

Transoniq

Hacker

The Independent News
Magazine for Ensoniq Users

A Truly Different Drummer

The MR-61 and MR-76 Drum Machine Revealed

Robby Berman



In the last few issues of the *Hacker's Interface*, it's become clear that the part of the MR-61 and MR-76 that have users most intrigued is the Drum Machine. Some have claimed that someone at Ensoniq told them that Drum Machine rhythms are transwaves. Say it ain't so, because, well, it ain't so. I'm not surprised that the under-the-hood workings of the rhythms have users wondering. The MR Drum Machine and its rhythms are unusual: unusually cool and unusually clever. And since they're so much fun to use, they've certainly caught everyone's attention.

The first thing that's distinctive about the Drum Machine — after the intoxicating patterns, of course — is the way it responds to your variation and fill choices. Most drum machines wait until the next measure before changing over

to the newly picked variation or fill. Not so the MR — things change right away without losing time! How do they do that? Second, with the avalanche of new tunes being created during all that jamming and goofing around, the natural question arises: what is the relationship between the Drum Machine and the 16-Track Recorder, and what's the deal with the Rhythm Track (AKA Track 10)?

MIDI and sequencers have, of course, been around for a while, and you may think that you've seen it all. But the MR keyboards sport two honestly brilliant new MIDI applications. One is the Idea Pad; the other is this entrancing Drum Machine and its rhythms.

What the Drum Machine Really Is

Let's make sure we're clear on the basic idea of the Drum Machine. It's an oddball eight-track sequencer (we'll discuss that oddness in the next paragraph). Each rhythm is something like a song, in that it's a collection of 16 eight-track sequences, though they're not chained together as they'd be in a song. Eight of the sequences in any rhythm are looped, so that they play over and over — these are the variations. The other eight sequences in the rhythm play through once and stop — voila, the fills — before

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returning you to the last variation sequence you selected. Each of the eight tracks in a variation or fill is dedicated to playing only the notes that would be played by one component, or zone, of a drum kit. Still with me? This relationship between the eight tracks and the eight zones of a rhythm's kit can cause some confusion, so we'll get back to that below in "Zones and Tracks."

But first: the odd stuff. The notes that each Drum Machine rhythm plays are actually contained in a bunch of special tracks buried within the MR's memory. These special tracks utilize a proprietary packed data scheme designed to squeeze as much stuff into as little memory as possible, in order to get the maximum musical bang for the buck. While they are sequence tracks of a sort, they're not playable by a conventional MIDI sequencer, given their unusually dense data structure. The Drum Machine is one eight-track sequencer that can play these tracks, of course, though it does so indirectly. When you select a variation or fill, each of its eight tracks switches on a specific section of one of the special data tracks.

Some *Hacker* readers have asked why they can't record their own Drum Machine tracks. This is due to the fact that, at present, there is no end-user utility available that can convert standard MIDI tracks into the special packed-data format.

Zones and Tracks

One potential source of confusion when using the Drum Machine is that the eight tracks in each variation and fill are named KICK, SNARE, HATS, CYMBL, TOMS, PERC1, PERC2 and PERC 3, while the zones in a drum kit sound are named KICK, SNARE, HATS, CYMBL, TOMS, PERC1, PERC2 and PERC 3. Do'h! They both use the same names!

The reason for the brain-twisting nomenclature is that the tracks only play notes that fall within their like-named key range in a rhythm's drum kit sound. For example: the KICK track always plays notes no higher than E2, the top note of the KICK zone within a drum kit sound. Ensoniq was trying to help by naming the tracks after the zones they play.

The fundamental thing to remember in keeping your head screwed on straight here is this: tracks, like sequencer tracks everywhere, play notes (even if the notes actually live in the dark recesses of the MR's memory), while zones are simply key ranges within a drum kit sound. They're interdependent in the Drum Machine, but they are two different things. Perhaps you've felt that ol' confusion rising in yer throat when you pressed the Drum Machine Edit button and answered "Yes" to either the "Edit zone settings?" or "Arrange fills & vars?" questions. Let's push that nasty taste right back down.

When you're editing a rhythm's zone settings, you're editing the drum kit sound used by the currently selected rhythm.

That is, you're doing a bit of sound programming by picking a new drum sound to be played in a particular key range in the drum kit, by twiddling the zone's volume or panning, by re-tuning it and so on. You're changing the KICK zone within the drum kit sound, not the KICK track — the track will continue to play the chunk of note data it always played; it'll just sound different due to your sound programming masterwork.

When you start working with the arrange-fills-and-vars functions, you're determining which portion of the data-packed tracks is to be accessed by the track you're tweaking. Each portion of these packed tracks is identified on the MR's display by the variation or fill that's currently playing it.

You can do a lot of musical damage by mixing and matching all this note data. This is not, after all, as innocent as it may seem — remember that each track only plays one element of a drum kit. By taking a bass drum from here and throwing it against a hihat pattern from there while tossing in a percussion lick from somewhere else, you can create some truly Frankensteinian rhythms. The arrange-fills-&-vars stuff often leads to some really amazing musical fun. A number of the rhythms Ensoniq provides for the Drum Machine partake of this happy madness, in fact, borrowing bits of musical stuff from hither and yon.

How Does the Drum Machine Respond to Variation and Fill Selections So Fast?

As I mentioned earlier, drum machines typically move to a newly chosen variation or fill when they're good and ready — at the next bar line, or four beats from now, or, for fills, at a pre-determined spot in a pattern. The MR-61/76 Drum Machine fulfills your desires immediately like so: when a variation or fill is selected, it immediately starts playing the chunk of the packed-data track that it's been programmed to play.

This is all accomplished internally, courtesy of that old character we thought we knew so well, MIDI: the packed-data tracks play the drum kit sound, in the same way as any conventional MIDI track plays any sound. Obviously, this is a completely different stream of MIDI data than the one that pours out of the MIDI OUT jack in the back of the box; this one's under the hood, and it's also the one that the 16-Track Recorder and Drum Machine use to communicate. It's the same old stuff, but it's routed through an internal conduit.

What Is The 16-Track Recorder Rhythm Track Anyway, Huh? Huh?

The 16-Track Recorder's Rhythm Track (where Track 10 would normally be) doesn't really play notes — it plays the Drum Machine's buttons.

What recorded on the Rhythm Track are MIDI System Exclusive messages that represent presses of the Drum Machine's buttons. These SysEx messages are recorded on the Rhythm Track, and as the track plays back, it's as if the invisible hand of MIDI (that old coot) were reaching over across the Parameter and Value knobs and pressing this Variations button, or that Fills button. In fact, when you have a rhythm on the 16-Track Recorder Rhythm Track and press Play, both devices — the 16-Track Recorder and the Drum Machine — swing into action, synchronized to each other. The SysEx button presses travel over to the Drum Machine via the internal MIDI back-channel. Many readers have wondered why the notes aren't on the Rhythm Track. Heck, they're not even in the 16-Track Recorder! And, as we discussed earlier, they're not even in the Drum Machine, the little packed-data devils!

Of course, as long as the Rhythm Track's sitting there pointing its SysEx data at the Drum Machine, why not point some MIDI note data at the Drum Machine's drum kit sound? Aw, just go ahead and record some drum kit notes from the MR's keyboard. It's as if the Rhythm Track is itself two tracks. One of the two sub-tracks — I just made up this word; no need to memorize it — holds the SysEx button presses, while the other holds the note data you've recorded from the keyboard. Of course, you can do more recording on either sub-track whenever you want without disturbing its neighbor.

It's Nice to Fool the Drum Machine

And, just to tie all this up, allow me to explain what's really happening when you use Tony Ferrara's fine method of setting the Rhythm Track to use a MIDI-OUT sound, resulting in the selected rhythm's notes being sent out of the MR-61 and MR-76 as MIDI data. You're merely tricking the Drum Machine into sending its MIDI spewage to the MIDI OUT jack instead of its usual internal MIDI bus by pointing its tracks at a sound that's aimed outwards to the great wide world. Clever. Diabolically clever.

The MR-61 and MR-76 contain some amazingly features. Some of them are designed to be so easy to use that you can't really see just how wild they truly are. I'm glad that all of these questions about the Drum Machine have arisen. They've provided a good excuse to talk about all this head-shaking stuff. Oh, and lest I forget, all of this would have gone for naught without the terrific job Ensoniq's Ray Legnini did of putting together all of these great rhythms that can't seem to help but lead to new musical ideas, and a whole boatload of fun. ■

Bio: Robby Berman is a musician frantically recording new tracks in the piney wilds of New York State. His latest completed crime against squirrelhood is "Rings and Rings."

Front Panel

RND (🎵🎵)

Hacker News

Due to winter weather conditions in the Northwest, phone lines were down here at *Hacker* HQ for the last week in December and the first two weeks of January. If you tried to reach us and couldn't, please try again.

The *Hacker* staff is so sorry to have to announce the passing of long-time *Hacker* writer and all-around very fine dude, Jeff Rhoads. Jeff joined the *Hacker* six years ago when he suggested we run an SQ Hackerpatch column and we suggested he take charge of it. He did — in addition to writing numerous articles. Jeff was an upbeat, knowledgable, good-hearted man and we will miss him.



Third-Party News

Syntaur Productions to Distribute Ensoniq Sound Libraries — Syntaur Productions, a Houston-based company that creates sounds for Ensoniq keyboards, has signed a licensing agreement with Ensoniq Corp. to distribute factory sound libraries for the EPS-16 Plus sampler and the VFX, VFX-sd, and SD-1 synthesizers. This is the third such agreement between the two companies; earlier arrangements involved the factory sound libraries for Ensoniq's Mirage and EPS samplers, and the ESQ-1 and SQ-80 synthesizers.

The twenty *SL* libraries developed for the EPS-16 Plus will be added to Syntaur's selection, now numbering 320 sample disks usable in the EPS, EPS-16 Plus, ASR, and TS-series instruments. The *SL* sets feature some of the best acoustic pianos and orchestral instruments created for the EPS-16 Plus, and excellent bases, drums, vocals, guitars, and synth sounds round out the collection. Each 5-disk set sells for \$39.95.

Ensoniq's *VPC* and *IPC* collections add well over a thousand VFX, VFX-sd, and SD-1 patches to the Syntaur catalog. These are available on ROM cartridge for \$54.95, and on disk for \$29.95.

In addition to these sound collections, Syntaur is now handling the *Mirage Musician's Manual* (\$17.95), and the *Talking Owner's Manuals* — instructional cassette tapes — for the EPS, EPS-16 Plus, SD-1, SQ series, and KS-32 (\$12.95 each).

Syntaur Productions has been developing and marketing sounds for nearly every Ensoniq product since 1988, and the company's leading position in that market made such partnering a natural fit. "For Ensoniq, these older libraries were being phased out since the keyboards are no longer in production," said Sam Mims, Syntaur's president. "But we have many, many customers with those keyboards who are happy to have the sounds still available. Even the *Mirage*, released over 12 years ago, still has a huge loyal following."

The DP/Pro

Ensoniq

Sonic Quality

The impeccable sonic quality will become a new industry standard. The high resolution 20-bit converters and low noise design of the DP/Pro maintain the integrity of your signal. With two of our next generation ESP-2 VLSI 24-bit digital signal processors, the DP/Pro has enough horsepower to produce realtime effects that are unparalleled in any environment.

Mastering Limiter

The Mastering Limiter algorithm alone is worth the price of admission. This single algorithm can do the work of a computer-based workstation running expensive mastering software. Maximize levels and even out irregularities between songs. You can give your final mixes a polished professional sound.

Dynamics Processing

The DP/Pro also incorporates a variety of other accurate and flexible dynamics processing algorithms such as Compressors, Expanders, De-Essers, and Gates which eliminate the need for additional outboard gear during a session. The gates and expanders are some of the easiest to use and best sounding available. All are completely programmable, making them adaptable to any application.

Flexible Mixing and Routing

Flexible mixing options allow you to blend analog and digital inputs with the optional DI-Pro digital I/O board. Flexible routing allows serial, parallel, stereo or mono connection of the individual effects processors. Need a stereo gate followed by a tempo delay? A chorus in parallel with a flanger? No problem!

Tweak

The Tweak button provides instant access to the most im-

portant parameters of each algo. The Tweak knob can be programmed to make useful and complex adjustments to multiple parameters of the algos. This is very useful in high-pressure mixing situations when you need to get just the right effect but do not have time for an involved editing session.

Effects Finder

The Effects Finder is based on our patented "Soundfinder" technology which allows you to search for an effect by category (reverb, delay, chorus, etc.) or by application (vocal, bass, live, warped, etc.). When you create your own pre-sets, you can label them with the appropriate attributes to make them easy to find later.

