

Transoniq

Hacker

The Independent News
Magazine for Ensoniq Users

The Waveboy Trilogy

Craig Anderton



For: EPS-16 PLUS, ASR-10.

Products: 44 kHz Compressor, Tempo Sync'd Delays, and Soniq Demolition disks.

Price: Compressor and Tempo Sync'd disks \$49.95, Demolition disk \$39.95.

From: Waveboy Industries, PO Box 233, Paoli, PA 19301, tel. (215) 251-9562.

A few years ago, Waveboy came up with the bright idea of creating a series of disks that gives the EPS-16 PLUS and ASR-10 cool new features — parallel effects, resonant filters, weirdass vocalisms, audio in effects options for the EPS-16 PLUS, and a Transwave sound library (all of which have been chronicled in previous Hacker reviews). Now Waveboy has given us three new

disks, each distinctly different, and each cool in its own way. In keeping with the Waveboy tradition, they're clever, cost-effective, and useful. Let's load 'em up, and look in detail.

The Waveboy Squeezebox

First up is the 44 kHz compressor (\$49.95), which is 14 kHz better than the internal 30 kHz version. Well, there's more to it than sample rate; in addition to the expected stereo compressor algorithm, there's a special version for the EPS-16 PLUS that allows feeding an external mono signal into the EPS and processing it.

Control-wise, you have the usual parameters found on hardware compressors:

- Output gain (varies from -48 to +48 dB in 1 dB steps)
- Compression ratio (from 1:1 to infinity:1)
- Threshold (-96 dB to 0 dB)
- Attack time (50 microseconds to 100 milliseconds)
- Release time (1 ms to 10 seconds)
- Noise gate on threshold and off threshold (both variable from -96 dB to 0 dB)
- Noise gate release (1 ms to 10 seconds)

Most of the parameter values are

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"scaled," for example, the compression ratio goes from 1:1 to 3:1 in increments of 0.1, 4:1 to 10:1 in unit increments, 5:1 to 40:1 in increments of 5, and then it jumps to infinity:1.

Since it can take some time to set parameters the way you want, there are save and copy options. Saving preserves the effect in an effect file, while copy puts the effect "inside" an instrument so that the effect gets saved along with the instrument.

The biggest drawback is that there's no "auto" setting like on most compressors, where the attack and decay change dynamically according to the input signal. Nor, of course, is there any side chain (for de-essing and other, more esoteric compressor applications). However, the compressor's digital nature means that it can clamp really fast when you want to limit transients. And unlike analog compressors, it takes some real work to make a signal sound "compressed." The action is quite natural, and if all you want to do is make something sound a lot louder, you can do it without having the sound seem "forced."

For longer rhythmic loops, the compressor works very well at making a sample jump out. But the effect is also very useful for resampling, and if you work the controls just right, you may be able to compress parts of the sound to flatten out the amplitude envelope, thus promoting easier looping.

Bottom line: it's not the most wildly innovative thing Waveboy has ever done, but if you need a stereo digital compressor for your studio, I don't know where else you're going to find one for under \$50.

Synchro-Delays

I'm a sucker for delay times that fit right in with the beat, or make some kind of interesting polyrhythm, so give me a disk that lets me sync delay times to sequence tempos and I'm a happy guy. The Tempo Sync'd Delays disk makes me a happy guy.

This effect provides a 4-tap delay algorithm (both 30 kHz and 44 kHz sample rate versions are included) with adjustable delay up to 480 clocks (5 quarter notes; Ensoniq uses 96 pulses per quarter note timing), level, pan, and feedback. You set the delay time for the desired timing, trim the other parameters, and voila. There's also a Bus 1 dry parameter level parameter and like the compressor, you can save and copy patches.

Okay, now the bad news: it doesn't sync to incoming MIDI clocks, only internal sequences. Still, it's wonderful that when you change the sequence tempo, the delay follows along. You can have a lot of dumb fun just looping a particularly nifty rhythm, then playing with the tap parameters in

real time. (Avoid varying the delay time itself, though, unless you want some glitches and pops. Stick with the feedback, level, and pan values.)

Bottom line: This is a definitely cool effect, especially if you're into dub & dance ditties. \$49.95 for one effect isn't dirt cheap, but you're getting something in return that can be essential for some types of music (like dub), and is a lot of fun.

Soniq Demolition

If you think of samplers as devices intended to emulate French horns and pianos, you are not the target audience for this disk; but if you're into creative mutation, you'll be thrilled. This disk is a real gem — to my jaded ears it's the best of the bunch, and paradoxically, the least expensive. Maybe Waveboy knew they had an uphill battle trying to explain to people why they should bend their sounds beyond all recognition, hence the lower price to suck them in.

Anyway, the disk has three algorithms. Grain-Storm does the sonic equivalent of taking a sample, putting it in a spray can, and letting you spray little "grains" of the sample all over the audio spectrum (with appropriate nozzle and flow controls). Yup, pretty twisted stuff. You can change the grain length and pitch, along with random time and frequency variations, and all of these parameters can be modulated. If you can't picture what this sounds like in your head, I'm not surprised! Here's one way to get an idea: put a fan in front of a speaker, play some program material, put your ear in the front of the fan, and turn it to a moderate speed. This will break up the sound in a weird tremolo kind of way. Now imagine this taken to Warp 9, and you'll at least be close to one particular effect that's possible.

Attention shoppers: there's also a delay built in so you can weird the sound out even more. Great stuff.

The next algorithm, Pitch-Warp, is a frequency shifter. The effect is somewhat like ring modulation, but instead of producing sum and difference frequencies, all incoming frequencies are shifted by a certain amount (e.g., 250 Hz). However, a "tone balance" parameter does let you use Pitch-Warp as a classic ring modulation by combining the shifted frequency with the reference shift amount frequency.

Additional parameters let you modulate the shift frequency with a sine wave LFO, set up an additional controller for modulation (e.g., keyboard), smooth incoming modulation, and set the "bonus stereo DDL" parameters (volume, time, and feedback).

This is absolutely killer on drums, for the same reason ring modulation works so well: you get a rude, clangorous sound

that has the capacity to frighten and intimidate listeners. It also sounds like something out of a '50s German electronic music lab.

The final algorithm, Lo-Fidelity, lets you add all the things other people are trying to remove: short word lengths (how about changing that nice 16-bit sample to 4-bits?), distortion, DC offset, and filtering. And of course, there's an audio-in feature for the EPS-16 PLUS so you can screw up any audio, not just what's in the sampler.

The filtering is pretty comprehensive. The pre-distortion, pre-emphasis filter offers gain trim, high-pass filter frequency, and parametric filter frequency, gain, and Q. The post-distortion EQ section is similar, but has two parametric filters, and an output low-pass filter. Finally, there's a noise gate which is good for setting too high and causing nasty

"stuttering" effects.

How effective is this algorithm? Actually, the question should be how defective is it, and the answer is, "very." Beck could have cut the famous distorted version of the line "two turntables and microphone" in seconds if he had this disk. And made it weirder, too.

Bottom line: Reward creativity in the arts: buy this disk, then get a little creative yourself. For \$39.95, it's a steal. ■

Bio: Craig Anderton wants to take these few lines to plug his site on AOL ("Craig Anderton's Sound, Studio, and Stage," keyword SSS). It has forums, demo software, over 40 megabytes of AIFF and WAV samples, an articles library, events calendar, online magazines, and much more. It's totally subscriber-supported, and way cool.

Front Panel

RND ()

Ensoniq News

ASR-X Advanced Sampler/Resampler

Ensoniq

We went to the masters of sampling and asked them to list the top features they would like to see in the ultimate groove machine. They said to make it easy to sample, resample, and loop, include a built-in synth, add some incredible effects, resonant filters, an easy to use sequencer and put it all into a portable box with pads. We did all that and much more...

Power Sampling. It was time to take sampling to a whole new level, so we took the best features of the famous ASR-10, added great sounding 20-bit A/D converters, made the RAM expandable to 34 Mb, and stuffed all this power into one portable table-top box. We put a lot of effort into making it extremely fast and fun. Just sample, shoot it to a pad, and start jamming. Never before has so much power been so easy to use.

Synth-in-the-House! Everyone has raved about the great sound of the MR products, so we integrated its synth engine and a new built-in ROM into the ASR-X. We also included an expansion slot which will accept any of the popular EXP Series Expansion Boards. This is an amazing amount of synth power to have in a sampler.

Incredible Effects. Our new VLSI 24-bit digital signal processor (ESP-2 Chip) with 26 MIPS of DSP power gives you incredible sounding FX. That power can be used to make your

sound mysterious or bold, rich or thin, big or small. There are also plenty of fun effects like ChatterBox, Vocal Morph and Speaker. In fact you can also use the Low-Fi processing algorithms to get that cool muffled sound.

Cool Interface. Every aspect of the interface was developed to be fun and easy to use. After all, you probably write your best grooves when you're having a great time. The 14 custom designed velocity sensitive pads feel great. They're fast and responsive, smooth and sensitive just beggin' to be hit.

Extremely Expandable. The ASR-X is expandable in many ways. You can add up to 34 Mb of RAM for sampling, add an EXP synth expansion board, or add 8 outputs or SCSI.

Great Sound. Both the Synth sounds and the Samples needed a powerful engine for playback, so we took the MR voice architecture, added resonant filters, our 24-bit ESP-2 effects processor chip and pumped it all through pristine 18-bit DAC's to give you an amazing amount of "soniq" power at your fingertips. You'll never get tired of the sound of the ASR-X.

Resampling. The ASR-X offers resampling functionality like no other product. Sound parameters can be tweaked to your liking, routed through the Insert Effect or Built-in Reverb, and recorded at the Main Outputs digitally. Use this power to create audio loops from sequences you've previously recorded. Add effects to individual pieces within a drum kit, then use another effect algorithm in your final mixdown. You can even mix the A/D to any effects bus, play a sequence, jam along on the pads, and resample the whole thing!

Unique Effects Algorithms. All of the brilliance of the MR

family effects algorithms are represented in the ASR-X. A Global Reverb is always available with 8 models for Plates, Halls, Rooms, and Huge Places. The Insert Effects has 40 algorithms with 4 variations each available. EQ, Reverb, Chorus, Flange, DDL, Distortion, Tunable Speaker, Chatter Box, Vocal Morph, and Autowah presets are included to add character to each resampling session.

Disk File Compatibility. Gone are the days of custom disk formats and incompatible disk files. The ASR-X uses standard file formats for sequences (SMF) and samples (AIFF) to ease the transition of data to your computer, or other compatible device. Once you come up with that killer groove, save the sequence to disk, and load it into your computer sequencer. Play it back into the ASR-X over MIDI while playing a guitar riff into the audio input. Resample all of that. Save to disk. You get the idea.

