

Transoniq

Hacker

The Independent News
Magazine for Ensoniq Users

That Syncing Feeling

Using the MR Unisyn™ Software to Create Sounds
That Sync to MIDI Clocks

Ray Legnini

The MR synth voice is a flexible and expressive tool. With it you can program anything from a subtle, expressive solo violin to a screaming raunchy rock guitar to outrageous technosounds. This trip we are going to focus on understanding the sync options available to you when you program a sound. The techniques discussed here would apply if you were tweaking an existing sound from the existing MR RAM or ROM banks, or if you wanted to create a sound from scratch. This is a great way to get your feet wet if you're new to programming.

Some Background

Most synthesizer voice architectures have a set of common parameters that go all the way back to the days of analog synthesis. You'll find things like oscillators, envelopes, LFOs (low frequency oscillators), noise or random pitch generators, amplifiers and filters. These tools help you shape and mutilate sounds in new, sometimes interesting and sometimes bizarre ways. Although most synths these days have these parameters available, the jargon used to describe them has gotten a little bit confusing. Individual companies have been describing these functions with fancy

names to make the functions sound catchy or unique to their way of doing synthesis. Once you have the correlation down, you'll see that each manufacturer has a similar set of tools that you can use to shape sounds. With this knowledge you can then move from one synth to another and tweak away.

The functions we are most concerned with this time are the LFO, or Low Frequency Oscillator and the Noise generator. The LFO is a slowly moving waveform, usually a sine or triangle shape, that is most commonly used to create vibrato effects. By altering a wave's pitch with the LFO's wave shape, the sound of the affected waveform moves above and below its starting pitch at a regular rate. The speed of this wave and the depth of the modulation applied to the original waveform will determine the type of vibrato effect you'll hear. This modulation is most often associated with a mod wheel or aftertouch controller, which bring in the effect only when the player needs it, thereby simulating the way an acoustic instrument is played by a musician. The noise generator (sometimes known as a random pitch or "sample and hold" generator) is similar to the sine wave LFO, except that its waveshape is irregular,

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meaning it jumps around from place to place instead of moving smoothly from one point to the next. Apply this irregular shape to an oscillator's pitch and you get the classic "sample and hold" sound.

Beyond the Ordinary

But, there are other uses for the LFO. You can use the LFO and/or noise generator to subtly alter a voice's panning — to move around the stereo field a bit. An LFO with a square wave shape can be used to create a trill when applied to pitch. When the rate of the LFO or noise generator is controlled by MIDI, things get really interesting. The panning you set up can move at an interval that is a subdivision of the music's tempo; an eighth note, for example. You can program an octave trill to pulse at exactly a sixteenth note. You can apply a noise generator to the filter, with the noise generator changing with the tempo of the music. One of the coolest effects is to have Transwaves in sync with the song's tempo. And now a word from our sponsors: a shameless plug... Some great sync sounds, and tons of brand new Transwave material, can be found on the new 24-Meg EXP-3 expansion board, Urban Dance Project. Check it out!

Get down to business

Okay, time to set up and get some programming done. We are going to use a default patch so that the examples are clear, but be sure to apply these ideas to your own sounds after you understand the basics.

Set up your MR and your PC/Mac running the Unisyn software. I'll presume that you have the MIDI wiring and communication stuff happening and that you have run Unisyn before. MR keyboard users may find it easier to set up a RAM bank for sounds if one is not already set up; this is done by using the Librarian function. Start by creating a new empty bank from Unisyn. This has 128 Init Patches and is also a good place to store your examples as you work. Select the first blank patch from this bank; it will be sent to the MR's RAM bank location 127, the default set by Unisyn. Play the default patch, you should get a sawtooth wave with a bit of vibrato when you use the mod wheel.

Our first task is to disable the LFO to pitch mod in the default patch, so that we have a blank slate to start from. In Unisyn, go to the Patch Edit screen and the section called "Pitch." There you will find a parameter marked "LFO Amt," with a value of "10." Set this to "0." Save the sound as "Raw" to the first location in the new bank. Save your bank file. Now go to the Unisyn editor section marked "LFO." There you will find the Timebase parameter that can be set to multiples of the system clock or MIDI clock. Select "Eighth note." What you have just done was to tell the LFO to move at the rate of an eighth note relative to the system tempo. As the tempo in-

creases or decreases, this rate will change to keep up. This works the same whether you are using the MR's internal timebase or if you have set "MIDI" as the timebase for an external device to send MIDI clocks to your MR.

Now we have to apply that LFO to a parameter in the MR voice. We'll have the sound pan in tempo. Go the section marked "Amp" in the Unisyn editor. Set the parameter "Pan Mod" to the value "LFO" and the parameter "Pan Mod Amt" to "127." Play a chord and move the mod wheel forward. You should hear the sound repeatedly move left to right and back to left. Save this sound as "Pan 1" in the next available position in your bank. Change the system tempo and the sound will pan at the new rate. MR-Rack users set this from the System page, while MR-61 and MR-76 owners can use either Drum Machine or the 16 Track to alter the tempo, depending on whether you are sequencing the parts you play or just jamming along with the Drum Machine. At this point you should try the other Timebase values in the LFO section. The other variable to try is the parameter for the shape of the wave which is doing the panning. Set the LFO Shape to "Square" and the sound bounces from hard left to hard right, an effect sometimes heard in the old Suitcase RhoadsTM electric piano.

Like the LFO, the Noise generator can sync to the MIDI Clock value. This is done using the "Noise Sync" parameter. Set this to "Sixteenth note" and set the Pan Mod to "Stepped" in your "Pan 1" sound. Save this as "Pan 2." Hold a chord and listen to the sound jump around the stereo field. A value of 5-10 in the "Pan Mod Amt" field will make the changes more subtle. Also try the setting "Smooth" for Pan Mod. This is the Noise generator again but with the transitions between jumps rounded off for more graceful, but still random, movement.

Starting from the "Pan 2" sound, cancel the pan mod by setting the Pan Mod Amt to "0." Go the "Filter" section of the Patch Edit screen and set the "FC2 Mod" parameter to "Stepped" and the "FC2 Mod Amt" to "127." Save this as "Filter 1." What you'll hear when you play is the sound pulsing with randomly changing filter settings. Try this against a drum beat for an interesting pad effect. Adjust the amount of modulation to suit the situation.

Set the "FC2 Mod" parameter to "LFO" and the "FC2 Mod Amt" to "-127." Save this as "Filter 2." Now play a chord and move the Mod Wheel up. As you do the sound will get filtered at the rate set by the LFO Timebase. Try different Timebase settings and also experiment with the LFO shape.

One last experiment. Start with the sound "Raw," saved earlier. Set up the LFO with Timebase set to "Sixteenth note," and the shape set to "Square." Set "LFO Depth" to "127." You don't need the "Depth Mod" parameter anymore, so set

that to "0." Go to the Patch Edit area marked "Pitch." Set "Pitch Mod" to "LFO," "Mod Amt" to "127" and "Mod Range" to "12." What you'll hear is an octave trill in sixteenth notes at the system tempo. Save this as "Pitch 1." Try the other note value settings for the LFO, too. Setting the Pitch Mod "Range parameter" to other values will give you other types of trills. This parameter is calculated in half steps. For a minor third trill, for example, set this to "3." Save iterations as you work.

This should open the doors to some of the creative potential lurking under the hood of your MR synth. Apply these techniques to your own creations. Remember to try these sounds against drum grooves. Some really cool things happen when everything is in sync. Until next time... ■

Bio: Ray Legnini, blah blah blah, woof woof, with occasional yaddi yaddi yaddi, and blah blah, woof woof, etc.

Front Panel

RND ()

Hacker News

Season's greetings to all, thanks to everyone, be careful, and enjoy the holidays!

Hacker regular Tom Shear reports that he has another CD appearance on Arts Industria's "Electro-cution" CD which features a good number of underground

musicians who happen to make use of Ensoniq beasties. People can contact Tom directly (41 Mary Fran Drive, West Chester, PA 19382) if they want to purchase a copy.

Ensoniq Announcements

The MR-61 and MR-76 are now at Version 1.64. Owners with earlier versions should call Ensoniq Customer Service (610-647-3930) for a free upgrade kit.

HYPERSOBIQ

New Product Announcements

Rubber Chicken Software Co. announces *The Ten-Tone Equal Temperment Set* from Bill Sethares, author of the famed "Recycle Orchestra" and many fine ethnic samples available on Chicken CD-ROM II. *The Equal Temperment Set* consists of ten hi-density disks of quality alternative scale ten-tone samples that have been intricately programmed.

Are you ready to face a keyboard where the C major chord does not exist? A keyboard that doesn't repeat at every octave? One in which the only familiar interval is the tritone? Is there life after major chords? YES!!

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The set comes with a complete manual that not only describes the sounds, but gives you an entire overview of ten-tone equal temperment and how to use it effectively. Bill Sethares is an acknowledged expert in the field. List price is \$49.95.

Rubber Chicken also announces *EPS/ASR Tools for MacIntosh*. This great all-around utility program will now be available for the MacIntosh near the end of the year. MIDI parameter editing, sound control, graphical envelope and waveforms will be featured. List price will still be \$59.95.

For more information contact: Rubber Chicken Software Co., 714 5th Street SE, Willmar, MN 56201, phone: (320) 235-9798, (voice or fax), order line: 1-800-8-PRO-EPS, email: chickenEPS@willmar.com, Web page: www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps.

* * *

Peter Segerdahl, of Vinga System AB in Sweden, has developed a professional Sample and Groove Editor for Ensoniq samplers called *Zero-X*. It runs on any Atari computer, from the ST to the Falcon and makes full use of the hardware available (for instance the Falcon has a DSP, 16-bit audio and SCSI interface as standard). Vinga has supported the Ensoniq EPS/ASR for a long time via MIDI but they now also support the SCSI Sample Dump for both ST, TT and Falcon. This is major news to Ensoniq/Atari owners.

Some of *Zero-X* features are:

- **DrumSplit** — Create a MIDI file from drum loop and transfer the drums as individual samples to the sampler (just like *ReCycle* for PC and Mac).
- **AutoSearch** — an extremely powerful loop search function, almost guarantees seamless loops without the need of any cross fading.
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and MIDI Sample Dump.)

For more info, check out their web site: www.algonet.se/~mcalbert/Zero-X, or phone: +46-31-428270, or fax: +46-31-42 82 75.

Back Issues

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

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

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

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Come On — Feel the Noise

Tom Shear

"Turn down that NOISE!"

Sound familiar? Throughout our lives we, as musicians, are more likely to have heard this phrase with some regularity than the average bear. It's most often heard coming from some batty, blue-haired old crone shaking her fist and hanging out an overhead window as you shake your head knowing that *one* day she will realize the artistic merit of Cannibal Corpse and will feel like a total goof for having expressed her ire.

"Turn down that noise" has been the perennial battle cry of an older generation railing against the music of the younger. Most of time, the term "noise" is merely figurative, but nowadays, there are cases where it is quite literal. Stemming from American acts such as Non and Monte Cazzazza in the early eighties, a small, but burgeoning "noise scene" has erupted, most prominently centered in Japan with the better known acts being Merzbow, Masonna, and others who produce tracks of, quite literally, noise. I like to think of myself as being a pretty progressive, open-minded guy, but most of this stuff is totally unlistenable, even to me.

But it does raise an interesting point. As experimentalism becomes more acceptable in mainstream culture, the incorporation of elements such as noise into music is becoming more prevalent and is sure to continue.

So what? Well folks, this month, I thought I'd share some neat-o, super-keen ways of getting your EPS, '16+, or ASR to cough up big, ugly hairballs of sound that are sure to enrage your neighbors and provide hours of entertainment for sociopaths like yourselves.

This first trick ("Hey Rocky, watch me pull a rabbit out of a hat...") is something that I discovered by accident, and I imagine a few of you may have run into it too. The difference being, when you heard it, you probably thought, "That sounds like garbage, what an

awful sound" and when I heard it I said, "That sounds like garbage. I think I'll add it to that new song I'm working on."

1. Turn on your sampler and load the OS. If you actually need to be told this, you may be eligible to get a job as an MTV vee-jay.

2. Now, load up all eight instrument slots with any sounds you feel like... I suggest at least one or two drum kits or multi-samples for the most interesting results, though.

3. Choose any of the eight instruments, doesn't matter which one, and hit EDIT to make sure you have a wavesample selected for editing. Once you've done that, go to the EDIT-WAVESAMPLE page. Scroll right until you see the looping page and select a FORWARD LOOP. Continue scrolling right until you see the LOOP END parameter. Pull this value down as low as it will go.

4. Turn your speakers/headphones down — just in case.

5. Hold down a key, any key. What you should hear, is the sampler gurgling through its entire wavememory at varying pitches and speeds... in other words, a whole lot of nasty noise. If you have drums loaded, oftentimes the noise will be interrupted by quasi-random drum patterns! In the unlikely event that you can't get this to work, play around with some other parameters... the ROOT KEY (on the EDIT-PITCH page) can often remedy the problem...

6. Read eviction notice.

If you like what you hear, start changing the order of the instruments in their slots to change the loops and maybe mess with the parameters on the other 7 sounds outside the looped one. One neat trick a friend of mine likes to use (hi Scott!), is to modulate the loop on the

EDIT-WAVE pages to get a more random, non-repeating effect. Who says wave-sequencing is such a new thing?

So this is all well and good, but man can not live on squeals and stumbling drum samples alone. Let's say you need something a little more ambient. No problem.

1. Load up any sort of non-pitched sound; dialogue from the TV/movies, a drum loop — I got particularly good results from a sample of one of those annoying baby dolls that cries.

2. On the EDIT-WAVE page, select a FORWARD LOOP (obviously making sure you have a wavesample selected for editing), scroll right and make sure your LOOP START is at 00. Scroll right again to check that your LOOP END is 99.

3. Hit COMMAND-WAVE and scroll until you find yourself amidst all the pages of looping tools. You're looking for SYNTHESIZED LOOP. Once you've found it, go ahead and apply it to the sound. Then apply it again... and again... and again...

