



MIDI *in* MINISTRY

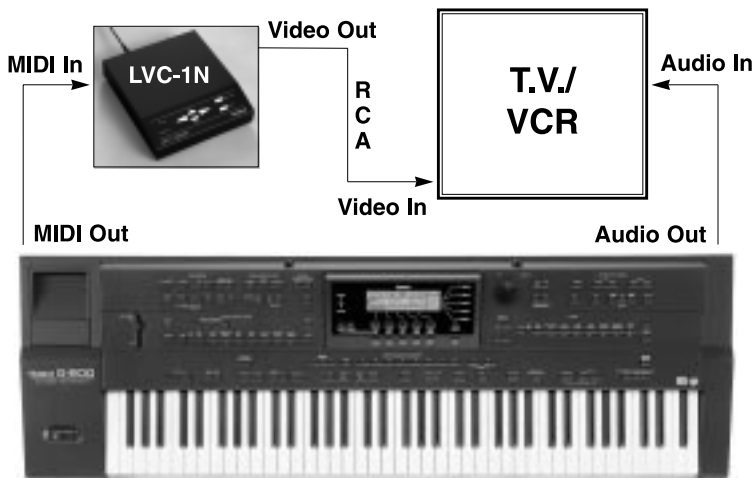
The INFO Source for Church Musicians

Vol. II No. II

Using MultiMIDIa in Worship: The Complete Music and Lyric Solution

"So has everyone memorized all the verses to 'Oh For A Thousand Tongues,' 'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name' and 'A Mighty Fortress Is Our God?' Oh, but wait, now the pastor has added a new hymn this morning—'It Is Well With My Soul.' Sure, no problem. I'll scribble out a chart for the band and we'll make a lyric slide real quick. Can anyone here type 100 words a minute?"

Sound familiar? As a worship leader, the demand to be flexible can be overwhelming. Allowing spontaneity in worship while still delivering excellence are two values that often conflict on Sunday morning. Yet, as technology becomes more prolific in church, there are tools that can help you deliver both—preventing a lot of stress along the way. For example: What would it be like if a couple button pushes could provide a full musical arrangement and display all the lyrics of any hymn or praise song—with perfect synchronization? No switching back and forth



between slides, no overheads to shuffle, no lyric sheets to print. And the song can be in any key at any tempo with any instrumentation you desire—all at a moment's notice. Well, this time, it's not too good to be true...

Once in a Lifetime

This doesn't happen often, but a number of technologies have all become available at the same time that will allow a MIDI sequence containing special lyric data to be played into a box that converts that information into a standard video signal. As the above diagram illustrates, the Roland G-1000, G-800, G-600 or RA-800 Arranger Workstation can transmit MIDI information to a device called the LVC-1N Lyric Converter. This device has a MIDI In and Video

EASE YOUR PAIN

By Steve Young

Four Steps to Headache-Free MIDI in Worship!

PART I of II

So, you're starting to get the hang of using MIDI technology. For some of us, that means spending countless hours tinkering with a MIDI keyboard, waiting patiently for that ever-elusive light bulb to appear above our heads. For others, it means pestering (in a Christian way of course) our local music dealer for more information, asking friends for help, calling a technical support line, or heaven forbid, actually reading the owner's manual! Okay, so maybe you're not an expert in MIDI, but you're working at it and that's what counts.

Well, this article is written for those of us who somehow were born without the MIDI gene. Not only do I admit to being MIDI-challenged, I also confess to resorting to all of the tactics previously mentioned (as well as a few more) in my quest to get a handle on all of this stuff. Why go to all this trouble? Why not just stick with the tried and true? Why not just be content with using the 2 or 3 percent of our keyboards that we actually (kind of) understand?

For me, it was the realization of what a powerful ministry tool MIDI can be. Seeing how people respond to the new world of music that MIDI brings is enough incentive for me to keep at it. While we all ultimately decide just how much we want to invest in our MIDI education, I want to share four simple tips not found in the manual that can help make using MIDI in church a lot more effective; not to mention enjoyable.

STEP #1

Group your sounds together.