Specifications

Interface

- 13 Velocity sensitive trigger pads
- Exclusive Patch Select Buttons for access to 4 different variations within each Sound
- Octave Transpose Buttons for quick changes

Internal Memory / Expansion

- 2 MB internal RAM (1 Megaword)
- 2 MB internal ROM (1 Megaword)
- Expandable to 34 MB (17 Megaword) internal RAM with standard SIMMs (32 bit non-parity, or 36-bit parity, 72-pin only)
- 1 expansion slot for any MR - EXP board

Sampling

- 20-bit Analog-to-Digital converter, 18-bit Digital-to-Analog converters, 16-bit Memory.
- Stereo or Mono sampling or resampling (through the effects processor) of played notes, sequenced notes, or MIDI notes
- 44.1 kHz Sample rate
- Maximum sample times:
- Standard Memory (2 MB): 20.5 sec @ 44.1 kHz mono, 10.3 sec @ 44.1 kHz stereo
- Fully expanded (34 MB): 6 minutes @ 44.1 kHz mono, 3 minutes @ 44.1 kHz stereo
- Dedicated stereo audio input preamp with hardware mic/line switch and input level trim control
- Sound Processing commands include:
- Copy, Truncate, Reduce bits, Scale, Normalize
- Compatible with all existing ASR-10 libraries
- Imports Akai (S-1000/1100) and Roland sounds via SCSI

Playback

- Frequency response: 2 Hz - 20kHz 1 1.5 dB @44.1 kHz
- 94 dB signal-to-noise, 96 dB dynamic range, 94 dB THD + noise (< .002%) at unity playback

Voice Architecture

- 32 dynamically assigned voices
- Each individual Sound has a complete set of programmable parameters

- Independent multi-mode dynamic digital filters (low pass, high pass, variable bandwidth band pass resonant low-pass, resonant band-pass)
- Extensive assignable modulation implementation
- Transwave loop modulation for constructing unique spectral interpolation waveforms

Effects

- Custom 24-bit digital signal processor with 48-bit accumulation
- Programmable stereo multi-effects processing with real time modulation of effects parameters
- 40 algorithms with 4 programmable variations per effect (160 total variations) 5 Stereo busses: Insert, Light Reverb, Medium Reverb, Wet Reverb, Dry

Sequencer

- 16 polyphonic tracks, each with its own Instrument, Mix, Pan, and FX Bus
- Tracks can play internal voices and/or external MIDI instruments
- Up to 128 Sequences
- Sequence memory: 40,000 note
- 384 PPQ clock resolution, synchronized to Internal or MIDI clock
- 3 real time recording modes (Replace, Add, Looped) and Multi-track recording via MIDI
- Quantization, copy, erase sequence edits available (with Undo).
- Auto-locate controls (Bar/Beat accuracy), adjustable click track and Tap Tempo control
- Automated mixdown feature records mix/panning changes for each Track

MIDI

- 16 Track Multitimbral
- MIDI Song Position Pointer

Disk

- 1.4 MB Quad-density (HD) 3.5" micro-floppy

Inputs/Outputs

- Left/Mono and Right/Mono audio outputs
- Optional 8 output expander (X-8) for a total of 10 outputs
- Headphone jack
- 1 single/dual pedal inputs (SW-2, SW-6 or SW-10)
- Stereo audio inputs
- Audio input level trim control
- MIDI In/Out/Thru

Optional Accessories

- Floppy disk and Audio CD sound libraries
- EXP Series Wave Expansion boards
- SCSI interface
- SW-10 Dual Damper Pedal 2 pedal piano-type for sustain, sampling trigger, effect modulation, and sequencer control
- SW-6 Single Damper Pedal

Physical

- 17" (43.1 cm) wide x 4" (10.1 cm) high x 13" (33.1 cm) deep, weight: 12.5 lbs (5.67 kg) unboxed, 17 lbs (7.71 kg) boxed

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Soniq Safari

Exploring the MR Factory Sounds

Robby Berman

As many of you have already discovered, the MR-series synths — that's the MR-Rack, MR-61 and MR-76 to you, junior — have power to burn (but odor isn't everything, nyuk, nyuk, nyuk). It's immediately obvious that the boxes sound great, but there's hidden gold in there in the form of sounds that you may not have stumbled across, or may not have recognized as being the amazing things they really are. Let's have a look around, shall we?

Wheel of (Good) Fortune

There are a handful of sounds tucked away amongst the DRM-SND Soundfinder category that are somewhat jaw-dropping. The sounds in this category are intended to be used as components in drum kits, and so they appear. But given that Ensoniq's programmers don't always have room on the display to spell out exactly what going on — nor was there room in the manuals (AKA "The Yellow Pages") — you may not have realized what you had at your fingertips when you dialed these sounds up.

I would posit that one of the most unusual and cool of the MR sounds is the unassumingly named "CTRL1 OpHat" (DRM014:032). "OpHat" stands, of course, for "Open Hat." "CTRL 1" stands for MIDI controller 1, the mod wheel. To twiddle this sound as it's meant to be twiddled, ya therefore need — duh — a mod wheel. If you've got an MR-Rack, hook up a keyboard that has a mod wheel; MR-61/76 owners are pre-equipped (nicest thing anyone's said to you all day, I'll bet).

Tap on Middle C as you move the mod wheel: the hihat seems to move from tightly clamped — with the wheel all the way back — to considerably looser, with the wheel forward. Ever hear another synth do that? The first time I heard this was the first time I got truly excited about the MR. You can use the mod wheel to add some realistic randomness to the tightness of the hat by adjusting it slightly in a sequenced track, or you can simply use the mod wheel to set your hat's sound. This effect is made possible by programming eight layers to simulate different degrees of closed-ness, and then setting up each layer to sound only for a particular portion of the mod wheel's throw. This last bit is accomplished with the MR's Trigger Control para-

meter, which you'll find in the *MR Unisyn* editor. With this parameter, you can program a pre-condition that must be met in order for a layer to play. In this sound, the pre-condition is a range of mod wheel values. Clever, eh?

NKG, BTW

By the way, have you wondered what all this "NKG" is about? Many of the MR hihats are programmed to be part of a key group. A key group is a collection of sounds that supersede each other. That is, if you've played one, and then play another, it cuts the first note off. This is handy for hihats, for example, where you want a closed hihat note to silence an open one to simulate the sound of a hihat being shut. The MR voice architecture provides for up to 16 of these groups, to which you can assign any layers in any sound. The MR hihats are typically programmed to be part of key group 1, so that when you pull a closed hat from here and an open hat from there, when you put 'em together in a kit, they'll agreeably cut each other off. All that having been said, "NKG" stands for "no key group," meaning that so-named sounds are not pre-programmed to belong to any of the 16 key groups.

TRANScendent Experience

To some of you who have already spent hours working your MR sounds, this next item will perhaps seem a tad obvious. But I'm sure you'd agree that it's just as obvious that this sound has to be mentioned in any tour of standout MR sounds. I speak of course, of the redoubtable Wak It.

Wak It is a sound comprised of but a single Transwave whose start time changes depending on the velocity with which you strike the keys on your keyboard, but, ah, what a wave, and whotta lotta fun. All you need to do to join in is to select this puppy and play different velocities on but a single key. Turn off your speakers so that no one can hear your journey back to the '70s.

And So On...

Is that it? Nah. But let this hors d'oeuvre serve to whet your appetite for now. The MR boxes are packed with arresting sounds you don't want to miss, so don't miss 'em.

Start a conversation with Atomic Lead, bathe your brain with the delayed layers of Multi-Perk. Check out what happens under your left hand as you play some bass lines with Jazz Trio, a sound that begs to be to be sucked into Unisyn for perusal (Sshhh, don't tell anyone: pushing the

mod wheel forward turns off the bass.) ■

Bio: Robby Berman is a musician living and recording amongst the pines of New York State's Hudson Valley. His most recently release opus is "Rings and Rings."

More Mirror Floppies

CDR-4: The AS Archive Volume 1

Pat Finnigan

For: ASR, 16+, TS variants.

Product: CDR-4, AS Archive Volume 1.

Price: \$99.00.

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

This month we delve into the archive of Malvern warez, and come up with a copy of *CDR-4* for review. This collection consists of the first 14 sets of AS-x sets of floppies for the ASR-10, and represents a very cool coupla hundred Mb of Ensoniq samples, most of which are portable (read fittable) into the TS variants, as well as the 16+, so don't go looking for 25,000+ block basses in here. And now that 2X CD ROM readers are all but extinct, they're so cheap (I picked up an Apple 2X external for \$45), I'm going the silver disk archive system. Not that I don't like floppies; it just I've got boxes upon boxes upon boxes of soooo many floppies I simply can't maintain an organizational scheme for them anymore. The simplicity and elegance of CD ROM storage simply will not be denied; we're moving way too much data around in this day and age. Netscape 3.0 wants 9Mb just to idle in; it thrashes 70-80 cache files after boot, any one of them larger than the ASR-10's capacity, so just because I play in a R & B band doesn't mean my ASR's gotta live the R & B life...

The Roses

As with all Ensoniq offerings, the documentation is superb, excellent, ab fab, etc. I can't believe so many third parties haven't gotten up to speed on this; I wouldn't buy a keyboard if the manual wasn't first rate. Don't sound vendors realize the analogy? It might cost a little more, but geez, if it makes the product more usable (i.e., more musical), what value can you put on it? Patch select variations are documented for every file, controller/mod routings are listed along with a brief description of the sound.

I almost know what it's gonna sound like before I commit to loading it. With a 16 Mb ASR you can kill a WHOLE lotta time shovelling in a 28 thousand block of sound for close to a minute (the ASR only likes 2X CD readers, gang). Multiply by 500+ files, and you're wasting 8 1/2 hours (one whole work day) loading files just to see if they work for you. That's why I love reviewing Ensoniq warez: you know what to expect after you read the docs. I mean, come on, just what the @\$% is EK-ANA-PAD-1 gonna sound like without even the briefest of hints? Kudos to Malvern.

And the sounds are just exactly what we've come to expect from Ensoniq: no ticks, no discernible loop points; in fact, the only surface noise you'll get in this collection is a file aptly entitles "Surface Noiz" to overlay on top of loops to get that urb vibe goin'. There's 34 bonus sounds that don't seem to appear anywhere else in the Ensoniq library, one of them being a 2401-block Rhodes sample that's on the money. The 1971 block "Steinway" is as small as you can get an accurate acoustic piano sample without stretching 5 monosamples across a keyboard. A 54-block "Wurlie" is one of the most accurate I've heard; its strength really belies its size. The "Time Bomb" demo and sounds is here as well as the two "Gift-O-Gab" 1 and 2 demos. I didn't realize Ensoniq had a mountain instrument set, but AS-8's "Appalachian" library is here; I can't tell you with a straight face how wonderful the 631-block Jaw harp sounds in 16-bit splendor, but the "Musical Saw" at 1198 blocks, well, those Malvern guys must be practicing creative pharmacology. And we haven't even gotten to the AS-5's "Left of Center" collection. I'll just mention the 518 block "Sick Cat" and the 1062 "Ktchn Mgcian" in passing and leave an easter egg or two behind for the curious...

AS-9, as well as AS-13 and 14 cover the rap alchemists: the "Dyno Rhodes" at 783 blocks is a perfect rhodes/DX

EP under patch selects. All the chronic and phat basses are covered here; for more diverse loop tempo selection, you'll have to visit DJ Jazzy Jeff's SCD-2 for the def stuff. AS-10, 11 and 12 comprise the Euro/Techno/Retro 150bpm club with heavy emphasis on dancetrance composition. Old JP-8, Oberheim SEM, Matrix and analog live here, and the quality here is easily overlooked. AS-10-11 and 12 comprise the most analog-sounding samples I've heard ever to come out of such digital wonder. These three sets are worth the price of admission alone; if you do the techno thing, you'll be absolutely amazed at *how* analog the ASR can sound. The 161-block "Jupi-16" is the fattest synth sound I've ever heard come out of the ASR, and at 161 blocks? Now you'll know why Malvern took those ASR-10 DSP chips and made dedicated DP-series FX processors with them.

This CD is an excellent reason to learn about "Direct Dialing" CD macros. I just discovered (by reviewing this CD) that Macro 1000 *always* takes you to the "Exit To Root" page. Something about an old dog comes to mind...

The Thorns

Banks and demos only work on the ASR-10. That's all the negative I can find here.

The Deal

Ensoniq is trying to migrate its established client base into a new storage medium by pricing its warez so ridiculously low that everyone will opt for it. And they just did it to me. I actually built a 3' x 4' wall mount disk storage unit to hold my 800+ EPS floppy collection in 1992. It overflowed 6 months later bearing truth to the concept that

"the larger the container, the sooner it will fill up." So looking at a 5 1/4" silver disk that holds approximately the same amount of data as my 65 lb. wall unit becomes very attractive to me now. Methinks it's time for a CD writer; if I only had the time to build a 650 Mb HD for the ASR-10. Ya know, it takes a full weekend to do the "Change Storage Device" timewarp on an EPS SCSI drive, and that's IF you already know what files to put where in what directories. Hey, Ensoniq! How about the ASR-10 Archive Volume 22: CDR-97: the 28-hour Day?