You see, most people only run the SYNTHESIZED LOOP algorithm once and give the yea or nay to the results. What they don't realize, is that you can build a synthesized loop, then apply another synthesized loop

to it over and over again with the resulting sound getting further and further removed from the original with each pass. Obviously, you will reach a plateau with this where there's no real audible change, but you should be able to get it to the point where you have an odd ambient noise sample that bears little resemblance to its source.

I've found that in addition to being great on their own, the resulting samples can often be made into killer percussion sounds. And since the noise in this case is an actual sample, and not the EPS-16+ spitting up the contents of its entire memory, remember that there are further things you can do to mangle the sound. Convert the sample rate to a ridiculously low level before you do the loop... or resample it with a weird effect. The possibilities are endless.

So there you have it. I'm sure this article answers some readers' questions about why I have to move so often. But just remember, when that landlord is knocking at your door screaming at the top of his lungs, it could make a great noise sample. ■

Bio: Tom Shear lives in beautiful, humid West Chester, PA where he is so close to Ensoniq that he can hit the building with a stone. But he doesn't know anything about that incident last week, so stop asking....

How to Set up a Small Home Studio with The SD-1

Clayton Lewis

I'm not sure when it happened or even how it happened. All I know is that one day I turned on the light in my basement and I saw all of this "stuff." It seems my little ol' SD-1 had gone out over night and found some more electronic gadgets to hang out with. Well, at least that's what I told my wife...

Actually, it didn't happen overnight either. (Ahhh, the

truth comes out...) I spent the last few years acquiring gear for what is now BNM Productions. What started out as a simple keyboard and a four-track tape machine has now grown into something of my own creation. A monster that has 32 digital audio tracks, synths up the wazoo, signal processing gear that I don't even remember buying, all at the mercy of the monster's brain... My Power-Mac with megabytes upon megabytes of RAM.

It lives and breathes and it feeds on whatever is in its path. The monster that I've nurtured since birth is now what supports my family... my home studio.

But even with all the gadgets, widgets, bells, and whistles that my monster holds I still long for the younger days, the simpler days. The days when all you had to do was press record and go. I didn't have to worry about what channel was on what track and was take 6 better than 13, why aren't the ADATS syncing up to the computer tracks and oh, my God what have I done?

Those of you just starting out may or may not end up building your own Frankenstein. But today I'm going to assume that you are quite happy with what you have or you just want to have a little set-up to record some demos of those masterpieces that have been tearing at your very being. In this segment I'm going to give you an idea of the things that you might need or want to have in your studio.

1) Multi-timbral keyboard with a built-in sequencer. Preferably anything of the Ensoniq nature. I have found the SD-1 to be the best keyboard a beginner could own. And why not? With a 24-track sequencer, thousands of great sounds including drum sounds (which excludes the need for a drum machine), and a user friendly operating system... who could ask for more?

2) 4-track tape recorder with a built-in mixer for recording your voice (or somebody else's) on your demo, or maybe even some "real" guitar or other acoustical instrumentation get one with a mixer built-in. They usually come with a decent EQ section, pan controls, and aux sends for FX. With digital the thing, 4-tracks are coming down in price and you can probably find some good bargains in the classified ads. If you're on-line, Check out AOL's classified section, keyword: Classified (what else?). If you have no desire to record anything but your synth sequences then a quality (but not overly expensive) cassette recorder will do just fine. But I'm assuming that you're recording "live" instruments so everything below deals with this situation.

3) A good microphone. Or two... A good microphone is important in capturing an accurate recording. That's not saying that you have to drop the bucks for Nueman but rather get a versatile mic that you will get your money's worth. A good example is the Shure SM-58 and SM-57. These two mics are the workhorses of the industry with the 58 used for vocals and the 57 primarily used to mic

instruments, respectively. I recommend getting both if your budget allows it. They're inexpensive (around \$100) but they sound very good.

4) FX processor. Even though your keyboard may have built in FX's, you still need something to put your voice or other instrument into a aural space (i.e., small or large room, hall, or a large auditorium). Something with few reverb variations will do. There are a number of bargains out there. ART has the MR-1 for about \$150, Alesis has some good models still available... Midiverb I, II, II, IV. The Microverb is still available in the classifieds if you hunt around. I use an (here it comes, another shameless plug) Ensoniq DP-2. It has come down in price (they practically cut it in half: \$595) and I use it extensively, It has reverbs, delays, chorus, pitch-shifting; it also has some *great* guitar amp/fx simulations.

5) A compressor is a signal processor that is essential in getting a quality sound. They help smooth out the dynamic range by leveling out loud and soft passages of your recording which aids in a more professional sound. I wouldn't be caught dead without one. Alesis makes a great compressor, the 3630, for only \$299 and it has stereo or dual mono compression and noise gates on each channel. This is a great buy and by Jeffrey Fischer's urging I picked up two.

6) Sync box. Synchronization is an important part of 4 tracking with a keyboard sequencer. With a sync box, you can record all of your MIDI instruments (drums, bass, keys, etc...) in your sequencer and save 3 tracks on your recorder for your lead vocal, and back-ups with the fourth holding the sync tone. Confused? After you've created your song in the sequencer, record a sync tone from the sync box for the entire length of your song onto one of the tracks of the tape machine. Whenever you press play on the 4-track machine it will automatically start the sequencer allowing you to use the remaining tracks for "live instruments."

Well, there you have it. The tools you'll need to make a good sounding demo for that producer who has been calling you up everyday. But you'll have to tell him to wait just a little longer because the monster we're building is just starting to take shape. ■

Bio: Clayton is the owner and head engineer of BNM Studio Productions and is still trying to figure out what BNM stands for....any suggestions?

Beats on a Budget

Tom Shear

Product: Scarface Records "Classic Beats and Breaks Volume One" audio sampling CD.

Price: around \$15.

Contact: Your Local Record Store.

I love sampling CDs. Sure, that's nothing profound, pretty much everyone who samples has an affinity for them. Since their introduction, these discs have become so specialized that there are disks to match virtually any musical style. One thing hasn't changed, however. The prices. Although some exceptions *are* starting to pop up, most of these disks are priced in a range high enough to make their purchase only a "once in awhile" deal... especially if you're always broke like me. So you can imagine my delight when I walked into my local record store and discovered Scarface Record's "Classic Beats and Breaks Volume One." For the price of a regular CD, this disk is packed with over seventy different incredibly useful drum loops produced into perfection by rap artist Paris.

I know what you're thinking... everyone and their mother has a rap/hip-hop sampling CD out these days, what's so special about this one? Well, aside from the fact that it costs about a fourth of most others, the production on this is impeccable. Where most drum loops CDs simply grab a beat from a record or the producer's collection and plop it down, these have been EQed, layered, and generally punched up in the way that rap loops should. The kick drums are hard and full and the snares are snappy. These could be real floor-rattlers if you want them to be.

The beats on the disk come from a variety of sources. There are recognizable beats from songs by Run DMC, Ice Cube, Naughty by Nature, and Cypress Hill, as well as a *ton* that I had never heard before, even on other sampling CDs. They range from pounding hardcore loops, to slinky laid back gangsta grooves, to light jazzy shuffles, to old school electronics, to really weird stuff (listen to track number 52 if you don't believe me). In addition, it is dead easy to grab individual drum sounds from within the loops, to create your own killer beats.

So what's the catch? Well, at a regular CD price, you've got to expect some cutbacks somewhere, and in the case of this disk, it's the documentation. That is to say, there is none. None of the tracks are named, and you'll be on your

own when it comes to figuring out those BPMs. Given the extraordinary low price of this collection, however, I think we can let it slide. One final caveat... these loops are for the most part entirely sampled from other sources, so using them in any work that you're going to release is going to be at your own risk. You probably won't get called on it, but you'd better be prepared for it if you do.



Finally! Sampling on a budget! And what's even better is that a return trip to the record store revealed at least two more volumes in the series just waiting to be snatched up. Life is good. ■

Bio: Tom Shear's beats are phat.

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The MR-Series Revealed

Pat Finnigan

"When spice production stops, all eyes will turn to Arrakis" — Frank Herbert, Dune

Okay, we've seen enough of it, we've heard enough of it, we've listened to enough of it, so now — let's read all about it. That's right folks; like it or not, there's a new sheriff in town. Just because you didn't vote for him doesn't matter. Just because you did vote for him doesn't matter. 'Cause he's here to stay, so grin and bear it. We will debunk, demystify, and otherwise dissect the newest child of the Ensoniq bloodline, the MR-61. Or his bigger twin, the MR-76: they're fraternal (nearly identical) twins, and much more alike than Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger would have you believe. More questionable than O.J. Simpson, more polarizing than Ru'Paul, and more powerful than any previous Ensoniq offering, the MR-Series 61 and 76 are a giant question mark in the perceived Ensoniq dominance of the "workstation" market. And after a month with one, I've discovered the MR is an acronym for misunderstood. And to explain why, my normal "Roses/Thorns" form will be brief and will refute and/or reinforce what we've overheard, seen, and heard about this latest flagship.

And a new interface it is: Ensoniq is committed to this new organizational layout for at least the turn of the century. It's bold, it's new, it's daring: ever seen a Malvern wonder with the words "Drum Machine" silk-screened onto it? Or "Idea Pad"? So stop all the @#\$%^& whining about "Man, it ain't laid out like the TS; I can't deal with it" nonsense. If all we wanted was a 64-voice TS, we'd have bagged a KT-76: Ensoniq's already been there, done that. No, this is totally different from any previous Ensoniq interface we've used before. So it is time to debunk the 10 most common myths about Ensoniq's new powerhouse...

MR Myths

Myth A: "Jeez, all these @#\$%^& buttons and no bank/program select buttons? Ya know, this thing sucks!

How could Ensoniq do this?"

That's the first impression I heard from more than a passing few in an MR encounter. And, quite frankly, that's what I thought when I poked at MR-61 over a 10-minute period. Then I installed the 24-Mb World expansion card, and guess what? All the new waves and patches pop up in their respective groups. You'll find "Shakuhachi" in the Wind group, not in some "Expansion Wave" group of duplicity. And when you realize how logical it is to organize a theoretical max of 84 Mb of wavedata, Soundfinder becomes a necessity. Yeah, I know: I memorized every patch location of the "Int" and "ROM" banks of my SQ, but people, that was only three Mb of wavedata: we're working with 12 times that now (and still have two open expansion slots). So Ensoniq did the right thing here: besides spinning the data knobs to find your sound, hold down the "SoundFinder" button and type the first 3-4 letters of the bank of sounds you wanna work with: poof, there you are. Now underline the selected sound, hold the SoundFinder button again and type in the first 3-4 letters of the patch you're looking for: poof, up it comes. Yes, the keyboard has become more of an input device than in previous Ensoniq wonders, and after you diddle with it a bit, it's downright logical to do it this way. Unless you want to be poking around for a sound for three weeks to accidentally find it, this is the only way to logically organize 84 Mb of wavedata.

Myth B: "What? 8 sequence locations? For song organization? Are you @#\$%^& guys nuts? My lowly 1992 SQ-1 had 99! And where'd the presets go?"*

First, you only had 70 sequence locations on the SQ series: the other 29 were Song locations. Here is the thing — each of those 8 sequence buttons on the MR-Series is 3 deep: you have 24 sequence locations. And when you multiply that by 16 track buttons, you have a total possibility of 384 presets/sequence locations. With *that* many presets available, Ensoniq didn't seem to think double-clicking on tracks was a necessity. A luxury, maybe, but not necessary when you've got

that much space to work with. And, to top it off, if you can allocate memory among the Idea Pad/Drum Machine/Sequencer/Flash Registration in four different ways, along with stacking sounds together in the Soundfinder, who's gonna miss it?

Myth C: "Hey, no patch select buttons: what happened?"

I've already talked to Malvern about this one. Seems there're two extra footswitch controls on the back of the MR-Series: guess I missed that when I glossed it over. Betcha you can route those extra switches to select wavesamples in the Unisyn MR profile, eh, Ensoniq? Et tu...

Myth D: "All these sections: Idea Pad/Drum Machine/Track/Sequence editor: this thing looks like it was designed by committee."

It sure is: it's designed by the most prestigious committee on this blue ball. Check the names on the Signature Series Disks, check the artists on Ensoniq CDs, and you'll get a handle on how prolific this committee truly is. The MR-Series is designed as a songwriting tool: to explore this power, as with any other tool, it helps to learn how to use it. And the manual isn't some kind of "Let's Play!" novella: we've got a 500+ page precis here...

Myth E: "What: no data entry slider? How the @\$%^ do you select anything?"

Actually, there are two data entry knobs for those looking for the familiar. There are 61 data entry switches on the MR-61 masquerading as a keyboard. Oh, and they play notes too. What a concept: using the keyboard as more than note entry: very unfamiliar to guys like us who used to use it only to play notes. Old habits die hard. Ensoniq promised me they'd mail me a data entry slider to keep in my pocket if I really missed it: I haven't called back yet.

Myth F: "Transport controls? What happened to the "From xxx to xxx page? How can I punch in now? AAAIIIIIEEEE!!!"

Press the FF button until you get to your punch-in point (with track selected), press the record button and FF/dial

to your punch out point: bingo, you're like, there, dude. May take a little getting used to hearing the tape sing as it spools up and down from speed, but yeah, just like a tape recorder: a helluva lot easier than the "Locate/Track/From Bar xxx Beat xxx.xx to Bar xxx Beat xxx.xx/yes/keep new track?/keep original track?" time warp.

Myth G: "Keyboard response is way too heavy: I really gotta bang it to get a 127."

Fixed in new ROM and latest O.S. Also fixes insert effect bug: any insert effect took not only selected track, but all four tracks on that row. No more thrashing the cache.

Myth H: "Where'd all my MIDI options go? No more "Int/MIDI/Ext/Seq" selection! Waahh!"

Okay, so a few more CPU cycles were required to do 64-note polyphony. Copy the @\$%^ track and set it to External, Okay? Now the one track plays local and the other doubles it via MIDI out.

Myth I: "I can't set Track 1 to MIDI channel 16: track #s follow MIDI #s. My SQ/KS/SD/TS never did that. Waaaah-waaaah-waahhh..."