Dual Mode Meters

The two six-stage LED headroom meters (0, -3, -6, -12, -20, -30) may be instantly switched to indicate either the input or output headroom on each channel. Being able to monitor the digital output signal helps to avoid accidentally clipping the digital processing section even though the input signal level looks fine.

Modulation

The powerful and flexible modulation system includes 2 global LFOs, full MIDI controller support, 16 programmable modulators assignable to internal and MIDI tempo sync, as well as a front panel Tap button to manually enter tempo.

Processors

- (2) ESP-2 custom VLSI 24-bit digital signal processors with 48 MIPS total processing power.
- 24-bit digital audio path
- 52-bit internal accumulation
- Maximum delay time (per processor):

- @ 48 kHz = 2.73 seconds (stereo)
- @ 44.1 kHz stereo = 2.9 seconds (stereo)
- 16 MHz, 16-bit host processor with DMA for better real time response

Algorithms/Presets

- Over 35 Algorithms
- 384 Presets (256 RAM, 128 ROM)

Input/Output Specifications

- A/D conversion: 20 bit (1 bit, 128 times oversampled)
- D/A conversion: 20 bit (1 bit, 128 times oversampled)
- Converters are upgradable
- Maximum Input Levels:
- +4dBu Balanced Setting:
 - +20dBu = +17.88dBV = 7.75Vrms = 21.9Vp-p
- -10dBV Unbalanced Setting:
 - +8.12dBu = 5.90dBV = 1.97Vrms = 5.58Vp-p
- Maximum Output Levels (+4dBu/-10dBV settings):
 - +4dBu: +18.6dBu = +16.4dBV = 6.6Vrms = 18.6Vpp
 - -10dBV: +6.72dBu = 4.5dBV = 1.68Vrms = 4.75Vpp
- Input Impedance: 15k (Balanced)
- Output Impedance: 120
- Frequency Response: 10Hz-20kHz, =B1 0.5dB
- Dynamic Range: >100dBA
- THD+Noise: <0.003% = -90dB down from fullscale output (Measured w/1kHz +4dBu balanced input, +4dBu setting @ +10dBu output level)
- Crosstalk between channels: better than -90dB (@ 1kHz)
- Hardware bypass with high quality relays

Front Panel

- 1 Stereo Input Level Knob
- Stereo 6 stage LED headroom meters. Levels are: 0dB, -3dB, -6dB, -12dB, -20dB, -30dB.
- Meter function switch toggles headroom LEDs to meter Analog Inputs or Digital Outputs
- 24 x 2 Supertwist character LCD
- Four digit LED display
- Sample rate indicators for 48, 44.1, and 32 kHz.

- MIDI Input LED
- Digital Input status LED
- 1 Rotary Encoder (Value knob)
- 20 buttons, 16 with LEDs, for various selection and editing functions, including Tap and Tweak.
- Power switch

Rear Panel

- Inputs: (2) combination female XLR balanced and 1/4" TRS balanced/unbalanced jacks
- Operating signal level toggle switch: +4dBu (balanced)/-10dBV (unbalanced input)
- Outputs: (2) separate XLR male balanced and 1/4" TRS balanced/unbalanced jacks for Ground Compensated Outputs
- 1 Dual Foot Switch
- MIDI In, Out, Thru

Optional Accessories

- DI-Pro user-installable digital I/O kit Supports both S/PDIF (up to 20-bit) and AES-EBU (up to 24-bit)
- ADC-24 Converter upgrade kit This kit will provide a complete 24-bit analog input/output path when 24-bit converters become available
- SW-10 Dual Foot Switch
- User-installable Operating System updates/upgrades

Physical

- Dimensions: 19" (48.26 cm) wide x 1 3/4" (4.29 cm) high x 11 1/4" (28.58 cm) deep
- 19" rackmount standard, 1 space high
- Weight: Unboxed: 8.1 pounds (3.7 kilograms) Boxed: 16 pounds (7.4 kilograms)

Limited Warranty

- One year, parts and labor

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Preliminary Specifications

Prices and specifications subject to change without notice

Softly Spoken

Syntaur SQ Set 2

For: SQ series, KS-32.

Product: SQ Set 2.

Price: \$39.95 on disk. Also available on cartridge.

From: Syntaur Productions, 5402 W. 43rd St., Houston, TX 77092, 713-682-1960.

Pat Finnigan

A lotta people have been upset by Ensoniq's latest decision to cease manufacture of the SQ series, KS series, and TS series of keyboards in the effort to streamline the Malvern product lineup. Personally, I wish I showed my age as gracefully as these synthesizers, but I'm still making lotsa music with these discontinued "defunct"

(NOT!) keyboards. And you'll quickly discover that the SQ and KS are as highly valued as the VFX and SD series in the aftermarket. You'd find out as soon as you sold your Malvern box and bought something else only to find the new board paling by comparison. The *SQ Set 2* ensures that you won't make that mistake. This month Sam Mims sends his regards to the SQ/KS camp with this latest offering of patches that have become the trademark of Syntaur Productions: this set ensures you won't find your old Ensoniq friend out of date.

The Roses

I've reviewed many of Sam's patch sets, and if you're a long-time listener/first-time caller, Sam is *the* flyguy of animated pads. Every set of Syntaur patches contain a healthy dose of innovative envelope/modulation pads that bring the Wavestation to mind. So rather than give you a blow-by-blow of these sounds, here's what's going on. *SQ Set 2* is a cross between the *VFX Set 2* (reviewed Feb. '95) and the *KT Set 1* (reviewed Apr. '96) with the same caveats. Sets 1 for these instruments are huge animations that sound glorious by themselves yet demand center stage because they take over the mix. The *SQ Set 2* is much more restrained and evocative; you have to listen for these patches — they aren't as in one's face as the *Set 1* sounds. As I suggested in the SD-version review of these sounds, these are more Celine Dion evocative sounds as compared to Mariah Carey gymnastics. And, just like the *SQ Set 1*, this bank of Sam's legendary prowess will turn your SQ into the sonic equivalent of an SD. And trust me, if you've ever spent time programming either, \$40 is chicken feed for the sheer effort you'd spend just getting one set of envelopes right, let alone the three sets for the three voices of most of these patches.

You'll get the same delicate airiness of "Lochness Cloud" and "Ivory Coast" along with translations of the KT set's "It Ain't Baroque" and "Dreamstream," along with "Mad Max Wigs" and "Kilimanjaro." The operative word here is restrained: more understated than the *Set 1* yet with the same attention to detailed animation that has become the Syntaur trademark. And you get 20 Bases and 60 pads, 20 of which are bell/string/piano/synth layers, 20 of which are plucked/synth/pad layers; they really do defy description, and I, for one, am glad Sam's not one of the "Nimbus" atmosphere nominatives; I mean how different from "Cumulus" could "Stratus" possibly sound...

The Thorns

Unless you've got a PC (or a PowerMac with the new PC compatibility card), you can't load this disk from your

computer. The batch file loader "Getit30.exe" is definitely looking for an MPU-401 or an electronically *identical* hardware/software combination: I couldn't get it to load using my SoundScape Elite in MPU emulation. Maybe it's a Win95 thing or something, but until I installed the old MidiQuest MPU-401 card in my 586, these sounds were just a bin file waiting on the executable to call. The PowerMac's new PC compatibility card did it without a hitch, but that's about as common as neXT machines in this day and age. [TH — Syntaur has since changed the software to fix this.]

In either case, Sam's got these available as Ensoniq sysex disk files as well. He's one of the few guys who will still load your RAM cart with these sounds if you send it to him for a nominal fee. Ensoniq lets him archive the Mirage library, and he's the only source for Triton's Mark Cecys' SoundProcess OS and disks for the Mirage as well, so he's obviously well versed enough to warrant Ensoniq's corporate approval...

The Deal

As with all of Syntaur's offerings, the *SQ Set 2* offers the absolute finest modulation and envelope programming money can buy. And it's a credit to Sam (as well as our benefit) that he'll part with these collections for \$40 a whack. And even upon first listening you'll hear the attention to detail in his work that's not present in the \$100 sets frequently offered. And that's not intended to dismiss the hard work of other programmers: it is simply that Sam is *that* good. One listen and you'll know exactly what I mean. And the fact that this set sounds the same on the 21-voice SQ variants as on the 32-voice Q-pluses is not only a tribute to Sam's programming prowess, but breathes new sonic life into our old 21-voice friends. How he gets this level of sound from the original wavetable borders on the legendary/uncanny.

And if you're a serious programmer, toss these things into an editor and print patch pages to see exactly what's going on here. *Then* you'll realize the sheer amount of work this collection represents. This work serves as an excellent tutorial on mod routings, wave start offsets, and once you see how it's done, you, too, will be amazed that this level of programming expertise is available in the third party channel. Any \$100 set of patches that will turn a \$1200 SQ into a \$2700 SD is worth *very* serious consideration...

For \$40, it's a no-brainer... ■

Bio: When not answering video-capture questions for TrueVision, Pat is a tech support person for RasterOps.

The Sampling Turntable:

Ensoniq's SCD-2

Pat Finnigan

Product: SCD-2: DJ Jazzy Jeff: A Touch of Jazz.

For: EPS-16+, ASR and TS variants.

Price: \$249.95.

From: Ensoniq Corp, 155 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern, PA 19355, 610-647-3930 (voice), 610-647-8908 (fax).

I remember writing an article a few years ago about how folks were using the Ensoniq line of samplers as Polaroid Land Cameras: i.e., using a sampler to take a picture of a sound. I suggested that this had very severe ramifications, that the EPS would become a "tape loop" generator and this technology would succeed the magnetic tape recorder as the instrument of recording choice. Little did I know I'd see it happen within two years. And littler yet would I be able to predict that Ensoniq would embrace this art form in its product lineup. We have a two-track direct-to-disk recorder in every ASR-10 just yearning to breathe free, replete with up to 16 Mb of sample RAM, a definitive on-board 16-track sequencer, FX out the wazoo, with live audio mixing and resampling abilities. So much technology, so little time...

So it should come as no surprise that DJs would devour this power and embrace this technology and torque it out way beyond its limits. The Ensoniq SCD-2 is the fuel for utilizing the ASR-10 in this type of endeavor, and even though I don't agree with using the technology in this manner, I must stand in awe of the creative ability DJs and rappers have demonstrated in using these products far beyond what any engineer could have imagined. Like it or not, these guys have really stretched the envelope: much of what they have done in the late '80s/early '90s is mainstream now, so if you don't agree with or even question *how* they use this technology, skip this article or otherwise get out of the way. But if you've ever watched a competent and professional spin/rave doctor you have to agree that yes, what they do is indeed an art form. And if you've walked up into a professional DJs booth lately, you don't see records categorized by ballad, rock, MOR, pop, top 40 anymore: they're categorized by BPM. We're talkin' dance here...

This CD defies the normal Roses/Thorns dissection here,

because either you dance or you don't. If you dance, there's no thorns; if you don't, there's no roses. Given, there are 30-40 Mb of sampled basses, Rhodes/Clav/key waves and such, but the impetus here is on beat loops and scratches. So let's presume you're an accomplished spin doctor just turned loose with a fully ported, stroked and relieved ASR-10 and this CD. You now have the collective tools to turn loose any urb groove 2-4-8 bar loop in the 80-115 BPM zone. This pretty much defines most rap genres to include pop, urb, and dance, as well as most MOR rap beats like TLC's "Waterfalls," any plethora of *Electric Slides* and similar grooves, (unfortunately, including the *Macarena*). The sounds on SCD-2 are categorized into Loops, Big/Small Scratches, Bass, Keys, Leads, Toys and Percussion. And that's all you get, meat and potatoes, so don't go looking for Mozart strings here. That's on CDR-11...

What you get are the most complete assortment of sampled scratches ever put to CD. Even the "Representin" CD doesn't offer this collective variety. This is a turntable maestro's Dom Perrignon. I personally would be with more loops, especially more loops at higher BPM, but this isn't a techno CD, so I'll try the time compression algorithms on these to see what I can come up with. More grist for 'da mill, and an excellent method to learn and fine tune those ASR time-comp skills that I've seldom used. DM #8202 is 3319 blocks of 61 of the snares used in this CD (in the *Collections* directory), and a few of those with some tweaked ROM FX patches saved me from plunking down the bucks for that new Alesis D5 box. The "Slices" directory are extractions of individual drum samples from their parents in the "Loops" directory: kudos for saving us weary loopers that particular drudgery. "Accubass" is a very good upright bass sample in 149 blocks with the most fretboard noise I've ever heard out of a dog-house bass: this guy must've never oiled that rosewood.