There's a rock solid 300+ Mb of choice factory-polished stuff here that really needs no touching up for instant gratification. Guys like me will probably torque on these, but with a fully expanded 16 Mb ASR, there's no real need to: you might wanna touch up some FX, 'cause the warez sound really large, and I'd like the tune, not the sound, to catch attention. Still, one without the other is neither, so I'll continue torquing away...

Our Malvern homespuns have thrown a new variable into our non-linear music equation: convenience. Sure, you can still keep floppies of your warez, but why not keep the most used (as well as the most popular, I might add) archived on CD? Less space, less load time, more warez and files; with space being a premium, they've done it to us again. And, as Nietzsche said, "The only successful revolution is the one that isn't discovered until it's over." Kudos to Ensoniq for spending the extra time and effort into making *CDR-4* (as well as their other technology) practical AND affordable, as well as easy to use. You'll have to buy the Miroslav Vitous Orchestral CD to get an equivalent level of documentation: at \$3500? NAH!!!

Now about that creative pharmacology CD...

Don't Try This at Home!

Editing Sampled Sounds in the TS-10 and TS-12, Part 3

Robby Berman

Did your mother tell you there'd be daze like this? Well, your mom wouldn't lie — here comes a good one. In this article, we enter the scary world of sampled-sound wave modulation, AKA the third sampled-sound wave page on the TS. Most sample editing on the TS is really pretty similar to standard TS sound programming, but this page presents some notable exceptions. This is not for the faint-hearted; actually, it would be more accurate to say

that this is not for the impatient, since most everything done on this page requires meticulous tweaking in tiny increments in order to achieve gratifying results. Much of what we're about to discuss borders on the experimental, teetering right along the edge of the unknown; okay, we're going right over the cliff, if you must know the truth. If you've got no interest in this spooky side of your TS, come back next time. I promise things'll return to normal.

You don't scare easily, do you? Okay, then. Start off by loading VOCAL SNIPS from the sampled-sound disk that came with your TS, SSD-100, and we'll be ready to head into the laboratory (pronounced "la-bore-a-tore-aaieeee!").

Our Control Group

Let's get our bearings for a mo'. Select the ROM sound, BABY-GRAND. Press the Wave button twice so that SAMPLE-START is showing on the top line of the display. Okay, now, when you're programming a normal TS sound, this page lets you set starting point of the samples in the selected wave; that is, you can adjust how far into the sample playback will begin when you play a key on the keyboard. You can also set up real-time modulation of the start point by selecting a modulator (START- MODSRC) and setting the maximum amount by which the real-time modulator will be allowed to alter the basic setting (MOD-AMT). Remember all this: it's the only familiar thing you'll find once we get to where we're headed.

Paging Dr. Frankenstein...

Now select VOCAL SNIPS, and press the Select Voice button. Press the soft button in the center of the top line of the display and use the up button to pick layer 2. Press the upper-right soft button and then play Middle C: you should see wavesample 1 selected as your victim, and you should be hearing a "Yeah-hey-ay-ay-ay" that clearly has no idea what's in store. Press the Wave button until you see the phrase "WAVE-MODULATION" on the top line of the display.

Essentially, what's different — and challenging — about this page is that it lets you alter, in real-time, so very many things about the selected sample. To get an idea, select the WAVE-MODULATION parameter. Using the up/down buttons, slowly look through the list of values for this parameter. These are all the attributes of your sample that can be modulated in real time. All monster-movie jokes aside, this is manna for serious sound designers, great though the potential for sonic damage may be (or is that a good thing to you?). Let's talk about each of these values.

LOOP POS: If your sample is looped, and WAVE-MODULATION is set to this value, you can use real-time modulation to move your loop around within the sample (or beyond it, if you're not careful). Obviously, not every sample has more than one or two good-sounding places that you can plant a loop, but some do.

START: This value lets you do the same thing you can do with the SAMPLE-START setting in a normal TS sound: you can alter, in real time, where your sample will begin playing.

START+LP: Yipes! This one lets you modulate both the sample start and the loop position.

LOOPSTRT: This lets you modulate the location at which your loop will begin, without changing where it ends.

LOOP END: Guess what? Yup. This lets you modulate only the place at which your loop will end, without affecting where it starts.

LPSTRT-X: This value produces an effect similar to LOOPSTRT, except that the TS performs a little pitch-correction voodoo to help keep your loop in tune as you move its beginning hither and thither.

TRANSWAV: This value moves the whole loop by a distance equal to the length of the loop. If you've got a short, single-cycle loop, you can make your own transwaves, sorta, that will move around in response to your modulation.

You may feel, after struggling for weeks, nay years, to find just the perfect loop for your sample that, jeez, why would I wanna move the loop around just when I had it sounding good? Fair question. Honestly, most of the modulation you can accomplish on this page leads almost immediately to unwanted pops and clicks. However, when you're truly into sonic slicing and dicing, and you really slow down and take your time to find the right settings, you can come up with some arresting results. I used some of these tools in the "Attitudes, Atmospheres and Accidents" sound sets I produced for Ensoniq (AS-18 and 19), and I haven't been arrested. Yet.

The Only Constant is Change

Okay, I promised you something familiar. Let's modulate the start time of this sample, to get a sense of how real-time wave modulation works here. Set WAVE-MODULATION to START. Select the MODSRC parameter and set it to WHEEL (I say that's the mod Wheel, son). Set MODAMT to +99. Leave the MODRANGE parameter at its current setting of 32K — we'll visit this parameter in a minute.

Play the keyboard as you move the wheel: see how the sample start gets moved forward as you push the wheel forward, since we set MODAMT to a positive value (+99)? Plant the wheel a little less than halfway forward, so that you hear the vocal with its opening "yeah" removed.

The MODRANGE parameter determines the maximum distance your modulation will travel through your sample. At its current 32k setting, a modulation value of +99 — in our example, this would be produced by tossing the mod

wheel all the way forward — will mean that the start point will be moved ahead by 32,000 (that's 32k) samples, since this vocal snippet is actually 48264 samples long, moving the wheel all the way forward should move the start about three-quarters of the way in. And it does. Set MODRANGE to double this setting: 64k. Since the mod wheel can now move the start point 64,000 samples forward, the halfway point is further along in the action. Play the keyboard: you're down to your last "ay."

The MODRANGE parameter serves two functions: it lets you scale your modulation according to how big your sample is — no point going right off the end of the thing — and it can also let you limit the movement caused by your modulation for creative purposes. If, for example, you just want to move a loop by a little bit, you can select a small MODRANGE. This parameter offers values from 1 sample all the way up to 2,000,000 samples. By the way, MODRANGE is disabled when TRANSWAV is selected for the WAVE-MODULATION parameter; this makes sense when ya think about it, since the loop length controls the throw achievable with modulation.

With Knowledge Comes Responsibility

For most people who use the TS and sampled sounds, all

of this is pretty much esoterica. But the sound sculptors among ye can see, no doubt, that there's play potential here. I've found that, when modulating samples in real time, it helps to draw out on paper what it is I'm trying to accomplish. It also helps — well, really, it's mandatory — that you allow yourself the unhurried time to try different settings ad nauseam until pleasing results can be found. I've also found that real-time wave modulation is best controlled by sequencing a performance and tweaking it in the event editor to make sure that each modulation lands the sample in some non-tick-pop-splat place.



When we next pick up the TS sampled-sound trail, we'll be back in the realm of the familiar. ■

Bio: Robby Berman is a musician slipping and sliding along the frozen highways and byways of New York State. His latest opus is "Rings and Rings."



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Averting Disk-saster

Tom Shear

Well, it finally happened. It was Thursday. I had to finish sequencing a track, add vocals, and get the whole thing mastered and in the mail to the record company by Friday. I was running around like a be-headed chicken. I was in the Zone. I didn't make a back-up.

Yup, you heard me. Mr. "Always Make A Back-up of Your Files, People" didn't make a back-up and got bitten by the nasty corrupted sequence data monster. I guess it was bound to happen sooner or later, it's just that at the time I was wishing it had happened later instead of NOW. Calls to Ensoniq Customer Service unfortunately didn't get me any closer to a solution.

My problem was this. I was almost finished sequencing the song. I went back to overdub a particularly tricky drum fill and saved it. Then, when I tried to move on to the next or previous sequence, my EPS-16+ crashed. I reloaded it. Same thing. I tried it under different versions of the OS. No help. I couldn't create new sequences after the corrupt one, because even if I tried to scroll backwards to the last sequences, it crashed. I couldn't even delete the corrupted sequence because every time I selected that sequence, it crashed. I was screwed, blued and tattooed. So to save you some heartbreak, here are some handy disk management tips:

1) MAKE A BACKUP

Yeah, I know. Save your jokes. The fact of the matter is, not making a backup of especially important files is begging for disaster. And now that hard drives are cheap and we have great products like the Zip drive available, you can back up all your files without having to build an addition onto your house to store them all.

2) Use high quality disks

It's tempting to try and pinch pennies and save some

cash on disk costs, but *Avoid This*. Those cheap, no-name disks are cheap and no-name for a reason. In addition, many of the cheaper disks are more likely to gum up your disk drive which can lead to further unfortunate mishaps.

3) Don't use single-sided disks.

Although you *can* use these disks in your sampler, it isn't recommended. Single-sided disks are writeable on both sides, but only one side has been tested for quality. This isn't as much of an issue as it once was since single-sided disks are more or less none-existent these days.

4) Use the proper kind of disk in your disk drive.

By this I mean, if you are using an EPS-16+, there is no need to use a High-Density (HD) disk. The reason being, if you try to load that disk into an ASR, you'll get an error. The ASR will only read a HD disk as an HD disk, no matter how it's formatted. So to prevent compatibility problems, only use HD disks when you're formatting them that way.

5) Store your disks carefully.

Ideally, you want to keep your disks in a warm (although not hot) dry place as free from dust and smoke as possible. If your disks came in little plastic slip baggies, use them, they can go a long way toward keeping disks safe from dust, filth, and accidentally spilled beverages. Also buy the disk storage cases with flip tops, so when you aren't using the disks you can cover them up.

6) And more...

Also be sure to avoid putting disks on top of speakers, televisions, and computers. While most of these products are magnetically shielded, in some cases it might

not be enough to prevent the magnets inside the speakers from erasing or mangling your precious data.

So hopefully that will save you *some* potential problems that can and will sneak up occasionally. And for those of you on the edge of your seats, I was able to at least retrieve the non-corrupted sequences by saving each individual sequence, reloading them, and resaving the whole deal as a bank on some fresh, new disks. And guess what I did after that? I backed them up.

And wouldn't you know it, I haven't had a crash since.... ■



Bio: This portion of the page has been left blank intentionally.

My MR Isn't a TS!

Eric Montgomery

Let me preface this by saying that as a TS user I anxiously awaited my MR workstation. There is nothing like a new synth to make new ideas happen and freshen up old ones. Then the day arrived and my expectations were to just open it up and start cookin'.

A few minutes into it I wanted to burn it. I was confused about how it operated. The sequencer was different, as were the way sounds were accessed. I had become so used to the way things were and just didn't want to change, but change is inevitable and if I wanted to evolve into the musicmonster I envisioned myself to be, I realized I had best learn this keyboard.

After making things harder for myself by constantly comparing it to the TS, I suddenly found that the MR was easier to use than my old trusty TS. For example, if a track was recorded and I accidentally played a wrong note, simply pressing the sequencer edit button allowed me to "undo" the last function that was performed. As for getting rid of a single note on the TS, I had to go into the event-edit section and scroll through the events until I found that one specific note and, well you know the process. On my MR Workstation, all that was needed was to simply set record mode to "ADD," enter into record mode like normal, press and hold the record button and then play the key I wanted to get rid of. Voila, it was gone! To get rid of the same note throughout a sequence all that was needed was to hold the Record button and play the note to be erased, then press enter.

Let's look at another situation. I recorded an 8-bar groove and wanted to set it to loop around for another 8 bars. This is done by appending the track to itself. Press "COPY." Set the SCOPE for "entire track." Turn the parameter knob and set PASTE to "append." Continue to set the other parameters accordingly using the parameter and value knobs and press enter at the end of the list. Pretty simple.

