the pads — they feel REALLY GOOD. In fact, that's almost the best thing about the unit. No aftertouch, but still, the pads are a joy to play. (Concerning aftertouch, the X responds to pressure, even

poly-pressure, from other sources just fine.)

Ever since the '70s, I've been a fan of polyphonic glide (after hearing *The Message from Lords of The Rings* by Styx) — I'm glad it's back.

In a way, this is not the old EPS/ASR design — it's the new wave — but it still shares all the Ensoniq terms and is consistent with their designs. Please spare the Ensoniq Customer Service the question of "will there be a hardware upgrade for the ASR-10?" — the upgrade is the ASR-X! And it's not too much \$\$\$ — see below.

Like I said before, this is a hit-drum-percussion centered unit. Repeat after me — there is no ROM concert grand, there is no ROM string section. But there is no reason that one can't be sampled and composed — and I believe that ASR-X can become that. Look for third-party support for all types of samples.

Okay, now let's talk price. I saw a list price of \$1595 — and the marked-down price was even less — a very very fine deal.

Conclusion

Again, if you are a dance artist or the like (please — don't make me list the different type labels like rap, hip-hop, rave, etc.) — get the X NOW. I mean right now. It stomps all over its competition. However, if you want to extend the X beyond its niche and want it to do full brass sections, pianos, bagpipes (yes), complex synth sounds, I'd wait to see what the coming update does.

Next time we'll go over the sequencer... ■

Thanks to Glen, Chas, and Rodger of Rodger Dodger Music in Minneapolis for temporary use of the ASR-X, and for the time of the always helpful Tony Ferrara, Robby Berman, and Bert Nus Kirk (congratulations on the baby!)

Bio: Garth Hjelte is the owner of Rubber Chicken Software Co. Striving for redundancy, he wants to sample the effects used on the X-Files with the ASR-X — making X-Files from X-Files.

What do you do with 1,000 CDs?

Duane Frybarger

I know that there are many of you out there who have given thought to having a CD pressed of your band's music or your MIDI studio compositions. And most of you have read or heard of other musicians who have gone this route and ended up with 950 CDs in a closet. Last year, I began marketing my music to radio stations and before long, I was faced with the decision of whether or not to press a large quantity of CDs. I had made a limited run of 35 for distribution to radio personnel and the response was very encouraging. That initial run cost me nearly \$500, which was not exactly cost-effective. It was a fairly simple decision to opt for 1,000 CDs and give it my best shot.

I had the mastering done at Olde West Studios here in San Francisco. They were able to make a master CD from my DAT for about \$100 and have 1,000 CDs duplicated for me at a cost of \$.85 each. I decided to do my own graphics and rely on local copy shops to duplicate the CD booklets and tray inserts. Part of the reason for this decision was

because money was a real issue and I wasn't ready to invest in a bar code number (cost \$300). I figured I could do that later if my CD started doing well. Olde West would have done the whole graphics job for about \$800. I ended up paying much more than that by using copy shops and I also had to deal with putting each CD package together which is quite time-consuming.

While I was waiting to receive the CDs, I started emailing radio stations asking if they would like promo copies. I initially had about 150 stations respond to my offer. I received my CDs the day before Thanksgiving last year, and sent out the initial batch of 150. I also sent out a few for review to both print and online publications. After the New Year, I started really hitting radio stations with email requests to submit my CD. I probably contacted 400-500 stations overall and I've now submitted CDs to almost 250 different stations and programs. I also started using Usenet groups to find DJs looking for music and also to post listings regarding my CD.

About a month after receiving my CDs, I started approaching local stores to see if they would carry my CD. I was very reluctant to begin this phase of marketing, because my product wasn't bar-coded or even shrink-wrapped, but I found that most stores were more than willing to take a few CDs on consignment. I was even able to get my disc into the local Tower Records and Warehouse outlets.

I then started calling stores in other parts of the country where my CD was doing well on the radio to ask about placing CDs there. I was able to use a resource I found on Yahoo! called "Get Local" to find record stores in different cities and regions. However, it was not easy to place CDs in other regions — people don't like returning long-distance phone calls and if you're unknown in their area, they don't have much incentive to carry your product. It would help to mention that my CD was being aired locally, but it was still a daunting task. I usually work days as a temp to support myself and many radio stations and DJs don't mind using email to communicate. However, it's a different story with records stores. Very few are online and most don't have any kind of email and so I started seeking distribution.

I'm sure many of you have submitted demos to record labels and have discovered that it is almost impossible to establish any kind of dialogue without some sort of "inside" connection. I soon found that distributors operate on the same level. At the time I started contacting them, I was in rotation on about 60 radio stations worldwide (about 40 in the US) and was doing quite well on some stations and specialty programming. The few distributors who would talk to me were unimpressed with this information. I also approached Internet CD outlets (CDNow, CD Online, and several others) regarding carrying my disc, and they always referred me to established distributors. I sent CD copies to many different distributors, and was either

rejected or unable to talk to anybody with the authority to say "yes."

I finally found a distributor on Yahoo's site who responded to my email inquiry with a phone call. He was very helpful and said he was quite sure it would work out but asked me to send a copy to him so that he could hear it for himself. After a few weeks and quite a few phone calls, I had a signed contract with Jem Music of New York that puts my CDs in most Tower Records, Virgin Records and Barnes & Noble stores in most major metropolitan areas in the US. I will also be in their respective databases which is a big help when potential customers call in to inquire about my disc. Jem Music ended up taking 100 CDs on consignment and requested an additional 10 promo copies for store buyers. Once I'm established in this country, Jem will recommend a foreign distributor to me for overseas markets. By the way, the lack of bar codes and shrink-wrap did not adversely affect my distribution deal. Jem Music will assign a bar code to my CD and shrink-wrap it for me. However, it was suggested that it is advisable to have this done initially at the CD plant.

I've just set up online ordering on my Web site and I've sold a few CDs to friends and family. Of course, I've also given out many promo copies and so at this point in time, I have less than 500 CDs in my closet! I'm in rotation on about 80 stations, I'm on the playlists of several Smooth Jazz stations and I've been on the College 500 World charts. I even have a club DJ in Dallas, TX playing my CD at his Happy Hour gig and the people there really enjoy it! Not bad for one guy, a roomful of equipment and an Internet connection. ■

Bio: Duane Frybarger is a composer who lives in San Francisco but spends much of his free time in cyberspace. His latest CD is "A Musical Feast" and his Web site is at <http://www.creative.net/~duane>.

Ensequencing

Part 6: Let's Make A Record!

Jack Stephen Tolin

Welcome to *Ensequencing, Part 6*. This series concerns the usage of Ensoniq sequencers to their maximum potential in utilization and expression. It may seem odd, then, that it is not until part 6 that we

should deal with Recording. Recording is, after all, what makes a sequence a sequence. Well, that and preset data. Recording is the primary function of any sequencer. Before all the frills. Before all the other se-

quencer functions. But, with many different things, some which are first will be last...

At different times, depending on the situation, there will be a number of different choices for recording that are available to you: Recording the first track, Recording additional tracks, Punching in, Step entry, Auto punch. It may also be helpful (as I have found it to be) to use the foot switch set to sequencer. This makes it easier to stop the sequencer quickly when recording, particularly if your hands are busy at the time!

- **Recording the first track.** Initially, after you create a new sequence, you select a track, a sound for the track, and check the click. The most popular thing to do with the click is to set "Click=RECORD." This will activate the click while you are recording but not while you are playing. The next most popular thing to do with the click is to set "Countoff=RECORD." This will activate the click to play for one bar before recording begins, but will not play before just playing.

The most crucial aspect of recording the first track is that this process is what will determine the length of the entire sequence (pending utilization of the Change Length feature in the Seq edit bank). It is very important to keep this in mind before recording. Know what it is that you really want to record before starting to lay down your first shot (unless of course you just want to experiment or just use the sequencer as a sketch pad). You will have to continue the aforementioned steps until you have finished your first track and, hence, determined the length of the sequence. (This last statement is true unless you have no intention of adding additional tracks to the sequence.)

- **Recording additional tracks.** This one's my favorite! After you have finished the ordeal of recording the first track, you will notice that all of the remaining tracks in the sequence are of the same length. This is more Ensoniq magic. (After all, it would be horrendous working on a sequence if each of the tracks had a different length! Imagine what it would sound like in the end putting together a song built up on sequences like that!) It is at this point that we may begin orchestrating with the other tracks OR recording something different on the first track.

Of course, there are certain similarities between recording the first track and recording additional tracks. You will have to select a track and then a sound for that track. Assuming that Countoff=RECORD or CLICK, the click track will play for one measure before playing the sequence and going into record mode. Hitting Play while holding down the Record button will send you into the action of recording. Each track, after you have played with record on, will ask you if you want to keep the new track. Fortunately, Ensoniq provides non-destructive editing, which means that if you don't particularly like the new addition to your sequence, whatever was there beforehand gets to stay after all. (Insert "Yeah"s here.) This is particularly helpful if you are recording over other track data.

Recording additional tracks also have some very neat features to them as well. First of all, there is no extra pressure that the recording of the first track had in that the length of the first sequence has already been determined. (Whew!) You can record onto the new track until the end of the sequence is reached OR until you press Stop. (And remember, you can use the foot-switch for doing this, if you need to.) There are also more recording options for recording on additional tracks. This makes recording additional tracks not only easier than the initial track, but also more fun. To find out how, continue reading...

- **Punching in.** The next neat thing is that recording anything from now on will not require you to hit play while holding down record buttons which starts recording at the beginning of the track. You can do something that is strangely referred to as "punching in." Why it is called this, I am not entirely sure. I think it has to do with some old boxing activities (taken out on four-track cassette recorders, no doubt).

Anyway, punching in, regardless of what the manuals say, actually means to hit Record after you hit play. What this does is it sets up the sequencer to prepare to record on a track without eliminating anything or adding anything until you actually start hitting the black and whites, the ebonies and ivories — the keys, that is. Always select your track first. Hit Play, then hit Record. You will notice that your sequencer will then go into overdub mode as your screen will read something like "ODUB" on it. This means that though your

sequencer is playing, it is ready to begin recording any time you begin playing the keyboard.

Your sequencer will continue repeating the sequence — assuming in your Control Bank the Loop function is set to ON — in ODUB mode until you begin recording. If the sequence is not stopped at the end of the sequence, it will go into rehearsal — no, recital — no — um... You will be able to choose to either accept the new recorded data or the old recorded or unrecorded data. If you would rather the sequence to just stop at the end, go to Control Bank and change Loop to OFF. In this case, you will have to press Play again in order to hear the new track (or old track for that matter).