Obviously, "Big Scratches" are looking to nest in a 16 Mb ASR-10: "Small Scratches" are for our memory-challenged TS-variants. Sounds are nearly identical from downsampling: just fewer multisamples across the same keyboard zone is all that's at work here. On nearly all of these beats and drum loops, the mod wheel muffles the

sound, which, wisely, is less noisy than dialing EQ up. So you can get perfectly clear boomin-kicks and ultra crisp snares, or wind the mod wheel up and presto, you're now in TR-808/Drumulator land. Not as expressive as, say, air-choir with bells and differing amplitude envelope staging. Remember, this is groove, not ballet...

And it's here where Ensoniq documentation shines: for instance, DM #1102: "A 2-bar, 88 BPM loop on C2 and C2+ with a loop different start point on C2+. Individual extracted drum sounds run from D2 to B2. Patch 00 is *bussed dry*." And you'll find that same level of documentation on *every* file. This disk is practically useless without this documentation: most users (like the types who glossed over the MR-61) will give this CD a 10-minute once-over and return it to its jewel case. Patch XX adds worn vinyl noise on most all of these loops, X0 busses selected layers thru gate reverb, 0X adds random panning. Not a whole lot you can do with a timed loop, but Ensoniq's managed to run these loops through their paces.

And stuffing this CD into your ASR ain't gonna make a Kid Capri out you, but it will certainly get you closer to what these types are doing out there. And you have to

marvel at how out of bounds these guys have taken this technology, and that's a given whether your with them or not. Geez, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis bragged about using a Mirage car horn sample as the bass for Janet Jackson's "Nasty" from her first album, so if that's sampler abuse, well, tell their bank to file charges. My claiming this was sampler abuse would be equivalent to throwing out my Mac and buying a Royal manual typewriter. And trust me; I'm neither that purist or elitist...

Folks, you gotta listen a lot deeper and longer these days. We're not just tossing around a floppy here and there; we're moving and auditioning 300-650 meg at a whack in 16 Mb increments. Trust me, reviewing's gotten a lot tougher simply by the sheer volume of data a CD represents. Performance, composition, *and* sound design are further entangled by FX processing, novel modulation routing and patch selects; this ain't the glory job you might think it to be. Before it was so easy; we only had 4 meg to stuff data into, if we got it to fit we were happy. Now it's a question of which of 18 4-12 MB piano samples we wanna dump into the slate. And it's a whole lot easier to start from a beat than from scratch (pun intended).

SCD-2 is by no means the definitive treatise on sample montage as music. But it does represent the most technically refined set of notated, dissected, timed and massaged scratches and loops you're gonna find from any vendor. I wouldn't be surprised if *only* Ensoniq has committed this to CD: most vendors don't feel it warrants more than a CrO2 tape. And that's another hats off to Malvern for taking this form this seriously. You can't ignore what's coming at you all the time; at least not for long, before you absorb enough of it to start dialing it out. It's at that point you should realize how much of it you're tuning out, why you're tuning it out, and think what you would do to make it more interesting. that alone piques my interest, simply from the sheer numbers coming at me. And that's what makes a premiere rhythm programmer. That's the stuff that makes me jealous: how some guys can subdivide the spank of the bass to lead the kick by just a 32nd, where guys like me can just barely keep the snare dead on two and four. And then you load this CD and see where it's coming from, how it's done, and how technically proficient you really gotta be just to keep the beat from rolling out from under the groove. This CD speaks volumes about just that. Judging from sound quality, SCD-2 exudes the same attention to detail that all Malvern offerings are renowned for. Hey, I can't scratch vinyl in tempo to a second Technics SP1200 Mk 2, let alone hear the deep groove difference between 80 BPM and 84 BPM.

But I'm a lot closer to it with this CD... ■

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Sound Program and Sequencer File Formats

Tony Ferrara

As the Ensoniq product line and the related instrument families continue to increase and multiply, so does the possibility for confusion about file compatibility issues. To translate that into user terms, a typical question would go something like this: "I've been working with the TS-10, and I'm now interested in the MR-61. Can I load my sequences right into the MR and begin to play them?" Another common desire is to move to one of the many popular computer-based sequencers that exist in the Windows or Macintosh formats. The following information should help to clarify the situation for those of us in Hackerland who want to change platforms.

Ensoniq synthesizer and sampled instrument programs have been in a proprietary file format since the first Mirage. This holds true to this day. The same is true with sequencer file formats, with the exception of the new MR Keyboards, which saves sequencer files in MS-DOS format as Standard MIDI Files.

Mirage Series: the sequence format is proprietary and cannot be converted with the Giebler utilities. Sampled instruments can be converted by both the EPS and the EPS-16 PLUS models and re-saved.

ESQ-1, ESQ-M, SQ-80: proprietary sound program files are upwardly compatible.

ESQ-1, SQ-80: sequencer files (24 ppq) are in a proprietary file format, are upwardly compatible, and can be converted to SMF using the Giebler SQ80SMF Utility.

VFX through SD-1 32 Voice: proprietary sound program files are upwardly compatible, since the VFX and VFX-SD ROM waves are a subset of the SD-1 and SD-1 32 Voice.

VFX-SD through SD-1 32 Voice: sequencer files are in a proprietary file format, are upwardly (and backwards to some degree) compatible and can be converted to

SMF using the Giebler VFXSMF Utility.

EPS, EPS-16 PLUS, ASR Series: sequencer file formats are in a proprietary format and are generally upwardly compatible, with one disclaimer; the original EPS had a sequencer clock resolution of 48 pulses per quarter note (PPQ). The EPS-16 PLUS and ASR Series sequencers operate at a resolution of 96 ppq. You may notice some rhythmic inconsistencies when playing EPS sequencer files in a later model, although they should load and play. This problem can be avoided by converting the EPS sequencer files using the Giebler EPSSMF or ASRSSMF Utility, which doubles the relative placement of the notes events, keeping them in exact proportion to the original.

EPS, EPS-16 PLUS, ASR Series: sample file formats are upwardly compatible, and are in a proprietary format. However, they can also be read by many other manufacturer's instruments, due to the widespread popularity of the Ensoniq sampled instrument library. They can also be read by the TS Series and the MR Keyboards with Flash ROM expansion board installed. There is some backward compatibility as well, with RAM on the earlier samplers being the greatest restriction. The EPS can play sampled instruments (within the limits of memory) developed for the later models with the disclaimer that since it has no on-board effects processor, some editing and tweaking of parameters will be necessary. Instructions about this type of "conversion" can be found on Ensoniq's Web Site, as well as on the Fax-On-Demand System (1-800-257-1439) as document #1001, titled "Converting EPS-16 PLUS and ASR Sounds for the EPS."

SQ-R, SQ-R Plus, SQ-R Plus 32 VOICE, SQ Series keyboards, KS-32: all of these models share a common sound architecture; proprietary sound programs which are upwardly compatible contingent on the ROM wave list, which grew in size with each updated model release.

SQ Series Keyboards, KS-32: proprietary sequencer files are common to the entire series, are upwardly compatible, and can be converted to SMF using the Giebler SQ1SMF Utility.

TS Series: sequencer and program file formats will work only with other units from this platform, with the exception of the EPS/ASR sample file format, which a TS will read. TS sequencer files can be converted to SMF using the Giebler TS10SMF Utility.

KT-76, KT-88: proprietary sequencer and program file formats will work only with other units from this platform. KT sequencer files can be converted to SMF using the Giebler KTSMF Utility.

MR-RACK: proprietary sound program file format, which shares architecture with the MR Keyboards.

MR-61, MR-76: the MR sequencer reads and saves in MS-DOS format sequencer Type 1 Standard MIDI Files, .WAV audio files, AIFF (Macintosh) audio files; the ROM-based sound program files are in a proprietary for-

mat. EPS/ASR sampled instruments can also be loaded via the disk drive and saved to an optional 4 megabyte Flash Memory Expansion Board.

Sys-Ex files: are bulk dumps that are never interchangeable or even readable by a MIDI instrument different from the family that the files were created on. They can be dumped via MIDI back into an upwardly compatible model (example: ESQ-1 files loaded into to an SQ-80) but not necessarily vice-versa. Particularly, they cannot be transferred cross-platform to an entirely different model such as an SD-1 to a TS-10. ■

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Bio: Anthony Ferrara is working on some pieces (using Ensoniq instruments exclusively!) to be used as show themes and background music for independent WYBE TV 35 of Philadelphia.

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Tom Shear

For: ASR, TS Variants

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It used to be that sampling CDs were a rarity... they were expensive and difficult to come by, and unless you did mainstream dance music, you were pretty much out of luck finding something to cater to your tastes. Nowadays, however, you can find sampling CDs for just about every style imaginable, some so specific that it's absurd.

As an industrial musician, I am always eager to check out the more unusual sampling CDs for some fresh sounds, and maybe even an idea or two. So, I was quite anxious to check out this sprawling 3-disk collection aimed at makers of industrial, electro, and related genres.

"3 disks! This is going to be GREAT!" I thought. Unfortunately, the decent material on this collection could've very easily fit on a single disk and a short one at that. The first two disks consist solely of drum loops set up in the moronic "construction kit" format that is becoming alarmingly popular these days. Here, you have a fully produced rhythm track and are given two variations on it (usually one without the snare or kick, etc.). The problem is I can't imagine anyone wanting to sample these beats. Aside from the fact that they're rather uninteresting, I can't imagine anyone not being able to program these themselves. In general the beats are very simple, and most lack a steady backbeat which I found sort of strange for what is generally a dance-oriented genre. Furthermore, there was very little aside from the heaviness of the drums that sounded "industrial" to me at all.

So enough of that... what about the third disk? Well, this is what saves it from being a total loss. Disk 3 contains a wide variety of heavily produced noise loops, drones, and drum sounds. Most of the drum sounds used in the loops on the other disks are here, and they sound great. Punchy and hard... this is NOT for everyone. Many of the sounds were a little too similar to each other, but there is enough here to choose from that most people probably won't complain. In addition to the standard drums sounds, there are

also some oddly processed percussion sounds including some thunderous "Reverb Trash Cans." On the non-drum side, there is a huge selection of synth drones and noise loops that would make excellent intros to your next track. Many are given in multiple octaves to ease sampling. The third disk rounds out with some "Noiseloops to Play With." Now this is more like it. Drum loops that are distorted, mangled, and generally shredded to bits. *This* is what the other two discs should've sounded like. Nasty!

Finally, Digital Kitchen, like many sampling CD manufacturers, has a licensing agreement if you plan to use these in your own songs. They ask for two copies of the finished production within 90 days of the first distribution, credits in the liner notes, and permission to use title, cover, or artist name for promotional purposes. If you don't follow this standard, Digital Kitchen will charge you \$0.10 per unit sold. Alright, now I'm getting out my soapbox, so bear with me... I personally find licensing agreements distasteful in the first place. If I just paid a hundred bucks to buy this product, I expect to actually be able to use it without any extra hassle on my part. After all, when you go to a grocery store, you don't buy food and then have to do backflips just so you can eat it. The thing that seems most hypocritical to me about these licensing agreements is that I seriously doubt that Digital Kitchen got permission from, say Roland, to use sounds from some of their old beatboxes on this disk. I'm sure they paid nothing, and they certainly don't give credit, so why should the consumer have to jump through hoops for Digital Kitchen?

So anyway, three disks for \$150 is a pretty good deal, but when you realize that only part of one disk is of any use to you, it suddenly doesn't seem like such a bargain. I could

see this set being useful primarily to composers who are under time pressure and lack a familiarity with the genre. As for the people within the scene, however — you can probably do better elsewhere. ■



Bio: Tom Shear uses his Ensoniq gear to write industrial music and to annoy anyone within hearing distance.

System Commander

Command your Destiny — Part II

Garth Hjelte

You are the unsung captain of your ship, which if you are a Ensoniq sampler user, is an Original EPS, an EPS-16-Plus, or an ASR-10/88. You take charge of your craft using the EDIT-SYSTEM combination. You are the SYSTEM COMMANDER and this is Part II of your parameter voyage...

Change The Channel

Very important parameters, the MIDI BASE CHANNEL, MULTI-IN MODE, and MIDI TRANSMIT. If you weren't watching FOX, you missed seeing the World Series on TV this year. You had to be on the right channel. Same with MIDI. Only the EPS/ASR is more complicated, because unlike TV, the device has to transmit as well as receive. So the MIDI is made up of two parts, reception and transmission.