Or assume that you have loaded a Standard MIDI File into the MR workstation (a feature that was not available on the TS series) and want to change a sound on one of the tracks. Every time you select the sound you want for each track it just changes back to the original sound that it was programmed with... Frustrating? Well, here's how to fix that. After the sequence has been loaded and the tracks have been "aligned," press Erase in the 16-track recorder section. Set the SCOPE to "Trk Data Only." Use your parameter knob and set EVENT to = "Bank & Program." Press Enter and now you can select the instruments you want for that sequence. Keep in mind that after all that work is done, SAVE IT TO DISK!

By no means is the MR workstation a TS workstation, nor is it designed to be a replacement for the TS family. It is a very cool, very easy to use song writing tool. To me, the bottom line is to write a good song first, then use the tools you have to build it into the most incredible structure you can. Whether the tool of choice is an MR or TS, both are perfectly capable of creating great songs. ■

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Mark Twain once said "You know, everybody says something about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." And, as Madeline Kahn said in *Blazing Saddles*, "It's Twue! It's Twue!" And everybody has an opinion to air about the lack of educational materials on learning the Art of The Ensoniq Box.

I aired one about the *Covert Video* series many issues ago: good stuff but pricey.

And I reviewed the *Talking Owners Manuals*: great product without video. Seems as if all number of companies are addressing the learning curve but few are straightening it out for the masses. Is this (a) a blanket indictment on the state of education in this country, (b) an indictment of the student, or scarier yet, (c) the teacher?

The correct answers are (d) all of the above, and (e) none of the above. The Ensoniq sampler is undoubtedly the most powerful box of its kind: as such it represents a technological marvel of unparalleled achievement, as well as a highly evolved musical instrument. Learning to use the box is not like playing the piano, although we who have played keyboards for decades may feel we know it for that reason. We typically learn a functional ambivalence about the buttons, i.e., which ones to press to load sounds, select tracks, record sequences, a navigable ambivalence, if you will. Afterward, we cease exploration within the instrument and functionally use it as a "loadable" wavetable synth. After all, it IS a musical instrument; "Hey, it's got a keyboard on it, don't it?"...

Evidently Sam Mims and Todd Speer have decided this must cease and desist. After all, a sampler is a wavetable synth without waves, so why not treat it as such? And that's exactly where they're going with *Soniq BOOM!*.

Cleverly disguised as a monthly disk of samples, your

Pat Finnigan

Soniq BOOM! subscription is half documentation of the disk, and half tutorial. Not just your average "press X, scroll to Y, and press enter to get to Z" documented button pressing, but Why, where, and how. Issue #1's tutorial sample "Suprnoise Bas" describes creating a sound/sample from nothing! As power users are aware, you don't need an input to get a wave out of the Ensoniq sampler: just pressing "Create New Wavesample?" drops a single cycle square wave into the selected layer.

This is a neat trick, but actually documenting how to turn it into a usable sound is the stuff of *Soniq BOOM!*

And I mean documenting how to synthesize the loop, adding modulation control of volume, velocity control of filtering, all the backwards tricks and tips Sam's been doing for years are here. Wouldn't you route velocity to volume like the factory patches (the "normal use of velocity")? These little two-page tutorials break new ground that force you out of "normal" preconceived linear thought ("well, that's the way it's always been done" school of non-thought) and into the less traveled but more audio scenic route. And unless you go this route, you're only using about a third of the Ensoniq box. Exploratory ventures into the instrument as sonic tool rather than piano keyboard are few and far between: what better guys than Sam and Todd to be your guide on this kind of expedition?

The Roses

Unparalleled educational tool. In just one issue you'll be using those arcane and ignored yet powerful commands/operations like "End Address," "Copy Data," and "Normalize Gain." Drop phrases like "Dest Addr" on your friends, REALLY edit filter modes, hardvel and softvel envelopes, and know what you're doing and what Sam and Todd are talking about! What a concept! Really learn your instrument from a sample data viewpoint: you'll learn the Ensoniq sampler from the inside out instead of the keyboard in...

Documentation of the sounds on disk are a lift from Ensoniq, and I mean verbatim. How the sample was arrived at, what modulation routings are active, what each patch select sounds like and what it does: this is the stuff En-

soniq docs are made of, and most welcome.

Have I gotten to the disk yet? Each issue comes on the disk of your choice: if you're the proud owner of an EPS Classic, just say so and your subscription will arrive on 800k floppies. If you upgrade to an ASR, call Sam: he'll bump you up to 1.4 Mb floppies with the added bonus of effect files. You'll get drum groove sequences for the "SoniqBoomKit" for perusal: slow 'em down and see what makes 'em tick. And docs on the sequences/drum grooves are just as good as the sound docs. And the ASR Bonus Effects are sure to please the most powerful of power users. I just discovered the "Wheel Peaks" fx file, and learned that the twin peaks of this algorithm are always separated by 1000Hz. Haven't learned this much stuff since Terje's quiz in the *Interface*...

Tips for using the optional OEX-8 Output Expander? Look no further than Issue #2. And Sam and Todd, I quote, "work in our secret underground sonic laboratory... trying to guess exactly what sounds, fx, styles are our subscribers after? What programming tricks would you like to learn?" The image of Razor and Blade describing phone phreaking in the movie "Hackers" comes to mind.

The "Tutorial Sample" monthly example/project justifies the price of admission; all else is bonus.

The Thorns

Issue One: 8 column inches (including header artwork) for shameless plugging of Syntaur warez. Issue Two: entire back sheet (1 of 4) for shameless plugging of Syntaur warez, including acquisition of Ensoniq EPS/16+libraries. If this logarithmic growth trend of advertising column inches continues, page count had better grow as well, or *Soniq BOOM!* will start to read like the *Roland Users Group* magazine. Please don't go there. Been there, done that, burned the T-shirt...

Since all the samples are copywritten, does subscription payment include mechanical reproduction license? I suppose you'd better call Syntaur on this, but I'd expect royalty-free repro license with the subscription, or at least a one-off buyout. Don't throw away that cancelled check just yet. [TH — Syntaur tells us, "Just like any commercially-available sound disk, our product is copyrighted to prevent others from distributing it. You are certainly free — and encouraged! — to use these sounds, effects, and drum grooves on your recordings and performances. But you cannot make a copy of the disk (or newsletter) to give to your friends, to post on the Internet, or to sell to others." (They also mention that Issue 3 has

5-1/2 inches of plugging and Issue 4 has zero — not a growing trend, just "fill.")]

That's all the negative ions...

The Deal

Soniq BOOM! is a must-have for inveterate ASR users, as it represents a low-cost educational elective, and is recommended for veterate users. I know, but how can it be a candy mint and a breath mint at the same time? Candy mint for those novice-to-intermediate ASR users who got stymied at the wave and mod level of sound programming, and breath mint to those of us who wouldn't have thought to offset those mod routings in that manner (or that direction, for that matter). Interesting and useful, wish it was \$49.95 a year, but, hey, a disk a month puts it over the top.

Something for everyone here: a slow pitch softball begging to be hit... ■

Bio: Pat assures us the lyrics to the Macarena are "I lost my wallet." This explains why people grab themselves in all those places.

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

Chorusing and Flanging Effects on the SQs — The Plot Thickens

Clark Salisbury

Welcome to this month's installment of "Programming The SQ When You Should Be Looking For A Real Job." So far we've talked about how to route voices to the effects busses and how to work with the reverb parameters to customize reverb effects. This time out, let's move on to some of the other on-board effects.

The SQ includes a number of effects that are delay-based and, as such, can be approached in very similar ways. Among these are the chorusing, flanging and rotary speaker effects. The rotary speaker and flanger effects are found only in combination with other effects — primarily the reverb. The chorus, while it is found in combination with other effects, also presents itself as a single effect — the 8-Voice Chorus. We'll start out by examining this effect first.

As I've already mentioned, chorusing is a delay-based effect, made possible through the use of delay circuitry. A delay is generally used to create echo-type effects. You put a signal into a delay, and what comes out is generally the same signal, but later — the signal has been delayed. If you mix this delayed signal back in with the original signal, the resulting sound might give the impression that the original signal is echoing. This simple approach yields the original signal and a single echo. If one wishes to create the sound of multiple echoes, one need only route the delayed signal back into the delay itself. This delayed signal is then again delayed, yielding a second echo, and since the output of the delay is routed back to its own input, this second echo is again delayed, and so on. The process of routing a delayed signal back into the delay is referred to as "regeneration" or "feedback."

If this regenerated signal is routed back into the delay at full intensity, however, the echoes will continue to multiply at full volume until the sound finally becomes a wash of echoes. This is generally not a very pleasing effect. For this reason, provision must be made to attenuate (turn down) the delayed regenerated signal. The result is a series of echoes that get progressively quieter, eventually decaying to silence — a much more natural-sounding effect. We can hear this process in action by

performing a few simple adjustments to the SQ's 8-Voice Chorus.

First, select a sound to experiment with. ROM sound 00, Dynamic Grand, should do nicely. Press the Edit button, then the Effect button. If you are not at the top of the effect menu pages, press button 0 also — you should be seeing the effect name, 'Concert Reverb', in the display. Select the effect name, and use the up/down arrow buttons or the slider to change it to '8-Voice Chorus'. We now have a piano sound that's being processed with a fairly straightforward chorus effect. Press button 1 — you'll find that chorus rate and depth are both set to 20 — we'll be talking about these parameters in a moment. For now, though, set the Chorus Depth parameter to 0, and press button 2 to move to the next menu page.

Here we are presented with two parameters — Chorus Center, which should be set to 20, and Feedback, which should be set to +00. Select the Chorus Center parameter, and set it to 99. If you now play a few notes on the keyboard, you'll hear the piano sound and a single, quick echo. This is because Chorus Center actually controls delay time — the amount of time between the original signal and its delayed counterpart. The highest value is 99, so we have set the delay (which is the basis for the chorusing effect) to its maximum delay time. The delay is now long enough that we can hear it as a discrete echo.

Now select the Feedback parameter, and see what different parameter settings do. You'll find that as you increase or decrease the value for this parameter from its initial setting of +00, you will begin to increase the number of repeats from the delay. A setting of +99 or -99 will give you positive or negative feedback at full gain, completely unattenuated. The effect will be that the echoing continues until you change the value for the parameter, select a new sound, or turn the SQ off.

Leave the Chorus center parameter set to 99 and set the Feedback parameter to a value of +90 for now. Press button 1 to move back to the Chorus Rate and Depth page. Chorus rate should still be set to 20 — set Chorus Depth to 99, and play a note. The echoes are now shifting in pitch — moving up and down in a fairly regular way as they decay. What's happening here is what sets chorusing apart from simple delay effects — the delayed portion of the signal is being modulated. To be more precise, the delay time itself is being modulated — in this case by a sine wave. The effect is that delay time is being shortened and lengthened cyclically — as the delay time gets shorter, the pitch of the delayed signal rises, and as it gets longer, the pitch

of the delayed signal gets lower. Any of you who have played with the time control and digital, analog, or tape delays will recognize this effect. The theory is that if you mix this pitch-shifted version of the signal back with the original signal, the result will sound like more than one voice sounding in unison — a “chorus” of voices, each one slightly off-pitch from the others.

Of course, the effect that we've put together here is a bit exaggerated — for most typical chorusing applications we'll want to be a bit more subtle. For example, try setting the Chorus Depth parameter back to a value of 20, and hit button 2 to move back to the Chorus Center and Feedback page. Try setting the Feedback parameter to a value of +35 or so. The chorusing will now be quite a bit more subtle, although there will still be a rather pronounced “slapback” echo at the beginning of the signal. This heavily chorused sound, with the slapback echo at the beginning is a popular effect among many electric guitarists — you might want to check this out with some of your favorite guitar patches. If the slapback is bothering you, you can shorten it by adjusting the Chorus Center parameter — lower values will cause the initial echo to shorten, finally becoming so short as to be imperceptible as a separate echo.