• **Control Bank Record Setting.** An important factor with overdubbing, or punching in, is Record Mode settings in the Control Bank. REPLACE works like audio tape; anything recorded will replace existing track data. After cycling through once, Audition is entered. ADD acts somewhat like a sponge; recorded data will be added to already existent recorded material. Just like with REPLACE, after cycling through once, Audition is entered. LOOPED is just like ADD, except, when Record=LOOPED, the sequencer will con-

tinue to roll and record. That is, it will until the earth blows up or until you hit Stop — whichever comes first. MIXDOWN is only available for songs selected, but it records dynamic Volume and Pan changes in the Performance Bank into sequence and song tracks.

• **Step entry.** This particular feature will be featured in an upcoming feature of *Ensequencing* featured in this magazine-featured packet of feature information.

• **Auto step.** This particular feature will also be included with the above.

Hopefully, this has given everyone an adequate introduction to the process of recording. Further installments will certainly add embellishments. Bye for now, everyone, and keep your sequences on track! ■



Bio: Jack currently attends Nazarene Theological Seminary and works for Sprint in much, much, much of his spare time.

Ensoniq's CDR-9

Ethnic Instruments

Product: CDR-9 — *Ethnic Instruments.*

For: ASRs, EPSs, TS variants

Price: \$99.95.

From: Ensoniq Corp., 155 Great Valley Pkwy., Malvern, PA 19355.

Phone: 610-647-3930 (voice), 610-647-8908 (fax).

Isn't it ironic that after purchasing all the racks, stacks, SIMMS, storage, cables, and consoles integral to any functional audio workstation, it is easy to forget a much greater issue — SOUNDS. What good is a synth/sampler with no sounds to play? Or a processor with nothing to process? Inevitably, just about the time the last device is placed in the rack, the money tree is bare. And, for the common man, the prospect of a decent sound library is many paychecks away. For owners of the Ensoniq ASR-

10, EPS-16+, or TS Series instruments, however, there is an answer. Ensoniq, in conjunction with InVision Interactive, has developed the *Invision Libraries*. This set includes Ensoniq CDRs 8 – 13, five budget-priced CD-ROMs covering a spectrum of sounds including: Orchestral, Ethnic, Pop/Rock, Keyboard, Drums, and Percussion. Suggested retail price on each of these five CDs is a pleasantly low \$99.95, making this set an inexpensive way to beef up your sound library. (A list of these disks and their contents can be found direct at www.ensoniq.com/html/cdr8-13.htm.)

Recently, I was given the opportunity to review the second disk in the Invision set: *CDR-9 Ethnic Instruments*. CDR-9 weighs in at a reasonable 100 plus MBs, and contains exactly fifty sounds. All the sounds on the Ethnic

disk fall into one of five main categories: Stringed, Wind & Brass, Percussion, Piano and Organ, and Mallet & Bell.

Instinctively, the first of my many questions pertaining to the quality and usefulness of this disk were questions of mass. Is this set really budget priced? How many sounds does a \$200 Ensoniq CD-ROM generally contain compared to Ensoniq's \$99.95 CD-ROMs? I had Ensoniq *CDR-14 (Analog Synth Resource)* and *CDR-4 (ASR Archive Volume 1)* available for my investigation... *CDR-14* retails at \$199.95, and contains about 225 sounds totaling in excess of 250 MB. *CDR-4* contains 260 sounds totaling 175 MB, and retails for \$99.95. Initially, it would appear that *CDR-14* with 175 more sounds and 150 MB more of mass compared to the *CDR-9*, is just as "budget." Or *CDR-4*, which is priced the same as the *Ethnic* disk but contains 210 more sounds, might easily appear the most economical of the lot. Admittedly, the statistics are misleading. Truth be known, the number of sounds on a disk is not necessarily the primary concern, nor is the number of MB. And in the case of *CDR-9*, it is a good thing.

The most important aspect of a sound disk is the quality and usability of its sounds. And I am happy to report that it is usable, quality sounds you get from *CDR-9*. Upon closer inspection, I noted that over fifty percent of *CDR-9* was comprised of sounds at least 2000 blocks in size (2000 blocks roughly equals a MB). What that generally means, in my experience, is better sounds. *CDR-4* contained a lot of smaller, lower quality sounds as well as Ensoniq demos and useless (in my opinion) filler. *The Ethnic CD-ROM* (as well as the other CDRs included in the InVision set) bypass the smaller sounds and less useful data and, in return, give you bigger and better sounding instruments. Budget with quality, not budget bulk.

The documentation for this disk is in a fairly standard format, though somewhat sparse in some areas that could have been helpful. As mentioned before, instruments are categorized first into five main sections. Three of the five main sections have subsections. All of this is well laid out on paper, along with instrument size, direct navigation macro numbers, and a handy dandy step-by-step on how to load sounds using the macro numbers. What is not there is any information on patch selects, controller/ mod, or the instruments themselves.

Sound architecture, as you would expect from any Ensoniq sound source, is superb. It definitely pays off to use Ensoniq sounds in Ensoniq machines. The patch selects are programmed with the user in mind. Depending on the instrument, switching the variations of layers or using the patch select buttons, gives instruments full vibratos, stereo imaging, attack upon release, instrument doubling, chan-

ges in amplitude, pitch, and velocity envelope settings, and plenty more. There is no real need to go tweaking these sounds. Almost all the options for each instrument have been covered in the patch selects. Very nice.

Now I could run through the whole CD-ROM, sound by sound, and fill you in on the virtues and the pitfalls of each and every wave sample. I just do not think that is necessary. Almost every sound on this disk is a usable, convincing, quality sound. That is the bottom line. I would, however, like to call to your attention to a few of the instruments contained within the *Ethnic CD-ROM* that are practically worth the whole price.

The first on the list of Golden Sounds is the Didgeridoo. An actual didgeridoo, being played by someone who apparently had seen the instrument many times before, and being slated by an engineer who must have known his foreign woodwinds. This is great stuff! Another of my favorite sounds from the *Ethnic CD* is the Tabla. Again, good tones and good samples. I have never heard a tabla this convincing come from a synth or a sampler. Then there is the whole stringed section of the CD-ROM. A sitar, a banjo, and a mandolin steal the show in that category. Really nice. Fact is, almost all the sounds featured on Ensoniq *CDR-9* are worthy of investigation.

Complaints? Yeah, a few. My chief complaint would be the key layout for some of the percussion sounds. Sounds like the tabla, congas, and bongos lack some playability due to their layouts. Realistic drum lines are harder to piece together, and sequencing becomes more difficult when drums span the whole keyboard unnecessarily. Also, as I mentioned before, the documentation could be a bit more thorough. No big deal though, since the patch selects do what would be expected, and the sounds practically speak for themselves. The only other fault I found with the *Ethnic CD-ROM* would be the absence of several instruments I had hoped would be present. Where are the bata drums, the dulcimer and the bombo?

Overall, it is plain to see that InVision and Ensoniq have created an affordable, quality line of CD-ROMS. I have yet to see any sound source of equal quality match this lineup of CD-ROMs in price, and it is for this reason I give the *Ensoniq Ethnic CD-ROM* two thumbs up. ■

Bio: Britton Beisenherz is a student finishing his degree in Synthesis at a school of music in the dreadful Northeastern portion of America. Britton has been writing, recording, and producing music for many years, and hopes to someday breath a bit of life back into a dying art... any one of them.

The Care and Feeding of the Ensoniq Disk Drive:

Non-Routine, Non-Periodic, and Non-Preventative Maintenance

Pat Finnigan

This month's installment dives into that most hidden of secrets: the Ensoniq floppy disk drive. This article deals with the 800k mechanism as used by the EPS/16+/VFX-SD/SD-1 and, quite possibly, the SQ-80. As the sole factory-provided media I/O source, this little critter has been the subject of countless emails to interface@transoniq.com. Anyone who has fed their pet a bogus or defective floppy will realize the frustration of "disk data corrupted" in the middle of a song while frantically stabbing the "eject" button. And more than a few of you have frantically stabbed the "eject" button only to have the floppy hang inside. If you've pried or pulled the disk out, skip this article: you've probably already pulled the upper head off or otherwise misaligned the two heads rendering your floppy drive unusable. Just take your instrument into your friendly Authorized Ensoniq Service Station and plunk down \$250 for a drive and \$50 more to R & R it. If you're handy with tools and a soldering iron, you just might be able to salvage the drive, even if you did extract a junk floppy with a pair of dental forceps. This is not a panacea nor a guarantee that you can revive a defective floppy. It will, however, allow you to fix/repair the most common floppy drive problems with a minimum of time and money. Again, this article will not unwreck your car — if it won't start or sputters erratically, this article may rid your favorite box of the most common floppy gremlins. If your instrument is under warranty, ignore this article. But if it isn't, let's assume you have a working knowledge of the Philips screwdriver and have soldered more than a few mic cables in your travels...

Tools Required

- Clean paint brush (1/4" to 1/2" camel hair bristle

recommended)

- Can of WD-40
- Can of Zero Residue Cleaner ("Blue Shower" or Radio Shack Video Head Cleaner)
- Bottle of isopropyl ("rubbing") alcohol
- 8-12 Q-Tips (don't put in your ears)
- Cleaning cloths (lint-free if possible but not required)
- Disposable pie pan

(A) Removing the Mechanism

...is typically a snap. All Ensoniq keyboards of the 800k floppy vintage have 4 screws holding the left hand cheekblock (with pitch and mod wheels, patch select buttons, etc) to the case.

Secret here is to remove the four allen screws holding the top lid (with the display, track buttons, edit and sequence buttons) first. So disconnect *all* cables from your instrument (yes, the AC cord too!) and remove the four allen screws securing the top lid to the the case. Once removed, remove the two rear securing screws located at the rearmost left of the instrument (right beside the pop-riveted hinge that runs the length of the lid). Then remove the two front-securing check-block screws (*not* the frontmost two holding the front ledge under the keyrail, but the two directly behind them about 2" from the front rail. So far, so good...

Now, open the top lid, and gently lift the pitch/mod wheel cheekblock up and forward, but don't pull it out yet! Just flip it over so that you can see the power connector (the little white 4-wire job) and the ribbon/data connector. Note the polarity of the power connector so you don't try to reconnect it backwards when we're

done and unplug it. Note the ribbon connector has a red lead marked. This not only indicates pin 1, it also represents the side of the cable that is closest to the power connector. Remember to mark this and unplug the ribbon cable from the IDC connector on the floppy drive.