Sorry, bucko, but default sequence MIDI channels always followed track #s; by locking this architecture in hardware, glitch-free sequence playback is guaranteed. I harp on people about this every year in the *Hacker*: it doesn't matter what "slate" or track programming you use: just stay with it. Failure to do this results in more crashes and erroneous punch-in edits than anything Ensoniq ever did to the OS. By assigning this in hardware, more robust (read crash-free) operation is guaranteed. Has anyone seen an "Error 127-reboot?" MR screen yet?

Myth J: "\$2595 for the MR-61? \$3000 for the MR-76? Pretty @\$%^& pricey for an entry-level keyboard, if you ask me..."

I concur. They're neat, very powerful pieces, but given the competition, \$1995 and \$2495 sounds more like the Ensoniq pricing we've come to know. Besides, those big prices are MSRP's. Any dealer is gonna see this and flex price to meet demand, so don't blame Ensoniq.

Somebody had to write code for these things; and they didn't do it for free, so, hey, it's a buyer's market. They can't charge any more than you're willing to pay, so negotiate.

Now, as promised, a brief installment of...

The Roses

Adaptive interface: voice architecture is way cool: each expansion card has its own ROM that attaches to hooks written in the instrument ROM and code, so all expansion voices reside in their respective instrument families. No more going to the "Wave Expansion" screen to dial up that fretless: hold down the Sound-Finder button and press "B-A" on the keyboard to get to the bass family. Glorious effects and innovative routing. Effects follow instruments, not sequences. Big display. Lotsa LEDs built into buttons that wink in tempo (oooh-ahhh). LEDs indicate what one of 3 depths are selected in song mode. Absolutely def drum/percussion samples. Variations in drum machine section. Assigning sounds to tracks a snap. Idea Pad awfully nice. Assigning Idea Pad to sequencer a snap as well. Mixdown of levels and effects major improvement over earlier interface. Pan movements recorded. Expansion up to 84 Mb. Flash Expansion cards allow ASR sample loadability (ala TS-series). Lightweight (at least the MR-61 is) and portable. Double the footswitch options. Aux outs. More mondo effect variations. Much hotter output than predecessors; higher S/N ratio with improved headroom and lower noise floor. Quiescent noise at idle imperceptible. No zipper noise or FX whoosh. Variable memory organization. Meaty analog sounds; great lush pads, vocoder FX stuff mondo trance.

The Thorns

Unlearning the old Ensoniq interface to figure this new one out...

Slow disk operation: saving or loading a Session (all flash/sequence/track/FX/voice registrations) is a two-minute operation. It's not as glossy or as slick (pricey) as the whistles and bells of the Trinity, doesn't have ribbons like the K2500, or SCSI I/O like the high priced spread. It doesn't have knockout demos, doesn't have a chrome case or Jaz drive built in. But...

The Deal

What you get is a machine designed around functionality, ease of use, with more memory expansion options than the leading three synths combined, coupled with the best software/hardware support in the business. The MRs are on their third revision of software/firmware revision and should simply be viewed as a work in progress. And we're not talking simple maintenance revisions: we're looking at the addition of features in upcoming revs. I only wish I'd learned this interface before I learned the EPS/SQ/SD interface; unlearning wouldn't be as tough. And as with other Ensoniq instruments, these things speak so much more authoritatively in live performance than the competition it's downright scary. I really don't know how they do it, but unlike most keyboards that sound great in the music store but lose something in the move to the stage, the MR-61 I'm diddling with sounds better live. When the horn players in the band come up to you and say "Now *that's* what a soprano sax sounds like," you've got to wonder who does sound design for Ensoniq. And if you've looked at their artist registry, you already know who's done a lot of their sound design.

A bit pricey, perhaps, but no more than the traffic will bear. The MRs are not trying to compete with the installed base of loyal Ensoniq users: this is squarely aimed at the customer who got bit buying a JV30 or SY85 and knows what he wants this time around. The entry level user is gonna love this piece, and we seasoned vets will opt for one simply for the sheer volumes of sounds resident in this instrument. Just wait for those expansion cards and it'll become very clear why the interface was organized this way...

This is an Ensoniq curve ball high and outside that defies to be hit. If you don't see it before you swing, it's already past you... ■



Bio: When not answering video-capture questions for True-Vision, Pat Finnigan is a tech support person for RasterOps. He still uses a B-3 for a keyboard stand.

Little Brown Church in the Vale Organ

(and its evolution)

Dan Rohde

This three-voice organ patch actually started out as a one-voice pad that I created to give me a smooth sound somewhere between an accordion or a harmonica, depending on how I adjusted its filters. The KS-32's ROM 78 Accordion and ROM 79 Harmonica both get their old-fashioned, metal reed quality from the same Accordion sample, but they were too strident and vibrato-y for my sequences. I wanted a mellower sound, unobtrusive yet interesting enough for background use. In fact, I do use Voice 1 all by itself, a program I renamed "Harcordian." (A dumb name, true, but "Acmonica" is even dumber.) The more I used it, though, the more Harcordian also sounded sort of like an old pedal organ, the kind Neil Young played on his unplugged MTV special last year.

So, Voice 1 by itself is not too fancy, but functional enough. I chose the Wheel over Timbre as Filter mod-source for its convenience when using the patch as a lead sound. Timbre as Modsource would probably work better if you want to be able to set the Filters at a certain fixed point for a sequence or Preset. The LFO numbers enable you to put a little warble into the Pitch with either Wheel or Pressure, but this vibrato is pretty subtle considering it's happening underneath the Chorus Effect. I like the Chorus, but any of the stock Reverbs sound okay, too, just not so modernized. The Amp parameters allow you to vary both the volume and the quickness of the attack through Velocity Level and Velocity Attack — something organs don't usually do. I guess I just like

KT Prog: Little Brown Church in the Vale Organ

By: Dan Rohde

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	On	On/Off
Wave Class	Expansion	Waveform	Waveform
Wave	Accordion	Org.Var.1	Org.Var.4
Delay Time	00	00	00
Wave Direction	Forward	Forward	-
Start Index	00	00	-
MODSCR	-	-	-
MODAMT	-	-	-
Restrkc Decay	10	10	10

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	34	-	32
Noise Rate	00	-	00
Level	04	-	10
Delay	00	-	00
MODSRC	Wheel+Pr	-	Wheel+Pr
Wave	Sine	-	Sine
Restart	On	-	On

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	50	50	99
Peak	99	99	99
Break	80	86	99
Sustain	80	86	99
Attack	20	10	20
Decay 1	67	43	20
Decay 2	73	40	20
Release	10	10	10
Vel-Level	19	26	33
Vel-Attack	26	19	19
Vel Curve	Quik	Quik	Linear
Mode	Norm	Norm	Norm
KBD Track	+00	+00	+00

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	+11	00	00
Semitone	00	00	00
Fine	+00	-01	+01
ENV1	00	00	00
LFO	00	00	00
MODSCR	LFO	-	LFO
MODAMT	-02	-	+10
KBD Ptch Track	On	On	On
Glide	Off	Off	Off
Glide Time	-	-	-

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	2Lo	2Lo	2Lo
Filter 2	2Lo	2Lo	2Hi
FC1 Cutoff	64	64	127
ENV 2	00	00	00
FC1 KBD	+10	+10	+20
MODSRC	Wheel	Wheel	Wheel
MODAMT	+11	+18	+20
FC2 Cutoff	127	90	15
ENV2	00	00	00
FC2 KBD	00	00	+20
FC1MOD-FC2	On	On	On

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	90	85	65
Boost	Off	On	On
MODSRC	-	Wheel	Wheel
MODAMT	-	-06	+05
KBD Scale	00	00	00
Key Range	-	-	-
Output Bus	FX1	FX1	FX1
Priority	Med	Med	Med
Pan	00	-14	+14
Vel window	>00	>00	>00

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

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

EFFECTS

Chorus + Reverb (Stock)
Or any reverb

a keyboard to sound louder when I pound harder, maybe because of my piano playing background.

For a while, this patch did serve me faithfully as a useful pad. Yet I always wondered what those other two Voices could add. If I was the one playing back up in the loft on a Sunday morning, what would I like to hear? I didn't want to lose that old metal reed sound, but I think I'd like something a little more developed, something with, oh, the ecumenical equivalent of a nitro-burning dragster roaring down a quarter mile. Something with some guts, some hurt in it. You know, something to jolt the folks in the back pew awake when the sermon's over.

The KS has quite a few organ samples to choose from. Perc Organ was too cool; Full Pipe Organ, too hot. But Organ Variation 1 for Voice 2 was just right. It has no vibrato, but rolling the Wheel does increase its higher frequencies, yet at the same time lower its volume at Output so it doesn't overpower the other Voices. After all, I didn't really intend to sound like Captain Nemo on the Nautilus. As in Voice 1, the Amp settings provide some Velocity modulation of volume and attack. Voices

2 and 3 are panned slightly left and right respectively to give it a little more spacious feel.

Voice 3 is optional, but seems to place the sound's overall quality a little higher on the food chain. Voices 2 and 3 are each detuned a teensy bit under Pitch. (Maybe they could be even further off pitch to add a little more realism?) Voice 3 uses the LFO for a little (+10) Wheel-modulated vibrato under Pitch. The Wheel also increases the high frequencies under Filters and the volume by +05 under Output.

Thus hath Church Organ crawled from its primordial ooze. With the wheel down, it's an LBCITYV (Little Brown Church in the Vale) soul-soothing pad. With the wheel up and some weight transferred through your digits, you just might be able shake the dust off the tops of those hard-to-reach ceiling rafters.

Try out this sound on some vintage hymns, such as "Amazing Grace" or my favorite, "Great Dream from Heaven." ■

Vintage Synth Corner

Stuff That Only the SQ-80 Can Do

Part 2

Kirk Slinkard

Some, but not all, of the SQ-80-exclusive transient waves have a tendency to sustain or repeat when you use them with the AM (audio-frequency Amplitude Modulation) or the SYNC (hard synchronization) features. This month, we will look at a couple of examples. This odd behavior doesn't occur in the ESQs or any other synthesizer that I know of. Why it happens on the SQ-80 will probably remain one of the great unsolved mysteries of the universe.

The first patch "SPRNGS" is an example of the normal way SYNC behaves. STEAM is one of the SQ-80's complex inharmonic waves that sustains as long as you hold a key down or as long as the patch sustains. This patch imitates the sound you get when you hit a long stretched steel cable with a hammer — the basis of the handgun sounds in *Star Wars*.

The second patch "KIK2.SN" shows how the transient KICK2 wave repeats rapidly when it is used with SYNC, creating a sustained waveform. In this synth-bass patch,

for all practical purposes the FILTER is removed from the sound chain. The sweeping sound comes from OSCILLATOR 2's pitch being swept by ENVELOPE 1 while it is SYNCed. This patch uses the SQ-80/ESQ's way-cool MONO mode which was abandoned with the VFX family, but was brought back in more recent models as the MINI mode (so named to indicate that it behaves like the monophonic MINI Moog synthesizer — only staccato playing re-triggers the envelopes). OSCILLATOR 3 has the KICK2 wave set up exactly the same as in OSCILLATOR 2, except that 3 doesn't have it SYNCed. Use the "patch select" MOD WHEEL to compare the two (forward is not SYNCed). Just in case this sound doesn't have enough bass for you, the pedal kicks in the SINE wave from OSCILLATOR 1 for a big bass boost.

The most bizarre and perplexing SQ-80 idiosyncrasy I've encountered happens when the TOMTOM transient wave is used with the AM effect. Note that in the "ODBEAT" patch, all three DCAs are turned off. When the AM func-

SQ-80 PROG: SPRNGS								BY: Kirk Slinkard		
	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	+0	00	00	SAW	ENV1	-63	ENV1	-63		
OSC 2	-1	00	00	STEAM	WHEEL	+63	PEDAL	-63		
OSC 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	LEVEL	OUTPUT	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH				
DCA 1	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-	-		
DCA 2	63	ON	*OFF*	-	*OFF*	-	-	-		
DCA 3	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	FREQ	Q	KEYBD	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH			
FILTER	064	00	00	VEL	+63	*OFF*	-	-		
	FINAL VOL	PAN	PAN MOD	DEPTH						
DCA 4	63	08	LFO1	+63						
	FREQ	RESET	HUMAN	WAV	L1	DELAY	L2	MOD		
LFO 1	01	OFF	ON	TRI	63	00	-	*OFF*		
LFO 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
LFO 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	L1	L2	L3	LV	T1V	T1	T2	T3	T4	TK
ENV 1	+63	+63	+63	00L	00	32	00	00	63	00
ENV 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 4	+63	+63	+63	25L	00	03	00	00	41R	00
	SYNC	AM	MONO	GLIDE	VC	ENV	OSC	CYC		
MODES	ON	OFF	OFF	06	OFF	ON	OFF	ON		
	SPLIT/LAYER	S/L PRG	LAYER	L PRG	SPLIT	S PRG	SPLIT KEY			
	OFF	-	ON	SPRNGS	OFF	-	-			

SQ-80 PROG: ODBEAT								BY: Kirk Slinkard		
	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	-3	10	00	NOISE1	WHEEL	+63	WHEEL	+63		
OSC 2	-1	04	00	TOMTOM	KBD2	-63	KBD2	-01		
OSC 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	LEVEL	OUTPUT	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH				
DCA 1	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-	-		
DCA 2	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-	-		
DCA 3	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	FREQ	Q	KEYBD	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH			
FILTER	127	00	00	*OFF*	-	*OFF*	-	-		
	FINAL VOL	PAN	PAN MOD	DEPTH						
DCA 4	63	08	KBD2	-63						
	FREQ	RESET	HUMAN	WAV	L1	DELAY	L2	MOD		
LFO 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
LFO 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
LFO 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	L1	L2	L3	LV	T1V	T1	T2	T3	T4	TK
ENV 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 4	+63	+63	+63	00L	00	00	00	00	12R	00
	SYNC	AM	MONO	GLIDE	VC	ENV	OSC	CYC		
MODES	OFF	ON	ON	00	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF		
	SPLIT/LAYER	S/L PRG	LAYER	L PRG	SPLIT	S PRG	SPLIT KEY			
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-			