The Chorus Center parameter has another use, besides that of introducing a slight echo into the chorused signal, and that is to “tune” the chorusing effect. Different settings for the Center parameter yield chorusing effects that seem to be “tuned” higher or lower in the frequency spectrum.

To become proficient with chorusing effects, you should also become familiar with the interaction of the Rate and Depth parameters. You'll find that these two parameters interact when you are attempting to arrive at a pleasing chorus effect. Increasing the depth, for example, may necessitate a corresponding decrease in the rate, and vice-versa. Also, the overall amount of chorusing should be taken into account. In the case of the 8-Voice Chorus effect, this is programmed from the first effect menu page — pressing button 0 will take you there. With the multiple effects that include chorusing, chorus amount is controlled from within the effect menu pages — the parameter for controlling chorus amount will be presented as “Chorus Level.”

Flanging is very similar to chorusing — in fact, it is nearly identical. As such, all the parameters that we've talked about in our discussion of chorusing will apply to the flanging effects. The only real difference between flanging and chorusing is that flanging effects are achieved using shorter delay times than would be used for chorusing effects. The effect of sweeping these shorter delay times is easy enough to make apparent by example. Starting with the same sound, ROM 00 Dynamic Grand, hit the Edit, then the Effect, then the 0 button to move to the first page of the effect menu. Select the effect type, and change it to Flanger+Reverb 1 — the flanging effect should be immediately apparent if you listen to a few notes from the SQ.

Now hit button 2 to move to the Flanger Rate and Depth page.

Set Flanger Depth to 00, and hit button 3 to move to the next page. Set Feedback to +00, and select the Flanger Center parameter. Set it to 00 as well. Now, increment the Flanger Center parameter one number at a time while repeatedly striking a key on the SQ keyboard. You should hear the sound go through a number of fairly subtle tonal changes. What is happening is that the signal, having been very slightly delayed and mixed back with itself, is exhibiting amplitude changes in a variety of frequencies. When you mix two identical waves, one slightly delayed from the other, certain frequencies will be amplified and others will be attenuated. This is because at some points in the two waves' cycles, both waves will be traveling in the same direction. In this case, adding the waves together at this point will result in those frequencies being at greater amplitude than in either wave taken separately. If we use a sine wave as an example, we find that adding a sine wave with an amplitude of +10 with another identical sine wave with an amplitude of +10 will give use a sine wave with an amplitude of +20.

At other times, the waves will be traveling in opposite directions — one might be going positive while the other is going negative (remember, since one wave is delayed from the other, it might still be moving in a positive direction while the original wave has taken a turn to the negative). Adding the two waves together at this point will have the effect of cancelling some or all of the frequencies out. For example, adding two identical sine waves, one with an amplitude of +10 and the other with an amplitude of -10 results in a wave with an amplitude of 0, or no wave at all.

Of course, the waves that we are mixing together in our flanger are much more complex than sine waves, so this phenomenon of frequencies accentuating and cancelling each other sounds much more complex. And I should mention that this is not limited to the flanger only — both the chorusing and rotary speaker effects will exhibit some of this effect. But the characteristic sound of flanging is most closely associated with this process.

Most of your considerations when using the flanging effects will be identical to those when programming the chorus — flanger rate, depth, center, and feedback all function identically to their counterparts in the chorusing algorithms. The main difference is that flanging uses much shorter delay times than chorusing effects — although there can be some overlap between the two types of effects. In addition, the flanger presents a parameter not contained in the chorusing algorithms, the Input Invert parameter, and what it does, simply put, is to invert the polarity of the delayed (or flanged) signal. Its effect is to reverse the pattern of affected frequencies — notches in the frequency spectrum will become peaks, and vice-versa.

At any rate, this should give you a good start at making up some new and cool effects. Don't worry that we haven't spent time yet on the distortion, phase-shifting, compression, and rotary speaker effects — we'll be getting to them all in good time. So stay tuned, and I'll be seeing you later...later...later...later... ■

The Tunesmiths

CD: *The Tunesmiths* (c) 1995.

Artist: The Tunesmiths.

Contact Info: Miro Svetinsky, 9441 Flower St #201, Bellflower, CA 90706, Phone: (310) 925-3839, Email: mjsvetinsky@ccgate.hac.com.

Equipment: Ensoniq EPS-16+, KS-32, DP/4, Emu ESI-32, Alesis D4, Q2, 3630 Compressor, Lexicon LXP5, AT4033 condenser mic, Alesis ADAT, Soundcraft Spirit Studio 16x8 console, Emagic Logic Audio.

The Tunesmiths are six musicians (with four special guests) who cobbled together a CD project by mail, sending ADAT tapes around the country for musical contributions from different members of the project. The main goal of this work appears to have been to have fun, and I believe any musical project ought to be reviewed through the lens of the artist's intentions. However, an offering like this, created in what is obviously a state-of-the-art digital project studio and put out on the market for sale, is a contender for shelf space in my CD cabinet, and as such is also open to critical review, not just "this is a bunch of folks having fun." But before we run a selection of The Tunesmith's sixteen tracks through the Basement Tapes Wringer, let's take a look at (make that "slobber over") their home studio...

Miro Svetinsky is the first *Basement Tapes* contributor to include a sophisticated computer-graphic diagram of his studio setup. I won't repeat the equipment list (gawk at it yourself above), but this group has a totally clean signal path from vocal cords to CD, from the beautiful clarity of the AT4033 microphone, through their Alesis ADAT to a Soundcraft Spirit Studio console to a Sony PCM-2300 DAT, and mastered on a Mac running Sound Designer software. Such equipment virtually guarantees a faultless end product, right? Well, no, it only guarantees (in the hands of competent engineers, like the people who mixed this project) a digitally pristine outcome. Such absolute clarity leaves the compositional, performance, and production realities glaring under bright lights, kind of like examining your complexion in front of a 1000 watt bulb.

Let's look at a few tracks, observing the zits as well as the clear spots...

Hurricane Girl — In my opinion, The Tunesmiths did not open their CD with anywhere near the strongest track. Most glaring on this song is the rough-hewn vocals. Now, "rough" vocals can certainly "work" in the right context, but there is a phenomenon on this cut which is repeated a number of times throughout the CD: doubling rough vocal tracks makes them twice as rough (doubly rough, rough squared). Better to run tracks in need of doubling through your DP/4 or a Vocalist to thicken them up, rather than exaggerate the already-questionably pitched vocals by repeating the performance. One thing that might help (besides just simply spending a great deal of time and effort in the woodshed practicing, or a lot of effort in the studio tracking overdubs) would be to bring the vocals on these tunes a little further back in the mix.

Therapy For Me — The idea of this song is that music is therapy for this songwriter. Great concept, surfacing from time to time in popular music. But a couple of gripes: one, lyrically the song is a bit thin (a pattern throughout a number of the Tunesmith's tunes). One example in which the lyricist commits the sin of over-anthropomorphizing: "Every day I caress the keyboard just to let it know how I feel." Is this therapy for the musician, or for the keyboard? Granted, if my ESQ-1 had feelings, I'm sure it would be feeling pretty darned neglected these days... As long as I'm griping about lyrics, how about this double-bind for a music reviewer: "I don't really care if you notice, I don't really care if you care, I don't really care if you know me, It's therapy for me." I can appreciate the act of songwriting and recording as a therapeutic venture, but publishing and selling the music and then turning around and telling the audience that you don't care what their response is... hits me as just a bit narcissistic. (Ahh... I feel much better now; that was therapy for me...)

Tunesmith — It was difficult to figure out what was bothering me about some of the lyrics, and it finally hit me: so much of them on this project are completely literal! They leave no room for metaphor. For example, the title track, "*Tunesmith*," describes (ostensibly) the process by which this group creates their music: "*He*

wakes up in the morning and there's a song inside his head, he runs and grabs his notebook as he jumps out of his bed; he writes it down so quickly so that it doesn't slip away, he puts a tune to it by sundown, and in the mail the same day, in the mail the same day; Bah-pa-bah-pa-bah..." Actually, the very term "tunesmith" needs no explanation to evoke the image of a hard-working craftsman plying his or her trade. Painstakingly detailing its meaning in the lyrics just makes me want to say, "No, I get it; no, really, I caught your meaning the first time!" Lyrics aside, this is a nice composition, reminding me of old Jim Croce tunes.

Love at First Sight — Compositionally, ballads like this one fare better for the Tunesmiths than some of their other offerings. A memorable and melodic chorus using a universally understood phrase ("love at first sight") is a winning formula.

I Can Be Your Friend — Shallow lyrics about a shallow relationship cripple this minor-key pop-rock tune. A seventies feel, but without that retro vibe.

Made In The U.S.A. (c) 1995 — Well, so much for a sense of world community ushered in by the breaking down of cultural and national barriers and the technological opening up of global communication. Here is a nostalgic throwback to an Americo-centric point of view. The songwriter snarls, "Did you hear about the Russians, they're startin' to play rock 'n' roll." Hello. Time warp. I was in Kiev in 1973 and went to a dance featuring a local rock band playing their guitars through jury-rigged television sets (yes, some "Russians" even have those!) for amplifiers. The band was great (and not just because they let me jam with them on *Purple Haze*). Again, that was 1973. Guys, guys... "the Russians" have been playing rock 'n' roll since the beginning. At least The Tunesmiths admit later in the song, "Sometimes I get confused about the birth place of rock 'n' roll." Yupper. You do.

Go To Sleep — Another revisitation of early 70's rock, this time reminiscent of The Fifth Dimension.

Money for Bait — Here is a distinctive guitar rocker, an interesting composition, and performed and recorded well. The loose vocal style fits well here.

Harleys and Angels — This biker song in the Beach Boys style opens with a great recording of (what else) a Harley.

Dianna — The final cut on the CD is, in my opinion, one

of The Tunesmith's strongest, with a very compelling instrumental bridge. I asked myself, "Why does this work so well?" and I believe it's due to the combination of a memorable chord progression and a rich harmonic structure.

In general, there is some really nice playing on this project, especially the bass, keyboards and percussion tracks. My ears hear way too much compression on the acoustic guitar, yielding that telltale "rubber band" effect, but the performances are very nice. The drum tracks are helped no doubt by Miro's live playing on homemade drum pads triggering his D4; nice and human (Miro admits to some editing in *Notator Logic*, however). Being a heavy user of the D4 myself, I always wince at the D4's greatest weakness: its cymbals, a dead giveaway for a drum module. I wonder if your ESI-32 has something better to offer in the cymbal department?

Nit-picks aside, this CD is engineered with excellence: it is mixed well, clean as a whistle, and the balance between instruments and parts throughout the stereo field is generally superb, as well as the oxymoronic effective use of effects and EQ. And production-wise, The Tunesmiths have done some excellent arranging.

This is the second "chain letter"-style recording I have reviewed in the past year, and it has some of the same strengths and weaknesses as the other project (*Keope and Friends* reviewed July, 1996, *TH* #133). Group therapy projects tend to have a "community" feel to them that feels, well, a bit "derivative" to me, like the outcome of a committee. In other words, there seems to be a lack of incisive musical *focus* with so many different opinions and ideas collaborating. The end product feels stripped of some of the communicative power that comes from the demons and joys of a single soul. One would also think, on the positive side, that in such a collaboration there would be some checks and balances, e.g., that out of the ten different musicians on the project, *somebody* would speak up and say, "Hey, don't you think the vocal line is off-pitch on the first track?" or, "Why don't you lay back on the compression on the guitar a little?" Maybe it's the distance, or the time-space continuum, or the postage or long-distance charges, but it seems like a paradox that with so much collaboration there seems to be a possible lack of accountability.

Okay, I really ran The Tunesmiths through the wringer, but only because they poured so much energy and work into this project. And also because this CD is for sale,

competing for my sparse CD money (admittedly a measly \$10 bucks, available directly from The Tunsmith himself, Miro Svetinsky, at the address posted above). There are a couple of elements replete throughout this project that no amount of hammering at the anvil can obliterate: enthusiasm and heart permeating the music. The Tunsmiths have forged plenty of that. ■

Tapes Recently Received

Trapped by Emotion, Nurvis.