As you view the side of the floppy drive in the checkblock/carrier, notice the four screws (two per side) that secure the mechanism to the carrier. Noting which of the three mounts are used for this purpose, remove these four screws. *Now* gently slide the mechanism rearward so the front of the eject button clears the housing, and lift it free. Collect all parts and put aside with your instrument. Set the drive aside and grab a scratch floppy disk (a good one this time! We don't wanna have to do this again, do we?) for repair purposes. Obtain those 8-10 Q-Tips, isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol, can of zero residue cleaner, can of WD-40, and cleaning rags/mechanics cloths (lint-free if possible but not required). Now that we've got the mechanism out, it's time to get these materials together and laid out for the real work that follows. If this has been a bit of time for you, stop now and resume tomorrow. Better a step at a time than rushing through these next steps, as the ones that follow are the ones that *really* matter. Allow 2-3 hours for the following...

(B) Disassembly

For the purposes of this article, I'm assuming you have a Sony MFD-63W-00D (the MFD stands for micro floppy drive): this # is on a label on the right hand side rail as you view the drive from the front. This is the most common of the Ensoniq 800k drives; very similar mechanically to the 400k Mirage drive except it has two heads. MFD-63W-00D is actually an Apple 800k floppy without the motorized eject features. You'll see a big open area in the right rear quadrant of the drive where the eject motor normally sits after you remove the top cover... Oops, forgot to remove the top cover first! Pry gently at the rear of the aluminum dustcover to pop it free, then repeat the process at the front of the same side. Once one side is free you can lift the cover off to reveal the mechanism within.

First, use that camel hair brush to knock off all the dirt and dust that has accumulated over the years of musical endeavor. Don't go after this with years of pent-up frustration; just gently brush away accumulated dirt: there's a lotta springy-type things that once knocked loose take off in an orbital trajectory never to be found again. In particular be careful around the shutter arm return spring and the slide springs located on both sides of the drive. You can do this with or without a floppy in the drive: if the drive won't eject a floppy once inserted, don't load the mechanism yet — we'll get to that in a few. Pay particular attention to the detail in this little device: even the pins on the power connector are staggered so connecting the cable to it is a breeze.

Okay, now get out the alcohol and the Q-tips. All these mechanisms use silicone grease on the slide rails to make them smooth and easy to load. Problem is this grease dries out and forms more of a paste than a grease, actually inhibiting the drive to accept a disk properly. Clean the grit/grime/chunks of silicone grease off the slides and posts with the Q-tips and alcohol. When you think you've got it as clean as you can, hold the mechanism at a 45-degree angle from the horizontal over the pie plate, and wash this lowest side out with the zero residue cleaner. Hopefully it came with one of those red tube nozzles so you can direct the spray over these slides. Repeat for the opposite side. Carefully clean the grease off of the shutter opening arm with Q-tips and alcohol: this arm is responsible for more floppy drive failures than you want to imagine. Its failure usually precedes further catastrophic problems/failures of the head assembly.

Ensure this arm is clean and moves freely without resistance. Now we're ready to give that scratch floppy a workout.

(C) Problem Identification/Resolution

If your floppy drive eats disks and doesn't want to eject them here's the most common scenario. You insert a disk, press the eject button, and the disk either remains in or only partially comes out. After wrangling with it for 10 minutes it came out but now (a) it won't take a disk or (b) it takes a disk but won't read it.

Look closely at the upper head assembly block. It has a little arm on the left that rests on another black piece of plastic. *That* piece of plastic actually moves up and down as the disk is inserted to lower the upper head assembly into contact with the floppy disk (assuming the shutter arm is opening the disk shutter properly). Nine times out of ten, after wrangling the stubborn disk out of the mechanism, the upper head arm (which should be resting on *top* of the actuator) is now *under* this actuator. If this is the case, take a close look at the upper head itself to ensure it is still attached to the head block assembly. If it's hanging down by its wires, you're welcome to try and glue it back up, but chances are more likely than not you'll never get the mechanism's heads aligned properly to ever work again — you'll be visiting your friendly Ensoniq Dealer for a replacement mechanism. Still, if the wires are *not* broken, you can attempt to glue the head back up using contact cement or other adhesive, but no guarantees other than you just might get lucky...

Back to the actuator arm. If this arm is underneath the actuator, remove the actuator by *gently* prying up the small finder in the middle and sliding the plastic piece rearward off the top load metal piece. Gently lift the upper head assembly and slide the actuator back on the top load cover *underneath* the actuator arm. If the head is intact, congratulations! You've actually fixed the problem and can move on to step (D).

Typically, a disk shutter seizes and the shutter actuator arm gets bent or otherwise torqued outta shape by forcefully pulling the disk out like an impacted molar. Inspect the post that sticks down from this arm and ensure that it is *perfectly* vertical: any deviance whatsoever from the vertical and I guarantee the mechanism will always eat disks as it can't engage, or worse still, release the shutter on the floppy. This is the most common of floppy-related problems, so check that post carefully.

Also, if a floppy has been forcefully removed, inspect the small microswitch rightmost beside the side rail under the top floppy carrier (when the mechanism is viewed from the rear).

This microswitch's leading edge should be vertical also. This switch starts the pancake motor to spin the

disk. If it doesn't trip the drive won't spin. This problem appears as you'd insert a disk but nothing happens — no drive click and spin, and the telltale sign of this: no LED comes on beside the eject button.

If you experience no motor run with the LED on or grinding noises, invert the drive and inspect the bottom cover. Remove it and check for contact areas, grind marks, or other indication of wear. If it's bowed, either straighten it out or replace it upside down so that it bows *away* from the flywheel rather than into it. If the flywheel is seized and won't turn, contact your friendly Authorized Ensoniq Service Station for a replacement. There's no sense in dismantling the entire mechanism just to find out either the bearings are frozen or the stator has been ground open (or short, as the case may be). Do *not* remove this cover and throw it away: it serves to keep the flywheel from coming into contact with the pitch/modwheel/patch select wiring harness. And while removing this cover may solve your immediate problem with the floppy drive, as soon as that flywheel grinds thru some of the wires in this harness, you'll be looking at a possible logic board replacement, possible power supply replacement. If you short the right wires to the floppy, you'll be buying both of the above, as well as a floppy drive, from your friendly Authorized Ensoniq Service Station. To paraphrase Nike again, "Just DON'T do it..."

If the drive acts intermittently or sometimes works and sometimes doesn't, inspect the power connector PCB insertion points at CN103. Touch them up with a 15-watt iron and rosin core (we're not seaming gutters here) and clean those 4 contacts with a Q-tip and zero residue cleaner. I've seen more oxide-related floppy failures here than I'll admit to...

On the right side frame rail is an oval hole rearmost to this rail. Within this hole is a slide switch with a schematic reference of SW101. Ensure it is switched

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all the way to the rear. I don't know if this is as ID selection switch or allows power thru the ribbon cable, but whatever its purpose, switch it back and forth a few times to wipe the contacts and *ensure* you return it to its rearmost position.

Pull the head connectors out and Q-tip them with ZRC; ensure you replace them respectively. I've done all this just to plug the lower head into the upper head connector. Don't do that — makes for a long day. You could realistically set RV101 to 12.00V by reading the business end of R203 on the controller card, but unless you're absolutely positively sure you're getting 12.00V outta the power supply, leave it alone. As everything with the embedded controller card is surface mount, if you get a problem here, that's right, visit your friendly Authorized Ensoniq Service Center... I think I'm free-running a nested loop here...

Final Inspection

Now insert the scratch floppy in and out a few times to ensure the upper head drops in contact with the floppy and it ejects reliably. Ensure the shutter arm opens and closes the shutter properly upon disk insertion and ejection. Now we get the WD-40 out, wet a few Q-tips and lubricate the slides and shutter actuator arm. Do *not* idly spray the mechanism with WD-40: it may not be a conductor, but being a lubricant, it will attract dust as do all petrochemicals. Use it judiciously (not generously or liberally) on moving contact points, *not* electrical contact points. Get the front rollers on the right and left slide, get the drop posts on the rear of the slides *with* and *without* a floppy inserted. This will ensure you don't miss the important contact points.

Using WD-40 *only*, clean the spiral shaft of the stepper motor. Don't saturate the Q-tip here, cause you're working in very close proximity to the heads and the head/ribbon assembly.

And finally, eject the floppy (if it's in the drive), use one Q-tip with ZRC to clean the head base assemblies (upper and lower); a lotta grit accumulates here, to include mylar and ferric/ferrous oxides (more than likely a lot of your irretrievable musical data ground off of floppies is residing here).

Lastly, use another Q-tip w/ZRC to swab the upper

and lower head surfaces, and the last Q-tip leave dry to gently dry off these upper and lower head surfaces. Snap the aluminum cover back in place and reinstall the drive...

Summary

What we have done here is basically refurbished the 800k floppy mechanism and taken it one step further. We've not only cleaned the old gunk out of the drive and addressed mechanical-related issues which lead to drive failure, we've gone a few steps better. We've cleaned the heads and all the connector points. These alone are responsible for better than half of all drive-related failures. We've lubed the mechanism with a finer lubricant that *won't* dry out in extreme temperature variations. We've performed a visual inspection of the mechanism and addressed the six most problematic areas of floppy operation. We've done everything short of fully dismantling the drive, and unless you've done this before, you wouldn't realize the labor cost involved. *That's* why a replacement floppy is always recommended to fix a floppy-based problem...

But yes, it's difficult to swallow a \$250 replacement drive for a \$300 SQ-80. And this article may not prevent this. But at least you'll have done all that you can before committing to a \$300 repair bill to resurrect your ailing Malvern Wonder. And be advised sometimes this is the *only* way to cure the problem. Then again, sometimes it ain't. This isn't rocket science: this is simple mechanics at work (or should I say not at work?). As with most devices, the parts that most often fail are the moving parts. Once properly understood and inspected, these problems are easily remedied.

Next time we'll investigate the 1.4 Mb floppy mechanism of the ASR-10... ■



Bio: Pat has left Truevision to lead a normal life. "If video is such an art form, explain television."

Frequency Folderol

Editing Sampled Sounds in the TS-10 and TS-12, Part 5

Robby Berman

Odd stuff at our backs, lettuce move briskly now forward in our discussion of editing sampled sounds in the TS-series synths. This month's article is nothing but easy stuff, for a change, and I'm not even being sarcastic (also, for a change). As we work our way east across the middle row of Programming buttons, we espy (not the Macintosh font; that's "Espy") a pair of mighty filters looming ahead on yon horizon. Before climbing that drumlin, we need to load in a sampled sound, something different, mayhaps. Let's go with the sampled sound GUITR STRUMS from the SSD-100 floppy that came with your TS.