SQ-80 PROG: KIK2.SN								BY: Kirk Slinkard		
	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	-2	00	00	SINE	*OFF*	-	*OFF*	-		
OSC 2	+0	00	00	KICK2	ENV1	+63	ENV1	+63		
OSC 3	+0	00	00	KICK2	ENV1	+63	ENV1	+63		
	LEVEL	OUTPUT	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH				
DCA 1	00	ON	PEDAL	+63	*OFF*	-	-	-		
DCA 2	63	ON	WHEEL	-63	*OFF*	-	-	-		
DCA 3	00	ON	WHEEL	+63	*OFF*	-	-	-		
	FREQ	Q	KEYBD	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH			
FILTER	127	00	00	*OFF*	-	*OFF*	-	-		
	FINAL VOL	PAN	PAN MOD	DEPTH						
DCA 4	63	08	LFO1	+63						
	FREQ	RESET	HUMAN	WAV	L1	DELAY	L2	MOD		
LFO 1	28	OFF	ON	TRI	00	08	63	*OFF*		
LFO 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
LFO 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	L1	L2	L3	LV	T1V	T1	T2	T3	T4	TK
ENV 1	+00	-31	-53	00L	00	00	32	38	63	00
ENV 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 4	+63	+63	+63	24L	00	00	00	00	36R	00
	SYNC	AM	MONO	GLIDE	VC	ENV	OSC	CYC		
MODES	ON	OFF	ON	00	OFF	OFF	ON	ON		
	SPLIT/LAYER	S/L PRG	LAYER	L PRG	SPLIT	S PRG	SPLIT KEY			
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-			

tion is activated, it automatically mutes DCA1 and modulates full volume DCA2 by OSCILLATOR 1, no matter what their settings are. I have no explanation whatsoever for the resulting rhythmic loop that results from TOMTOM being AMed. It is more than just the TOMTOM wave repeating rapidly — whole new sound elements are being introduced. In this patch, the TOMTOM wave is held at constant pitch while the NOISE1 wave tracks the keyboard. That way, the rhythm stays at a constant speed while the keyboard changes the tone. The waveform used in OSCILLATOR 1 determines the final tone of the patch — try out different ones to see how they sound.

So that's all for our brief look into the strange and dark mind of the SQ-80. If you try various SQ-80-exclusive waveforms in these contexts, you will find that some of them behave normally while others don't. For example REED2 will react in this strange way while REED3 will won't. There seems to be no logical order involved. So now, see if you can live your life the same way you always have knowing that a strange and demented SQ-80 could be lurking anywhere, even around the next corner! ■

Bio: Kirk synthesizes around near Denver and collects and restores vintage keyboards and amps so he won't have any need for Emu's Vintage Keys synth. He's also somehow under the impression that Ensoniq named the KS after him.

J. D. Ryan John R. Bolles

Tape: *J.D. Ryan's Collected Compositions*, 1996.

Artist: J.D. Ryan.

Contact Info: P.O. Box 964, Ocean View, DE 19970; phone:

302-537-0775; Email: BrosRyan@aol.com; Website:

<http://home.dmv.com/~brosryan>.

Equipment: Ensoniq EPS-16+, Sequential Six Track, Sequential Drumtracks, AKG 330 BT, boss SE-50, Mackie 1202, Peavey 600S spring reverb, Tascam 424, Tanko Voice Decoder, Ryan dbx compensator, Kenwood 8050.

Just when I had regained my composure and thought it was safe again to open a package marked "Basement Tapes," along comes another installment from the Bros. Ryan, or rather J.D. Ryan, sans his sibling in crime. Perhaps J.D. thought that 28 tracks were not enough for a demo tape, so he packed this one with 31 tunes (sic). However, I use the term "tunes" loosely, as J.D. notes, "Some of these are meant as short interludes for radio/tv or break effects. They will sound terribly repetitious if considered as meant for regular casual listening." I'm glad he made that clarification, because a trademark of the Ryans' music is its trancey redundancy. If you think about those sometimes odd transitional pieces you hear on NPR, you'll be in the ballpark of a number of J.D.'s instrumental compositions, although NPR's tend to be more acoustic, and J.D.'s more electronic.

These tracks can be grouped loosely into the following:

Commercial sound bites:

"*A Word From...*" — A cartoonish commercial announcement.

"*Scary, clangy, funny thang*" — Pretty much describes it. I hope J.D. used this at Halloween.

"*Interlude Trumpet*" — Imagine an overdriven muted trumpet segue between "*All Things Considered*" and "*Fresh Air*."

"*Angel Intro*" — A Christmasy ditty, ready for holiday shoppers.

Political vocal satires:

"*Pack Wood*" — Focuses mostly on alleged sexual

exploits.

"*Dr. Deamus/Senate*" — Cuts with razor sharpness.

"*Newty*" — Unfortunately, many of the vocals are obscured by the special effects attempting to emulate a tinny recording. For a sample of J.D.'s outlook, you only need to know that he rhymes "Newty" with "horse's patootie."

"*PolySci 001*" — Less smiles, more vitriol.

Whimsical silliness:

"*Mama Don't Let Your Cowboys Grow Up to be Babies*" — Cute, classic Bros. Ryan. Killer crying baby sample.

"*Depressed Duet*" — A short vocal number crying out for Prozac.

"*Rude Rondelle*" and "*Rude Rondelle X-mas*" — The only difference between these two is an additional track of sleigh bells on "X-mas." The hook is a flatulent blast. I don't even want to know how J.D. created that sample.

Strange, Trancey, and Other instrumentals:

"*Jazz Wahness*," "*Mystic Disco*," "*Jaw Harp Shuffle*," "*Sneak-a-Peek*," "*Hand Me Down Rose*," and "*Brass Cats*" are some of the other tracks rounding out this collection, usually containing blues or ragtime motifs.

"*Ugh-a-Bug-a-Pee-You*" gives us the entire lyrics in the title, and "*Hipster Doofus (instru-MENTAL)*" contains some very cool vocoder emulations (using Waveboy's Voder FX) that can't help but make you laugh.

J.D.'s collection appears to be more of an archive that includes a number of sketches and ideas to be fleshed out later, rather than an intentional demo. Many of the tracks are unpolished, rough-hewn ditties showing his composition chops for tongue-in-cheek ballads, biting twisted humor, and commercial jingles. Even his apparently "finished" works have some rough edges, which serve to add to the charm and "home grown" ambience. I listen to a lot of demo tapes where faultless production and engineering seem intended to cover up a lack of lyrical and compositional skill. The Bros. Ryan are on the other end of the continuum: nobody will accuse them of over-pro-

duction, but what this music has is attitude, and in spades.

The one track I have not mentioned yet, "#7 Dust," is in a category of its own. This is a wonderful poem by Dennis Saleh (published in his "Little Magazine vol. 14") narrated by J.D. over an instrumental background, and is a "serious" work of art, vs. the mostly whimsical tunes surrounding it (which are seriously whimsical, or whimsically serious, by the way).

J.D. and sib (difficult to know if this "brother" really exists) just keep churning out these copious collections. Currently, the Bros. Ryan have quite a load of their custom-sampled sound effects out on Rubber Chicken's CD-ROM II, about 300 of his samples, J.D. tells me (and lest I give you the impression that I don't think much of the Ryan's production/engineering quality, let me tell you that the original sound effect samples I have heard on their recordings are downright superb).

Their comedy material has received airplay on Dr. Demento (three or four pieces, including J.D.'s well-received "Here Comes Halloween" and the ongoing political saga of "Dr. Deamus"), and they have sent material to Howard Stern and the Grease Man at DC-101 in Washington, D.C., whose L.A. affiliate has played J.D.'s cover of Simmons' "Haunted House."

Creativity comes in an infinite array of packagings, and the stuff that J.D. produces fearlessly treads on sacred cows and worthy political targets, but also manages to touch the heart at times with its artistic passion. Visit the Bros. at their website at <http://home.dmv.com/~brosryan>.

Tape: John R. Bolles Demo.

Artist: John R. Bolles.

Contact Info: Allegra Music Production, 2219 Heather Lane, Gilbertsville, PA 19525; phone: 610-970-1462.

Equipment: Ensoniq SD-1, SQ-80, Alesis HR-16 and D4 drum modules, Yamaha TX81Z, Peavey Predator AX Guitar, Ibanez RG770 Guitar, Sigma Acoustic guitar, Peavey Transtube Bandit amp, Rockman Sustainor, Digitech GSP-5 guitar processor, Roland SPD-11 and miscellaneous triggers, Alesis ADAT, Mackie CR1604 mixer, Peavey Line Mix 8 (drums only), Alesis Microverb III, Midiverb II, Digitech Delay, Tascam 112 cassette, AT4033SM, 600D and 450 mics.

John R. Bolles' story is a familiar one: he started accumulating MIDI gear about five years ago, creating

sequences for him and his wife to perform with. He then started creating backing tracks for local performers, and recently started acquiring serious recording equipment (like his ADAT, Mackie and AT4033). He is now attracting actual paying customers, and hopes to develop his studio into a production house with its own record label.

It's no wonder that local musicians are paying attention to John's production work: his product is top notch! He submitted a four-song demo, including two instrumentals written by himself, and two vocal tunes by Christian singer/songwriter Tania Beatty. Let's give a listen...

"Power Trip" — John describes this instrumental as "a fairly aggressive, high-energy tune that leans away from the 'EZ-jazz' side of fusion and more toward the funk and rock side." This is a clean, kickin' fusion guitar fest reminiscent of a more aggressive Koinonia with leanings toward Al DiMeola. I could listen (and dance) to this all day.

"Hip Hop Peace" — More laid back, this one does fall into the "EZ-jazz" genre, but with class. Features totally tasteful jazz guitar stylings on what has to be his Epi Joe Pass. You can feel the wood in his clean guitar tone.

"Count Me" — John describes this vocal number by singer/songwriter Tania Betty as "a neo-folk/grunge/rock contemporary Christian" song. Believe it or not, that is a very accurate pigeonhole! And well-done it is, too. Although the lyrics are filled with inside buzzwords and cliches, they are sung with such attitude and panache that you don't notice how overused they are in this genre. Compositionally excellent, and the production is transparent, giving the composition center-stage.

"Fire in Babylon" — A darkish rocker depicting the downfall of society using the biblical metaphor "Babylon is falling." Once again, the lyrics could have been cut and pasted from any point in the last 25 years of contemporary Christian music, but the production and arrangement lift this track above mediocrity into an interesting and head-turning tune. It's heart-warming to hear that SQ-80 panning synth cymbal! Ah, the good old days.

John's demo is a study in near-perfect production, showing that what makes the difference between an "okay" track and a great track is not necessarily one particular element, or excellent gear, but the synergy of all the elements having been attended to by an artistic ear and a musically sensitive heart. Special production kudos go to

John's percussion tracks: his use of cymbals is just like a real drummer! They can never have enough of the dang things, and they're always flailing at them (I've probably got 20 cymbals mapped across my keyboard for perc tracks, and I use every one of 'em). Also, I often point out the need to leave some sonic "space" in the mix and not fill every nook and cranny of the audio spectrum with sound. Well, John is an exception: he fills just about every corner, at least in his instrumentals, and it works perfectly! Just goes to show...

My main suggestion is in the area of vocal production. Tania's voice has a wonderful Shawn Colvin-esque passion, but it didn't make it into the mix! Anyone with an ear for vocals can hear that Tania "has it." Admittedly, it is very difficult to capture vocal nuances, but it is definitely worth the time and effort spent tweaking until you get it. I suggest miking the vocalist more closely with that wonderful AT4033 with a bit more compression. This will capture more of the breath and passion in Tania's voice. Also, mix the vocal tracks hotter; vocal songs should feature the vocals. This might help translate

the passion of the performance into the final mix.

If John R. Bolles keeps churning out this kind of quality, then his Allegra Music Production is destined to become a household word in Gilbertsville. Great stuff! ■

Tapes Recently Received

Image — Jason Rubenstein

Group Esoteric — André

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@harbournet.com, or at his website at <http://www.kspace.com/vincent>.

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

For Sale (reluctantly) Mirage :bought new in 1986. All owner manuals plenty of discs including Masos. Works perfect. Any offer.. I just want it to have a good home and continue to make music. Also: Oberheim Hammond organ module with drawbars and presets-killer sound. Best offer. Glenn 334-621-0234.

1976 Univox Organizer drawbar organ and Yamaha RA-50 amp with rotating speaker. Both \$700. Good condition. Moog Prodigy. Mint. \$600. Ed at 817-297-6831.

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

2323 (after 6 pm PST).

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

SAMPLES/PATCHES/SOUNDS

DRUM PATTERNS!!! Over 200 BUTT-KICKN' original patterns from Afro-cuban to Funk for only \$19.95!!!. Give your midi files a boost!!!! Available in SMF and Ensoniq formats (TS series). Call now and receive 50 extra patterns absolutely FREE!!! PLUS any additions made to library since the offer!! Email for a quick demo in SMF format Call (410) 850-4230 or email BNMproduct@aol.com.

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

Holiday Blowout Sale: 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.

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If you're selling your gear...

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

The Interface

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

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

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

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

TH -

I have been a 10-year subscriber to the *Hacker*, and saw advertising for MUG. I joined many years ago, ordered nothing and lapsed. During the past year, I rejoined and ordered ten of their "super sequences." About the first week of May I received my sequences but there was no documentation or MIDI track info. I called and faxed them and finally was faxed back a scrawled, hard to read, and generally incorrect excuse for MIDI track data. I have not had any success in getting MUG to send me the correct info since May. They cashed my check immediately, and I feel they are not reputable business people. I have purchased close to \$5,000 worth of sequences in the past 5-7 years from some six other companies, and they all went out of their way to treat me as a valued customer. This shoddy treatment by MUG simply astounds me, and I would hope that the *Hacker* would not promote their company in your magazine any more. My contact was Gordon, and I understood he was in charge, but he seemed totally unconcerned with satisfying me once he got my money. I now have 10 songs that I really wanted, but cannot get them to play satisfactorily in my TS. I have thought long and hard about complaining to you, but I feel like the rest of our readers need to know.