There are few things more annoying than not being able to find something when you really need it. We have filing systems for our important documents, tags for our luggage, hooks for our key rings and leashes for our dogs. And yet, many of us resort to the all too familiar

cont. on page 3

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Out—taking in the MIDI lyric information from the sequence played by a Roland arranger workstation and broadcasting it out to a standard RCA jack. Most video systems, TV's and VCR's have RCA connectors.

“Daddy, where do MIDI files come from?”

The short answer is, “Two places.” You can create them yourself or buy them from one of the many MIDI file publishers. If you want to create your own MIDI file with lyrics events, you'll need a sequencing software program like Opcode's Vision™ (Mac and PC) or Twelve Tone's Cakewalk™ (PC only). The new Roland G-1000 will also allow lyric entry directly on the unit. Once you've created a song in one of these programs, you can add lyric events that follow the melody line. This takes a bit of time and skill, so you may prefer to start with a finished product from a company like Worship Solutions™ which has a huge library of MIDI files ranging from traditional hymns like those previously mentioned to contemporary praise choruses.

When you play these files on the G-1000/800/600 or RA-800, the lyrics appear on the display screen of the keyboard. Each lyric is highlighted at the appropriate time according to the rhythm of the melody line—a la karaoke. You can choose to mute the melody instrument from the song and it won't affect the lyric display. If you're a keyboardist you can mute the keyboard track and play along with the file live, using whatever sound you choose. So you can lead worship or rehearsal from the keyboard and have all the lyrics right there for you.

“Be Thou My Vision”

You can also share your view with the congregation, choir, worship team, etc. with the Roland LVC-1N. Set it up like the diagram and everyone can benefit from the rhythmic display of lyrics as they “play” by on the screen. And because they're part of the MIDI file, you'll never have to worry about the lyrics being wrong or out of sync. With a MIDI sequencer, you can rearrange the order of verses, remove verses, change lyrics—you name it. You can also transpose the song into a new key or change the tempo. MIDI files are very flexible, and you can customize them to fit your service.

Actually, Sunday services are only part of the picture. The arranger/LVC-1N combo is also great for rehearsing and creating teaching tools. For example, you can see in the diagram that there are audio connections and video connections going to the VCR. Why would you want to send the audio information to a VCR? Well a VCR records both audio and video onto one tape. So you can make a VHS practice tape to distribute to your team that has both the music and the lyrics—an audio/visual song learning method. The instrumentation and melody play while you see the lyrics highlighted at the appropriate time. This is great for all those singers who don't read music.

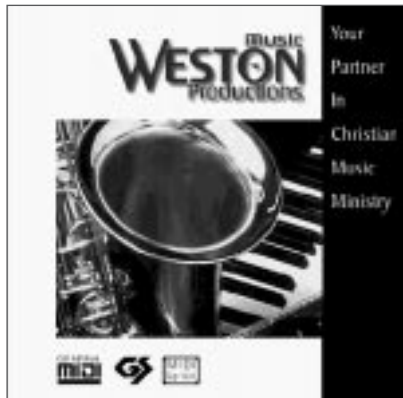
But wait, there's more..

If you'd like to get a complete overview of how various types of music technology can be integrated into your worship environment, a FREE video is available called *Electronic Music in Worship*. For an ongoing source of information, be sure to stay plugged into the *Worship Connection's MIDI in Ministry*. Just call (800) 386-7575 x593 and ask for both. You can also attend a Maranatha! Worship Leader Workshop in your area for personalized training. Call (800) 245-SONG for more information.



Country/Southern Gospel MIDI Files

Weston Music Productions offers a unique library of MIDI files featuring a large selection of country/ southern gospel songs. They're optimized for GM/GS instruments and contain MIDI lyrics as well. Another unique aspect of Mark Weston's disks is that the lyrics are included as separate text (.TXT) files along with the MIDI file (.MID) songs. This makes creating overhead transparencies or multimedia slides (i.e., PowerPoint®) a snap.