The Great Filter Fakeout

Once GUITR STRUMS is loaded, select BABY-GRAND (from bank R2-0) so that we can check out what a standard sound's filter pages look like. Press the Filters button until "FILTER 1" is shown in the display's upper left corner. Let's take inventory: we've got the Filter 1 configuration parameter, the cutoff and keyboard scaling parameters, the MODSRC and MODAMT parameters, and the parameter for determining how much Envelope 2 will be used for shaping Filter 1. Press the Filters button again: Filter 2 has the same parameters (though the available configuration values are a bit different).

Now select GUITR STRUMS and tap on the Filter button until "FILTER 1" is shown in the upper left. Yipes! It's the same parameters as with a standard TS sound! For a change, we've nothing to explain. But wait, Vegan Boy — not so quick. One of the parameters offers different values when a sampled sound is selected, and, actually, there's even an itty bitty parameter missing.

Cutoff in Our Prime

When a standard TS sound is selected, the Filter 1 and 2 Cutoff parameters offer a range of 0 to 127. When a sampled sound is selected, the range is 0 to 150. The effect of the parameter is the same: it's just that, in standard TS sounds, you've got 127 steps in-between the highest and lowest cutoff frequency setting, while in sampled sounds, you've got 150 (ooh, 23 more!) for a somewhat finer resolution.

The parameter missing in sampled sounds' filters is hardly even a parameter — it's just an asterisk. Of course, in the TS, when the asterisk is visible, the cutoff setting can be offset by the Brightness track parameter; when it's not it can't. The Brightness track parameter can always be used to alter the cutoff setting of a sampled sound; this feature can't be disabled, as it can in a standard sound.

Beyond Compare

Let's talk about something we haven't gotten into yet that applies to all sampled sound editing, and is actually kinda interesting. Have you noticed that the Compare LED doesn't light when you edit sampled sounds as it does when you edit standard sounds? Have you noticed that when you re-select a standard sound, all of your edits go away, but that the edits you make to a sampled sound stick? "Why this is?" you may ask. These two different behaviors reveal and, in the case of sampled sounds, mimic the differences between the editing environments of the TS synths and Ensoniq samplers.

On a TS synth, there is a separate area of memory

called the "edit buffer." When you begin to edit a standard sound, the TS copies the sound into the edit buffer along with the change you've made (and any subsequent changes you make). The Compare LED lights to say "Yo, the edits you just made are in the edit buffer, and that's what you're listening to." When you press the Compare button to turn off the LED, you're listening once again to the unedited version of the sound stored in the TS's battery-backed RAM ("random access memory").

Ensoniq samplers, on the other hand, don't have battery-backed RAM — when you turn your ASR or EPS off, bye-bye go the sounds you've loaded or created, as well as your sequences (hopefully you've saved everything to disk first). Most brands of samplers operate in this fashion, since they're generally viewed as sound-creation canvases where storing an assortment of preset sounds in memory isn't such a priority as it is in synthesizers — and battery-backed RAM makes products more expensive. When you

shape sounds in a sampler — or when you edit sampled sounds in the TS — your work takes form in malleable (non-battery-backed) RAM, and remains there, as you left it, until you tweak it some more, delete it manually or turn the sampler — or TS — off.

Told ya it would be easy this time. Next time, too! ■



Bio: Robby Berman is a musician currently enjoying the warm evenings of New York State's beautiful Mid-Hudson Valley. And he's getting tired of plugging "Rings and Rings," already.



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One of our most common requests from new subscribers (new owners) is for more basic tutorial information. We've all been there. Unfortunately, the *Hacker* is usually "there" when a new instrument first makes its appearance — and then we move on. While back issues can answer many questions, not all are still available and they do represent an additional expense for the new reader. Hence, "*Hacker Reinitialization*" — yup, old goods in a new wrapper. We feel a little funny about the whole reprint thing — so we're going to keep it small. Clark's series on the SQs is the most requested, least available, and the most generally applicable (KSs, KTs, and the new E-Prime in particular — and we're checking 'em for freshness), so here we go...

The Book of SQ (KS, KT & E-Prime)

Part XII — Setting Phasers on Stun

Clark Salisbury

So far in our twisted journey we've examined the SQ reverbs, chorusing and flanging effects. But there's a lot more going on in SQ effectsland than just these three effect types. Why, there's phase shifting, rotary speaker, distortion and compression that we have yet to deal with. Let's start with phase shifting, shall we?

The Phase Shifter effect in the SQ is designed to emulate the classic "Bi-phase" effect popularized by the venerable Mutron company several years ago, and it's one of my favorite effects. You readers who've been playing electric guitar or Rhodes piano or Clavinet for more than a few years will no doubt remember the phase-shifter's almost vocal-sounding sweeping effect. And for those of you who don't, here's a little demonstration.

Select the ROM program "Dyno Lead." Hit EDIT, then the EFFECTS menu button, and the screen 0 button to move to the top of the effects menu pages. You'll note that this sound uses the "Chorus + Reverb" effect. Select the effect type, and change it to "Phase Shifter." You should be hearing the effect of the phase shifter now, though it will seem a bit subtle. But we can fix that in no time.

Scroll to the next page (or hit the screen 1 button), and adjust "Phaser Rate" to something a bit faster — perhaps a value of "25" or so. Also, increase "Phaser Depth" to around "60" — you should be starting to hear that classic sound now. Scroll to the next page and you'll come to the "Phaser Center" parameter — it is set to a value of 50. This value places the poles of the phaser half-way between their extremes, yielding maximum effect. Note that changing this value can have the effect of "tuning" the phaser to sweep through higher or lower frequency spectra. For now, leave it set to 50, and move on to the "Feedback" parameter. This control works in a similar fashion to the feedback control on the chorusing or flanging effects — it routes some of the processed signal back into the effect input to process it again, yielding a much thicker processing. You'll want to be careful with this parameter, though — extreme settings

can cause the SQ to generate some pretty brutal sine waves, which could damage your ears, your speakers, and your good standing with the board of directors for your condominium association.

But being the devil-may-care synthesist that you are, you'll want to beef up this sound by increasing the feedback amount anyway. Try both positive and negative setting for the Feedback parameter, to get a sense of how each colors the sound. The setting that I particularly like is in the negative range — something like "-70" sounds pretty cool to me.

The next parameter is "Stereo Cross-Feedback," and the caveat about extreme settings applies here too. This parameter controls the amount of output from one channel of the phaser that will be fed into the other for creating a stereo feedback effect — the actual effect of this parameter (at least to my ear) is pretty similar to that of the straight-ahead feedback parameter, so just adjust it to your own liking. I find a setting of "-46" to be pleasing.

The next menu page presents us with the "Phaser Level" and "Input Invert" parameters. "Phaser Level" gives us a certain amount of control over the amount of phaser output that will be present in the final signal — a setting of 99 will yield maximum effect, so let's leave it set there. After all, we can still control the overall phaser level from the FX1 and FX2 bus located at the top of the effects menu pages.

The "Input Invert" parameter, however, will have a very significant effect on the color of our sound. You see, normally a phaser creates notches in a sound's frequency spectrum, and these notches are swept up and down through the spectrum to create the phaser's characteristic sound. But by inverting the input signal, the notches become peaks — a fairly different sounding effect. Try setting the Input Invert parameter to "ON" to get an idea of what this sounds like. See? This stuff is a piece of gateau.

The last parameter in the phaser menu pages is for modulating one of the effect parameters from one of the modulators. By now you should be sufficiently adept with the SQ and its effects to be able to explore this page fully on your own, but I will share one of my favorite uses for this page, and that is to control phaser rate from the modwheel.

To set this up, first assign "Rate" as the parameter to modu-

late, and modulate it from the "MODWHEEL," with an amount of "+30" — your display screen should look like this:

```
Modulate  RATE
by MODWHEEL +30
```

This will allow you to use the wheel to control phaser rate. And since you have an easy way to change the phaser rate whenever you want, it might be nice to set the initial rate a bit slower than you might normally. This will give you a nice range of phaser rate values to choose from when you're performing. So hit the screen 1 button (to move to the correct menu page) and set "Phaser Rate" to a fairly low value — around "18" or so. Now you can use the modwheel to adjust the phaser rate to pretty much whatever seems appropriate at the time. If you want to increase the range of control from the modwheel, simply set "Phaser Rate" lower yet, and increase the value for modulation amount from +30 to some higher value.

The SQ also contains a dual effect that utilizes phase shifting — the "PHASER + REVERB" algorithm. None of the reverb or phaser parameters differ from anything we've discussed so far, so you shouldn't have any trouble using this effect. And it's real nice to have access to phase shifting effects without having to give up the reverb — particularly for electric pianos, clavinet, guitars, organs, and a multitude of other sounds available in the SQ (clavinet through a phase shifter is one of my all-time favorite comping sounds).

Another effect that I'd like to take a moment and talk about is the "ROTARY SPKR+VERB" effect. This effect is designed to simulate the sound of the speaker cabinets designed and manufactured by the Leslie Corporation for use with electric organs — most notably of the illustrious Hammond variety.

The Leslie speaker cabinet contains at least a couple of speakers, one of which would actually rotate at a couple of different speeds, creating interesting doppler effects as it rotated toward and away from the listener. The organist using the cabinet would normally have a footswitch which would allow him or her to switch the speaker between slow and fast rotation speeds. But since the speaker rotated mechanically, it would take it a few moments to get up to full speed or to slow down completely once the switch had been hit. All of these idiosyncrasies have been quite nicely integrated into the "ROTARY SPKR+VERB" effect. To check this out, let's start with the ROM program "Organ 2."

Select the program and hit the "Edit" and then the "Effects" button. Hit the screen 0 button to move to the top of the effects editing menu, and increment the effects until you

reach the "ROTARY SPKR+VERB" effect.

As is usually the case with most of the multi-effects, you can use FX1 and FX2 to control reverb amounts; any voices routed to FX1 will be processed both by the rotary speaker effect and the reverb, while voices routed to FX2 will receive processing by the reverb alone.

Since we've already dealt with reverb effects in some depth, I want to skip the second menu page (the one accessed by pressing the screen 1 button) which deals solely with reverb-related parameters. So let's continue by pressing the screen 2 button to access the first set of parameters that deal with the rotary speaker effect, "Slow Speed," and "Fast Speed."

As might seem obvious, here's where you control the speed of the rotary speaker effect. As with a real Leslie speaker, there are two speeds available — slow and fast. Unlike the real thing, though, you can control the speed for either of these extremes.