Glenn Normand,
Daphne, AL
334-621-0234

[TH - Sorry to hear about your treatment. MUG actually hasn't been advertising in the *Hacker* for several years now. Aside from that though, we try not to get too much into the role of "third party police" - we hope that maintaining a really open letters column will let the natural operation of the market and the free flow of information handle problems like this. Which is why it's just about always good to see a letter like yours. We'll pass it on to Gordon. Maybe he'll fix things, maybe he'll tell his side, and maybe nothing will happen. But whatever happens (or doesn't), we'll all know more than we do now. Please don't hesitate to let us know how this develops.]

[G4Prod@aol.com - I've tried to satisfy Glen Norman's problem - but nothing is to his satisfaction. He owns the TS and it is not a general MIDI keyboard and our sequences are set up in a general MIDI fashion. I've (as he put it "scrawled") MIDI assignments for his sequences and he still has no luck. I think the problem is on his end. He bought sequences at a bargain and if I spend any more time trying to help him (short of flying down there and doing it myself) I will have spent this year's MUG budget. I do not have any problems with any other sequence purchasers. The ones that have problems are the most vocal.]

[TH - Well... it wasn't the "fix things" type of answer we hoped for. But at least now other TS owners know what to look out for.]

[GNormand@aol.com - I have been using sequences since about 1987, and I can make most any sequence work. Six other companies have sent me their products, and I had no trouble tweaking their sequences. Your written advertising claimed top quality sequences with MIDI maps. You forgot to send mapping to me, and I only got the handwritten data after two calls. You have since ignored 3 faxes, 4 phone calls, and my last letter to you for CORRECT data for the tracks. That is very poor customer service, not a case of me not being able to handle my sequencer. My check didn't bounce, but your integrity sure did.]

[CS - Here's my two cents worth: Glenn Normand's no stranger to this forum. He's written many times, more often than not to offer advice and/or tips to other readers. Anyone who is familiar with his writings (which show up here just about every month) would conclude that he's no dummy when it comes to music technology.

On the other hand, I've had no recent dealings with MUG or any of their representatives, so I'll allow the possibility that some sort of colossal misunderstanding has taken place here. And I'll make this offer: Glenn, if you want to send me one of the sequences that you received from MUG (if it's OK with MUG, that is), I'll take a look at it and give

you my honest opinion as to whether or not it's well set-up for your applications. Also, it occurs to me that the data you received from MUG may have been garbled in some fashion, so if the guys at MUG want to send me the same sequence, I'll be happy to compare the two (this is strictly up to you guys at MUG). Feel free to e-mail the data to me clo the *Hacker*, or just use the good old US Post. When (and if) I've obtained a result, I'll post it here.]

Hi guys,

I am desperately trying to convert all my files from my EPS to Cakewalk. I am having all sorts of trouble - like having to record across to the PC one track at a time. I am slowly getting there but I MAY GET TOO OLD TO GIG in the time it's taking me!

All I want to do is to convert all my files to GS. (Approximately 300 which I have sequenced over the years.) Is there software available that will read my disks in the PC and convert to .mid or load into Cakewalk?

Your help on this will be gratefully appreciated and may save my sanity!

Kind regards,
Wayne Ranson

[CS - You're in luck. Gary Giebler (Giebler Enterprises) has just what you need; a program that will read your EPS files and convert them to .mid files - no muss, no fuss (as far as I know). I haven't used his stuff, a number of our readers swear by it.]

Greetings!

I've been searching for a while and haven't received a good answer yet to this:

How can I backup an Ensoniq KS-32 to a Mac, and back, using System Exclusive for sequences and sounds? How can I get the KS-32 sequences to standard MIDI file (SMF) format on the Mac and back?

I have a Mac Performa 636 with an Altech MIDIface EX (MIDI interface box).

I have a sequencing/notation software package for the Mac called Freestyle 1.0.4 by Mark of the Unicorn, but apparently I need sequences in SMF format.

Any help would be appreciated.

Valerie Hunt
valhunt@imap2.asu.edu

[CS - Simply backing up SysEx data on your Mac is no big deal. There are a couple of shareware/freeware programs you should be able to find which will do just this. I've tried a couple of them - Bulk Sysex and MidiEx Mac, both of which will do the backup thing. Point your browser at your favorite search engine, type in the names of the programs or some other appropriate keywords, and see what you come up with.

Another good place to look would be at the Oakland; you'll find gobs of software there.

It's also possible that Freestyle has the ability to record and play back sysex data - most sequencers these days do. If so, you should be able to simply put Freestyle into record mode, and send the SysEx from your KS-32. If I remember correctly, to do this press Edit/System, scroll until you see STORE SOUNDS or STORE SEQUENCES, press Enter, hit the Up Arrow button to select MIDI SYS-EX as the storage type, then press Enter. The KS should then send its sounds or sequences, as SysEx data, to its MIDI out port. Freestyle (or whatever SysEx storage program you're using) will then (hopefully) record the data. Once finished, just save the data to disk. To send the data back to your KS, simply load and play the sequence. Of course, your KS must be connected via its MIDI in, and System Excl (in the Edit/MIDI menu) must be enabled (on).

If you're using Freestyle as your sequencer, creating SMFs should be a snap - every sequencer I know of supports SMFs these days, so I'd be surprised if Freestyle didn't. Assuming it does, you should be able to load your sequence and then export it as a Standard MIDI File using the Save As command (which may generate a dialog box which gives you some options as to what sort of file format you wish to use), or using a separate Export (or some such) command

- usually found in the File menu on the Mac.

If your sequences are coming from the KS-32's internal sequencer, things become a bit more complicated. The sequences will need to be transferred to Freestyle, and the only way I know to do this using a Mac is by recording the MIDI output of your KS-32 - while the sequence is playing - into Freestyle.

Without going into all the hoary details, there are a couple of things to be aware of. First, if you want your sequences in sync with Freestyle's internal clock (and you do, if you want measures, note timings and durations, etc. to line up correctly), your KS-32 and Freestyle must be synchronized while recording. Decide which one (KS or Freestyle) should act as master, and set the other one to use external sync. If you need help with this, it should be covered in your owner's manuals.

Next, each track in the KS-32 should be set to send MIDI data. This is accomplished by setting track status to either MIDI or BOTH. Also, each KS-32 track should be set to use its own, unique MIDI channel; otherwise, Freestyle will have no way of knowing that your sequence consists of separate tracks.

Transferring individual sequences from your KS-32 in this manner is pretty simple. If you need to transfer songs things become a bit more complex. The major stumbling block is that while the KS-32 in song mode can play 16 tracks (eight sequence tracks and eight song tracks) and transmit 16 MIDI channels, it can only receive eight MIDI channels at a time - either the eight channels assigned to the sequence tracks, or the eight channels assigned to the song tracks. The eight you hear will depend on whether you've selected a sequence or a song. This means that you'll need two passes to transfer your sequences - one to send the first eight channels into a sequence, and another to send the other eight channels into a song. The sequence will then need to be written into the song as a song step.]

Hello all,

Any word on how you make new drum rhythms for the MR keyboards from scratch?

It might also be nice to have the drum machine play note events out into an external sequencer. Last time I tried dumping a drum sequence into Performer, all I got was a lot of sysex messages, and they didn't seem to play back at all!

John Seboldt

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - Dear John:

This is a feature I too would like to see implemented in a new OS release. I have had no luck sending a drum pattern to the 16-track sequencer and then sending the pattern out to an external sequencer. The drum track #10 always shows that it is empty whenever I send anything over from the idea pad or the drum machine. I was told by Ensoniq technical service that the reason this doesn't happen is because the drum pattern is actually a long built-in transwave that really contains no MIDI data. When I say no MIDI data, I should qualify the statement by saying no MIDI note on/off data. There appears to be some system exclusive information being sent out via MIDI, but nothing that Performer can actually play back for you.

Wayne Palmer, Ensoniq's guru at Thoroughbred Music, tells me that he has a work around for this dilemma but has yet to get back to me to explain it. As soon as I have more information, I'll be posting this information to the Hacker interface.

I'm also hinting around to Ensoniq that it would be very nice to be able to get information into the "idea pad" and "16-Track Sequencer" via an external MIDI keyboard. I like to play my MR-61 via my TS-12's weighted keyboard action. The MR-61 slaves to my TS-12 beautifully but the "idea pad" and "sequencer" can't remember my ideas. Otherwise, these two incredible features of the MR-61/76 work flawlessly when using the MR-61/76's own keyboard.]

[Ensoniq - If someone from our technical support department said that the drum rhythms are transwaves, this is wrong. We apologize. Drum patterns are not transwaves. They are a special type of sequence meant only to be played by the MR's drum machine. Anthony Ferrara, Ensoniq's prolific customer service representative and frequent Hacker contributor, is working on an article that includes a workaround for

dumping drum sequences into an MR sequencer. Anthony's article will tell readers how to record MR Drum Machine Rhythms from an MR sequencer into an external sequencer. Look for this article in an upcoming issue of the Transoniq Hacker.]

Hi There!

I own a TS-12 and a TS-10 (for road-playing and shows) and recently I discovered the wonderful world of Internet playbacks. Considering that's part of my work, I've been trying to find ways to properly convert TS-seqs to general MIDI, or at least find a proper software that does all this well enough (one that knows effects and other controllers and MIDI signals of the TS-12/10).

But most importantly, is there a General MIDI to TS-12 convertor rather than a TS-12 to general MIDI (because I have about 3000 General MIDI files waiting to be converted to the TS sequencer). I'm willing to pay for this software, or trade for it.

Thanks a million,
Shy Fishman

Email: fish01@netvision.net.il

<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/8706>

<http://www.netvision.net.il/php/fish01>

[CS - Have you checked out Gary Giebler's (Giebler Enterprises) software for PC compatibles? It will (reportedly) convert Ensoniq sequences to standard MIDI files and vice-versa.

As far as converting to and from General MIDI, I think you'll probably need to spend some time massaging your data - assigning the correct programs, making sure the controllers are doing what you want, and so on. I know of no software capable of re-assigning programs, controllers, and so on from a GM sequence to corresponding data in the TS (when it's not in GM mode) - or any other instrument not set up for GM

operation. The problem is that controllers, program change commands and the like are generally user-definable in the TS and other pro instruments. Therefore, the program that's handling conversion has no way of knowing how controllers might be set up in the target instrument, which programs are corresponding to which program change numbers, and so on. As a matter of fact, it was because of this problem that GM was developed in the first place - to make a specification available that would provide manufacturers a way to organize programs, controllers, and other data in such a way that sequences would be transportable across platforms.]

[GNormand@aol.com - I do use the Giebler conversion program to change smf and gm sequences to TS and VFX. It does work. Not always perfectly - but what computer program does? It will save you tons of work and time.]

TH:

I'm a new ASR-10 owner, and I think the Disk Write Label function is great! I used to have an EPS and always hoped there would be something like this, except, I don't really grasp how to do it. Once I've created a Bank, I save it and get to the command "Write Disk Label." It asks me "Use current Label?" I say no (I want to name it an acronym from my song). So I name it SKIN001. I pop the next two in and name them SKIN002 and SKIN003 respectively.

Now, say I erase the memory and try these out. I pop in SKIN001 and choose to load the Bank SKIN. The ASR asks for the disk marked "DISK000." What gives? I know the ASR is referring to the last disk read, but why does it ask this if you are loading a new bank?

Matt Chinn
Cols, OH

[Steven Potaczek (potaczek@misslink.net) - I think I know why the ASR is doing this. When you save the bank BEFORE you label the disk, then you're basically saving the file to "DISK000" - NOT "SKIN001." Make the label of the disk before you save anything on it.]

[CS - The ASR is asking for DISK001, most likely, because there's something on that disk it thinks it needs - a sound, an effect, or some such.

My guess is that the mistake you're making is saving the bank to your new disk before saving the sounds. This bank thinks the sounds came from DISK001, etc. Here's what I do:

After assembling the bank I want to save, I first save the new bank to a new disk; this is to guarantee that the bank shows up as file #1 on the disk. Then I save all the sounds, sequences, custom effects, and so on to the new disks. Finally, I save the bank again, replacing the original bank. As the ASR is smart enough to remember where the data for the bank has been saved, this gives me a bank with pointers to the new locations for sounds, sequences, and so on.]

TH -

I own an ASR-10 and am looking for a certain sound for it. I am interested in doing Pink Floyd Covers and need to get the string sound they use in the recording "The Wall." Particularly, "Comfortably Numb." During the verse part it is a warm mellow string sound with a hint of synth fading in. There is also a harmony with the same warm mellow string sound minus the synth.

I have tried to mess around with the string samples I have and have had no luck. I was hoping someone would know where I could get these sounds or point me in the right direction to program them myself. Anyone who would have help on this please E-mail

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me at scott25@enter.net.

Thanks,
Shawn Scott
scott25@enter.net

[CS - Not being much of a Floyd-o-phile, I'm afraid I can't be of much help. Readers?]

[Steven Potaczek (potaczek@misslink.net) - Check out Rubber Chicken's Web Site and buy Giebler's new editing program. The web address is: www.soundcentral.com. Giebler makes really good editors and I know the ASR's screen is difficult to program on. Also, the program "SoundForge 4.0" might help you. You can get this in CPU stores.]

Hello out there -

I'm looking for help with the Flashbank of my newly purchased EPS-16+ Turbo. I just managed to load it with sounds - but can you put the OS 1.3 down to it?? Could you send (snail/e-mail) me a copy of a Flashbank manual?

Best,
Jorgen Teller,
Sortedam Dosserring 41 D,
dk-2200 Copenhagen N
DENMARK
106321.1617@compuserve.com

[CS - I'll bet you could order a Flashbank manual directly from Ensoniq. However, (and if memory serves) I believe you'll need to copy your OS to the Flashbank before loading sounds or other data. To erase what you've already stored on the Flashbank, you'll need to format the Flashbank. Once that's done, you should have no trouble copying your OS to the Flashbank. I don't recall exactly how this is done, but it seems to me that you proceed one of two ways: point your EPS to the Flashbank as its storage device (command/system/5), and then select COPY O.S. TO DISK (command/system/1). If that doesn't, just try the COPY O.S. TO DISK command, and see if you don't get to choose where the OS goes - disk or Flashbank.]