If you want your tape run through the wringer, err, Hack-

er, just mail it off to: Basement Tapes, *Transoniq Hacker*, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland OR 97221. Please include your e-mail address!



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

Ensequencing

Part 5: Copy Cat Tracks (It's a gas, gas, gas!)

Jack Stephen Tolin

It's good to know you can copy a sequence if you want an easy base to begin editing another sequence. There are some nice little tricks, though, that we can do with our new Ensoniq sequencers that make sequence editing so much easier and really allow us to be so much more creative. "More creative than what," you ask?

Depending on what sequencer you are using, the newer Ensoniq sequencers are so much more advanced. But a long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, all I had was an SQ-80 for sequencing. Ever since I first got an SQ-1 PLUS, I was resistant from the beginning concerning new sequencer edit functions. Maybe it was just fear of the new and unfamiliar. Maybe it was addiction to habit. Maybe I left the iron on at home.

At any rate, one of the most useful functions I have been using a lot recently is the Copy Track function. Since I have been working recently on music that develops and evolves into very different styles and moods, I like to copy tracks from earlier sequences into the newer ones to give the whole song some general motifs woven all throughout the piece. In a sense, it becomes like a variation on a theme, although the theme generally doesn't change much — it's more of the composition surrounding the theme that changes (although characteristics such as pan, effects, and volume settings may in fact change frequently). The theme can sometimes be very complicated and difficult to play over and over, so a feature like Copy Track can become a

real helper in time of need.

Since I have an SQ-1 PLUS 32 voice, that is the unit to which I will be referring. The functions, however, are contained on many of Ensoniq's newer sequencers, so please join in.

The first thing to keep in mind is that this particular function is very flexible. Since I personally program all my sequences in 1/4 and have different length sequences — some 30 beats, some 16 beats, and so on — I am quite thankful that there is a feature that allows me to copy a single track between different sequences despite difference in length of sequence. And even better; a track could be copied either way: from larger to smaller sequence, and from smaller to larger sequence.

For example, say you have two sequences (in 1/4 please!): sequence one is 8 beats long and sequence two is 20 beats long. You want to copy track 2 of sequence one to track 7 of sequence two starting with beat 3. This will allow three insertions, the third one being only two beats (or bars) long. First, select sequence one, track 2. Then, on the SQ-1, this function can be found in the Event Bank: Press Edit Sequences, then Event (Bank 5), then Screen 1.

The screen will tell you which track and which sequence you have selected for your source. As long as this information is correct, press Enter. Then, use your left and

right arrows to switch between sequence and track in order to select the correct target sequence and target track if either is not correct. Use your up or down arrows to find the correct selection. Press Enter when the screen reads your target sequence; for our example: "To: Track 7 Sequence two."

The display now reads: "Insert copied data at bar: 1." In our example, we want to begin inserting data at bar 3, so, select 3 by using the up arrow. Press Right Arrow or Enter. Since we are copying the entire track and full range, just bypass this next screen by pressing Enter until you come to Ensoniq's famous "Keep new track?" page. If you screwed up previously and did not realize it, you will know it now! Hit Play on the sequencer to find out. Hit Yes or No depending on your preference.

We will have to repeat this process for inserting at beat 10, and also at beat 18. Note that the last insertion will only last for two beats, so the inserted passage will sound incomplete. This kind of insertion can be useful, though, as I have used this many times myself as it filled my needs. If you are still wondering where the extra 6 beats of the third copied passage goes, you will have to ask Ensoniq; I have not yet figured it out.

At this point, I would like to make a few comments on the Copy Track function. It may not be something that would

be used all the time. For example, when all tracks will be different on two different sequences except for one, it would be much easier to simply use the Copy Sequence function, erase all the tracks that will be different, and keep the similar track. I generally use the Copy Track function as I realize that, after creating a sequence from a foreign context (from the source sequence), I want to connect the new sequence with the rest of the song by using a theme, motif, rhythm, or so on. After copied, the track data can be altered easily by other functions: transposition, single notes altered to account for things like changes in key (possibly by using the Erase Track function by range and then punch in overdubbing), changing timbre, effect, and so on. Things like variations can be done easily even within the same sequence, switching off among different instruments.

After you have successfully copied your track(s), feel free to play around with panning, effects settings, volume, and timbre as they all fit your needs and their new home sequence. It sure beats having to replay the same passage over and over again! Many thanks, Ensoniq!

Bye for now — and keep your sequences on track! ■

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

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Ensoniq ASR-10 kbd w/16 MB & SCSI, Syquest 105 MB removable drive w/hundreds of sounds including Waveboy transwaves & FX, and Optima ATA II flight case. All are in excellent condition. \$2,250 obo. Contact: Sean O'Donnell at sodonne@vm.temple.edu.

Ensoniq SD-1 Synthesizer Keyboard, 32 voices, 75,000 note/24 track sequencer, 4 yrs old, mint condition. Includes carrying case & cover, double pedal, extra sounds, all manuals, for \$1,000. I will pay for shipping. Call H:(314) 955-3036, or W:(314) 367-7163.

TS-10, 8 Meg, MINT, OS2 (w General MIDI), SW-10 Dual Pedal, CVP-1 Voltage Pedal, Yamaha RH-SM Headphones, in original box, all manuals, cables etc, more. \$1800 obo. cmfoy@btigate.com or 701-255-3613.

Wanted: Used EPS 4X Expander. Reasonably priced — please! Tom Deniston, phone: 304-366-7676.

For Sale! Ensoniq EPS Sampler Sequencer with 2X memory expander, hardcase, 9 disk sound library, all manuals. In great condition! \$1,200 or reasonable offer. Phone: 610-847-2292.

Money order to: Tom Shear, 41 Mary Fran Drive, West Chester, PA, 19382.

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The Interface

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

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

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

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

TH -

Just wondering if anyone knows how to reset the ASR-10 when it hangs? I mean without switching the power off and on. Should I try to upgrade the ROM? (It hangs a lot and it's very annoying.)

Hilsen Maxim
maximm@sofus.hiof.no

[PF - Hilsen: The ASR-10 OS is both firmware and software: i.e., like a Mac, the "toolbox" is ROM based, while the OS code is disk-based. This allows for timely enhancements to the instrument as well as maintenance revisions. I suspect you may be using an OS lower than 3.53. To reset the ASR, power MUST be cycled.

If you are, in fact, using OS 3.53, the instrument hanging up as often as you state is highly irregular. First (and foremost), ensure you're feeding the ASR good, clean and solid power. My EPS Classic was very erratic until I installed a Juice Goose; power in my area was very dirty and full of grunge/noise riding in on the neutral line. This single step will usually not only solve the problem, but will typically reduce your noise floor another 6-8 dB which translates to quieter operation. Since installing this device, the only time my Ensoniq gear hangs is when I intentionally send it a blur of 64th notes at 220BPM and it returns the MIDI buffer overflow "Error 127-reboot?" screen.

Finally, if the problem persists, consult an authorized Ensoniq dealer to have him take a look at your ASR and bless it. I'd venture to say more than 90% of erratic/spurious operations centers around insufficient line voltage.]

[J2qmark@aol.com - I find turning the disk tracks off when not actually using them usually improves the performance of my ASR-10. Command: System MIDI,

scroll to Configure Audiotracks, Enter, scroll to Off, Enter.]

Hello everyone!

I'm an MR-76 owner since 10/96. Although I'm no stranger around Ensoniq gear (also have a Mirage DSK, & ESQ-1), I am somewhat new to this Rat Race of Upgrades. My MR came with v1.45, then I upgraded to 1.64 after repeated pestering at my local dealer. I ended up ordering the upgrade myself from Ensoniq Accessories 800#. I had the chip in two days. (With a free wrist strap.) Thanks, Ensoniq!

Now, I read that v2.0 is out, but if it weren't for the Hacker, I wouldn't even know about it. Where's that 800#?

I have had some problems with my sequencer buttons. They seem to stick down once in a while. The FF button drives me nuts when it sticks. Ensoniq has informed me by e-mail that the MRs are not being repaired in the field as of yet, so I'll have to send it in. But before I do, I'd like to finish a project and am having trouble with Copy Track from one sequence to another. It seems that if I write a 12-bar passage, Copy it to another track, mark a certain region of the copied track to append back to the end of the original sequence track, it will not put the append at the 13th bar, beat 1. It, for some strange reason, adds measures to the first sequence and then I have to erase track 1 within region 13.1 - whatever and remove gap to place the new addition where it belongs. At beat 13, not 17. This is not, I repeat, NOT a consistent problem though. Sometimes it works fine.

I've tried Marking regions 1.1 - 12.4 and then "Erase seq.Outside Region," to try to truncate the phantom size of the sequence, but it still wants to add measures. Anyone else have this prob-

lem? Maybe v2.0 will fix.

Looking forward to meeting our new Factory Rep. Really gonna miss Bob Stillman coming around. Good Luck to you Bob.

One last question - the MR has three slots for expansion. Can we mix EXP and sample flash cards, or is it one or the other?

Thanks a lot,
TRWEBBS@aol.com

[PF - TRWEBBS: The cut/paste anomaly is fixed in O.S. 2.0. And yes, you can mix and match expansion and FlashRAM cards, but you can only have one flash card installed. If you install two, the MR will only recognize the first card in the lowest numbered slot and ignore the other FlashRAM card. So two expansion ROM cards and a FlashRAM card are as max as you can take the MR Series.]

Hello Hackers,
Greetings from Erie, Pa.

Concerning the MR-76:

Any idea what "Sorry...Event 65 Occurred," followed by a soft reset means? It's happened to me on at least a few occasions. Not predictable, but it seems to happen during overdub mode and usually while adding modulation. Am I doing something wrong? Out of RAM?

I thought I'd be able to use SIMMS in the MR. My dealer assumed it would use them, but he was wrong. Yes, I have a PC w/16 Meg RAM, but I can't take that beast with me. and I'm tired of seeing "File too big to fit in memory" message.

I'm wondering if there could be a trade-off implemented in a future ROM upgrade to use memory from an add-on card installed in one of the 3 expansion

slots. I just thought that with the price of RAM these days, 215k is a mere pittance, if not skimpy.

One last question. Why, oh WHY do the sounds in sequence #1, which plays fine by itself, change drastically when put into a Playlist with another sequence? It DOES seem to matter according to playlist order, however, the same sequence is unaffected when put in a Playlist with yet a different sequence. I'm confused!! Any ideas?

Thanks in advance,
Ever in search of more info...
Tim Roche
TRWEBBS@aol.com

[PF - Tim: O.S. 2.0 will relieve the indigestion the MR-76 is experiencing, as well as probably relieve any indigestion the MR is causing you. I am not privy to the MR Error Codes (that's proprietary Ensoniq stuff they say wouldn't help us anyway), so I can't say what is causing this reset. Suffice to say O.S. 2.0 not only adds multi-record (as well as other mondo cool) features - consider it a maintenance revision as well.

On the memory topic, the FlashRAM cards REQUIRE O.S. 2.0 to operate properly. I know, it would've been way convenient to just drop 30 or 72-pin SIMMS in (like the ASR) and dash.]

[Ensoniq - We need a few more details to help you to solve the memory problem. You don't specify what type of file you are trying to load, or at what point you see the error message. As a start, have you familiarized yourself with the Librarian functions? This allows you to partition the onboard RAM for your specific needs, allocating the onboard RAM as required. You may be able to reallocate some of this RAM to the type of file you are trying to load.

Regarding the Event 65, this is an internal error that was detected by the Operating System. There are many different reasons that this error may have occurred. Some of these reasons include static discharges, bad data read in from disk, or internal software errors. As al-

ways, we recommend using the latest version of the Operating System, which is currently 2.0.]

TH -

I am using a **KT-88** to do some sequencing with and have a question.

How do I sequence a section of music that has a ritard in it? The only thing I can think of is to build a separate sequence at a slower tempo and then fit that into the song. However, this only partially achieves what I want, because the change in tempo is too abrupt. Am I missing something here? Is there any way to do this using just the on-board sequencer?