The default setting of 10 for the slow and 90 for the fast speed is a pretty good approximation of the way a real Leslie works. But if you'd like to change these speeds, do so. Note, though, that any changes you make will not be apparent until you've initiated a controller change. I'll illustrate:

Try setting the value for Slow Speed to 40, and play a few notes. No difference, huh? Now move the modwheel all the way forward and back, and play a few more notes. Notice that the slow speed is now quite a bit faster than it was before. You see, the modwheel is the default controller used to select between slow and fast speed in this effect (although you can easily choose any of a number of other controllers instead), and until you move it to switch to the fast speed, and then back to the slow speed, you won't hear the effect of any changes you make to either the fast or slow speed parameters. Just thought you'd like to know.

At any rate, the functioning of the slow and fast speed settings should be pretty evident, so let's move on to the next page. From here we can control the "rotor" center and depth. The "Center" parameter acts somewhat like the "Center" parameter in the phase shifter effect, in that it can be used to "tune" the rotor to sweep through a higher or lower range of frequencies. And, logically enough, the "Rotor Depth" control allows you to adjust the distance over which the rotor sweeps. A variety of effects can be achieved by varying these two parameters, some of which are pretty subtle, and some of which are not so subtle. The main thing to remember when working with these parameters is that the effect you end up with is going to sound a bit different at each of the two different speeds, so

remember to check the sound at both the slow and fast speeds before making any final decision on the settings for any particular effects program.

The last page in the ROTARY SPKR+VERB effect is where you assign a modulator to control the speed change of the rotor. The default setting uses the modwheel as a switch, which seems like a pretty logical way to control this effect. When the modwheel is used as a switch, kicking the wheel forward has the effect of switching the effect from the slow speed to the fast speed. And just as with the real McCoy, it will take the effect a few moments to fully attain its fastest speed. Pulling the modwheel back will switch the effect back from fast to slow speed, again with an authentic lag time.

There are a couple of other modes for controlling how the speed switching will work. For example, if you are using the wheel or CV pedal to control speed and you have SpeedMode set to CONTIN (continuous) the rotor speed will track the modwheel or pedal position. In other words, if you only want the rotor to speed up a little bit, just move the wheel or pedal forward a little way. Of course you can't do that with a real Leslie cabinet, but that's not Leslie's fault. After all, the original is a mechanical device.

The other choice for SpeedMode is TOGGLE. This is the setting you'd probably use if you want to use pressure or a footswitch to switch speeds, as the speed will switch whenever the assigned modulator sends a message that moves from 0 in a positive direction. For example, if you try routing pressure to control the switching between speeds (those of you with pressure-sensitive keyboards) — pressing harder on the keys momentarily will cause the effect to switch from whatever speed it's currently at to the other speed. However, if you try to use pressure as a modulator when the SpeedMode is set to SWITCH you can cause the rotor to switch from slow to fast by pressing harder, but once you release the pressure the rotor will switch back to the slow speed.



Anyway, that'll about wrap it up for this installment. Stay tuned — we'll be doing the last bit on effects next time out. See ya then... ■

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Ensoniq MR-76, w/ EXP-1 Wave Expansion Board, MRD-1 Sound Disk, Soft Cover, Mark of the Unicorn MR-Editor/Librarian Software (Macintosh). AKG headphones. New 1/97. Excellent condition, originally \$3,100 — priced to sell at \$2,500. Call Bill at (515) 253-0140 (Iowa).

Ensoniq KT-88 for sale. Never used. Includes: LeCover dust cover, MS-1 sheet music stand, generic keyboard stand, CV-1 pedal, shipping. \$2,100 or best offer. Call Greg at 860-242-5251.

TS-12 with 8 meg update, library, and case. \$2500.00. Wayne Thompson, (503) 286-6389, synsin@spiritone.com

SAMPLES/PATCHES/SOUNDS

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>.

For a limited time, receive all 25 disks in Tom Shear's library of samples for only \$100! That's less than a dollar a sound! Some of the sweetest sounds your EPS/16+/ ASR/TS will ever feed on. Smoothly looped sounds from the Matrix 6, Prophet VS, VFX, SQ-80, Microwave, O1/W, Yamaha SY, and OF COURSE, the Minimoog! Check or Money order to: Tom Shear, 41 Mary Fran Drive, 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!

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.

Creature Comforts by Sean O'Donnell and David Forlano

Pendler by Jorgen Teller and guest artists

Tape: *Creature Comforts* (c) 1997.

Artists: Sean O'Donnell and David Forlano.

Contact Info: David Forlano, 1714 N. Mascher St, Philadelphia, PA 19122; Phone: 215-739-0609; Email: Forlano1@aol.com.

Equipment: Ensoniq ASR-10, Casio SK-1, Novation BassStation, Oberheim OBMx, Roland D-10, Roland JS-30 sampler, Roland S-330 sampler, Alesis ADAT, Mackie mixing console, Digitech DSP-128, DOD effects pedals, 2 Lexicon JamMen, Rane Parametric EQ, Fender Stratocaster.

O'Donnell and Forlano write in their cassette liner: *"This music is improvised and represents a process of discovery. We began by playing eight one-hour sessions of music while recording to a multi-track DAT recorder. Each new session was taped without listening to those previously recorded. We then selectively mixed the results of this random overlay of music and excerpted our favorite moments."*

The operative word in their description is "random." *Creature Comforts* is a one-hour cassette containing twenty-two separate cuts, mostly fairly short (averaging around three minutes). O'Donnell and Forlano state that they recorded one-hour sessions of "music." I would describe the process more as laying down tracks of sound effects, then mixing the results. The outcome is a potpourri of sonic landscapes, most fairly ambient and soundtrack-like, but some fairly "musical." Animal noises compete with industrial churnings; spooky subliminal washes provide a backdrop for eerie crackles, pops, and moans; robot effects trade sonic space with guitar nightmares. The overall feel is one of mildly menacing backdrops to old movies or sci-fi flicks.

Production-wise, the recording is crystal-clear. This is a most welcome and necessary feature for a project showcasing ambient sound and seemingly intended as background mood-music, not "evaluate with your headphones on" listening in your lazy-boy. It is difficult to ascertain the intention of this music. From the artists' comments I assume this is a mostly experimental project, not "designed" with any particular listening style in mind.

The engineering is very good: artistic use of the stereo field, excellent balance between the different sonic elements, judicious EQ-ing breathing life into what could otherwise be mere monotony, fading sounds in and out smoothly.

The track titles give an indication of what this music sounds like: *"Insect Kingdom," "Whirlybird," "Bugs," "Tin Foil Ball," "Clock," "Fire Truck," "Funky Popcorn,"* etc. There is no question that, in the music store, this project would find its home in the "ambient new age atmospheric soundtrack" section. If this is a "first time out" basement tape project, I would like to see this duo focus on longer tracks which would provide for a more cohesive background listening experience, and to use some of the "organic" sounds more, such as the interesting Strat sounds. An excellent beginning!

CD: *Pendler* (c) 1997.

Artist: Jorgen Teller and guest artists.

Contact Info: Jorgen Teller, c/o SKRAEP, Kronprinsensgade 7, Mezz., DK 1114 K, Copenhagen, Denmark; Phone: 45-33327222; Fax: 45-33323836.

Equipment: DAT; other equipment not detailed.

We last heard from Jorgen Teller in his CD *"My Inner Ear,"* a collection of sonic explorations recorded in Copenhagen's cochlea-shaped Roundtower (reviewed in the May, 1996 *Transoniq Hacker* — #131). Teller continues his "ambient music in public places" theme in *"Pendler,"* a two-CD set which started in Copenhagen's Central Station. Teller writes:

"On the 2nd of January 1997, SKRAEP [distributor of Pendler] celebrated the passage from 1996 to 1997 with an homage to the pendling people of Copenhagen's Central Station in a very special event (Pendler = Commuter). Ten people surrounded The Central Station, all distributing a postcard (5,000 total) telling them they just left/were going into an extraordinary sound environment and that it was being recorded in that very moment. The postcard furthermore informed them that these record-

ings would be treated by 12 chosen invited composers and released on a "Pendler" 2-CD which could be ordered by using the postcard. The artists received a one-hour DAT recorded by Jorgen Teller and Per Buhl Acs on the grounds of the Central Station during the 2nd of January, 1997."

These twelve artists then used the DAT recording from The Central Station as a starting point, inspiring twelve separate compositions, derived from, based on, mixed and blended with the ambient soundtrack. Real "commuting" sounds are mixed with other samples, synthesizer sounds, drum machine tracks, and an amazing assortment of sound effects, musical instrument performances and vocalizations. The result is an ingenious work of musical art, a collection of realtime musical experiences embellished by twelve creative artists, and captured on CD.

Although the tracks are all based on identical copies of the same DAT, there is amazing variety and creativity represented from track to track, artist to artist. Some pieces are mostly ambient free-form sound, while others are more "musical," finding bits of ambient melody to be molded and massaged into a "song."

It isn't possible to review all 145 minutes of this project, but a few examples will hopefully give you a feel for this work:

CPH Pendler Music (Francis Dhumont, Canada) — Starting with the train station ambience which forms the backdrop for the entire track, dizzyingly panned "autobahn" synth sounds zoom in and out of the stereo field.

Kiseru-Copenhagen to Shinjuku (Otomo Yoshihide, Japan) — More of a water-travel piece, this track uses some very cool vocal effects, with female station announcers over a PA system, blended with scratchy vinyl LP sounds mixed with numerous other unidentifiable "commuting" sounds.

9/10 (Jakob Brandt — P, Denmark) — Female vocalizations of the words "number nine" bias the listener towards a White Album mindset. It is difficult to ascertain whether it is the almost hypnotic suggestion of "number nine" or the actual sounds on the track which evoke the Beatlesque mood.

Tiraillement (Ruelgo, France) — This track explores the rhythmic realities of rail travel. An ambient "melody" is

discovered and amplified, layered and doubled with synth instruments to bring it into bold relief.

3rd Stone from Platform Seven (P.O. Jorgens, Denmark) — Tongue-in-cheek reference to Hendrix, this track plays with siren and percussion sounds.

Pendul (Per Buhl Acs, Denmark) — This long track builds from "normal" rail commuter sounds into a noisy, rhythmic percussion fest punctuated with buzzy synths and people coughing. Reminds me of the frenzied drumming of men's movement retreats of the late 1980s (but without the B.O.).

I have a nagging question in the back of my mind: why would a presumably harried commuter want to listen to two CDs of commuting sounds? I would suppose that Jorgen's response might be, "To get them to hear the music all around them."