[Ensoniq - The Flashbank Manual is available from our fax retrieval system at 1-800-257-1439. It's document number 1002. The best part - it's free.]

Transoniq Hacker,

The good news on the MR-61: The 1.45 chips fixed the crashing and freezing. There is no bad news except an occasional auto switch to pan mode.

Unisyn arrived and this puppy looks complex. Time will tell. After the 35-page printout on Profile, the old printscreen-copy-Paint Brush-Paste-Print makes a great graphics manual.

I'm one of the few who like manuals.

For those who miss button layering and quick change on the job, here's an idea - SPLITS.

Example: On Neil Diamond's "Soolaimon" there are four main instruments that can be handled by keyboard. So - Pick an Organ on the top octave, then split. Choose a piano for the next octave and, yep, split. Next comes the Sitar and split. Last, put in a couple of octaves of Log Drums. Save all this in Flash and recall it later as one instrument. I've done several of these and save them under the song title. That way I don't have to switch during a song.

Situation: "Not Enough Memory." I couldn't find a delete button to free up some space. It is disguised as Library/Dial/Erase Memory Item? If you press "yes," there is a readout of Sound/Preset/rhythm memory in kbytes. That's handy - just don't press "yes" again.

By the way, anybody out there with a Jan-May '96 "Music & Computers" for sale?

Fred,
LonelyGuy1@aol.com

[CS - Thanks for all the cool tips, Fred! I'll have to get back to you on the memory problem, though. I don't own an MR myself, and *my* MR answer man won't be available in time for this month's Interface.]

[Ensoniq - At this writing, the current version of the MR-61 and MR-76 is 1.64. If anyone needs this latest version, call Ensoniq Customer Service at 610-647-3930. If anyone needs to know how to check the OS version on their Ensoniq product, they can simply request document 0002 from En-

soniq's fax retrieval system at 1-800-257-1439.]

Dear TH:

In a past issue of TH there were instructions on how to save both the original and a new sequencer track when overdubbing an existing track. Somehow, the new "take" could be saved to a new track or something. Can you help me find this tip?

I did my homework before purchasing my first keyboard and I am still the proud owner of an SD-1. In my opinion, Ensoniq was clearly setting high standards for user-friendliness and innovation.

I have wanted to add another synth to my collection for a long time but each new Ensoniq board has fallen short of my expectations. The TS-10 would have been an excellent choice had I been looking for my first board, and I would have bought it in a New-York minute had it not been limited to only 8 MB of sample RAM and the optional SCSI that was Read-Only.

The MR Workstation has great potential, too, but had they really wanted to design the songwriter's dream synth they would never have discarded proven features that greatly extend ease of use and flexibility - qualities that are essential to inspiration and creativity. Without the user-friendly multi-item display, full onboard programming capabilities and those wonderful patch select buttons, I'm not interested.

I hope this sends a message to Ensoniq that cutting corners on their flagship synthesizers is turning away customers. In my estimation, a compromised product isn't worth buying. Want my money and loyalty? I'll gladly pay more for a product that "really hits the spot." I would hate to think that the Trinity or the K2500 may be my only options. Ensoniq fans speak up!

I know Ensoniq is capable of making the best damn synth in the universe, so my suggestion is that they produce a board in the \$3,300 range and include the following features:

- * A large, user-friendly, multi-item display (who needs scrolling and confusion?)
- * Patch Select buttons (they cost nothing

and you can never have enough sounds and programming flexibility)

- * Drum machine, idea pad, song editor and sound finder
- * At least four slots dedicated to sound expansion boards
- * Additional slots dedicated for up to 128 MB sample RAM (off-the-shelf, user installable)
- * Unlimited onboard sound programming capabilities
- * Lots and lots of buttons, sliders and dials
- * Insert effects for individual parts or tracks
- * Read AND write SCSI option
- * Ribbon controller
- * An arpeggiator
- * Optional joy stick modulator
- * Ability to audition samples directly from disk
- * Recorded musical phrases assignable to keys

BD
Lancaster, TX

[CS - I don't know of a way to save an overdub to a sequence to a new sequence, but it's quite easy to copy a sequence to a new location before overdubbing, and this should accomplish the same thing. Check your manual if you don't know how to do this; my memory is a bit hazy when it comes to the SD-1.

You've put together lots of good ideas for additions to the features to include in your ideal synth, and I'm sure Ensoniq will take note. There's one thing I'd like to point out, though.

You ask for a "no-compromise" keyboard; as far as I can tell, there's no such thing. Every manufacturer must take a new instrument's projected selling price into account when designing a new instrument. Once target price has been determined, it's up to the manufacturer to make intelligent decisions about what features and capabilities to in-

clude in an instrument.

From the customer's point of view, the manufacturer may or may not choose to include features the user may find worthwhile. The manufacturer's decisions are based on his/her best guess about what the market wants - or more accurately, what the market will want two years from now, when the product's actually ready for delivery.

Ensoniq (as well as most successful companies) has thus far been able to provide products that appeal to a broad range of users, though often an instrument will not include every single feature that a given user might want.

Because of these factors, the "no compromise instrument" is a myth. As an example, here's the no-compromise instrument I want:

Built-in synthesis algorithms, including analog-style, Transwaves (user-definable from custom sample sets), physical modeling, FM, AM, phase distortion, additive, and so on - including combinations of the above.

Sophisticated digital processing including accurate Fourier analysis and resynthesis, linear predictive coding, phase vocoding, and the like.

High quality signal processing tools - reverbs, delays, choruses, EQs (graphic, parametric, para-graphic, etc), compressor/limiters, psycho-acoustic enhancement, spatial manipulation, etc.

Tons of input/output - both digital and analog.

Software and hardware upgradeable and expandable. Rack-mountable, with ports for video, a monitor, mouse, and ASCII keyboard. Detachable front panel (with touch screen) to act as a full-function wireless remote controller.

Reasonably good 64-track sequencer. GM compliant. Joystick? I don't need it.

Now if you can build that for \$3300, you bet I'll buy one! However, my guess is that such an instrument would cost over \$25,000 - probably way more. Oh well - maybe next year's model...]

[TH - Clark's always wanted a chance to say all that.]

[Ensoniq - The idea upon which Ensoniq was founded was to offer music technology at an AFFORDABLE price. There will always be some that have lots of expendable income to buy the most expensive gear on the market. We feel, however, that people want a product that can allow them to simply create music without letting the technology get in the way - AND do so without breaking the bank. To most, there is a big difference between \$2600 and \$3300.

The concept of the MR was to create a songwriter's keyboard that didn't require an extensive menu based display. Why? Because we've found that with multi-page menu based products, you're constantly having to remember where and on what page everything is. The menu based products stand in the way of creativity rather than enhance it, and this was where we knew there was room for improvement.

The layout of the front panel on the MR was specifically designed to avoid this. To put a menu based display would have been both redundant and overly expensive for this particular product, since all the primary functions that you would normally have to page to in other synthesizers have a dedicated button on the MR.

As far as the ability to edit sounds, the MR design has streamlined onboard sound editing, so that instead of menus and menus of parameters, only the most commonly used ones are now available. The idea is to have a user interface that is the least inhibiting toward creativity, while still offering all that a songwriter needs.

Knowing that there would be some who do indeed have more elaborate sound editing needs, we offer the MR Unisyn editor available free of charge to all MR owners.

Lastly, the patch select buttons have always been considered a well known Ensoniq innovation. At the same time, however, they are mainly a performance feature, not a compositional tool. The MR has over 1200 sounds onboard and the use of the EXP-1 (The Real World ROM) and EXP-3 (Urban Dance Project ROM) expanders give songwriters/arrangers even more sounds at their disposal.]

Hi TH,

I want to use an ASR-10 as sequencer than can record and play MIDI files coming from a computer running Cubase – in all 16 channels.

Usually I use a Korg 05/RW sound module, which is multitimbral. It can play 16 simultaneously sound programs.

When I use the ASR-10 as MIDI recorder I can only record 8 tracks (because ASR-10 has only 8 tracks). Is there any way to record MIDI data in Song Tracks, Audio tracks, etc... with a different input MIDI channel assignation than the instrument that they are associated?

Can you help me?

Thanks,
Carles Torras
72333.1605@compuserve.com
Barcelona – Spain

[CS – The ASR is capable of recording and playing a maximum of eight tracks at a time. The workaround I use is to try to find parts that are not playing at the same time, eg., strings during the chorus only and flutes during the bridge. These two parts can then be recorded onto the same track. If the track is controlling an external sound source, program changes can be used to select the correct sound for each part. If you're sending these from your sequencer, they will be recorded into the track along with the other MIDI data. If not, you can insert them using the event editor.

If you are using only ASR sounds this becomes a bit more complicated. You'll need to create an instrument which contains both sounds in different layers. This is most easily accomplished by loading both a string instrument and a flute instrument, and copying a layer from one into the other. For example, copy the layer that you want to use from the flute instrument into the string instrument. You may have to delete a layer (one that's not being used in the sequence) from the string instrument to make room for the flute layer. Assign patch selects to control which instrument is active in the new version of the string instrument – strings or flute. Then use the event editor to insert patch select changes into the sequence to control which sound is playing at

any given point in the sequence.

If you find that there are places within the sequence that are playing more than eight sounds, there's another thing to try. You could create an instrument that is split between two sounds, such as guitar and bass. This allows you to play both sounds at once from the same sequence track. This process is a bit complicated to explain, but the manual can take you through the steps you need to perform.]

TH –

Can you advise if there are still any samples for the old EPS sampler which feature Roland R8 Drum sounds? I am also looking for string patches for this sampler.

Thanks,
Pio Winston
pio@pacbell.com

[CS – I believe the sounds in the "HI-FI KIT" and "HI-FI CYMBALS" series are from the Roland R-8. These can be found on Ensoniq's CDR-2 CD-ROM. They also appear on floppy disk, I believe, but I don't remember which disks. You should be able to locate this info via Ensoniq's web site, or by contacting them directly (310-647-3930).]

["J.D." (brosryan@dmv.com) – A wide range of expertly done Roland emulations may be had from Syntaur Productions 713-965-9041. I don't know if they have produced anything from the R-8 but there are some current releases you should check out.]

[Sam Mims, Syntaur Productions, Sammims@aol.com – Thanks for the kind words, JD. Actually, that's an old phone number. We can be reached at (713) 682-1960, or (800) 334-1288.

We do have several 4-disk Sample Sets that have R8 samples, and they work on the EPS Classic. Our "Live Drums" set includes R8 Drum Kit (a live-sounding rock kit) and R8 Brush Kit, as well as some other instruments. Our "Percussion" set includes R8 Ethnic Drums, Orchestral Percussion (also from the R8), and R8 Spark & Plate. Each of these instruments includes a multitude of samples, except for the Spark & Plate, which has just those two sounds. These

4-disk sets sells for \$29.95.]

TH –

I've quit my band and am looking to sell my year-and-a-half-old ASR-10. What should I be able to sell it for?

Thanks in advance,
pbrandon
pbrandon@aristotle.net

[lloyd@winternet.com – I just bought an ASR-10 (keyboard version) recently from Music-Go-Round in Minneapolis and payed \$1299 for it. It had no case, no upgrades, and the piano disk was missing. It did include the manuals though. If yours is the rackmount version, I might be interested in buying it (depending on the price of course :). I hope this helps. – Chris.]

[CS – I can't tell you what used ASRs are going for these days, but you might try checking with the online Used Gear Price List. You'll find listings for any number of offerings culled from Internet sources,

Current Ensoniq O.S. (Disk/EPROM)

EPS	2.49/2.40
EPS-M	2.49/2.41
EPS-16 PLUS	1.3/1.00F
MASOS	2.0
MIRAGE	3.2
ESQ	3.5
ESQ-M	1.2
SQ-80	1.8
VFX	2.30
VFX-SD	2.1/2.00
SQ-1	1.11
SQ-1 32	2.03
SQ-1 PLUS	1.15
SQ-R	1.20
SQ-R 32	2.03
SQ-R PLUS	1.15
SQ-2	1.2
SQ-2 32	2.03
SD-1	4.10/4.10
SD-1 32	4.10/4.10
DP/4	1.15
DP/4+	2.05
DP/2	1.02
KS-32	3.01
ASR-10	3.53/1.5
ASR-88	3.53/3.50
KMX-8	2.00
KMX-16	1.50
TS-10/12	3.10
KT-76/88	1.62
SDP-1	1.70
MR Rack	1.50
MR-61/76	1.64

along with asking prices for these items. While this is not necessarily scientific, at least you can get an idea of what others are asking for similar equipment.]

Dear TH:

I just received my MOTU software Unisyn Editor for the MR-Rack. This was good news other than the fact that I own a MR-61/76 keyboard. Is this the software I need or should I have received an MR-61/76 keyboard version of the software?

The software distinctly says MR-Rack. Did MOTU send me the wrong software package?

I'm just trying to keep in touch with reality here.

James Rosand
jrosand@olympus.net

[Wes Zaidle (wzaidle@ix.netcom.com) - I got the same diskettes labeled MR Rack. Go ahead and load them. They work fine. But here are a few pointers. When you start the Unisyn editor program you will get a "Bad MIDI Header." Just click "cancel," and the program will start fine. Also, you will want to either create a RAM bank and copy the sound you want to edit into the RAM bank, or copy the sound to disk and erase the flash memory. (Don't worry about the flash sounds, you have them on a backup diskette. Don't you?) Then copy the sound into the Flashbank. When you edit sounds in the Flashbank the MR does this annoying autosave thing, and when the Flashbank is full of sounds it takes time to save them all, leaving you to twiddle your thumbs until it's done. Hope this helps you out.

Also, I'm looking for some of the keyboard sounds that are used in a lot of the contemporary Christian music. If anyone has any or can help me get them I will be very thankful.]

[John Seboldt - Yeah, I thought so too - just cancel after the bad header message. But noooo, my Unisyn (Mac) can't access all the waveforms in my MR-61. "Unknown!" shows up too often after getting a patch or trying to select some wave categories.]