In addition to its southern gospel staple, Weston Music offers contemporary hymns and CCM-style MIDI arrangements. Churches who are pursuing “blended” worship services will appreciate that Mark wants to provide resources to support them. “I've taken many of the traditional Christian songs and hymns and orchestrated them in new, lively musical styles,” he says. “I want to help bring some new life and interest back to these venerable classics.” This is exemplified in the Caribbean/Latin arrangements and bluegrass hymns. If you like Bill Gaither, Lenny Smith, Jr., or Ron Kenoly, he has them too. He's even got a country Christmas collection.

Mark has specifically orchestrated and engineered his files to sound best using Roland equipment and guarantees that they'll work for you, or he will fix them. He has a well developed Website where you can listen to samples and get a discount by ordering online: www.atlantic.net/~weston.



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Look on page 4 of this issue to see your colleagues' contributions to *MIDI in Ministry*. These testiMIDIals are REAL WORLD examples of how music technology is making a positive difference in ministry. Keep 'em coming! We'll send you a Roland T-shirt if we publish any of the following...

- What you're doing with MIDI in your ministry
- Useful ideas that might help other church musicians
- Topics you'd like to see covered in upcoming issues of *MIDI in Ministry*

This e-mail address is for the *Worship Connection* ONLY and at this time, we are unable to respond to each e-mail on an individual basis. If you need tech-support, please call (323) 685-5141 x770.

Also, to get previous issues of *MIDI in Ministry* or to access links to other music ministry Websites, visit *Worship Connection* at the Roland Website:

www.rolandus.com/rug/news/worship/worindex.htm

button-pushing dance, frantically trying to find the right sound for the right song—oftentimes while it's already begun. Why not do some housecleaning on your keyboard by making some space in a User bank for your most commonly used Patches? (see Storing/Saving Patches in the right column) It's been my experience that most church keyboard players have somewhere between 5 and 10 Patches that they tend to gravitate towards and use for 90 percent of the songs. (For my Top Ten, see below.) Why not keep your favorite sounds in the same bank? It will save you time, and maybe a few gray hairs as well. On some keyboards, you can even use a footswitch (i.e., Roland DP-2) to change Patches which leaves your hands and eyes free for other important things.

STEP #2

Choose sounds wisely.

When choosing sounds, take into consideration any other instruments that you'll be playing with. For example, if you're playing with a band that includes drums, electric bass, acoustic piano and acoustic guitar, you'll probably want to stay away from any Patch that has a keyboard split with an electric bass sound in the left hand. Besides hindering relations with your bass player, you'll be creating a very muddy sound for your congregation. In addition to staying off the bass, you'll also want to avoid any "piano-type" sounds or acoustic guitar Patches. Unless you're literally doubling these other instruments, you'll just be cluttering things up. Doubling a string or brass section, however, can be quite effective if you're truly doubling them note-for-note. It's amazing how realistic a brass Patch can sound when accompanied by even one or two real brass instruments. Likewise, it's amazing how easily one or two brass players can be made to sound like a whole section with a well-played brass Patch. I'll bet there are a couple of horn players hiding in your congregation who may not be confident enough to step forward alone. But combined with a good synth Patch, they'll be blessed and they'll be a blessing to your church and take your music to a new level.

If you're playing by yourself, there are some definite considerations you should keep in mind. When playing unaccompanied it's best to use a Patch that will give the song enough motion and direction for people to sing with. Now you're the drummer, bass player and harmony instrument. So, piano sounds (electric and acoustic), acoustic guitars, and various percussive synth sounds work well; legato sounds with slow attacks (most strings and "pads") do not. Now is the time to pull out that Bass & Piano Split. Or, use the strings and other "pad" sounds to complement the piano. For example, play the first verse on a piano Patch alone, then for the chorus, layer in a warm string section. Again you can do this with a pedal (i.e., Roland EV-5), bringing the strings in gradually and then fading them back down for the next verse. This is a fresh way to add dynamic contrast without having to simply play louder or modulate...again (eeeuggghh).

Look for steps 3 and 4 in the second part of this article in the next issue of *MIDI in Ministry*.