Jorgen Teller's fascination with "public place" ambient sound is highly contagious. Projects like *Pendler* cause one to stop and listen for the music naturally occurring in the immediate environment, whether an acoustically designed spiral tower, a train station, or (my present location) sitting at the water's edge in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, listening to the amazing music created by water crashing on volcanic rock, punctuated by the sweet songs of tropical birds. Teller does us an incredible service, opening our ears to the rhythms, melodies, harmonies and ambient washes of our everyday lives. One does not need a musical instrument nearby to hear music. ■

Tapes Recently Received

Bells and Whispers — from Lloyd Joseph Rose

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>.

The Interface

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

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

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

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

Transoniq Hacker,

I started subscribing to the magazine about two months ago and I have already found it to be of extreme use. Please allow me to use this opportunity to congratulate you for putting such a great magazine together.

Having done this let's get to the problem. I just can't get my computer and my MR-RACK to communicate properly using the UNISYN Sound Editor. Before going into details let me give you an outline of the equipment that I use.

- PC 486DX4-66 and Windows 3.11
- Sound Blaster 16
- Ensoniq MR-Rack (O.S Ver 1.50)
- Roland JV-1080
- Roland A-33
- "Nameless" MIDI connector with 1IN, 1 THRU, 4 OUTS and 1 Joystick Port (The MIDI connector is connected to the Game Port of the Soundcard.)
- Cakewalk Pro Audio 4.00

There seems to be no problem when Unisyn goes through the initialize processing at the start of the program, but the moment I try any of the "GET" command I get an error message that says "DEVIANT DATA RECIEVED [UNEXPECTED STATUS BYTE]." As far as I know the MIDI connections are working. When I right click the mouse I can hear a note from the MR-Rack which obviously means it is receiving data from the computer. Since I am new to the concept of MIDI and since I have access to only one MIDI IN port in the MIDI board, I connected the MIDI cables in the simplest manner I could think of. That is MIDI OUT of the computer to MIDI

IN of the MR-Rack and MIDI OUT of the MR-Rack to the MIDI IN of the computer. I could not figure out a way to connect both the MR-Rack and the A-33 (which I use as the master while I sequence) to the computer at the same time.

Could you please tell be why this error is occurring? And what I could do to fix it. I also would not mind a few tips on connecting my MIDI setup.

PS: How can I get an upgrade of the O.S for the MR-Rack?

Thanking you for your time.

Azmi Jaleel

Sri Lanka

neliwaru@hotmail.com

[PF - Azmi: This may sound like hogwash, but give it a listen anyway. First of all, IGNORE the "Deviant Data Received" message - that's a checksum error that only indicates the number of bytes expected for the Sysex dump was different than the number of bytes received. Your data is there. Simply press Continue and you're on your way...]

As far as a simple MIDI configuration, your existing config is fine. To insert the A33 into the loop, connect the MIDI out of your computer into the MIDI in of the A33, then connect the A33 MIDI OUT to the MR's MIDI IN. Then connect the MIDI out of the MR into the MIDI in of your computer. If that gives you grief you may have to reverse the order of instruments and use the thru on the A33. But just inserting the A33 shouldn't mess with the data stream, and represent a perfectly legal MIDI configuration.

And watch out for "Local On" and "MIDI thru" assignments on your sequencing app...]

TH -

I recently purchased an SQ-2 from a local pawn shop. Unfortunately, it didn't come with a manual or anything. Where might I find the manual and any software or hardware upgrade information (if there is any)?

Joseph Cason Jr.

joehouse@coastalnet.com

[PF - Joe: Welcome to the world of Ensoniq products where musical OUTPUT is the focus, not the noodling around to get a sound out of the instrument. For the secret stuff on how the SQ-2 operates, request the SQ-2 Musician's Manual from Ensoniq Customer Support at (610) 647-3930. Expect to pay in the \$25-\$30 range (including shipping), and don't put it off any longer. The SQ-2 is one of the more powerful Ensoniq engines with not only the built-in sequencer (that you're gonna want to expand with the SQX expander), but it's one of the 76-note unweighted keyboards that offers channel aftertouch. Don't know what you paid, but if you bagged it at a pawn shop, well...

Then it's time for you to subscribe to the Hacker, as in it you'll not only find tips, tricks, and VERY helpful workarounds, you'll also get the URL's to internet links for shareware software editors to voice your SQ-2, along with a plethora of user input from SQ users (like myself). Congratulate yourself on purchasing one of the most affordable

and powerful 76-note synths on this blue ball.]

TH -

In the April issue Dave Taylor asked about how one can sequence a smooth ritard on the **KT-88**. Pat suggested he use a series of one-measure sequences, each with a slightly slower tempo.

To get an even smoother ritard, I have taken this a step further and actually programmed a series of one-bar sequences in 1/4 time - in other words, the tempo changes slightly every beat rather than every four beats.

It's more tedious to program, but the results are nice!

Sam Mims
Syntaur Productions
syntaur@juno.com

[TH - Thanks!]

Hi:

I'm a veteran user of both the EPS and EPS-16+. Recently, after converting a sample from a Kurzweil archive into an EPS-16+ readable file (using Terje's K-Snatcher utility), I managed to completely lock up my EPS-16+ when loading this file (via floppy). After turning the unit OFF, and then trying to re-start, the unit will no longer prompt for the OS disk, or go through its usual start up routine. All that happens is that the 8 instrument lights go on. When I insert the OS (1.30) disk into the drive, it spins for a couple of seconds, then stops. All that happens when I press buttons is I get random characters on the screen.

I had this exact problem once before, with the exact same instrument (like a total fool, I forgot to trash this disk

and inadvertently made the same mistake again). That time however, I managed to "wake up" the EPS-16+, after rapidly turning the power switch ON and OFF several times. I seem to remember hearing about this as a trick to "hard reset" the newer Ensoniq boards, but don't ever remember hearing about this for the EPSs. Anyway, it worked that time, but this time it does not.

Does anyone know how to "wake up" my EPS-16+??? If it matters, Terje has looked at this particular file, and it is corrupted according to him. It also crashed his EPS-16+, but his was able to recuperate by simply turning the unit OFF and ON again. Also, I have one of the earliest EPS-16+'s, I believe.

Thanks in advance,
Dan Nigrin
Defective Records / 202 Hack
dnigrin@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu

[PF - Dan: The SD-1 (and possibly a few variants like it) could be reset after a hard crash or lock by switching the power on and off SEVEN times in rapid succession. Whether or not this will free up your '16+ remains to be seen, but I'd give it a try anyway. Never heard of this problem before - sounds more like it's hardware-based rather than software based. My old EPS Classic exhibited this same problem when it had a loose (intermittent) floppy drive connector. I cleaned and tightened the 4-lead power connector and it worked fine.

As the contents of the OS that load into the EPS-16+ from disk are RAM-based, it's difficult to believe a corrupt file managed to hose the '16+ firmware (if downright impossible). Terje's a veteran codewarrior, so I'd defer to his prognosis, as he's literally written OS hacks and EPS utilities.

But it sure sounds like a hardware-based issue concerning your '16+.

Give Malvern Customer Service a call at (610) 647-3930. They may have some feedback from the field on this particular problem. Ping us back with the solution, as I'm sure your experience will be helpful to all of us.]

[Dan Nigrin - Pat: Thanks for your suggestions. I too am fairly impressed (tearful) that a *file* has managed to crash my 16+'s firmware. But I'm convinced that that's what has happened! The unit was performing flawlessly around each instance that it was brought down by this particular file... I'll give the customer service folks a call.

BTW, the "magic seven times" trick has not been working for me this time round. :-<]

[Ensoniq - The hard reset procedure (turning a unit on and off seven times) won't work with the EPS. Since the EPS is a RAM-based machine, each time you boot up it's like having done a reset. In this circumstance, however, you may have to wait a period of time before rebooting, so that RAM can completely discharge.]

TH -

Firstly, let me say how amazing the TS-12 is. I have used keyboards by most of the other manufacturers and nothing comes close. Bravo!

Secondly, may I also congratulate Rubber Chicken software on their fantastic TS/MR Tools PC editing software. This is an absolute must for anybody wanting to play around with pc *.wav files and convert them to Ensoniq samples. Superb work!

Problem - I am after the latest operating system for my TS-12. The shop I bought the keyboard from passed me onto Key Audio systems who are apparently the new supplier for the UK.

But they told me they do not have a copy of any operating system for the TS-12. Surely I don't have to contact Ensoniq in the US for such a small request? I keep reading in the Hacker how fantastic customer service is at Ensoniq, but I am beginning to doubt whether the same can be said for the UK supplier. Please let me know where I can get hold of the OS.

Cheers

Andrew Ogden

Proud owner of a TS-12,

Manchester, England.

a.j.ogden@civils.salford.ac.uk

[PF - Andrew: Been caught on this one before, so it's still fresh in my head. The TS-12 operating system is ROM-based (firmware) on chips that reside on the logic board in your instrument. To get the new OS chips will require an Authorized Ensoniq Dealer to order them for you, so I'd either call your local Ensoniq service provider or call Ensoniq directly here in the states. They'll be able to forward your request to a dealer in your area. Cost is minimal: around \$35-40 US for the OS, and possibly a half-hour labor cost to have a tech install them for you.

BTW, the most recent TS OS is 3.05.

Cheers!]

[Rubber Chicken Software Co. (chickenEPS@willmar.com) - Thanks for the compliments on our software, Andrew.

I wanted to note TS/MR Tools has been renamed to Ensoniq Disk Tools (which is also contained in the Ensoniq MIDI-Disk Tools). The reason for the name change was that it more accurately represents what the product can do, and also we wanted to drop the MR reference since Ensoniq has dropped their plans for now to have the MR-Workstations read EPS/ASR samples directly.

Along that line, it's a shame that that feature was dropped. Although the .WAV reading option is a good thing, what you don't get is multi-sampling, looping, and other almost critical features. Honestly, we were on the verge of purchasing one here, but the dropping of that option drove us away for the time being. C'mon, everyone - contact Ensoniq and let them know you would like to see that feature! I know I will - because we want one. As before, if Ensoniq hears enough interest, perhaps they will reconsider and do it. Remember the Original EPS in a rack - people requested it - and they did that.]

MR Hackers,

I was browsing the Ensoniq web pages and found a way cool page that lets you order the current OS EPROM for your MR keyboards. No more calling and having to mess around with your dealer. I've done several of the OS upgrades on my MR-76, and it is a simple task. Ensoniq sends you all that you will need, instructions, grounding wrist strap, etc. Point your browser to www.ensoniq.com/html/mreprom.htm.

Wes Zaidle

wzaidle@ix.netcom.com

[PF - Wes: As I've been saying about Ensoniq for the past 12 years - "The most resonant company with the performing musician you're ever gonna find" ...]