[Ensoniq - At this writing, the Unisyn MR series runtime profile supports all waves in the internal memory and EXP-1. We are working with Mark Of The Unicorn on an MR series runtime profile that recognizes expansion boards beyond EXP-1. We'll post more information about this soon. Users with the full version of Unisyn may download this profile from our website (www.ensoniq.com). To elaborate a little on Wes Zaidle's response, if you're using Unisyn on a PC, pressing Cancel will allow you to proceed. If you are using Unisyn on a Macintosh you may press either Cancel or Continue.]

TH -

Just a quick note about "having patience" with Ensoniq. If you bought a new car and it constantly had problems and had to be updated monthly just to work normally, would you have "patience" with GM/Ford or Chrysler? I think not.

I'm still suffering with the Edsel of the the keyboard world - my VFX-SD II. I know, I know, "Why don't you just dump it and buy something new?" I don't have the cash and that's not the point. My ASR-10 had "teething problems" as well. If you invest your money and faith in a company you shouldn't have to be patient when product testing fails. I will not purchase another new Ensoniq product because of the constant software updates. I've had hours and hours of work wiped out because of a glitch that is corrected with the next version. Am I new to this process? No. I've owned six different Ensoniq models and only two have been relatively problem free. (SQ-1 and an SQ-80 - still in use!)

Yes, Ensoniq is a great company. Yes, it's wonderful that they send out upgrades relatively free. (Well, there was that VFX to SD-1 business but I'm not bitter...No sireee!) But we must put our kind feelings aside toward our favorite company. They're not giving the keyboards away for free. If the software is crawling with glitches, bitch groan and complain. If advertised software or manuals still haven't arrived, bitch, groan and complain even louder. If we put Ensoniq to the test they can only become a better company, giving us better product making a better situation for all.

RobertoRom@aol.com

[TH - Maybe instead of something simple like a car, you should think of them as a new computer platform, a new O.S., and new application software - all rolled into one. What are the chances of that hitting the street without bugs? Okay, okay, you do make a good point - and maybe it's not *quite* as complicated as all that - but it's close. There's some old sayings out there in the computer biz - "The pioneers are the ones with the arrows sticking out," "Never buy Version 1.0 of anything," and similar thoughts. This is good advice. You can be first or you can wait til the dust settles, but, unfortunately, you can't do both. (Not to say that the bitching and moaning isn't important feedback - in fact, that's one of the reasons there's a Hacker.)]

[CS - Your VFX-SDII should be working fine. Have you contacted Ensoniq Customer Support 610-647-3930)? I would imagine you have, but I'd be surprised if they couldn't help you out.]

[Ensoniq - We have always turned an open ear to our customers' comments, suggestions and complaints. Feedback from the field, whether it's positive or negative, is essential. We want to be the best company we can be and earn your trust. We welcome rational and constructive assessments on how we might better serve our customers.]

TH -

I have been a very happy owner of a KS-32 for a few years now. I've just recently started doing live performances and have been setting up lots of presets, but I have no way of backing these up. If my KS should freak out on me, I don't want to lose all my work (luckily that's never happened.....yet). I have Emagic's Soundsurfer, which saves all my patches, but not the presets!

Does anyone know of a MAC program that will allow me to save my KS-32 presets? My last resort, of course, would be to buy another RAM card and save them there, but I'd rather save 'em on my Mac.

Soniqually yours,
Miro
sonik@loop.com

[CS - You should be able to dump your presets into any Mac program capable of recording SysEx data. This would include

most sequencer and librarian programs, as well as several shareware offerings (MIDI Ex Mac and Bulk Sysex come to mind). Just set up your sequencer/librarian/whatever to record SysEx data, and select Store Sequences (Edit/System/scroll) on your KS (presets are just sequences with no tracks recorded). Hit Enter on the KS, select MIDI SYS-EX as the storage type, and choose to save (send) either the CURRENT SEQ/SONG, or ALL SEQUENCES. Pressing Enter once more initiates the MIDI SysEx dump. If your sequencer is in record mode, or your librarian is in receive mode, the data from the KS should be transferred, and you can then save it to disk (or whatever).]

TH -

I have an ASR-10 and am so happy that I can finally record with some efficiency (now that I know what it "can't do"). Man, if that baby had 4 separate effects chips that you could assign to any instrument!! Hell, as long as I am wishing, make that 8 of 'em!!

Anyway, I am looking for an effect that produces that killer studdering effect that is used in a lot of techno music. Basically, it would turn the volume on and off really fast anytime you activated the sample. I really don't know how I could program it myself. But I know I WANT IT!!

Please help...thanks everyone...Jose Alea

[Eric N. Michaels (traswave@dreamscape.com) - Jose, I think you're referring to a volume "gate." This is very difficult to reproduce on the ASR's sequencer. Someone else may have a suggestion for you on how to do it. I use a Mac sequencer to trigger my instruments on the ASR. This allows for much more modulating. Also you may be thinking of a sound I call "chopping." You hear this a lot on major remix labels. If this is the sound you want, you really need a pro audio/MIDI sequencer. Be prepared to pay a lot for the setup. Also, if you thought the ASR was technical, you will spend 5x the time learning how to use the software, let alone the computer operating system. Don't forget about the OEX 6 output expander. You can send the separate instruments to a processor like the DP/4. Good luck!]

[Sam Mims, Syntaur Productions, Sammims@aol.com - You should be able to

RUBBER CHICKEN SOFTWARE CO.

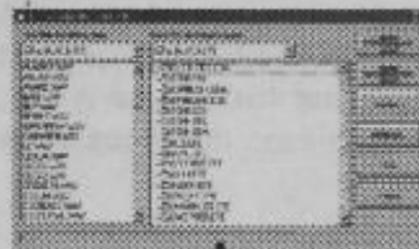
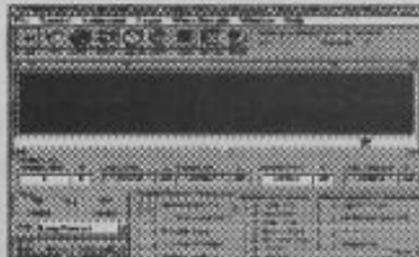


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program the ASR to do what you want, although not in the effects section. Instead, set up an LFO using a square wave, and assign that as a modulator to the output.]

[CS - I'm gonna take the day off...]

TH -

I've had an SD-1-32 for a little over four years, and the manual says that in about five years the machine will tell me it needs a new battery. Is it really impossible to replace the battery yourself, as the manual states? If so, you have to wonder why a manufacturer would make it impossible for owners to carry out what ought to be a simple job.

Otherwise my experience with the SD-1 has been great, especially now that I've added some Roland sound expansion boxes. The mix of manufacturers makes a huge difference, but sometimes those boxes generate a continuous deep tone that runs under everything I do with the SD-1. I have to switch off the SD-1 to get rid of it. Can anyone help here too? Obviously something to do with MIDI, which despite all the books I've bought on the subject continues to evade me. There ought to be a MIDI for Idiots book.

I'd appreciate any help you can give me.

Transoniq Interface is always interesting.

Ron,
Hell's Kitchen, NYC
e-mail: HewRon@aol

[CS - The battery is not impossible to replace, but it involves opening the SD-1, and (if memory serves) de-soldering the old battery, then soldering the new one in place. Be sure to back up all your SD-1 data before attempting to do this. Also, be very certain that you are using the correct battery. Your local service center (or possibly Ensoniq) can tell you what you need.

The low-pitched hum you hear in your setup is almost certainly not related to MIDI; no sound passes through the MIDI cables - just data. If this were to leak into your audio system, the result would sound more like a very high-pitched buzz.

My best guess is that you have some sort of

grounding problem. This can be tricky to track down, though. Try isolating your equipment from your amplifier system, and plugging things in one at a time. Use headphones to monitor. Start with your SD-1. If it produces no noise when plugged into the AC outlet and nothing else (besides your headphones), try adding a second device - perhaps one of your Roland modules. If this produces no hum, add a third, and so on.

Sooner or later you will plug something in and the hum will appear. This is probably because of a ground loop occurring somewhere in the system. I'm not sufficiently expert to advise you on how to eliminate this, other than to tell you that some alternative grounding schemes (e.g., lifting the ground on some of your hardware) can pose a potential danger of electric shock. If grounding does indeed turn out to be your problem, contact a qualified technician to help you resolve it.]

[HewRon@aol.com - Thanks for your prompt response to my cry for help. I came to realize that it was only when I used a certain sequence that the deep tone occurred. Trouble was, when I went to another sequence, or to sounds, that tone continued. It wasn't the kind of tone you get from bad grounding: it was musical. Anyhow, I traced it to one of the Roland boxes, made a few random adjustments, and that ended the problem. I still think it has something to do with MIDI: I have never understood why occasionally I get hanging notes that later disappear. Anyway, the problem has gone for now, and I very much appreciate your comments. Regards, Ron, Hell's Kitchen]

[CS - You know, it never occurred to me that you might have a stuck note, but this sounds like it could well be the problem. Reasons for stuck notes are multitude - an errant sustain pedal in your sequence, improper handling of splices by your sequencer, overlapping or doubled notes in a sequence track, the dreaded MIDI loop, bad juju, whatever.

The next time it happens, see if you can isolated which synth is producing the tone, and on what MIDI channel. If you can, try examining the sequence track that's sending data on that channel. By combing through the track - perhaps on an event-by-event basis, you might be able to determine what's causing the problem. View the track

both through graphic and event-list windows (if your sequencer supports both). Some bizarre problems might show up in one view and not the other. For example, when once tracking a similar problem, I discovered a note-on command with no corresponding note-off; basically, the "play until the next power outage" scenario. Interestingly, the offending note wouldn't show up in graphic windows, only in the event-list (guess my sequencer couldn't graphically represent an infinitely long note, even though it would try to play it).]

TH -

I am STILL the owner of a VFXsd and rely on it for several unique properties. (I know, a NEW keyboard...) But I still cannot figure out the manual on Sys-Ex MIDI Implementation. (I have the most current version 2.50.)

Does ANYONE have a working example of any parameter change sys-ex messages? (Command type 01 - in Hex please.) Say, to change the Master Bend Range, etc.?

I have been able to sys-ex "soft buttons" with reliability, but changing a parameter is too inconsistent with the soft "UP" and "DOWN" scroll arrows.

Ensoniq Tech support just wants to tell me about the manual.

Any help would be appreciated.
Ted Hyatt
hytway@mindspring.com

[CS - Try sending Ensoniq a request (in writing) for the VFX MIDI spec. Address your request to the MIDI Spec desk, Ensoniq, 155 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern PA 19355. Theoretically, you will be provided with more detailed documentation than what's found in the owner's manual. You might also be able to locate a copy via their fax-back system (800-257-1439), or perhaps on their web site.]

TH -

I am just now adding SCSI to my ASR-10 so I can use a Zip drive and cut down on my floppies.

I thought I might as well get a CD-ROM for

it as well. The Ensoniq auto-fax document lists a few 2X speed devices that are compatible, but has anyone had luck with 4X or higher?

Input much appreciated!

Casey - DJ Mental69
Denver, CO
djmental69@aol.com

[CS - I can't offer any advice concerning compatibility of 4X CD-ROM drives, but I can tell you this: when the ASR was designed, there were no 4X drives. Consequently, the ASR is not set up to take advantage of the higher speeds. If you're purchasing a drive to use specifically with the ASR, stick with the 2X; it'll be cheaper.]

TH -

First off, I must reiterate how much I've enjoyed the *Hacker* over the years. And recently, I let my subscription lapse, and despite the reminders, I didn't renew. I see now the error of my ways, and realize that my life is not complete without my monthly *Hacker-fix!* (I'll be renewing today!). Now, onto my questions...

I have an original EPS with 2x expander which has functioned flawlessly since 1989 (with the exception of a "Keyboard Failure" a couple years ago - which, I might add, was fixed without charge - even though my warranty had long expired. Thanks Ensoniq!) Well, I'd like to add a SCSI interface to my old friend. However, I've been told that I would need to upgrade the ROM chip to 2.4 (I have 2.0), and also that the actual SCSI interface is quite pricey (not to mention unreliable with the original EPS) especially when compared to other SCSI / computer peripherals of today. I'd like to use a Syquest EZ135 drive, as I also use one of these with my Atari Falcon (mainly to backup Cubase Audio .AIFF files), and I've found them to be fast, reliable drives.

Now, if I were to get the ROM upgrade, and the SCSI adaptor, and terminate the EZ135 externally, would it work? Also, how much does the ROM chip itself cost? I've heard that Ensoniq supplies it free of charge, and that my only cost would be labor for installation (although I may attempt that part myself). And more importantly, how much does the SCSI interface itself cost these

days? (I assume my only source would be Ensoniq themselves - unless somebody has a used one for sale???) And just for clarification, I have the Ensoniq 2x memory expander (with a little cutout on the tip of the cartridge for (I assume) the SCSI adaptor). So, would this setup work?

Also, I have a Reno 2x "portable" SCSI CD ROM drive. Will one of these work with the

"Classic EPS," or are CD ROMS too much for my old pal to handle? I know I've seen lots of cool sample CD ROMs from Rubber Chicken, but do I have to have a 16+ or ASR to use 'em? I have no desire to part company with my trusty sampling buddy - I like the way he sounds and works. Besides, the 16+ has only single color LEDs for the Instrument / Track buttons - I've got two! And we all know that the real reason we

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 & 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.

buy all this stuff is so we can turn out the lights and watch all the pretty blinking LEDs and displays and, ah... Never mind... I guess I forgot to take my medication...

Well, there you go, I hope you people have some answers for me.

And please feel free to e-mail me!
Paul Nurminen
El Segundo, CA
Nurmix@socal.com

[CS - You should be able to upgrade to the current EPS OS (version 2.49, actually) for free - although there will be a minimal service charge - around \$25.00, I think - should you decide to have it installed at an Ensoniq Authorized Service Center (recommended). The SCSI kit itself retrofits onto your 2X expander, as you've surmised, and retails (if memory serves) for about \$250.00. I've used the original EPS with SCSI only to do sample transfers to and from editing programs running on a Mac, so I can't attest to its overall reliability. However, transferring samples back and forth to my computer was pretty much on par with my experience with other samplers.