MODE — RECEIVE

OMNI — All 16 channels, no matter what

POLY — Only on Base channel, none other

MULTI — MIDI note reception dependent on MULTI-IN MIDI Channel under EDIT-TRACK. Original EPS only: Track 1-8 receives on consecutive channels starting with the Base Channel

MONO A — Just like POLY or OMNI, except that each Track responds to different MIDI channels (consecutive, starting with the Base Channel, plus 7), and unlike MULTI, it only responds to the Tracks that are selected

MONO B — Just like MULTI, but each channel is monophonic instead of polyphonic, and Tracks selected/deselected don't matter

This chart shows how the MULTI-IN MODE parameter affects what the Base Channel dictates dealing with reception of channel-specific messages. One exception: System Exclusive messages always need to be sent to the Base Channel, even if MIDI-IN MODE is set to something other than POLY.

And MULTI pays no attention to what Tracks are selected — it plays the tracks anyway. In Poly and Omni mode, only selected Tracks play.

For more information about the MIDI-IN mode, check the Musician's Manual.

The TRANSMIT deals with transmission. If it set to BASE CHAN, that means the EPS/ASR only sends out on the BASE CHANNEL, none other. When set to INST, the MIDI OUT CHANNEL in the EDIT-INSTRUMENT section of determines the channel MIDI is sent out of FOR THAT PARTICULAR INSTRUMENT. That way, your EPS/ASR serves as a master controller, sending different MIDI channels out of different instruments (as well as different zones, etc.). However, you can't shut MIDI transmission off — weird, I thought Ensoniq would implement a OFF value to the TRANSMIT parameter. Maybe the next sampler (Jean-Luc, where are you?).

Grace Under Pressure

I have no idea why polyphonic aftertouch keyboards are not the standard in keyboards today. So you have to deal with a little startup procedure. The advantages are enormous — get effects from one key, without affecting the entire keyboard.

The BASECHAN PRESSURE parameter sets the type of aftertouch the keyboard sends out MIDI. However, BASECHAN PRESSURE is ignored when TRANSMIT is set to INST — MIDI Pressure is controlled by the Instrument settings then. Sometimes aftertouch is irritating, if it's not what you are looking for. Turn it off then. When you're using an external sequencer, or using a complex MIDI setup where you are experiencing delays or when you are just experiencing FLOW problems, try setting it OFF or to CHAN.

On a offside, it's important to keep in mind that each instrument should be set properly in its EDIT-INSTRUMENT-PRESSURE setting. Make sure the drums you just sampled have PRESSURE turned off — you don't normally need it there.

Get Control

Don't confuse MULTI CONTROLLERS with MIDI CON-

TROLLERS. I know I do.

The MIDI CONTROLLERS parameters determines whether control information (such as pitch bend, modulation; in other words, all the control information we discussed in the section) coming through MIDI will be received AND sent by the EPS/ASR. NO means you can wiggle your DX- pitch wheel all you want, and the EPS/ASR won't respond. It also means you can press your PATCH SELECTS all you want, and your computer sequencer will never record them, because there is no MIDI control information sent.

The MULTI-CONTROLLER parameter determines what effect the onboard EPS/ASR controllers have on the EPS/ASR. But it's not a ON-they work or OFF-they don't proposition. ON means when you wiggle the EPS/ASR's pitch wheel, your loaded Rhodes will bend in pitch as well as your drum set. All tracks are affected. OFF means the only tracks affected when you employ an onboard controller (the pitch wheel, mod wheel, pedal, etc.) are the ones selected or that are blinking. Why didn't they call this parameter LOCAL CONTROLLERS?

Most of the time, you will want MIDI CONTROLLERS to ON, so your MIDI in-out control information will always be there, and MULTI CONTROLLERS to OFF, so you have some individual control on where your local controllers go. MULTI CONTROLLERS set to ON is useful when you are in MULTI or MONO B modes — remember, in those modes, sounds can't be played together when selected together. This is a fascinating quirk with the 16-Plus and ASR. Let me explain.

With the 16-Plus and ASR, you have the ability to assign the MIDI reception channel to the Instrument slot/track. That's the MULTI-IN CHANNEL parameter in EDIT-TRACK. So what happens if you put two tracks to the same MIDI reception channel? Hopefully they will both play, but they won't. Only the first instrument (going left to right) will play — the other will stay silent.

So MULTI-CONTROLLERS is useful when you are in MULTI or MONO B mode — now there is a way for your local controllers to affect all the tracks.

For Heaven's Sake, Change The Program!

I have had the occasion where I have loaded certain instruments onto my ASR from my hard drive, went to something else, only to come back and find different instruments loaded into the tracks. That still happens...

What happened is that I accidentally had the MIDI IN MODE MULTI and PROGRAM CHANGE ON on EDIT-SYSTEM. When I was doing something else, I'd inadvertently send a PC to the ASR. That would load the corresponding file from the hard drive — sent a PC of 5, it would load file 5. Oops!

But when planned, having PROGRAM CHANGE ON can be of great benefit. One such benefit is before you play a external computer sequence, send a PC that loads a Bank, that loads all your instruments in. You have to make sure that the EPS/ASR loads them in time, or you can send a PC before you start the sequence. (Note: with the Original EPS, it only loads Instrument files, not Banks or anything else. With the 16-Plus/ASR, they only load Instruments and Banks; nothing else.) Make sure the MIDI IN MODE MULTI — the remote loading doesn't work otherwise.

Also, for you remote users: take note that PC's 100-127 represent Macros 1-28. This is *great* for navigating through hard drives remotely.

One more great implication of all this: using PC's, you can trick your EPS/ASR to load sounds on-the-fly while an onboard sequence is playing! Just make sure the MIDI OUT is plugged into the MIDI IN (creating a MIDI loop, which usually isn't good, but if you control it by making sure the following parameters are set: SYS-EX OFF, TRANSMIT INST CHAN, and the appropriate MIDI STATUS parameters of each instrument). Then, if you have a PC in your sequence, the EPS/ASR will behave just like it received a PC, and load the appropriate file of the currently selected Storage Device.

Beware of the following problems though: with the 16-Plus/ASR, if the Bank Effect is not selected (in the FX SELECT button), there will be a slight glitch of sound when the file is finished loading. Make sure the BANK EFFECT is selected, which it should be when you are playing a sequence. Also, make sure there is time enough to load the sound in.

And now for some trivia. When the 16-Plus came out, Ensoniq promised a feature where you could load files during a sequence. This was evidenced by (and you can still see this in the 16-Plus on any OS) the LOADFILE EVENTS listing in the EVENT EDIT and FILTER EVENT parameters in COMMAND-TRACK. But, after some work between OS versions 1.1 and 1.3, Ensoniq decided against implementing it, because they couldn't get rid of the glitches of sound mentioned above. No loss — you can still do the trick above.

Interestingly, there are bootleg OSs that implement the mysterious LOADFILE EVENTS command. Version 1.17 can be downloaded from http://oak.oakland.edu/pub/eps/os/os_1_17.gkh. The macros don't work, but the LOADFILE EVENTS do. I have seen an OS 1.19, that doesn't seem much different than OS 1.17.

Last note: most other instruments with onboard effects do not cut off the sound when going from instrument to instrument like the EPS/ASR do because of the effects switching. Their side-effect is that the sound that carries over does change in sound, because the effects switch. But, if you ask me, that's better; in fact, the little change sounds kind of nice. Even further, this response is switchable in the TS series, and I believe in the MR series. Too bad it wasn't in the samplers. But there's still hope for the ASR — just one more operating system, please?

Select Your Song

How can you select a song where there can only be one song in the EPS/ASR at one time? No, this is for transmission. For example, my Roland R-8 drum machine can have 10 songs. It's real easy to set the SONG SELCT in the SEQUENCE INFORMATION parameter, and turn SONG SELECT ON, and the R-8 starts right up when it's synched with the EPS/ASR. Reeceel handy.

Control From Above — The XCTRL parameter

Let's figure out what this crazy phrase, Continuous Controllers, means. It is simply a MIDI Message, sent to a certain channel, sent to a certain number, set to a certain value.

Assume you want to control the Panning of a certain Instrument from another certain source, a computer. (Everything's for certain, isn't it?) Here's a demonstration on how the MIDI XCTRL NUM works (16-Plus and ASR only):

- 1) Press EDIT, and set the EDIT cursor under the Instrument
- 2) Press EDIT-AMP, and scroll to PAN, set it to -99
- 3) Scroll to PAN MOD
- 4) Set the source to XCTRL, and set the amount to +99
- 5) Press EDIT-SYSTEM, and set the MIDI XCTRL NUM to 10 (that's the number for Pan)
- 5) Temporarily turn the Effects off, so you can hear the panning better

As you adjust Pan on your sequencer (manipulate con-

troller 10), you'll find the panning of the Instrument goes from left to right. You will notice that when you set the controller on the computer back to 0, the sound will be panned hard left — that's because the panning on the EPS/ASR is set that way because that's the only way it can go from far left to far right. Otherwise, it would go from center to left (+99), or center to right (-99).

The reason we took the effects off is because certain effects, like the Phaser or the Chorus, obscure the stereo image because the sound is always up the middle. Ensoniq didn't make the effect's stereo image adjustable.

Liberace Buttons

It's my goal to play a concerto, only using the ENTER-YES button on the ASR. Yes, the ASR has my favorite feature of the EX-8000 (rack version of the Korg DW-8000, the first hybrid "diganalog" synth) — the A4 button. The EX-8000 has this little button marked "A4," because that's exactly what it was — A4 on the keyboard. It was great for making sure your rack units worked, before your keyboards were setup. Great for troubleshooting.

The ENTER PLAYS KEY parameters sets which note the ENTER-YES button plays. It works only when the EDIT CONTEXT screen is showing, or the ENTER PLAYS KEY screen is showing. Next time there is no sound coming from your ASR, and you can't figure out if it's your keyboard, etc., try using this parameter. Very helpful. ■



Bio: Garth Hjelte is the owner of Rubber Chicken Software Co., a company specializing in exclusively supporting Ensoniq samplers. This article has been excerpted from the upcoming book, "The EPS/ASR Sampler Guide."

Call For Writers!

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

Making Custom Samples For Your TS-10/12

Dan Wellman

One of the coolest aspects of the TS-10/12, and a big selling point for me, is the board's ability to load new samples from the ASR series samplers. Now you don't have to rely on the internal ROM sounds to get that specific sound that gives your music the edge you want — you just sample it, edit appropriately, re-sample with effects and presto! Errrr... well, not exactly. Sadly, the TS-10/12 can only load samples, so you're limited to sounds that were captured by other people. But with a computer and the right software, you can not only sample your own instruments but convert existing samples from other manufacturers' samplers to use with your TS-10/12! This article will give you some general instructions on the sample creation process; I'm a Windows/DOS person so I will offer some suggestions on programs to use for that platform, and I'll offer what I've heard "through the grapevine" as far as Macintosh programs go.

Overview

Here's a quick outline of the process — we'll go into step by step detail later. First you create and edit the sample on your computer using your favorite sound editor, saving the results when you are done. Then you convert that file to an Ensoniq file format that your TS-10/12 will be able to read. Finally, you copy that file on to an Ensoniq-formatted disk for your TS and play away. If you want to modify a sample already in Ensoniq format, you first need to copy the file off the Ensoniq disk to your PC and then convert the file format to something your sound editor can understand. You can also convert sounds gathered off the Internet for other manufacturers' samplers to something your TS can play.

Disk Formats

Computers have differing methods of storing data on

disks, thus when trying to transfer data between one computer type to another you can sometimes encounter "language barriers." If you were to take an Ensoniq disk and stick it in your PC or Mac and try to use it as you would any other disk, you'll probably get read errors and confuse your poor computer.

Not to worry though as many resourceful programmers in the world have written programs for the PC and Mac which will allow you to read and store data on Ensoniq format disks. If you've got a PC with Windows, you can use Rubber Chicken Software's "*TS/MR Tools*," an easy to use program which allows you to copy and read files from your Ensoniq Disk, plus many other disk utilities. For those who are using DOS, you can check out Giebler *Disk Manager* software or the shareware *EPDISK* by Michael Chen. If Macintosh is your computer medium of choice, try *EPSm* by Terje Finstad to write and read Ensoniq format disks.

Converting Audio File Formats

Like unique disk formats, software companies will often come up with their own individual way of representing audio data on disk that are (surprise) not directly compatible with one another. Microsoft has the WAV file, Sun has AU, Apple uses AIFF, and Ensoniq has its own file format which people have dubbed EFE (for EPS format instruments) and EFA (for ASR format instruments). In order to do any editing of sound files on your computer, you must convert the file to a format which is supported by your sound editor (typically WAV on a PC and AIFF on a Mac). In order to store the sound back on an Ensoniq disk, you need to convert the sound to the .EFE/.EFA file format. On the PC, this can be accomplished with *TS/MR Tools*, or a shareware Windows program called "*AWave*" which converts between dozens of file for-

mats, including Roland samplers, Akai samplers, WAV, and of course the Ensoniq EFE/EFA. With *AWave*, you can use the unending number of samples available on the Internet from almost *any* source.