[Wes Zaidle (wzaidle@ix.netcom.com) - MR USERS: Sorry about my three finger typing. But the web page address for the OS EPROM upgrades is www.ensoniq.com/html/mreprom.htm. Also the latest revision is 2.10. I also just installed the MR flash memory expansion module today and can't wait to load some samples. If your dealers are telling you that they are not available (like they were telling me), have

them call their Ensoniq representative.]

[PF - Wes: Thanx for the correction: duly noted and posted...]

[Rubber Chicken Software Co. (chickenEPS@willmar.com) - I just wish they were "resonant" enough to re-include resonant filters on their stuff years ago! But hey, they are back, so who's complaining...

Speaking of MR Web pages, check out www.rain.org/~msavard/index.htm - the Unofficial MR site. M. Savard has done a nice job - check it out! Better yet, contribute something to the archive.]

TH -

I have a 4x expander and I want to use a zip drive for storage of my samples. Could you please help me in locating a place that sells this connection? Also, if you know how I can convert the 4x connection to SCSI myself, please let me know the procedure.

Thank you very much for your help,
Alex

ALSKIII202@aol.com

[PF - Alex: No, you can't homebrew a SCSI adapter for any of the Ensoniq samplers. You'll save yourself a LOT of time and headache by purchasing the original Ensoniq SCSI expander for your particular sampler. There were a lot of third parties out there making memory expanders that were NOT compatible with the Ensoniq SCSI expander as well as a lot of companies that made SCSI expanders that would NOT work with the Ensoniq memory expander.

Contact your Ensoniq dealer and order the real deal. You'll be VERY glad you did...]

[TH – And for the lowdown on using a zip drive, check out the file “zippy” at our ftp site. Garth of Rubber Chicken Software wrote the article to address just these questions.]

[Rubber Chicken Software Co. (chickenEPS@willmar.com) – I assume you have an Original EPS, since “4X expanders” only existed on them. The ZipDrive is not recognized by the EPS’s SCSI interface – sorry about that. You’ll just have to get a 16-Plus or better.

Also, check our site for Drive Compatibility issues – http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/hd_compt.html – and Ensoniq’s site too – <http://www.ensoniq.com/mid/scsi.htm>.]

Transoniq Hacker:

Here is an interesting story for you.

I am new to the sampling arena and I have just purchased a new ASR-10. At least I guess it is new. Here is the story: I traded my TS-12 via UPS to Jerry’s Music (in Wausau, Wisconsin) in on my ASR-10. I had them install 16Mb of memory and SCSI. I paid for the SCSI and the memory for a total of \$595. Jerry’s Music took my trade for even except for the SCSI and memory, so I shelled out the \$595.

I received my ASR-10 via UPS about three weeks later. It was not shipped in its original box, instead, it was shipped in an MR-76 box. I opened the box and the floppy drive had a floppy in it! Even I know that you are not supposed to ship with a floppy in a drive. The entire unit was totally dusty and I needed to clean it. I found the warranty card and filled it out. My unit was made on 4-11-1994. I called Ensoniq to see if my unit was actually used. It turns out that it had not been sold before. I hope this unit is the

same as the ones they are building today!!! I don’t think I’ll purchase another keyboard sight unseen. I wonder if the unit will be worth less if I decide to trade in the future (because of its actual age)?

The ASR-10 seems to be working okay, but it is my first time using a sampler and I have nothing to compare it to. I should have done more research into samplers before I bought (even though I know that Ensoniq is a great company). The 16Mb of memory seems to be limiting when you see units like the Yamaha (AS 3000), Akai (MPC2000), and E-mu. Sometimes I wonder if I should just go back to playing my guitar (NOT!).

Thanks again!!!

Paul J. Pappas

pappa_pj@cowley.uwlax.edu

[PF – Paul: Sounds like you bought a demo ASR or a display model ASR. No big deal – the latest version of the ASR-10 has an LCD display, earlier ones had a display tube with blue characters. Other than the display, consider both units identical in durability, performance, reliability and features.

The 16 Mb limit is not a brick wall – it only seems that way when you compare the ASR-10 to newer samplers. And if you’ve EVER tried to navigate around an Emulator or any of the other Asian samplers, you’ll discover that the ASR-10 interface and sequencing environment MORE than make up for whatever memory benefit the others can offer.

As your ASR-10 has “never been titled,” you’re the first owner and entitled to the full one year part and labor warranty that Ensoniq provides. Not like the Alesis 90-day labor, 1-year part warranty that forces you to pay shipping costs and labor charges for repair to a unit that must be returned to the factory. No, you’re in

WAVEBOY PLUG-INS

44KHz COMPRESSOR

Your ASR-10 becomes a high-end digital compressor, with this new Waveboy plug-in effect. This stereo compressor limiter has adjustable attack, decay, threshold, and ratio, plus a noise-gate function to control digital noise in more extreme squashing situations. Only in digital can you get true “instant” attack time, which can control the fastest transients. Great on internal sounds, for re-sampling, and for processing external inputs. A must-have tool for recording, mixing, and mastering. Also works on the EPS-16 PLUS (with mono audio-in.) \$49.95

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possession of the most powerful, flexible and affordable sampling FUNstation ever manufactured – you can go to the bank on that. Enjoy!]

TH –

Does anyone use the MIDI features of the ASR-10? How do you change sounds via MIDI? I have the SCSI option with a Syquest 200/16Mb/output exp. The manual states that you “Send the file number plus 1” to change sounds. Also “Send the bank number plus one” for banks... I tried assigning a macro to a prog ch. num. Doesn't work. Am I missing something here? I had hoped to be able to change sounds from my computer (PC), using Logic Audio, like I can do with all my other MIDI equip... Also, if I send a MIDI Start Message from the computer, with my ASR on “MIDI,” I get an “Error 144 Reboot.”

Can anyone help? I bought ASR Tools from Rubber chicken, which doesn't work either (searches for the instruments forever). Am I the only one who needs a “Map program change number to sample instrument” function so I can assign prog ch. nums to a particular sound?

Thank you for any help...

Call For Writers!

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

Regards,
Bill Webster
billw@sirius.com

[Rubber Chicken Software Co. (chickenEPS@willmar.com) – Bill has contacted us about his problem with the MIDI-Disk Tools, and we have responded, but have not gotten an answer back from him yet. MIDI-Disk Tools has proven solid in the MIDI performance of all the test units we've worked with here. I encourage anyone who has experienced MIDI problems with our programs to contact us at chickenEPS@willmar.com.

A program change of 2 will load File number 1 (and so on) off the current directory of the current storage device. But remember, it only does this when MIDI IN MODE = MULTI or MONO B, and when PROGRAM CHANGE=ON and you must have it in LOAD mode.

Macros are loaded with Program Changes 101-128, to invoke macros 0-27 (-101 one this time). This info can be found on Page 43 of the ASR manual.]

[PF – Bill: I posted a response last month to a similar question, but Garth's comments from Rubber Chicken Software should be heeded here: program change offset is 1, you must be in “Multi” or “Mono B” mode, and if you're not in “Load” mode (the “Load” indicator in the display MUST be blinking), MIDI program changes will be ignored.]

TH –

Where can I convert a VFX-SD file to SMF standard MIDI file?

Very urgent!

I no longer have the VFX-SD and no computer can read my VFX floppy

disk.

If you do not know, please let me know someone who might.

Michael Reichel
reichelm@dcsengr.hqusareur.army.mil

[PF – Mike: Contact Giebler Enterprises at (610) 933-0395 (voice) to order VFX-SD -> SMF package. It's the fastest (as well as the easiest) way to get to there from here. Requires a PC or compatible with a 3.5" floppy drive to work, and it's WAY cool. Your PC will not only be able to read the disk and convert the VFX-SD sequence into a Standard MIDI File, it also comes with a formatting utility to let you format Ensoniq disks on your PC. Don't waste any more time trying to use anything else...]

TH –

I am an amateur musician who knows very little about the technology involved with today's keyboards. I am not a great technical musician. However, I do consider myself a fair/good songwriter. I recently came into some money and would like to buy some sort of machine that is relatively easy to use in order to write and perform songs. I have been told that the MR series from Ensoniq is the route I should travel (from a dealer).

I need something that has the ability to be used in a “live” setting to play the majority of songs pre-recorded. I was told that the use of the disk with the MR series would give me the ability to play an entire concert without time delays – is this true?

My main concern is the ability to write and perform music (dance/pop) as a “one-man band.” Is the MR series what I should be using, or are there better options from Ensoniq or any other companies that I should check

out (ie. samplers, etc.)?

I have no idea what direction I should go. I would really appreciate any advice you could give me about what I should buy and what it will cost me!!

Thank you for your time. I can be reached at smitty9139@msn.com

Jeff Smith
(816) 468-8067

[PF - Jeff: I'm not a consultant and this probably isn't the best forum for this kind of question, but I'll offer this much to you - as long as it says "Ensoniq" on it, you can't go wrong. The MR-Series are ideal, but also consider the E-Prime, the ASR-10, the KT-88 or KT-76, the EPS-16+, the SQ+ Series... I can't really put a finger on any one of them. As long as the instrument has a disk drive, and as the MR-Series reads Standard MIDI files, yeah, that's a very safe bet. And the drum machine built into it is bloody amazing...]

TH -

In need of a memory card MC 65 for SQ-1. Any out there?

dgwilson@mesa.k12.co.us

[PF - DGWilson: There were two cards for the SQ-series: an MC-32 and an MC-64 (indicating 32k and 64k memory). I've got ten 32k cards, but 64ks are scarce, as Ensoniq is the only source. Contact your nearby FRIENDLY Ensoniq dealer for

availability. Due to their proprietary nature, I not only don't know of any other manufacturers, I'd be hesitant to recommend anything less than the Ensoniq variety. Their card carries their hardware warranty (unlike the 90 days of third party cards)...]

Hi,

I'm a KS-32 user for three years and I'm very satisfied with this keyboard.

There is the sound... But I search for a good patch of Mellotron emulation. Do you know where I can find this??? Help !!!

Thanks in advance,
Jacques.
jk18@club-internet.fr

[PF - Jacques: The Mellotron was one of the first "analog" (as compared to digital) samplers in the marketplace. It was basically a tape player that played 7-second recorded (analog) sounds. As such, the Mellotron "sound" is playback of genuine strings/flutes/winds/etc. Problem was since it was a tape player, attacks were slow - you could NOT key a "key-down-sound-out" without a delay due to the inherent physics of pressing the key, engaging a capstan, dropping the tape assembly, and initiating playback of the tape across an analog head. It took more than a COUPLE of microseconds to get audio out of these hum-collectors.