STORING/SAVING PATCHES

To organize your favorite Patches on the XP-60 or XP-80, simply write them to consecutive User Patch locations.* This concept applies to any other synthesizer with User Patch locations.

- 1) Select the Patch you want to move.
- 2) Press the Utility button.
- 3) Press [F1] WRITE.
- 4) Use the Value dial to choose a new location for the Patch you're moving.
- 5) If you want to hear the Patch you'll be replacing, press [F1] COMPARE.*
- 6) Press [F6] EXECUTE. Now your Patch will be in the new location.

* Don't worry about writing over User Patches because they are duplicates of the Preset Patches in Banks A – C. You can always find them there and write them to any User Patch location you want.

Steve Young is founder of Arts Impact Ministries (www.artsimpact.com), an organization that provides training and resources to those who serve in arts ministries. The Arts Factory is a one-year intensive program offered by Arts Impact which brings church artists (music, drama, media, etc.) together to examine common ministry leadership issues in a hands-on environment in which participants learn from each other.

Steve's TOP TEN Patches

The SR-JV80-Series Expansion Board Patches are compatible with the following Roland synthesizers: XP-50/60/80, JV-80/90/1000, JV-880/1080/2080 and JD-990. The other Patches are available on the XP-50, XP-60, XP-80, JV-1080 and JV-2080.

	Patch Name	Sound Type	Patch Location
10	Fantasia JV	Synth Pad	Preset A-072
9	Steel Drums	Percussion	Preset A-099
8	Warm Strings	Orchestral	Preset C-036
7	Full Strings	Orchestral	Orchestral Expans. Board: Patch 039
6	Church Pipes	Pipe Organ	Preset A-061
5	A Little Help	Hammond B-3™	Kbds. of '60s & '70s Exp. Board: Pat. 002
4	EP+Mod Pad	El. Piano & Pad	Preset A-031
3	Nice Piano	Acoustic Piano	Preset A-004
2	9ft. Grand	Acoustic Piano	Session Expansion Board: Patch 002
1	Stereo Grand	Acoustic Piano	Session Expansion Board: Patch 001



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THE REAL WORLD...



"When we started Lakeshore Community Church, we began with no members, little money but a big dream for a ministry that attracts unchurched people with a quality Sunday service. Because we had so few experienced musicians, we struggled to put together a music team and band that was excellent on a consistent basis. Then one day in August, I challenged our music team to consider how MIDI programming might enhance our music quality and 'full band' sound. Our team watched a video presentation put out by Roland that explained how MIDI worked and how it could enhance any church's music. Four months, one Roland keyboard, one software package and many MIDI disks later, we implemented our first MIDI music service... and we haven't looked back since. With just a few quality vocalists, our music rivals some of the best in town. Our people have enjoyed it, our practices have been more efficient, and our music has met our desired standards of excellence week in and week out. If your church wants to improve your music and you don't have the talent to do so, I highly recommend you consider use of MIDI and Roland keyboards. The tools are available, so our excuses are over."



Pastor Vince DiPaola
Lakeshore Community Church
Rochester, New York

If you'd like to share your "testiMIDI" (the story of how you're using music technology in the REAL WORLD), send us a letter, fax or e-mail (see above addresses). If we print it in *MIDI in Ministry*, we'll send you a Roland T-shirt!

"Hello, my name is Kevin Dixon and I play a Roland Stage Set (electronic drum kit) in a praise and worship team at Mainland Community Church in Texas City, Texas. We worship with contemporary praise music and always try to add hip or Latinish rhythms.

The Stage Set has been a blessing in that it allows a much quieter environment for the other musicians who may have to turn up their volume to hear themselves. Before we knew it, it started to sound more like a concert than worship music. But, with the Stage Set, I can switch to Latin percussion instruments and play Latin rhythms to quieter, beautiful worship songs.

The sound quality is much better than micing the acoustic drums and also allows us to get CD-quality sound at an economic price. (Although, I bought the unit about three years ago myself.)

I have gone to a Maranatha! Workshop before and it was great. I'm definitely interested in going again."