Acquire and Edit Your Sound

If you want to sample your own sound, use your favorite sampling program on the PC or Mac. Then use a sample editor to trim the sample down the way you want and modify at will. On the PC, *Sound Forge* by Sonic Foundry is a very thorough but expensive (>\$400) professional editor which has many features. On the less expensive side, the shareware program *Cool Edit* performs many of the same functions as *Sound Forge* at a much smaller price. On the Mac, try the shareware *Sound Edit* or *Sound Hack* for your editing needs.

You can also convert existing Ensoniq samples to a format that your computer can read then use your sound editor to make any modifications you'd like.

Resampling Made Easy

One of the truly swell features of the ASR samplers is that you can run your cool sound through the effects processor and then rerecord the sound with effects. This function is useful in that it frees up your effects processor to deal with the rest of your mix in multi-timbral situations, plus allows you to apply bizarre combinations of effects to your sound. While the TS series allows you to modify the effects used on a sampled sound (the "Program Effects/Effects" button), it doesn't allow you to resample the sound with those effects.

The solution to this problem is to take your sound and load it up using one of the high quality sound editors on your computer. Sound editors will allow you to add effects to the sound and then re-save the file; while

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this won't be exactly the same as resampling using a specific Ensoniq effect program, you can get pretty darned close, especially with the more common algorithms such as reverb and chorus. Plus, once your TS has loaded the new sample, you can still apply those crisp Ensoniq effects if you so desire. If you have a PC try using *Sound Forge* or *Cool Edit*, on a Mac I hear that newer versions of *Sound Edit* will do the trick. You can add as many effects to the instrument and then re-save all you want; to the TS-10/12 it's just a new sample. Be aware that resampling the instrument will most likely make the sample bigger and require more RAM on your TS-10/12.

Converting the Sound Back to the Ensoniq Format

Now that you've tweaked, mangled, and ironed your beloved sample, it's time to put it back on an Ensoniq disk so your TS-10/12 can use it. This is accomplished by converting the sample format back to Ensoniq's EFE/EFA format and then writing the file to a TS formatted disk. To convert the sample format back to .EFE/.EFA, you can use the same programs listed above (*TS/MR Tools*, *AWave*). Note that when you create a new Ensoniq Format instrument it will contain the sample and also all editable parameters such as layer information, filter setup, loop points, and effects routing. You'll also get to name your instrument. Both *TS/MR Tools* and *AWave* allow you to change specific sample parameters and make multi-sampled instruments, a handy feature which saves some time and hassle when you get back to the keyboard. When editing sounds on the TS series boards you must save any changes to the sample as a nasty "Sample Edit" file, creating two files (often on two different disks!) for your sample that must be loaded.

Finally, use your disk program (*TS/MR Tools*, *EPS-WRITE*, *EPSm*) to save your EFE/EFA instrument back to the TS format disk. Pop your disk into your TS, press "Disk" then "Load" and in the Sample Sound section you should see your new instrument.

Final Notes

Although the TS series doesn't have the same sampling options as the ASR, you can simulate the functionality fairly well by using your computer. In

fact, using a computer with a big monitor and a graphical editor might even be easier for you than looking at the two-line display of an ASR! ■

Web sites and contact information

TS/MR Tools for Windows and Mac by Rubber Chicken Software, (800) 8-PRO-EPS
Type: Commercial Software
Web URL: <http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps>
E-mail: chickenEPS@willmar.com

Sound Forge for Windows by Sonic Foundry
(800) 577-6642
Type: Commercial Software
Web URL: <http://www.sfoundry.com/>

Cool Edit for Windows
by Syntrillium Software Corporation
Type: Shareware
Web URL: <http://www.syntrillium.com/>
E-mail: syntrill@aol.com

Giebler Disk Manager by Giebler Enterprises
(610) 933-0332
Type: Commercial/Shareware

EPSDisk for DOS by Michael Chen
Type: Free
E-mail: mchen@cse.psu.edu

EPStm for Mac by Terje Finstad
Type: Shareware
URL: <http://fysmac04.uio.no/eps/EPStmInfo.html>
E-mail: noise@fys.uio.no

AWave for Windows 95 by F. Markus Jonsson
Type: Shareware
URL: <http://www.nada.kth.se/~f93-maj/fmjsoft.html>
E-mail: f93-maj@nada.kth.se

Bio: Dan Wellman is a college student at the University of Illinois who spends time with his TS-10 writing synthpop and industrial songs.



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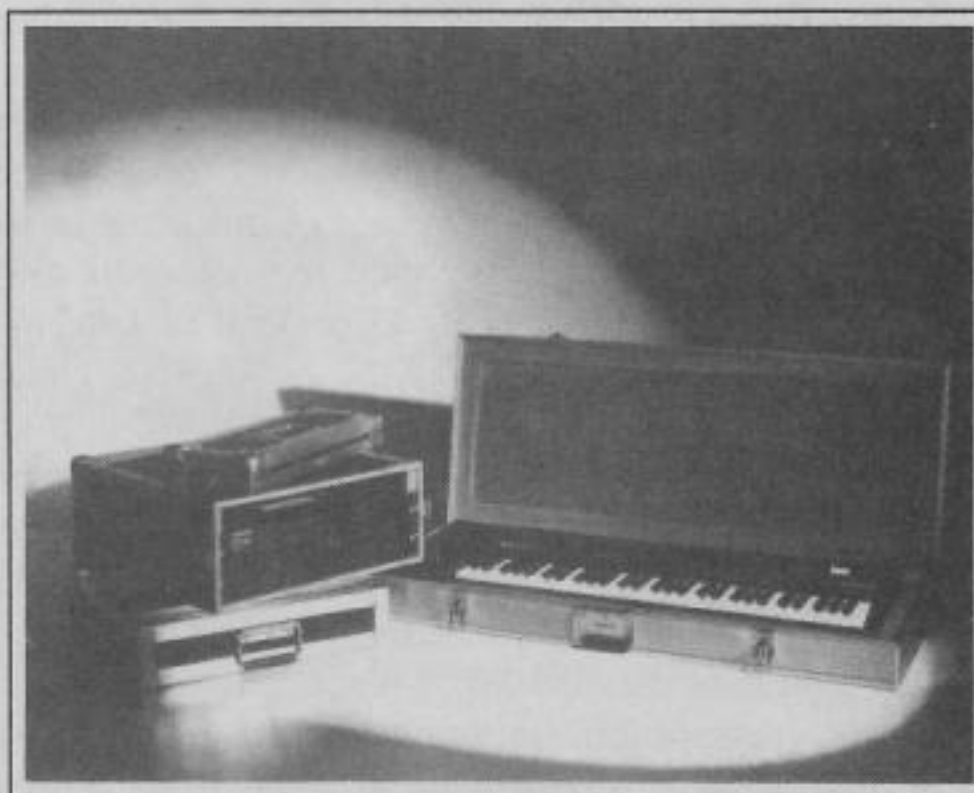
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THE OPTIMUM IN PROTECTION

From the ESQ-1 to Cakewalk

Duane Frybarger

In 1990 I bought my ESQ-1 secondhand and learned how to sequence on its very capable on-board sequencer. As many of you know, Ensoniq keyboards' built-in sequencers are intuitive and rather user-friendly. Over the years, I often thought of switching to a computer-based sequencer but until recently, I had no overwhelming need to make the move. This year, however, I added several new modules to my MIDI studio and there I was — running out of tracks (the ESQ-1 features 8 tracks).

I had purchased a used 486 PC clone and with the computer I got an old version (1.03) of *Cakewalk* for Windows. After the standard amount of procrastination, I loaded *Cakewalk* up and hooked up my music studio to my PC.

The first step was to find a MIDI interface. I went down to the local Guitar Center and after looking at several MIDI interfaces ranging in price from \$50 to \$200, I happened to mention to the salesperson that I had a Sound Blaster card. She told me that I already had a MIDI interface in the Sound Blaster card and I only needed a connector cable (cost approximately \$30). Cool! I was on my way.

I installed *Cakewalk* without a hitch and hooked up the MIDI connector cable to my sound card likewise sans hitch. I loaded the first demo file in *Cakewalk's* tutorial and I heard music. Over the years, I had read so many horror stories of dreaded MIDI loops, interrupt request conflicts, incompatibilities and other quagmires that I was amazed that it played on the first try. In retrospect, I'm glad that that first step went smoothly, because subsequent steps were not and that initial encouragement was Very Important. I decided to invest in the latest version available at that time, *Cakewalk Professional 3.01*. This version includes some great notation capabilities which for me are a great advantage over piano roll or event editor windows.

The most difficult aspect of the switch to a computer-based system, was the fact that I knew the ESQ-1 so well. I had been using it for over five years and I had

written more than 200 pieces on it. By the way, I can count on one hand the number of problems I had over that period of time.

One of my biggest obstacles was the fact that the ESQ-1 is pattern-based (many little sequences) whereas *Cakewalk* is linear (one long sequence). My initial solution to this problem was to set up a folder in File Manager called "Song 1" or something similar. Within that folder, I kept all the little sequences that made up a song, just like I used to do on my ESQ-1. I then used *Cakewalk's* "Jukebox" feature to string them all together and play them as one piece. This worked well as a gentle introduction to a new system. I eventually learned to use "markers" within a sequence to accomplish the same thing — these allow you to insert text wherever you like within a piece. You can mark sections (A, B, Verse, Chorus, etc.) or put in reminders to yourself to load a certain patch or whatever. These markers are also location points so you can use the "Go to" function to quickly move around within your song.

It turned out that after just a few months, I was settling in and feeling fairly comfortable with the new software. It was surprisingly easy to adjust to — working at the computer keyboard and the synth keyboard at the same time. It helped that I was familiar with other Windows software as many of the standard Windows commands are used within *Cakewalk*.

It's now been almost five months since I first started working with *Cakewalk* and I am not about to go back. It was, at times, a difficult transition but having the ability to see my work in standard notation, apply percentage quantization, set up folders for different versions of the same pieces, load sysex banks from within *Cakewalk* and many other features made the effort well worth it. ■

Bio: Duane Frybarger is a composer living in San Francisco, CA. He records under the name "Pangaea World Orchestra" and his latest album is "On the High Road." His WWW site is at <http://www.creative.net/~duane>.

Ensequencing

Part 4: Name That Tune

Jack Stephen Tolin

Sometimes we can easily be fooled, ending up with silly little problems that really have little to do with the technical aspect of working with synthesizers, samplers, and sequencers.

One interesting problem I discovered one day as I was working on my SQ-80 years ago was that, even though I had put some really good sequences together, added two extra banks of sounds via cartridge, and saved all onto disk, there was something I was still missing: A way to identify the sound banks I was using for that particular sequence bank! Now, of all the things to worry about, why would I have spent so much time thinking about identifying sound banks? All I was interested in was making music!

It is too bad that everything we own doesn't automatically do everything we don't even think of at the time that we really need to. Sometimes I confuse myself. Why don't player pianos play by themselves? Why doesn't the air conditioning know when to turn on by itself? Why don't people just laugh at me so I don't have to tell them jokes? Oh, wait — they do. Well, anyway, in this age in which we live, it is always a consolation to know that when we don't know quite what we are or are not doing, there is always someone out there who is willing to write an article about it.

The following suggestions should work for any Ensoniq synthesizer, including the ESQ-1 as well as the SQ-1. You will notice, of course, that on all of these synthesizers there are sound and sequence banks. Of the sequence banks, usually the last couple banks are reserved exclusively for song banks. Now, from my own personal experience, I generally have many song positions left empty by the time I have all the sequence positions full. This occurs even after all my songs have been put together.

Not being one to waste anything I figured that there must be a purpose for all those extra song positions.

At first, I thought they might be best used for different song variations. But then, one day it hit me: Since we can name the positions anything we want, why not encode which memory cartridge or card we use for that particular sequence bank?

First of all, there is no other place to encode this type of information anyway. Second, if we do not use them for anything, they go to waste. Third, there is probably nothing more annoying to a musician than having someone over you want to impress, and you pull up the sequence bank and accidentally put in the wrong memory card or cartridge and then hit play. Yeah, I see a few heads nodding with some awful frowns. Been there? Done that?