The only current supplier of SCSI kits for the EPS is Ensoniq. A couple of companies used to offer such devices, but I'd recommend staying away from non-Ensoniq SCSI adaptors, even if they're dirt cheap. Too many of our readers have had problems with these, and there's no longer any sup-

eTH — A Faster, Cheaper Hacker

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port available for any of them.

As for CD-ROMs, Ensoniq has approved no CD-ROM drives for use with the EPS, so you're probably out of luck. And I don't know if the SyQuest will work either. But I do know someone who would - Garth Hjette at Rubber Chicken 1-800-877-6377. If you talk to him, you might ask him what he knows about CD-ROMs and the EPS, too.]

[brosryan@dmv.com - Having reached a point of diminishing returns on this seemingly endless "techtotrek," I didn't want to drop the bucks to SCSI up. No one seems to think to tell us that there is an alternative. Giebler Enterprises makes the EDM for your EPS Classic which will read CD-ROMs in your PC's (Mac?) CD-ROM drive and render an Ensoniq format CD-ROM ready to write to a floppy on your PC. So, if you have a computer with a CD ROM drive and a 3-1/2 inch drive you can enjoy CD ROMs in Ensoniq format!

\$PLUG: You may begin with the fantastic Rubber Chicken CD-ROM II which contains a remarkable collection including the whimsical Brothers Ryan collection.

Giebler Enterprises: 610-933-0332. Rubber Chicken: 1-800-8-PROEPS.]

TH -

I have a TS-12 and want to buy a TS-10 for backup, home use, etc. What is a used one worth? Do you know anyone who has one for sale?

GNormand@aol.com

[Eric, traswave@dreamscape.com - Hello GNormand@aol.com,

I have a TS for sale. The price for a TS could range between \$1000 and \$1700. Be sure to get one with the current OS. (3.10 I think). This OS fixed a lot of bugs known in the TS series. Also try to get one that wasn't used for live work because going on the road takes a toll on equipment much more than studio gear (like mine). I have tons of sounds and these go with the TS as well!! The reason for selling the TS is that I'm trying to condense my studio, so I want to get a MR RACK. Feel free to e-mail me privately.]

[CS - As I mentioned to Chris (above), you might try checking with the online Used Gear Price List to get a sense of what folks are asking for used TSs (you realize, of course, that asking price and selling price can be two very different things). Somehow, though, \$1700 seems a bit on the steep side for a used TS at this point - unless it comes with lots of extras (SCSI, memory, CD-ROMs and/or sound diskettes, etc.). Good luck!]

Hello,

I'm an EPS-16+ owner and I'm running Emagic Logic sequencer on a PowerMac 7100/80. My question is how can I get my old EPS sequences into Logic? Any help on this would be greatly appreciated.

P.S. I have only been on the Internet a short time but I am already a big fan of your page - it has been very informative!

Thank you very much,
Roger Moore "PjHD"

[Eric, traswave@dreamscape.com - Roger, I use Logic 2.5 Audio, and I would think you can bring the EPS sequences into Logic. You may need to get an editor program to change sequences to MIDI files. All I could read in my ASR manual about sending sequence data is Sys-ex info, which of course won't be read by Logic. I would call Ensoniq or Emagic if you can't get the answer here. Also, there is an open forum address for Logic users on Emagic's Home Page. It's huge though, so be ready to do a lot of scrolling if you subscribe.

Good Luck!]

[CS - The only way I know of to get an ASR sequence into a Mac sequencer is to record it into the Mac sequencer (Logic, in this case) while it's playing back from the ASR. It's sort of like dubbing a multitrack tape from one tape deck to another. Just make sure that each track in your ASR sequence is sending MIDI data on a unique MIDI channel, and that your sequencer is set up to record multi-channel data.

For further details, you might want to read through the response to Valerie Hunt's letter in this same issue.]

TH -

I know the TS SIMMs sample memory chip is an off-the-shelf item, I installed that. But does anyone know if the sequencer expander chip for the VFX and TS is an off-the-shelf item also? I just bought a TS-10 and need to add sequencer memory (the 4th keyboard I will be expanding) and I'm wondering if I can save some \$\$ or time getting the chip at the computer store.

GNormand@aol.com

[CS - The memory expander is not a standard off-the-shelf memory module. You'll need to purchase the genuine Ensoniq article. If I'm not mistaken, it's not terribly expensive. For more info, try contacting a Ensoniq Customer Support (www.ensoniq.com/contact.htm or phone: 610-647-3930). They should be able to provide the low-down.]

TH -

I am fairly new to the MIDI file exchanging (outside of Ensoniq-to-Ensoniq) and would like to understand what is needed to exchange MIDI files between my ASR-10 and a friend's Roland MC-50. If the initial disk is coming from the ASR, what format should be used? Computer?? What else should I be cautious of (settings, sounds etc.) and what are some other experiences?

I would really appreciate as many responses as possible no matter how trivial you may think it is.

Also, does anyone know where I can get a good used output expander for my ASR that doesn't cost nearly what a new one does? By the way, are they shipping the new ones yet?

Thank you much!
Chris

[CS - There is no way to directly exchange sequencer files between the ASR and the Roland MC-50. You'll either need to play the sequences from one device into the other, (see Valerie Hunt's and Roger Moore's letters in this issue for more info on this process), or you'll need to transfer the sequences to a PC-compatible computer running software from Giebler Enterprises to perform the translation necessary.

In answer to your other question, yes, Ensoniq has been shipping ASR output expanders for some time now. If they hadn't been, I suppose it would make the hunt for a

used one particularly difficult...]

TH:

Hi. I have been receiving the *Transoniq Hacker* for some time now, and this is my first letter. I enjoy some of the articles, but more so, the Interface section. But I'm not writing just to be social. I have a problem. (Isn't that why most people write to you?)

I'm a proud owner of a KT-76, my very first professional keyboard. The KT is hooked up with an inexpensive Peavey MP4-Plus 4-channel, non-stereo amp and a pair of good quality Peavey 15-inch speakers. All were purchased new at the same time I purchased the keyboard, and all were part of the in-store demo unit that got me hooked on the Ensoniq line in the first place.

The problem: When I use my studio earphones (medium quality), I get rich, authentic sounds from the keyboard, especially brass, reeds, strings, etc. Impressive. But when I use the speakers, the sounds are tinny, non-authentic, and just down-right disappointing, especially in the upper frequencies. It sounds something comparable to a Fisher-Price phonograph mentioned in Tom Shear's article in Issue #135. I was able to improve on the sounds somewhat by adjusting the gain and contour on the amp and the mod wheel when applicable, but there is little else left to adjust, and the sounds are a long from matching the quality I get through the earphones. (Funny, I don't remember the demo sounding like this in the store.)

Any ideas? Could the amp, especially being non-stereo hooked up to a stereo keyboard, be the main problem? Room acoustics? Speaker placement? (Mine are located at both ends of the keyboard, facing backwards since I have little space to put them elsewhere.)

I would like to trade in my amp for a larger rack-mount amp/mixer type with near future expansion in mind (and hopefully clear up the sound quality problem at the same time, if that be the case). That brings me to my next question. Since purchasing the KT-76, I've been put on a number of professional sound equipment magazine lists with mind-boggling selections of amps, mixers, sequencers, etc. I have a problem trusting in-store salespeople (no offense to the "good guys") and would rather call on the pros like those at Ensoniq and TH for some guidance in this area. Like, what would be the best amp and/or mixer to move up to allowing for future expansion that could possibly include another keyboard

and/or rack-mount sequencer, vocal mic with studio monitoring capability, recorder, etc., while minimizing costs? Any recommendations on mail-order companies? Brand names, etc.?

And last, but not least, and you've probably guessed it by now that I'm an amateur, how about TH including a monthly article geared directly for amateurs like me that would hit on subjects like building a workstation one step at a time, simple do's and don't's when it comes to expanding equipment, interpreting and understanding TH language, etc. Maybe something under the title, "The Amateur Corner," yes? Though I enjoy reading SOME articles in TH (particularly those by fellow up-state New Yorker Robby Berman - I enjoy his articles more for the humor than the technical aspects), I get bored with most of them since I tend to get lost in the technicalities that seem more appealing to the experienced and professional keyboard artist (I can tell by the questions they ask in the Interface), not to mention little reference to KT's. I have seen a few articles intended for beginners (Tom Shear's recent "In Search of the Perfect Sample" comes to mind), but they are few and far between. I'm looking for something on a more regular basis. How about it, guys?

By the way, when I say I'm an amateur, I'm referring primarily to synths, samplers, and sequencers - I've been piddling around with pianos, organs, accordions for more years than I care to mention. Who knows, maybe one of my CDs will be showing up for review in the Basement Tapes in the near future!

Thanks,
Tom Kincheloe,
Ballston Spa, New York

[CS - Live performance amplification systems - and particularly budget-oriented systems such as your Peavey - tend to be less than ideal for monitoring full-range audio such as that from your KT-76, especially in small listening spaces.

All the things you mention - amp, room acoustics, speaker placement - affect the way your music will sound. Also, the speakers you use will have a tremendous effect on what you hear. Speaker systems utilizing 15" speaker will be optimized for performance in a large area - a concert hall or dance club for example. These generally will not produce desirable results in smaller spaces, such as living rooms.

If what you'd like to end up with is a

monitoring system capable of supporting your efforts in a recording studio environment, i.e., capable of reproducing full-range sound accurately, concentrate your resources in three major areas: the mixer, the amplifier, and the speakers.

There are excellent, low cost mixers available from a number of sources – Mackie, Spirit, Yamaha, Tascam – the list goes on (I should mention that Ensoniq is preparing to bring their own mixer to market, as well). Expect to pay anywhere from about \$400 (the excellent Mackie 1202 VLZ lists for \$395.00, I believe) and on up.

As for amps, the choices here are also numerous: Hafler, Carver, QSC, Stewart, and so on. Decent stereo amps will probably start at about \$400 or so as well. By the way – don't get too hung up worried about how much power an amp has. While overall power rating should be taken into account, I've heard good small amps destroy cheap amps rated at two to three times the power. And I'm an unshakeable believer that when it comes to sound, it's quality – not sound pressure level – that counts.

Finally, budget about (you guessed it) \$400 and up for a good pair of recording monitors. You'll find excellent sounding choices offered by Alesis, Tannoy, JBL, and so on. And here's the second best advice I can give you: If you must cut corners to save money, don't do it when purchasing speakers. Though it's a fact that every component in a sound system affects overall system performance, nothing hurts a system more than bad – or inappropriate – speakers.

So what's the first best advice? Educate yourself. Read everything you can about audio systems. Listen to as many components as possible in as many environments as possible. Because no matter what anyone tells you, no one knows what sounds best to you, except you.]

TH –

Why is that when I'm creatin' a hip-hop track, sometimes the sequences are off by just a millisecond, but it is very noticeable? I try to go back and fix it by rejoin' everything, but the result is the same. This only happens every once in a while. How do I make the ASR play the sequences smoothly from one to the next?

bmail-2@mail.idt.net

[cedwards@shvp.sc.ti.com – Can you be a little more specific as to the type of sequence (i.e. sample loop, same song different seqs, same sequence etc.)? I have found that adjusting the tempo and listening to the sequence can prove to be a quick fix for this type of problem when you are dealing with a sampled piece of material. Once you have the sequence looping almost where you want it, then you may have to go back and resample your material and get the loop points reset (don't forget to truncate the extra, if any). If you have a tempo already in mind then you would probably want to get into the sample editing functions and make the loop longer to fit the desired length. Before stretching the sample be sure you have the best loop possible.]

[CS – I'm with you, cedwards. Without more info, it's pretty tricky to diagnose this problem. It could be that you're trying to move too much MIDI data at once (are you using astertouch? If not, turn it off; it's a bandwidth pig). Are you using the sequences to controls effects selection? This could cause a brief hang when a new sequence causes a new effect to load. Are you using loops? A whole other set of issues are involved in keeping loops moving along smoothly.

Please write back with more details.]

Hi!

I want to know if Soundscape Elite has the high quality of sound needed to do some audio track recording. And if the onboard effects can be used with audio tracks – when you use it in Cubase or Cakewalk for example.

Thomas Johansson
thomas.johansson@mbox3.swipnet.se
Sweden

[Ensoniq – Typically, the Soundscape Elite is a sound card used by gamers who want to hear cooler sounds. The Soundscape Elite has a signal-to-noise ratio of about 82 db.]

TH –

Is there a way to expand the ASR-10's memory beyond 16 meg? Also, does En-

soniq have a new revision to the operating system allowing more than 8 instruments to be loaded?

Thank you,
Umberto Accardi

[CS – At last, an easy one. Technically, the answer is (2)no. (In layman's terms, this means the answer to both questions is no.)]

TH –

Does anyone know of other SCSI-removable media that is compatible with the original EPS? I currently use a 44 meg syquest drive, but am curious if it is possible to use SyQuest's EZ135 or Iomega's Zip or Jaz drive.

I am using operating system 2.49 which I have been informed is the last revision of the software. Any updates, drivers, etc. available to support these newer drives?

JHarri2928@aol.com

[CS – According to Ensoniq's approved drive list, the SyQuest 44MB, 105MB, and 270MB drives are the only removable-media drives approved for use with the original EPS. EPS operating system 2.49 is the newest (and final) OS for the EPS.]

Hello!!!

I'm sitting here with my ASR and wondering about PC-ASR. Is there something to convert our data from PC to ASR and ASR to PC? I'd like to know.

Nklas Saflund (neon@algonet.se)

[CS – If you are talking about moving samples between the ASR and a PC-compatible computer, check out Garth Hjelte's "From Cyberspace to your Ear," available at the Hacker's ftp site. The article details many of the intricacies involved in sharing data between Ensoniq products, the Internet, and personal computers.

If you are interested in sharing sequences between the ASR and your PC, surf on over to Giebler Enterprises web site, and check out the various software products they offer to make these sorts of transitions a breeze.]

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