So to synthesize the Mellotron sound, you want a fixed velocity (Mellotrons

were NOT velocity sensitive) over a tight chamber string section (preferably a string section in unisons or octaves) with a "short blip" attack envelope. For absolute accuracy, turn effects off - no reverbs were available the time the Mellotron was popular except for the AKG plates of the '60s, and only Yes and the Moody Blues had the unblushing effrontery to drag those tanks around on live gigs.

An almost "granular" sound in context, yet they should have been the most accurate, since they were playback instruments of tape-recorded sounds - the absolute best you could get in the '60s. 8-bit Fairlights killed them...]

Hi fellow enthusiasts,

Can anybody tell me what an Error Code 29 is? I have recently upgraded the memory of my aging ASR-10 to the full 16megs after having neglected my equipment for a while. Yes, I know it's bad but I had an Artistic Integrity crisis which took a while to get over. I have a sneaking feeling that the battery may be the cause but I hope someone may be able to enlighten me.

Regards,
Mike Griffiths
mgriffits@macline.co.uk

[PF - Mike: The Ensoniq error codes are privy only to Ensoniq and its Authorized Service Centers. As Ensoniq stated last month in the Interface, these codes are for the software guys and technicians to troubleshoot

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.)

both hardware and software problems. As such, I'd recommend contacting your friendly Ensoniq Authorized Service Center for the scoop on what the "Error-29" really means. I'd hesitate a guess myself. Any readers familiar with this error code? It's never landed on my ASR-10...]

[Garth Hjelte (i315577@willmar.com) – Do you mean 129? Error 129 is very common, especially when you are sequencing. If it is 29, I would think it's a hardware thing – maybe the SIMMs you have. DO the SIMMs you have have two chips or eight chips on them? If only two – I would recommend getting the 8-chip variety.]

TH –

Does anyone know of any existing supplies of the SCSI interface as I cannot find one – or the Output Expander – here in Helsinki? How about in the UK for example?

Also, does anybody know what DC OFFSET ADJUSTMENT is?

Mark Hakonen-Meddings,
mhakonen@siba.fi

[PF – Mark: With all of the knockoff SCSI expanders that were made for the original EPS, very few (if any) worked with the bona fide EPS memory expanders. For that very reason, I would email Ensoniq directly and ask them about availability for both the 4X memory expander and the SCSI interface kit for our old friend.

I'm not aware of the "DC offset adjustment" as it concerns the EPS – in normal audio lingo it represents an offset to the zero axis on which typical Class AB amplifiers "push and pull" the audio signal across. Example: a Marshall guitar amplifier with 4 EL34 output tubes. Two of the output tubes "push" the signal positive, the other

two "pull" the other half of the waveform negative. This is in comparison to a Class A amplifier, which pushes the entire wave positive (with respect to the zero axis). Harder to do, not as efficient, very expensive, but no switching noise between zero crossings.

Just my \$.02 worth: in either case, DO NOT mess with the parameters hidden under the "Command-1" page...]

TH –

Not yet a member... not sure if the MR-76 is right for my home studio. A friend says that you cannot input MIDI data directly to a computer sequencer AND use the MR as a sound module WITHOUT first saving sequences FROM the MR and then loading them by floppy into the computer. This seems slow... even archaic. Can this be true??? I like the keyboard otherwise, but this would be a definite minus for me. Any chance you would please respond to a potential new Hacker member?

Thanks,
Wildbill10@aol.com

[David Leonard (dleonard@atl.mindspring.com) – I'm using the MR-76 with my computer system (Cakewalk) with no problems. It's just that you have to think a little differently about the MR than other synths. The synth is basically a local only synth. In order to send out the MIDI out port, you choose a "sound" called MIDI OUT. This allows you to specify a channel, bank and patch.

For my setup, I have a preset that uses the utility sound "Silence" as the sound for tracks 1-9 and 11-16. I mute track 10 because I use a DM5 for the majority of my drum sounds. Then for the soundfinder sound I choose MIDI OUT, set at channel 1, bank 1, pro-

gram 1. Cakewalk then remaps this with its MIDI Thru setting and sends it back to the MR.

The reason for the Silence sound on the tracks is so that I can change the FX assignments if I need to.

The drum machine is local only, but there's a work-around here, too. Let's say I've used the MR sequencer to store a basic work version of a piece of music and I've used the drum machine for the rhythm patterns. I would like to be able to tweak the pattern a bit with some custom fills, or assign some of the voices to my DM5. For this I'll need to record the notes into my sequencer. Problem is the drum machine doesn't output actual note data through the MIDI OUT port. Solution is to change the sound on track 10 to the MIDI OUT sound, using channel 10. The bank and program settings aren't important. Set the sequencer to external clock, make sure your MR is sending MIDI stop/start messages, then record it into your sequencer. You won't hear anything, but the note data will be recorded.

To hear the actual notes, you'll need to find what drum kit the MR is using to make the sounds, and assign the bank and program number of that kit in your computer sequencer track. Do this by editing the drum machine kit. The "reassign drum kit" menu will tell you which kit is being used.]

[PF – Wild Bill: I don't understand your question: "...you cannot input MIDI data directly to a computer sequencer AND use the MR as a sound module WITHOUT first saving sequences FROM the MR and then loading them by floppy into the computer." Are you asking if the MR can be used as a tone module to be driven by a computer sequencer? If so, yes, absolutely. Can it be used as a MIDI controller to output note data into a computer sequencer? Yes, absolutely.

The REAL shiny part of the MR keyboards is that they can read Standard MIDI Files (SMF's) that most computer-based sequencers are capable of generating. In Cakewalk, for instance, save any sequence as a *.mid file and then insert it into the MR's disk drive. Press the "load" button and presto: there's the same file ready to be loaded into the MR sequencer and played by it. Way cool synth, too!

And wait'll you check the Drum Machine out...]

Dear readers,

I am an executive recruiter seeking a senior audio software architect with experience in streaming audio and embedded systems, for a terrific start-up in Silicon Valley.

Please contact me regarding any referrals or interest you might have.

Thank you,
Nick Meyler
(818)222-9800
fax(818)222-9898
winross@earthlink.net

[TH - Maybe a little "off topic" ...]

Hi guys:

My purpose here is not to add to the TS versus MR debate. However, I just have to say the TS-12 is the best, most versatile keyboard I've ever owned and perhaps the best machine the Malvernians have ever made, despite, YES, despite its shortcomings (lucky for you guys I only have to ask you about one of them).

Maybe I'm doing something wrong, but it seems when I want to use a sample loaded from disk in a preset or

sequence, I can't NOT use the CV pedal. In other words, when I go to the performance parameters page to choose PED+, PED-, or PED OFF, these settings have no effect on the CV pedal...it is always functioning as PED+. Now this doesn't seem like a big deal, except that I like to mix my MIDI rig live, and need as much inde-

pendent control of my gear as possible.

My rig is very simple actually. Using the TS as master, I control a Yamaha TX802, a Roland D550, an Alesis Midiverb, and a Tascam MIDI line mixer. Most times I have the CV ped mapped to the D550 (CC#7), the Mod

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 6:00 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, Cinetunes. 914-963-5818. 11am-3pm EST. CompuServe: 71024,1255.

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

ESQ-1 AND SQ-80 Questions - Tom McCaffrey. BSQUPA. 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, MR & 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.

wheel mapped to the TX vol (when needed), and use the vol slider on the TS (duh) to control the TS output. This works out great when using a good ol' sound program (RAM or ROM), but doesn't when using a sample. Can anybody out there offer a solution, other than to go out and buy something?

By the way, this was one of the first TS-12s made, in or around 11/23/93, and has the most recent software upgrade v3.10 (I think that's the number), so if a problem exists it is probably not software related. It has had this problem since day one (along with a lot of others) but was never really an issue until I started using a lot of samples in live situations. Despite everything, I still love this keyboard. Is there a chance in hell

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	1.5x
MR-61/76	2.10
ASR-X	1.03
E-Prime	2.01

there will ever be a TS synth engine married to the MR paradigm? I know you get your chops broken over this one, but a keyboard like that (64 voice, 16-track seq., 6-voice sound architecture, RESONANT filters, built-in SCSI, 76-note weighted keys, etc.) would RULE THE WORLD.

Thanks,
Al Friedberg
alcasio@mail.idt.net

[PF - Al: What parameter on the imported sample are you trying to have the CVP-1 control?]

TH -

How can I import an ASR-10 sample into my computer and convert it to WAV format so that I can transfer it from floppy to my MR workstation?

David Leonard
dleonard@atl.mindspring.com

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - Dear David: I've had excellent results using Garth Hjelte's Ensoniq Tools. You can go to Rubber Chicken Software's Web site (www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/) and get all the details. You can even try his demo to see if the Tools program is what you are looking for. I have an EPS and an EPS-16+. I've tried the sample conversion routine with Garth's programs and it works like gangbusters. I have to remind you that when the sample is converted to a .wav file, there is no looping or effects parameters that come with it. It's just the plain vanilla raw sample.

I've tried Awave to convert my PC's .wav file into a file that the MR-61/76 can read. I didn't have any luck with the program or the .wav conversion. All I got when I loaded the Awave converted .wav sample into the MR was what sounded like "white" noise.

I like programs that are simple and very easy to use. I don't think you can go wrong by using Garth's Ensoniq Tools Suite. Good luck.]

[Garth Hjelte (i315577@willmar.com) - Chalk up one for the Hacker - they just had a feature on that very question in the June issue. Check it out!]

[PF - Ditto's on JR's and RCS's suggestions. I promise to do an article on "step-by-step" *.wav/ASR/etc. import/translate into the MR soon.]

TH -

Has anyone ever developed a better sequencer O.S. for the ASR-10? The timing on that thing is sloppy and there aren't any cool features like groove quantize or even quantize "start/end duration" like on the Alesis MMT8, which is great for getting those ultra rigid techno sequences.

Jo-L of VeerChasm
VeerChasm@aol.com

[PF - Jo-L: Are you using the latest version of the ASR O.S. (V. 3.5.3)? I thought the ASR-10 sequencer and the MMT-8 were both 96 ppq. I noticed anomalous behavior on my ASR occasionally when I first got it, and discovered (A) its timing seemed tighter and (B) I didn't get as many "shuffling data" screens once I switched off Audio Tracks. Not that Audio Tracks isn't a cool feature: I just don't use it very often. Seems to run a bit faster as well without the overhead that Audio Tracks seems to require. We posted this solution in the Hacker last month. Try switching off Audio Tracks - might just fit the bill.]

HACKER BOOTEEQ

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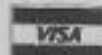
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