Thanks for your help,
Dave
Dave.Taylor@unilever.com

[PF - Dave: Since the KT-88 has no "conductor" or "tempo" track, what you'll want to do is copy and paste one-measure pieces of the sequence you want to gradually ritard into new sequence locations. By doing this (lengthy process, I know), you're allowing yourself ritardando by the measure: each successive measure can be assigned a slower tempo. Just remember to cut these copied measures out of the parent sequence (I've never made that mistake, either!) so that in song mode, when you assemble these one-measure sequences, they don't dupe what you heard in the previous sequence. Not as elegant as a tempo map, but that's the only way I know of to SMOOTHLY ritard a passage on the KT...]

To whom it may concern:

I'm looking for someone who could help me hook-up the **MR-Rack** and my Studio Vision Pro. I'm having a hard time dealing with program changes and related MIDI problems. Please help me on how to set-up my Ensoniq to communicate properly with my Studio Vision.

If I may suggest, please push Opcode to come up a librarian/editor for the MR-Rack, like the one you have for Unisyn. I love all of your stuff, 'coz I also have the TS-12, SD-1 and EPS-16+. The problem is that I have to wait soooooo long just to get a librarian/editor from Opcode. Right now, I've decided that if I were to buy an Ensoniq product, I have to check if it's supported by Opcode first. If not, I won't buy it. Just a thought. Maybe other Ensoniq/Opcode users are concerned as well.

Thanks for your assistance.
Rhoneil A. Almario
raalmari@pop.ma.ultranet.com

[PF - Rhoneil: I'm sorry that I'm not much help here, as I use the Unisyn profile for the MR-series for editing w/Performer. I've run into the same problems you have though, in selecting sounds. The issue here is to send the Bank Select Message followed by the patch message you're trying to call. You may want to give Ensoniq a call to request the SysEx docs for the MR-series. It's always kinda confusing when you try to hook two brains together (the PC brain and the MR brain). If it were the MR-rack, things might be easier. Any readers w/Studio Vision experience?]

TH -

In a recent issue someone asked for a patch editor/librarian for the **ESQ-1**, **SQ-80** family. Steve Day has written one which is floating around for a few years. It can be found by anonymous ftp at: ftp.ccnnet.com under users/sad001/esq135.zip

It has ESQ-1 and SQ-80 modes, plays notes from an on-screen keyboard, transfers data, and creates three-bank libraries.

pbricker@rdth2.rdth.luc.edu

Hello fellow Hackers,

I am in search of an editor for the **TS-12**. I've been going out of my mind

looking for one. If anyone knows of one please let me know – any help would be appreciated.

Thanks,
dflavius@aol.com

[PF – Dflavius: JR mentioned last issue that MIDI Quest V6.0 from Sound Quest might just fit the bill. Check out their website: URL is <http://www.squest.com>. I know of no other TS editor at this time, so give them a browse. Hope this helps!]

TH:

I have an SQ-1 that I bought in 1990.

About a year ago I turned it on, and instead of the usual greeting, the display showed comic-strip swear words. After the nonsense, the only thing the display would show were button numbers. A different number for each button. Nothing else on the keyboard would work.

I decided to look inside and noticed that on the board directly under the display and the push buttons was a gray-colored powdery deposit. I assumed this was the residue left over from the soldering when the board was built. I wondered if there might be a tiny short through the residue, so I used a toothbrush and removed some of the deposit, and LOW AND BEHOLD the display was restored and the keyboard worked properly – until about a week ago when the same thing happened. The only difference this time is that I noticed that the keyboard would play piano sounds live and a marimba sound through MIDI.

Sooooo. I got out my trusty toothbrush again. This time I removed the main board so I could get at the entire button board and also the bottom of the main board – which also had residue on it. The residue resisted the brushing, so I used a cloth dampened with a little water and scrubbed away. I put the keyboard back together and set it aside for four or five hours to let it dry out thoroughly, turned it back on, and everything was back to normal.

So much for the repair tip. Now for some questions.

I assume the residue had become conductive and caused a tiny leakage between components. Is there anyone out there who could verify this? Is there anything I could have used besides water and the toothbrush that would have been better?

I'd like to hear from anyone who may have had a similar problem.

Thank you,
Ray Burt
30 Third St., Waterford, NY 12188
518-235-6085

[PF – Ray: I can't begin to tell you some of the horror stories of my days as a keyboard technician. Actually, dust, residue, beer, nicotine (I've even fixed some older analog Obies and Rolands that had seeds sprouting under PCB's) are the enemy.

Typically I'd use TFE (now illegal and no longer available) to scrub boards with. Normally you'd only use this stuff to remove solder flux, but in some severe cases I've had to wash entire boards with tetrafluoroethanol.

You did the absolute best thing you could do. The only thing I'd have done differently was to use distilled water (which is THE universal solvent). Yes, some of that residue had actually formed a connective trace where it shouldn't have been. Plus, by removing and reinstalling the boards, you've inadvertently cleaned the connectors as well. I'd expect years of trouble free service with your newly/freshly "remanufactured" SQ-1. A toothbrush and zero residue cleaner is all you can do at the professional level – you've done the next best thing and well, the results speak for themselves.

I'd call your FRIENDLY Ensoniq dealer with your Serial # to ensure your SQ-1 has had the grounding kit installed: probably has, but an ounce of prevention...

[Ensoniq – The grounding kit that Pat Finnigan is referring to was only available for original SQ-1 keyboards, not the SQ-1 PLUS or the SQ-1 PLUS/32 Voice. Original SQ-1s with serial numbers less than 15250 required a new grounding wire to enhance the grounding of the SQ-1 and improve resistance to static electricity. While the ground wire kit is no longer available from Ensoniq, any wire will suffice and the modification instructions are available in the SQ-1 service manual.]

Dear Transoniq Hackers:

I have recently subscribed to your newsletter and have been very impressed and amused with its contents. I am addressing all participants within the Transoniq kingdom to see if there is a member who can help me understand the wisdom of the designers of the MR-76. And so the story goes:

I am Mac based, (Power Mac 8500/120) and using Encore 4.11 to notate my compositions. It seems that when I bought the MR-76, all the wonderful salesmen said, "It will send Standard MIDI files – like, no problem, man." I said, "Are you sure that Encore will read the files from the MR? I'm Mac based and have run into various glitches in the past." And now the great quote: "MIDI is MIDI, NO PROBLEM, man..!"

Houston, we've got a problem.

After much gnashing of teeth, calling and sending various "Saved" files, (e-mail) to Passport Designs (the wonderful makers of Encore 4.11), Encore couldn't read a lick of music from the MR-76! Okay, if you really want the details: I took a PC-formatted DD disk (oh, by the way, the MR can't read HD disks), downloaded some music, took that disk, put it in my Mac, went through PC Exchange, and changed the various formats to ".MID" so Encore could allegedly attempt to read and NOTATE THE SCORE (which I have yet to see in your newsletter, back issues included) – which is what you do if you want to copyright your music or share it with

any other legit musician. (I wonder what all your contributing hackers do with all the wonderful stuff they noodle on their synths.) Not a note. I'll get to Ensoniq's response in a minute.

So much for my horn section... so much for rehearsals, so much for the studio time, so much for - so little...

Now, don't get me wrong, the MR-76 is a - do I dare say it - a great composing tool. The Idea Pad has saved some key motifs, but what is a great composing tool without the ability to NOTATE what it is you compose?

Ensoniq's reply? See the attached note regarding variable-length headers, programs that don't follow standard MIDI specifications, and their recently posted utility program.

The bottom note is - everyone is pointing the finger at everyone else.

Ensoniq knew it had a problem, in fact, they have a "utility available over the net" to correct its inability to work with certain sequencers, notation programs, etc. But it doesn't stop there, *it is only available for the PC* - courtesy of Bert Neikirk. (Phoned him up too and had a nice non-productive chat with him. Macs do exist!! #@%)

I actually downloaded this utility on a friend's PC. It will play a file from Ensoniq through Media Player, but there is no way to export a file or change the MIDI configuration. It assumes that you sent it (Media Player), a properly formatted MIDI file.

I might add if this is Ensoniq's idea of a user-friendly music composition workstation, and this is the procedure one must go through to attempt to notate music if you have a Mac, they must surely be from another planet.

So, if you are the masters of the Ensoniq users, tips, etc., I'll ask you one simple question:

What Mac notation software program can take an Ensoniq MR-76 *.SSN or

*.MID file and allow one to *notate it*?

I'm sure someone within your kingdom has a Mac, can read music, and can save me from my plight. Have mercy, for I am a mere serf in the Mac world, trying to compose and arrange for an eight-piece band.

I await your reply. If you want to call

me, feel free - 713-522-4348. And I thank you in advance for your consideration.

John Borys

[PF - John: I share your frustration. I've been a Mac evangelist ever since I watched an SE/30 spit separate parts and master scores from an ImageWriter

Transoniq-Net

HELP WITH QUESTIONS

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

All Ensoniq Gear - Ensoniq Customer Service. 9:30 am to noon, 1:15 pm to 6:00 pm EST Monday to Friday. 610-647-3930. Ensoniq's Fax On Demand line, (1-800-257-1439) can also be used to retrieve specs, OS info, hard-drive info, and the like.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ESQ-1 AND SQ-80 Questions - Tom McCaffrey. 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.

*II thru Copyist. I abandoned 6 years of PC experience and never looked back. I have NEVER been successful at taking a SMF from the Mac to the PC (or vice versa, for that matter). I tried AFEX (Apple File Exchange) back when System 6.0.2 was state of the art, I've tried PC Exchange on everything from System 6.05 to 7.6. I don't understand how changing the *.XXX suffix can magically rewrite the file format or allow some toolbox call to reinvent the wheel.*

What I'd recommend doing rather than play the disk shuffle is to MIDI up to your 8500, slave the Encore clock to the MR-61, and real-time record into a new untitled document. While this may not be the answer you're hoping to hear, it absolutely, positively works without a hitch. Given, you've got to enable the MR tracks to MIDI output, but it works for me.

*All the hoopla about Format 0 and Format 1 SMF's is nice and well, but it doesn't make me any more music than I already do. I'm curious what happened with your DSDD disk, because I've loaded Cakewalk *.mid files into the MR on DSHD's without a hitch. I'll research this matter, do my homework and touch base with you once I've duplicated your configuration. Stay tuned.]*

[James Rosand (jrosand@tenforward.com) - I use a PC-based system and have had good luck passing SMFs to a friend that uses a Mac platform. We actually pass the MIDI files over the Internet via e-mail/attachments. When I send him a composition I'm working on, I use Eudora (mail reader) and send him an attachment in Bin/Hex form. When he sends his enhancements to the SMF he sends it back to me as an attachment but sends it in a MIME format. We both have had no problems with this transfer.

You could have your friend with the PC convert the SMFs with the MRmidi program before he sent them to you via BIN/HEX and then they should play properly in your MAC Sequencer.

I'm just trying to help...]

[terje.finstad@fys.uio.no - The MR writes out a Type 3 SMF. Unless you have a sequencer which can read Type 3, you are out of luck. None of my (6) Mac sequencers will read Type 3, but will read 0 and 1. If you ask around about new versions for sequencers, Type 3 capability is what to ask for. The PC utility mentioned does not do anything to the type - it is still 3 after changing/fixing other things. The best way to get any handouts of your music fast is, as PF suggests, to MIDI your MR up to your 8500.]

[dkylen (dkylen@prodigy.net) - I use HD disk in my MR-76 exclusively, no problem. Also save sequences to disk as one Midifile and load into Finale for notation. Works great. I am currently at O.S. Version 2.00 and I understand that this version contains bug fixes.]