First, put all the sound banks you have onto your cards or carts and leave them there. Try to place banks together that you would plan on using together. If you have more sound banks than cards or carts, buy more cards or carts. There is another way of doing this, and I have listed it later on, so keep reading! Second, label your memory cards or cartridges; make sure you can tell them apart. However, your third step is determining which three banks you will be using during any given sequence bank. For example, the SQ-1 will always have the ROM bank available. You can then choose your card for banks A and B. Even after all that, there is still your Internal Bank left to fill.

There *is* an alternative. This is for those of us who throw around lots of sound banks and try to stay flexible as far as sound bank placement is concerned. You will have an additional step in that you will have to provide further information for each additional bank and placement.

What you will need to do is select a song position that will not be used for anything. Then — depending on the kind of synth you have, this process may differ — get to that song position's name edit page. If you need

to have a sequence listed here, then just select any sequence available — it does not really matter at all. Then type “[bank position] [bank name or first sound of internal bank]” where “bank position” = “INT,” “A,” or “B” (for internal, card a, and card b, respectively) and “bank name” = whatever the name of the bank is OR the first sound in first position in the bank (only if you absolutely do not have another sound bank with a sound with the same name in first position).

If you are using an ESQ-1 or an SQ-80, you will probably need two song positions per notation — one specifying bank position and the other specifying bank name. Another way to do this is just eliminate bank

position. Simply list your three banks in a consistent manner, such as internal first, card A second, and card B third.

I make sure that I always use the final few song positions for this. If nothing else, it's an easy solution to an easy problem. Keep your sequences on track! ■



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

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

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Wanted: A patch librarian (editor?) for the Ensoniq ESQ-1 or ESQ-M and a patch librarian (editor?) for the Yamaha TX802. Luke, 201-818-0666.

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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.

Michael Paradise RaceCar

Tape: *Michael Paradise Demo* (c) 1996

Artist: Michael Paradise

Contact Info: 17 Mayfair Rd, Cranston, RI 02905, Phone (401) 785-3297

Equipment: Ensoniq EPS 16+, Peavey mixer, Shure microphones,

Yamaha MT-120 4-track recorder, Gibson guitars, live drums.

Michael Paradise brings us a 5-song demo tape of melody-rich tunes crafted mostly by himself (lead and backing vocals, rhythm guitars, keyboards, percussion and bass), but enlisting the help of six other musicians. The style sits in the pop/rock niche, with a foray into reggae. It is nostalgic-sounding music, due mostly to the late sixties, early seventies compositional style, and the Beatle-esque vocalizations. The strengths of Michael's project are the same as what made the Beatles so great: melody-rich tunes emphasizing vocals make for memorable music; you can go away humming these songs. Strong, memorable melodies plus out-front vocals equals communication. This is a formula that has always worked in popular music, and it works for Michael. These are his strong points — let's pick some nits track by track.

"Where Have All the People Gone?" — This pop song captures your attention with its strong british-invasion vocals and chorus styles. Michael has a rich, resonant voice, very pleasant to listen to, although cleaning up slight pitch anomalies on a master tape would be a good idea. There is an intermixture of styles on this track that feels a bit incongruous: "oww"-bass and screams don't seem to fit with what feels like it should be a vintage Beatles emulation. Absolving these venial compositional sins could leave this the strongest tune on the tape.

"Good Things 2 U" — This is a mild reggae song, but with a very wonderful and interesting instrumental bridge reminiscent of McCartney's Ram album days. The lyrics, like most of Michael's, seem a bit thin — mostly feel-good bromides that don't really say a whole lot in themselves. Another criticism: toward the end of the song, Michael added some fairly cheesy-sounding brass patches doing little melodic doodlings. These detract big-time from the nice feel and vibe, and they could easily be muted from the sequence and never missed.

"When I'm With You" — I'm trying to figure out what "doesn't work" about this song. It is a rocker-wannabe that never materializes, and I think it's because it implies intensity in its arrangement, but the intensity doesn't come through in the performance. Michael's voice is just too "nice" to wail out a rock tune like this. It's like the ideas are good, but someone else should be singing on this one.

"Never Before" — Another pop love song, but this one never emerges from bubble-gum territory, mostly because of the cliché lyrics. Extreme compression on the guitar makes the solo lines sound way thin. Back off the compression threshold and ratio to make the guitar a bit more present.

"Here It Comes" — This is a three-chord folk-rock tune, compositionally a mix between Peter, Paul & Mary, and the Beatles. Really nice feel to these vintage compositions. Again, the compression squeezes all the juice out of the guitar parts.

Michael's complex compositions hold some real promise for being very interesting for the listener. If any readers remember Greg Lief from the *Hacker Compilation Tape* I produced a few years ago, Michael's music reminds me of Greg's *"To Kill A Cow"* without the humor. The main area for the woodshed here is lyrics: if you wish to roll your own, I suggest doing some time taking composition classes, or even a poetry class or two. Or consider teaming up with someone whose lyrics you respect, and cut a deal: he or she helps you write a few lyrics, and you loan your voice and harmonic chops to their project. You'll both come out winners.

Tape: *RaceCar* (c) 1996

Artist: RaceCar

Contact Info: Hyde Baker, 4814 So G St, Tacoma, WA 98408, Phone: (206) 383-5085

Equipment: Ensoniq ASR-88 with Zip drive and CD-ROM, Quadrasynth soundmodule, real guitars, bass, drums ("equipment list is too large").

Tacoma, Washington. Center of the known universe. Home of the Tacoma Dome. The Aroma of Tacoma. The Narrows Bridge. Microbrews. Portent Music. And RaceCar. Hooray for local bands, and a big hooray for RaceCar.

I just got off the phone with RaceCar's photographer, trying to find where I can listen to them play their next gig, and found out they're "between drummers" at the moment. Too bad, because these guys rock, and front man Hyde Baker writes driving alternative rock with a techno layer, the kind you've just got to hear live to fully appreciate. But I do have a five-song demo, which we'll get into in just a moment. RaceCar consists of Hyde on vocals, guitars, keyboards and sampling, Sean Gibson on bass, and Rob Rotermund on drums (at least on this demo; apparently Rob is now history).

The musicianship in this band is excellent in every respect. Each member fills his spot with exactly what the rock doctor ordered: crunchy, chundery walls of thundering guitar, interesting keyboard embellishments and samples, drums with attitude, and bass that holds it all down, along with vocals that convey the message just right. Comparisons to Stone Temple Pilots and Nirvana come to mind, but Hyde's keyboards add a techno twist that gives this band a unique niche. I gotta wonder how they pull it all off live. Here's what's on the demo:

"Mass Appeal" — The quintessential alternative hard rocker; all the elements are there. Only complaint: the vocals lack the intensity demanded by the tune. No doubt an artifact of being in the studio and not dangling above the mosh pit.

"Old Sunny" — A fast one-two beat propels this adrenaline-pumping tune, and the vocals (sounding like they were recorded through an electric hand-held megaphone) finally get goosed. Great keyboard sound effects on the intro.

"The Entrance" — This is a complex tune, showing Hyde's genius in composition; the best of the genre, in my opinion: head-banging rock with wailing guitar, contrasted with quieter spoken vocal sections. The intro gets your attention with irritating sampled brass/sax noodlings. Complaint: again, the vocals are too "nice" on this track.

"Downstroke" — The vocals are more intense on this wailing wall of angst. The drums are great, but need to

sound more slammin' to get more of a "live" feel.

"'59 Impala" — This is a dark tune ("love is wicked so divine, in my '59 Impala..."), complex, wonderfully composed, with hints of Zeppelin. Sampled starter motor effects churn throughout the song, and a keyboard ditty interacts ingeniously with the guitar.

This project is mixed well: great guitar sound (could it be a Ricky through a Sovtek and a Big Muff?), the drums are all there, but somehow the sound isn't saturating the tape. The elements are too separate, too clean; it sounds too "studio." Normally, this would be a big plus, but for RaceCar, it feels like the band's energy is held back, under wraps. The vocals lack intensity half the time, except on Old Sunny and '59 Impala, where Hyde finally kicks out the jams. I would love to hear an excellently recorded tape of these guys playing live, with all the energy there. This demo tape showcases the band's compositional genius and performance chops, and anyone with half an ear for the heart behind the music knows that when these guys are unleashed, they rule.

Of course. They're a Tacoma band. ■

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



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

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

To our readers -

After more than a decade of answering questions here, and in the meantime building a very successful sound design business, Answer Czar Clark Salisbury has just plum run out of time to continue being our main resource. Luckily, a very familiar *Hacker* writer is available to step into the gaping hole - Pat Finnigan. We'd like to publicly thank Clark (as we're sure literally hundreds of readers would too) and wish him well on his new adventure and to welcome onto the *Hacker Hotseat* Pat (PF)!

Now, be gentle with him.

TH -

Where can I find a copy of the Yannes/Metcalf article on converting a *Mirage* to stereo?

The June 1987 edition of *Electronic Musician* is no longer available, even from Act III Publishing in Emeryville, CA. Any help would be sincerely appreciated.

Regards,
Chris Martin
bd094@lafn.org

[TH - The Yannes/Metcalf article was in response to an earlier article by Don Slepian. This article appeared in the January '87 EM (with some additions in TH #20). You might try to find that one if you can't find the June issue.

...And we just heard from a *Hacker* reader who has available both of the articles. We'll put you in touch.]

TH -

I would like to know if the TS-10 se-

quencer has a limited buffer for recording data.

The problem I encounter sometimes while transferring songs from my PC to the TS-10 is it stops recording mid-song. This only happens on songs that have a lot of data in them, or are long songs.

Can anyone shed any light on this, or have I hit the mark?

Thanks Hackers,

\\|// Lynden J Garrett

(o o)

-

Midi arranger & performer

Lj.garrett@hunterlink.net.au

[PF - Lynden: Nice ASCII art.

Depending on the tempo and the mass of data of the sequence you are feeding the TS, this can happen: it depends on what you define as a "long" song or "lots" of data. As the TS sequencer is pattern-based, feeding it an entire song into a sequence location may cause some indigestion.

I would check your data stream and thin out certain messages (poly aftertouch, modulation messages), and disable active sensing (if active).

As an alternative you might try recording sections of the song into different sequence locations (verse, chorus). This is the forte of pattern-based sequencers, as it's redundant to record the first and second verses if they are alike: you just play them back twice. I've done this very operation on an SD-1 and had no problems.

And ensure you have no free-running MIDI loops (out-to-in and local on escapades) as MIDI hell will ensue...]

Hi,

Thanks so much for the forum to ask questions and share ideas. I have subscribed to TH for nearly four years and even though I have an SD-1 and coverage has moved on to newer equipment, I always look forward to the new issues. Please continue to include articles on older equipment. Have you ever considered splitting up the web site into sections devoted to each product and including an archive of letters, tips and patches for each? I am constantly discovering new and uncharted territory on my keyboard and I would love to peruse some of the old letters and articles that pertain to my "new" discoveries without having to pull out the box of back issues to see if it has been discussed previously. Just a thought...

As a new MIDI user, I have a question about Standard MIDI Files. I have an SD-1 32, Cakewalk Home Studio 5, and the Giebler Conversion package. I want to be able to create drum tracks on the computer (or have a "real drummer" friend of mine do them on his keyboard!) How do I convert the file to something my Ensoniq board will read? Please do me a favor and keep the answer in very basic terms because I am new to this.

Thanks in advance
Michael Laflin
74543.3417@compuserve.com

[TH - The archive idea sounds like one of those things that would be very handy - and also like one of those things that would be a whole lot of work and zero \$. One thing that we do have is that all the email issues from #118 forward are available for a measly \$1 each. (This is starting to be quite a bunch of bytes, by the way.) What some folk have done is to put these all together into one really fat file - and then they just do word searches on it.]

[PF - Mike: The SD-1 represents the first Ensoniq Wavetable synth that allowed 61 drum sounds across the keyboard simultaneously: simply select the "Drum-Map-R" patch, drop it into a track location and assign it to respond to inbound MIDI channel #10 information. Basically, what you should do is create a "template" or blank sequence (preset) of patch data with this particular drum patch set to MIDI channel #10. Also, if you haven't already done this, print out the "read.me" file on the Giebler Conversion Package: it represents the manual for using these powerful and affordable utilities. When recording the SMF's to your SD-1, ensure you are set to "multi" which allows each channel of inbound MIDI data to be recorded as a separate track to the Ensoniq onboard sequencer. Been doing this with my SD-1 for almost two years now, and it still amazes me.]

Hi folks -

I'm a new and very green MR-61 owner (OS Ver 1.64). Question: how do I get the output of the drum machine to actually record on track 10 so that when I save the sequence to a MIDI file and transfer it to Cakewalk in my computer I can see and edit it?

Cameron

[PF - Cameron: You are about to discover one of the slickest tricks Ensoniq has ever embedded into a synthesizer. The "Drum Machine" section does not use MIDI information to play patterns: it uses a set of pointers to play back certain portions of the percussion wavetable. Consequently, this is an internal routing and is not actual MIDI data. It certainly sounds like it, but it is not using note-on MIDI data to play these rhythm parts. It's really a feat of technology - but that doesn't help your particular configuration.

To get MIDI drum data out of an MR, the sequence or song's Track 10 data must be entered from the keyboard as a rhythm track (NOT the "Drum

machine") in order to send out Ch. #10 MIDI data. Any song that uses patterns from the "Drum Machine" section as rhythm tracks will have no note data on Track/Channel #10 for the above reason. All preset patterns/variations/etc. for the "Drum Machine" section of the MR series (to include the disk data to load drum machine patterns) are merely a collection of pointer data to replay sections of the percussion wavetable, and do not represent MIDI note data.]

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) - This is exactly the same task that I've been trying to accomplish with my MR-61. I saw in the December issue of the Hacker Interface that Anthony Ferrara is working on an article for the Transoniq Hacker that is going to explain how to accomplish this task. It should be in the next issue of the Hacker and very interesting. I guess we'll just have to wait and see.]

[TH - Very true. But by the time this letter is in print (#140), it'll be the previous issue (#139).]

[Robby Berman - Actually, Pat is incorrect; the Drum Machine does use MIDI to do what it does, but its unique, 128-track playback-only sequencer is not directly accessible to the user. I'm writing a Hacker article (which should show up in this very issue) explaining all this.]

[Pat Finnigan - Hackers: Apologies to all for the misinformation on the MR-61/76 drum machine architecture. The correct info is indeed in the latest Hacker. Those responsible for forwarding the incorrect info to me have been deported to www.siberia.com for attempted multiplexing of sensitive Transoniq Hacker data. Thanx to those Malvern code warriors for the details. And thanx to all who chose not to flame...

Also, The Giebler utilities do not convert any type of *.wav files - it appears there's enough shareware utils to do this. Recommend any users visit <http://www.netaxs.com/~mikel/ensoniq.html> for details/directions. That is all...]

TH -

I am a new owner of an MR-71. It is a great tool for a songwriter looking for ease of operation and not fully into learning every detail of MIDI and everything that can be done.

But, as a recording device, I can't figure out why Ensoniq doesn't allow the footswitch to do a simple punchin! It is practically impossible to do a clean punch by holding down the play and record buttons and releasing them simultaneously at the moment of the punch. Even this manual procedure is not mentioned in the manual. Can anybody help with this???

Also, I have no idea how to locate additional sounds that can work on this machine. Ensoniq says they will create some soon. Do the MIDI sound companies mentioned in TH offer sounds for the MR-71???

Does TH have a lot of info about MR-71? The sample issue on the net is so old that it is hard to tell.

Thanks a lot,
Rich Riehl
RRiehl@internetmci.com

[TH - We'll probably update the ol' sample issue some day soon... It's really just meant to show the type of things you can expect from TH. The last few issues have started to really get into the MR Series. It's still a little early for third-party sounds, but we'll be sure to announce them and review them when they come along.]

[PF - As far as 3rd party sounds go for the MR series, it's such a new product not a great deal is available for it yet in the channel. Most people I know of who are working with the MR series are using the Unisyn MR Profile (although a PC Unisyn version is also available). Expect to see some very powerful sounds for these keyboards soon. At this point in space and time, I think sound developers are so knocked out by the sheer volume of the wavetable (it is expandable to 84

Mb, you know) they're taking a bit more time sifting through all the available possibilities for sound/patch development. Since the most effective editor for the instrument is Unisyn, there may be a delay in alternate sounds from third party companies that aren't using Unisyn as an editor. Stay tuned; the Hacker will undoubtedly be the first place the third party channel will advertise MR-series sounds. And check out the new demo disk for the MR keyboards: point your browser to www.ensoniq.com and click on the "What's new" link.

As far as punching in on a footswitch, I've never been able to punch in with a footswitch right on bar 4: beat 01: tick 000 either. I don't have 96 ppq resolution in either my left or right foot. There is a way to specify the in and out points that will let you "pre-roll" the sequencer before it shifts into record mode at your specified in/out points - but I'm going to have to get back with you on this... (If you need the info immediately, someone at Ensoniq Customer Service will probably run through it with you.)

[Ensoniq - Information on using a footswitch to punch in information can be found on page 181 of the MR user's manual (version 1.45). We e-mailed this customer on January 8th to learn if he needs version 1.45 of the musician's manual.]

Hey all you ASR fiends,

Here's my question: when I try to load a Roland CD-ROM (Keyboards of the '60s and '70s, Vol.2), I get a message: File Operation Error. I can load AKAI CD-ROMS very easily. The drive is a Chinon 435. Any clue?

Thanks,
Thom Adams
printroom@executone.com

[PF - Thom: I don't think the Chinon is an approved CD-ROM reader for the Ensoniq line. The only luck I've had with importing Roland and Akai samples is by using the old external Apple 2X CD

caddy loader: it's a Sony mechanism and hasn't missed a lick. Ensure that the file you're trying to import is not larger than the ASR can hold. Remember, the Roland and Akai samplers can hold up to 32 Mb - the ASR has a 16 Mb file size limit. If you try to put 32 pounds of audio into a 16 lb. container, well, you get the picture. Sometimes it helps to

change SCSI ID #s, but the fact your Chinon will read and import Akai samples lead me to believe the Roland files you're trying to import are larger than the ASR-10's capacity. With memory so cheap now, ask Santa for 4 4Mb 30-pin SIMMS to get your ASR humming...]

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: BSSLIP.

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@technix.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. ESQUPA. 215-830-0241, before 11 pm Eastern Time.

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

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

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

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

[Ensoniq - The Chinon 535 CD-ROM drive IS approved for the EPS-16+, ASR and TS products. The Chinon is not approved for the original EPS.]

TH -

Searched the whole net, but no extra FX for the ASR-10 FX processor online anywhere. Are there any programming tools for the FX processing part at all, or new strange FX which can be loaded?

For now, I only have the resonant filter add-on. Dying to hear realtime FX I haven't heard yet in any FX processor.

Thanks in advance...
amperror@worldonline.nl

[PF - Amperror: The only third party FX I know of for the ASR-10 are the WaveBoy FX disks. You can search around, but I haven't heard of or seen anything else. Give them a shout at 610-251-9562 (voice) or 610-408-8078 (fax). They've been a regular advertiser here in the Hacker for over a year, and their warez are way cool...]

[kxm@huitzilo.tezcat.com - Prosoniq makes some ultra kewl effects for the ASR and EPS. They're based in Germany and they kick. They developed sgi and ppc code and licensed the technology for Logiks Timemachine. ASR and EPS demo effects are available on the net, but I forget where - go to 2shareware.com and do a search for dsp.]

Hi!!!

I've got many disks for ASR-10. Is there a way to copy them on my PC IBM Aptiva, and then convert them into wavs???

Tommy,
kdf@algonet.se

[PF - Tom: You definitely, most assuredly, absolutely, unequivocally, beyond a reasonable doubt, must obtain

the Gary Giebler utilities: these powerful tools were reviewed back in 1994 (by yours truly) and comprise the link between the ASR and PC that allow you to save ASR files in PC format, format ASR disks from your PC, xfer *.wav to Ensoniq file and back again. I just can't say enough about the flexibility of these tools. Contact Giebler Enterprises at 610-933-0332 to obtain the infamous EDM. (EMM: Gary's even got sequence converters!) See his ads in the often-copied but never duplicated, (shameless plug) world famous Transoniq Hacker...]

[TH - And check out Dan Wellman's article on TS sounds elsewhere in this issue - much applies to your situation.]

Dear sirs,

I'm new to this computer stuff. Could any one tell me how to get Gzip to work on Win 95 OS so I can down load and unzip files from ftp sites?

Thank you,
Tom McLean,
soundman@mail.testengeer.com

[PF - Tom: If our old shareware friend pzip doesn't work, you'll want to get a copy of Microsoft Plus: this not only contains a global un-zipper, you get a bunch of new "themes" for your desktop as well. Available at most any computer store and kinda neat for the WIN95 set. Makes a great stocking stuffer as well...]

TH -

Many thanks to the subscriber who furnished me with the Yannes/Metcalf article on converting the original Mirage to two-channel output. The modification is pretty easy, except you will need to get a Curtis chip - the CEM 3360 dual VCA.

I have determined that this is still available from:

Onchip Systems
1190 Coleman Ave
San Jose, CA 95110-1190
Vox +408-988-5400
Fax +408-988-5488

They will fax an order form to you.

OnChip Systems no longer seem to have a Product Databook (!). However, I have the original 12 page applications booklet for this device, copyrighted 1983 by PAIA.

Having studied the aforementioned Yannes article, I find mention of two "factory-authorized modifications" - for noise reduction and bandwidth modification. Both of these mods would appear to be desirable. Can anyone offer a source for these mods?

Chris and Vicki
bd094@lafn.org

[TH - Well, actually, our old Issue #20 had this mod in it. We could probably find an issue for \$2 - or we could send you a photocopy of just the article. Let us know.]

[PF - Chris and Vicki: I concur: my subscription to the Hacker started at Issue #4, and sure enough, old #20 has the modification. However, I would recommend calling Ensoniq with your serial #, because the output mod (actually providing a hotter output) was eventually incorporated into Mirage manufacture.

I'm pretty sure the plastic-case Mirages have this mod already as an ECO to the original spec, but I'd check with Ensoniq to be sure. And, of course, a copy of old #20 would be helpful. There was even an eight-output mod by Don Slepian which involved tying the output of the CM filter chips to 1/4" jacks thru a summing resistor network in an earlier Hacker issue, but we're getting back to a point in time where even MY clothes were in style. Any readers out there know which issue this was featured, or know what became of Don Slepian?]

[Ensoniq - On December 15, 1985 we

published *Mirage Service Bulletin #8*. This service bulletin was for authorized repair stations only. It related to the black metal case *Mirage*, with all black buttons. The serial number cutoff for this bulletin were units with serial numbers lower than 14731. Service Bulletin #8 detailed instructions on how to update the original *Mirage* main board (PN 4090001801) with the noise reduction circuitry found in the subsequent *Mirage* main board (4090003401). There were a few different versions of the original *Mirage* main board (some were manufactured in the USA and others were manufactured in Japan), so the modification instructions varied depending on which version a user had. Unfortunately, some of the parts for this modification are no longer available.]

TH -

I just received the MR-61 1.6 chip and it seems to be working just fine. Thanks, Ensoniq. A really great idea for an update. I even sent the old one back as requested.

Will the MR-61 send MIDI Program Changes like the EPS? I can't seem to find it in the manual. What's this about a new book?

Artic Software MIDI File Informer doesn't want to read the MIDI files made by the MR. I read in Keyboard there's a program called "MRMIDI" at ensoniq.com, but I couldn't find it. Any hints?

When I tried to print the Unisyn Profiles in Window Write, I got graphic Parameters. Really neat, but it took *.* all files, no conversion to get the text.

LonelyGuy1@aol.com
(It's a stage name for playing solo gigs. If you've been there a couple of years, you know how I feel.)

Fred Tucson

[PF - Fred: Doing the single, eh? Been there, done that, burned the T-shirt. Still do it occasionally with a vocalist for the holidays, though. Xmas puts it on you, doesn't it?

Anyway, the MR-61 (as well as the MR-76) sends Program change via MIDI. Once "Midi out" is selected on the track page of the selected track, it will send program change info on the selected track and channel.

Point your web browser to www.ensoniq.com and download the MRMIDI selections. Click on the "What's New" icon and you're like, there, dude...]

[Ensoniq - We have already contacted this customer via e-mail and qualified that he needs the latest version of the MR Musicians Manual. We sent one out on January 7th via second day air.]

Hi !

I recently subscribed to TH and am a little disappointed in the coverage of KT related subjects. Is there a section I'm not paying attention to or does this just reflect the KT user population proportions?

Specifically, I am interested in —

- 1: Getting more patches (Do these match the KS patches?)
- 2: Getting more info about sound librarians
- 3: Connecting with other KT users.

Any advice will be welcome!
Mark Tie
mtie@mayo.edu

[TH - A lot of this is definitely a reflection of the KT population - we're certainly not withholding any KT articles that people have sent in. There is a lot of commonality among the Ensoniq synths. The KT is closely related to the SQs and KSs and a lot of the articles that cover them also apply to the KTs. And, of course, the Basement Tapes, the Interface, sequencing tips and stuff like that also apply.

One good way to connect with other KT users (besides having your letter in the Interface) would be to write an article. This is how most of our writers got started.]

[PF - Mark: As a subscriber to the Hacker, you're already hooked up with one of the most (if not the absolute most) open forums in the industry. Keep your eyes peeled for KT user groups in the Interface to get networked with other KT'ers.

The best sounds I've heard for the KT-76 and KT-88 are from Sam Mims at Synthaur Productions: highly recommended and highly reviewed. Sounds will be marginally more expensive than the Malvern disk-based brethren as the KT's use PCMCIA cards for storage. Contact Sam at 800-334-1288 for the details.

Librarians are a matter of personal taste: you can go with shareware SysEx apps that let you bounce files in and out of your computer, but you might consider an editor that allows programming your own sounds as well. Companies such as Mark of the Unicorn, Opcode, EMagic, etc., offer full-blown editor/librarian packages that allow computer-

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based patch programming.

And keep on surfing: the truth is out there...]

TH -

Selling a TS-10 in great shape \$900. Bay area. Just for your info. 707-421-3064. magellanca@earthlink.net

TH -

I am currently trying to sell an Ensoniq SD-1 (with 32 voice polyphony). Bought about 3.5 years ago, mint condition. With soft-sided case, 2-pedal switch, and all manuals, I am asking \$900 + shipping.

Where is the best place to advertise or market this? Besides the mailing list, is there a good place to post this?

Thanks - Brent Virgin
virginbs@agedwards.com

[TH - Doesn't anybody read all that stuff about selling gear we put at the top of our on-line page??!]

TH -

I'm using my EPS (Classic) with Passport Encore 3.0 - or at least I used to. After I upgraded my computer to a Pentium 166 I could not get my notation software to record notes from my EPS. It used to work fine - it transmits MIDI to another MIDI instrument - no problem. I spent several hours on the phone with some nice Passport technicians, but they don't understand it either. Especially since the software recognizes other MIDI instruments but not the EPS. Yet the EPS works with other MIDI instruments, just not my notation software. I talked to Ensoniq - they think it's the software since the EPS will talk to my other keyboard. I'm stuck. Any ideas?

Ron
reddog@onr.com

[PF - Ron: You are not alone: Our Bandmaster in the 38th ID Band (a military ceremonial unit) jacked up his 486 with a Pentium overdrive CPU and lost his Encore 3.0 functionality, i.e., playback is nonlinear, jumbled notes on the screen. First; if you're running Windoze 95, have you upgraded your MIDI driver? Contact the manufacturer of your MIDI interface and check to see if an updated driver is available. If you're running Windoze 3.1, ensure you've selected the proper MIDI device in the corresponding MIDI applet. Finally, ensure your MIDI interface is set to a "free" IRQ and not sharing one with another device: WIN95 absolutely, positively, HATES shared interrupts. I can't point at the EPS since the MIDI data it xmits is received and understood by other devices. Finally, ensure your MIDI interface (as well as Encore) is selected as your MIDI in and out device. If problems persists, please email back a more detailed configuration of your offending machine: we'll procure a larger hammer.]

TH -

I use the TS-12 in a church setting. I need to use piano sounds often but am disappointed in the sounds available. It seems like they lack depth and don't carry over enough to accompany congregational singing. Is there something I need to do differently, add sounds, change sound system (currently plugged into house system and organ speakers)? Are you aware of any sounds that I could purchase that would provide more depth? Interested in fatter electric piano sounds.

Thanks,
Nancy Downs

[PF - Nancy: As clean and faithful as the TS engine is, I'll bet the problem you're experiencing is related to your sound system. The TS has a glorious wavetable to emulate any number of

electric piano sounds. Since it can load ASR or EPS samples as well, the TS can sound pretty much like anything you've ever heard (or haven't heard, for that matter). Depending on the sound you're looking for, judicious use of reverb and chorus parameters (with the accent on Chorus) lends to very large and rich sounds. My favorite piano sound for backing singers is an acoustic piano doubled with an FM-type electric piano sound, but that's my own personal taste...

I'd highly suspect the sound system: not to knock "organ" speakers, but an instrument as broadband as a synthesizer really requires a true reinforcement sound system, i.e., a full-range PA system. Concentrate on adjusting your current sound system to advantage: a church is a difficult "room" to adjust, as most churches are varying levels (altar, congregation, choir loft), and typically very large. The acoustics change tremendously when the congregation is present, so what may seem loud when empty is often insufficient when the church is full.

Lastly, you may want to consider a monitor/lamp close to your playing position to better hear yourself: this alone may make all the difference.

I apologize for not being able to be more specific, but without knowing all of the variables in your particular configuration it's difficult to point at any one area as the problem. Hope this helps!]

[GNormand@aol.com - As a pianist, I have been quite critical of the electronic copies of that instrument. I use the TS-12 also, and have found that for my preference, I combine two piano sounds (by double clicking) such as stereo piano and warm grand.... the combination gives a more total feeling to me than any single sound. As mentioned, your monitor is critical to correct psycho-acoustical effect for the player. If you physically place your TS on top of a speaker, and the keyboard vibrates when you play the notes, you will find yourself playing differently. Put the monitor close enough to your body where you

can feel the sound waves and you will also respond in a different manner. The electronic keyboards can't "feel" acoustic unless you do something like that. Part of the brain telling you it "sounds" right is your body "feeling" it too. Your monitor must be TOP notch to accomplish this. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link.]

—————
Hello from a new subscriber.

I recently traded in my SD-1 toward the purchase of a MR-61 with OS version 1.64. In continuing the work I have started on the SD-1 (I am also using an ADAT, DataSync, DrumKat with an Alesis D4 drum module, etc.), I have encountered a few problems:

1) How do I save MIDI Sysex info from my other MIDI equipment on the MR-61? It used to be very easy to do on the SD-1.

2) The SD-1 allowed me to use song position pointer information with the DataSync to sync the SD-1 to the ADAT. The MR-61 does not appear to do this. Any suggestions?

3) I want to play the DrumKat instead of trying to play drums on a keyboard. I am not sure yet whether I want to use the MR-61 drum sounds or continue using the D4 sounds. In either case, I cannot get the MR-61 to record this MIDI CH 10 info. It does, however, trigger the internal sounds when recording is not taking place. The moment I hit record, the external triggering stops. Recording only takes place by using the keyboard. What could I be doing wrong? The SD-1 handled this by having keyboard, MIDI, or both triggering parameters for each track. How does the MR-61 accomplish this?

The MR-61 has many great features. I assumed that it would do all that the SD-1 could do, and be the center of my home studio. If I cannot do Sysex, SPP, or record external triggering, then I have taken a big step backward. Please tell me I am wrong.

Michael Kurlich
Grand Rapids, MI
mkurlich@iserv.net

[PF – Mike: As with any new technology, there are hits and misses: here's the scoop:

(1) No can do: the MR-61/76's do NOT act as a Sysex storage device.

(2) No can do: the MR Series follow MIDI clocks, not SPP.

(3) See Ray Legnini's article in Hacker #139.

Wish I had better news for you, but I'm only hitting 0.334 here today...]

[Ensoniq – As with any product we bring to the marketplace, there are some features that will make it in, and others that don't. In the case of the MR, we focused on making a self-contained song writing tool for the songwriter. These include the Idea Pad, drum machine, song editor, step record mode and final mix. The two last features will be in Version 2. Among the features mentioned in your letter, the only one that will be included in Version 2 is the ability to record from MIDI in (either single-track or multi-track).]

—————
Hi everyone –

I'm looking for a hardshell case with casters for my TS-12. With SKB, it seems my only option is the largest case (5820), which is designed for 88-key keyboards. The SKB-5014, which is the 76-key model, is a little too small for the TS-12. I'm trying to avoid going with the huge 5820 case, if I can find something that's closer to the actual size of the keyboard (maybe a custom case?). Any suggestions?

Anthony Ruocco
anthonyr@geocities.com

[GNormand@aol.com – I had to have a custom case made for my TS-12. Total weight: 82 lbs. No one in my band likes

it... reminds them of Fender Rhodes and CP 30's. Good luck.]

[PF – Anthony: The SKB is probably the best case, as well as the best value for your dollar. Their cases have "picture puzzle" foam packing pieces to allow you to match the case EXACTLY to the external dimensions of your TS-12. I used one to take a Quadrasynth +Piano home to tinker with last year. I also used it to return the Quadrasynth +Piano to the dealer, and, I must admit, the case performed better than the keyboard...]

—————
TH –

I am desperately looking for some new and fresh sounds for my KS-32 on RAM card. Please advise me where I can find such.

David
jdam@caribnet.net

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

[PF - David: The premiere distributor of KS-32 sounds would be Sam Mims of Syntaur Productions. His SQ Set 1 and 2 will fill your bill with the lushest animated pads this side of Mars. As I don't know what you are looking for in particular I recommend his wares wholeheartedly. Feel free to give him a shout at 800-334-1288. He's received Ensoniq's blessing to distribute Mirage factory warez as well, so he comes with excellent credentials. I've reviewed his sounds here in the Hacker, and there's nobody better (that I've heard) doing big lush animated sounds. I'm sure he'll fill your RAMcard with sounds you have to hear to believe...]

[Sammims@aol.com - Pat, you're making me blush... Thanks for the kind words.

We now have an SQ Set 3 available as well. This was programmed mainly by Jos Driessen, with some additional sounds by Todd Speer. These two came up with the most killer bass sounds I've heard from that machine. (Of course, there are many other patches as well.) If you're doing dance-type music, you'll want these bass sounds. These sets are available on RAM card or on various disk formats. Call us, and we'll send you our complete catalog.

Sam Mims
Syntaur Productions
sammims@aol.com]

TH -

Greetings from a new subscriber and MR-Rack owner.

I just received the Ensoniq MR Version of the UNISYN editor, and am having troubles.

I am getting a "Deviant Data (unexpected status byte)" message whenever I attempt to load info (standard sounds, banks, patches, whatever) from the MR-Rack into the editor. I get the "unexpected status byte" message 100% of the time, and I also get a "UMIDIDRV

DLL driver reports error in incoming sysex msg" once in a blue moon.

Although, this "unexpected status byte" error prevents me from taking a snapshot of the MR-Rack configuration (as recommended in the tutorial), standard sounds do appear to get loaded into the editor, but when I attempt to save them (unaltered) into a RAM location in the MR-Rack, the MR-Rack reports a CHECKSUM error. I can usually avoid the CHECKSUM error, by turning the INSERT EFFECT to OFF in the editor before sending it to the MR-RACK.

I have not been able to find an explanation for either error.... can you tell me what means and how to fix (1) "unexpected status byte" from UNISYN and (2) CHECKSUM error from MR-Rack?

MR-Rack at OS 1.5 - UNISYN editor is Ensoniq MR Version 1.2 (profile type 1.4, version 1.01). I am connected to IBM compatible DX-66 via a Music Quest MQX-32M MIDI card (Ver 1.2). I have reduced my system so that the MR-Rack is the only MIDI device connected to ensure I'm not running into some MIDI-echo black magic stuff. (See, I've been learning from your back issues!)

Thanks for any help you can send my way!
Brian L. Corkill

[PF - Brian: It would appear (from your experience with the MR profile for the Windows version of Unisyn) that it behaves in the same manner as does the Mac version. As I only have the Mac version, I can't be sure that all of this applies to your version, but the MR profile's anomalies under Mac supervision generate an error (MIDI checksum error), but if you ignore it and proceed, it works fine. I simply assumed it was because I'm using an MR-61 keyboard (which has a different manufacturer's ID byte in its sysex header than the MR rack).

What version of Windows are you using (3.1, 95, NT)? If 95, are you using the most recent MQX-32 driver? Any time

Windows reports a *.dll (dynamic linked library) error, an outdated MIDI device driver may be suspect. You might want to give MidiQuest a call to see if a newer driver is available. I say this because when I updated to 95, my Soundscape card played back Sound-Blaster stuff, but I couldn't access the wavetable synth OR get MIDI out to work until I downloaded the W95 drivers from Ensoniq's BBS. I believe the MQX-32M is the MIDI card capable of generating MTC for striping tape and chasing sync: ensure that it's not trying to output time code or SMPTE sync, as this could possibly wreak havoc on your whole program...

Unlike games (which often ship in a "combo CD" Mac/Windows version), Unisyn is either PC or Mac based: I'd have to buy the program again to duplicate your configuration, and, to quote General George S. Patton, "I don't pay for the same real estate twice." With that in mind, I would defer to Ensoniq's response...]

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Thanks for being there,
C.V. YARBROUGH
boogie1@iamerica.net

[TH - *blush*]

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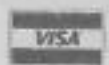
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