[Ensoniq - The MR is compatible with Standard MIDI Files. Any sequencer or software program which conforms to the Standard MIDI File Specifications as published by the MIDI Manufacturers Association will correctly load and play SMFs created on the MR-61/76. Many programs such as Cakewalk, Cubase, and Microsoft's Media Player load and play the MR-61/76 Standard MIDI Files correctly. Standard MIDI files may contain a variable-length header which includes information specific to the current file. Ensoniq has taken advantage of this variable-length header to add important parameters to the sequence header. However, some software programs do not follow the MIDI Specification exactly, and hence look for a fixed-length header instead of variable-length. The result is an incompatibility between the correctly saved file and your PC program. Since we understand these incompatibilities exist, we have developed a PC utility which will enable these programs to load the MR-61/76 Standard MIDI Files. This utility modifies the variable-length header of the Standard MIDI Files creating the fixed-length header these programs expect. It is downloadable from: <http://www.ensoniq.com/midi-mrmidi.htm>.

Regarding file types, the MR saves each sequence file to floppy as a Type 1 or Type 0 SMF. Type 1 sequences have multiple tracks and Type 0 sequences have a single track. There is currently no such thing as a Type 3 SMF.]

TH -

Last issue I had a question about using the Sys-Ex Implementation Specification Version 2.00 to send the message for STOP and START buttons, and Ensoniq replied with the following workaround: Use the MIDI-Start and MIDI-Stop commands, rather than using the System Exclusive virtual button messages.

Now my question has moved to finding out if the MIDI Start-Stop signals FA(Hex)start, FB(H)continue, FB(H)-stop, can be generated or sent somehow from within a sequence. While the Cakewalk sequence is being sent to the TS-12, how can I send a start-stop message to tell the TS-12 to stop and then start again at some other time in the same sequence?

Getting complicated isn't it? But it is important to me to be able to achieve this. If the Button press signals worked it would be easy. Maybe Ensoniq engineers just won't be able to stop themselves from attacking this very interesting question of getting them to work.

COME ON HUMAN INTELLIGENCE!!
GET INTO IT!!

(---please---)

Mel Laraway

mlaraway@senet.com.au

[PF - Mel: All you need to do is insert the start sysex command at the measure you wish the MR to start playback. Insert the stop sysex in a similar manner where you desire the MR to halt playback. NOW, when you want the MR to resume playback, insert the continue (FB) sysex command at the measure you want the MR to start up again. If you send sysex FA, the MR's sequencer will start at the top of your tune again. You CANNOT generate an EDL (Edit Decis-

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ion List) to randomly jump around start and stop points that the MR will recognize: it doesn't support device control or other RS-422 LINC-CIVITC protocols. Even if it chased MIDI sync this would still not guarantee playback started at EXACTLY the point you specified.

The MR is a compositional tool, not a dedicated computer sequencer. Trying to get two mouths to sprout ears is a tenuous situation at best. In Ensoniq's defense, that's precisely what the GM mode of the MR is designed for: ditching its command ability and morphing into a giant "ear" to listen to what something else tells it to do. Any configurations of two chiefs and no Indians makes for an interesting scenario...

I hope these suggestions prove helpful or otherwise lighten the load...]

[Mel Laraway (mlaraway@senet.com.au) - Thanks for your reply. I'm actually trying to do this with a TS-12, but perhaps what you have suggested will apply the same. I have not been able to get it to work by sending the FA or the other signals from Cakewalk. Perhaps I have got the sysex message wrong. I've tried sending F0 FA F7. This doesn't seem to work. Is there more to it?]

[PF - Mel: I would assume that the SysEx Start/Stop message for the ASR-10 would be the same for the TS-12, but as with most other assumptions, this may not be the case. Again, I don't know your particular configuration or requirement, but the fastest way to get from here to there would be to sync the TS clock to external (MIDI) clock from Cakewalk: that way whenever you click the start/stop xport icons in Cakewalk, the sequencer in the TS-12 will respond accordingly. If this doesn't fill the bill, respectfully request a copy of the TS-12 SysEx Command Spec doc from Ensoniq. Hope this helps!]

[Mel Laraway (mlaraway@senet.com.au) - Thanks PF; G'day again.

I am already doing as you suggest - slaving the TS to the Cakewalk clock, (this works well to start and stop the TS

at the beginning and end of the Cakewalk sequence). I want to be able to send a sysex message from Cakewalk to stop the TS (while Cakewalk continues on playing). While it's stopped, I want to send a sysex message to change some track parameters, and then for Cakewalk to restart the TS again. (All this while the Cakewalk sequence continues to the end, when it will automatically stop itself and the TS.)

This would all be fine if the TS-12 sysex messages worked properly as they should! I have sysex specs from Ensoniq. You may remember my initial call for help was because these specs give details for creating the sysex messages which are supposed to stop and start the TS. They start it, but will not stop it. Ensoniq replied that they too had found the same problem but were too busy to look into it now, (you edited this last bit out of my reply) they suggested a work-around would be to send the MIDI Start Stop sysex signals. But - does anyone know how to send the MIDI Start Stop signals thru sysex?

This was my second question. So now I am going around in circles!

See Ya!
Mel Laraway
mlaraway@senet.com.au]

[TH - Mel: Just a minor point - that wasn't Pat (PF) who edited out your comment, that was me, Eric - the hidden webmaster. Since this dialog has stretched over two issues, I had to rework the leadin in your letter a little bit to refer to the previous issue and the Ensoniq response (which actually didn't show up here on the on-line Interface - only in the printed version of #141). I thought their work-around indicated that they had looked into it and that (at that point in time) they had provided a solution. Sorry about that. I do do some editing here and it sometimes includes trying to clarify references to earlier discussions. I see now that their "too busy" probably was in reference to a permanent software fix. I goofed. I hope you guys can wrap this up before the next issue...]

TH -

Is there any logical reason why an ASR-10's internal memory can't be expanded beyond 16 meg? I found a company in *PC Magazine* which sells 30-pin 16-Meg SIMM chips for a great price. I called Ensoniq tech support and was told this would not work... I would really like to be able to expand internal memory to 64 meg - to be able to load large files (like vocals) rather than use an external hard disk. Is anyone out there able to give me any info or practical advice?

Joe Cass

[PF - Joe: You could put 4 64 Mb SIMMS in the ASR but it will still only recognize 16 of that 64 Mb. The ASR-10 memory architecture will only address 16 Mb of RAM, so it's pointless to install anything other than 4 4Mb SIMMs. Remember, the ASR uses a 68000-series Motorola CPU (which supposedly can only address 4 Mb of RAM) to page that 16 Mb around. That's why you'll sometimes see the "Shuffling Data" screen occasionally.]

Although 16 Mb may seem limiting, after 5 years of squeezing sounds into a 4 Mb EPS, 16 Mb is unfathomable. Judicious sample trimming/truncation/sample rate conversion seems to work for me. I tried one of those "E"-companies 32 Mb rack-mounts and found it unnavigable. Then again, after using the user friendliest interface in the market, it's difficult to migrate to any other sampler...]

TH -

Concerning Dan Wellman's article on "Converting Audio File Formats" - I've tried the procedure you suggest with the Awave program, but I only obtain bad results.

The problem appears when I try to put the EFE/EFA file back to disk. If I use a ASR-10 formatted disk (Ensoniq or computer), the Awave program tells me the disk is not formatted. If I use a disk formatted on my PC, then when I try to

load the instrument on my ASR, I get the message "Bad Device."

Can someone help me on this?

Thanks for your help,
Richard Lord
beaucoup@generation.net

[PF - Richard: As I'm not aware/savvy of AWave, I'm not much help here. I'd give ol' Gary Giebler a call on this one. The sequence of operations/conversion may be the culprit here. You can reach him at 610-933-0332 (voice) or 610-933-0395 (fax). Gary being the wizard of file format conversion, I'm sure he's the remedy for this particular problem. Any reader input for Richard here?]

[Rubber Chicken Software Co. (chickenEPS@willmar.com) - I assume you took a .WAV file and converted it using Awave, made a .EFE file. The Ensoniq Disk Manager, by Giebler; one of the Tools products by RCS, or EPSDisk (shareware by Michael Chen) can write this to floppy. Which program did you try to use?]

[Ensoniq - It appears that you tried to use AWAVE to write to an Ensoniq diskette. AWAVE only writes to MS-DOS drives. The resulting file must be written to an Ensoniq diskette using one of the programs mentioned by Rubber Chicken. These include the Ensoniq Disk Manager, one of the Tools products mentioned by RCS or EPSDISK.]

Hi,

I am the owner of an ASR-10 keyboard. Yesterday when I tried to format a high density double sided disk (which has always worked for me on other occasions) the display read "File Operation Error." I have tried time and time again and the same thing keeps happening. Can you please tell me what is going wrong and how to fix this problem?

Thank you,
Alfred Dale Tuohey
atuohel0@scu.edu.au
Southern Cross University

Lismore NSW Australia

[PF - Al: The ASR is telling you what it wrote to the disk when formatting was not the same as it was read back. This implies a defective floppy disk. Will it format any other floppies? If the ASR encounters ANY bad sectors, it won't allow you to use the disk and will return that "file operation error" or other "bad disk" or "media unusable."

Sounds like you got a box of bogus disks. I've purchased Maxells and had them fail a format too: disk quality is highly variable. If you wanna get serious, put your disks on the basket/magnet assembly of a 12"-15" speaker for an hour and THEN try to format them. That'll usually nuke whatever code/anomaly is causing problems. I can remember when 3.5" floppies were \$12 each: when they wouldn't format in my first Mirage, I'd give them to my wife who was an X-Ray tech at the time. Even after 3-4 "X-rays," a couple still wouldn't format, so back to the dealer they went. Talk about nuking a disk...

The point here is don't assume your disk drive has gone south. If you feel the ASR's floppy drive is being too particular about what you feed it, obtain a 3.5" disk drive cleaner and run the cleaner disk thru it a couple times to appease your conscience. It's quite possible that there may be a dirty head on your disk drive, so this kinda maintenance may clear it up. But, in most instances, I have found floppy media to be the cause of most problems, as its quality is HIGHLY variable. And none of this punching a hole in the lower right of a DSDD to fool the ASR into thinking it's talking to a DSHD...]

TH -

Can somebody please tell me whether Ensoniq has a "Dance Tools" CD-Rom for the ASR samplers (with techno, trip-hop, acid-jazz, etc. sounds)?

If not, can anyone recommend a definitive dance CD(s) from any other manufacturer?

Thanks,
Robby Rob (Australia)

[PF - Robby: CDR-4 has both the "EuroKlub" and "Techno" libraries on it. It represents the first 10-12 10-disk sets for the ASR-10. You should have it for your library anyway: cool warez, good price, Ensoniq product - what's left? Lotta trance synths and pads, lotta techno demos as well. Highly recommended and highly reviewed by myself. And it has a lotta other non-techno warez as well...]

[Midi Mark Productions, midimark@themall.net - Dear Robby, you can check out the "Powerhouse" CD ROM at <http://www.midimark.com>. We specialize in dance and hip hop samples.]

Hello Hackers,

About a year ago I bought a used ASR-10. It very quickly became my musical focus.

After a couple of months, I had the memory upgraded to 16 megs. Then slowly I started getting Disk-Data-Corrupted messages. After a while, I was getting these messages more often than not. My first thought was the memory so I had it replaced. When this didn't work, I spoke with my local factory authorized repair man, Bart at Bozotronics in Seattle. We tried replacing the mother board. It took us three times to get one that worked. (It seems Ensoniq only sells reconditioned boards.) This proved fruitless. Next, we replaced the power supply. That also was not the problem. Eventually almost everything was replaced. Still I was reading disk data corrupted. Since I was told that the latest mother board version could not be fitted into my older ASR, I almost gave up.

Finally, I got a break from touring long enough to send it to the factory. After much anticipation it was returned with the latest board version. This seemed to work for a while, but slowly the disk data corrupted messages returned. As a last ditch effort I have installed a Zip drive (with help from the folks at R.C.S - thanks, guys). So far things have been okay, but I live in fear of once again standing on stage looking at "Disk Data Corrupted." Any one else experience this problem? Or know why it occurred? Input would be appreciated.

Thanks,
Jason
J2qmark@aol.com

[PF - Jason: Never heard one like this before. I'm curious more about the conditions of the tour and locale, as sudden temperature changes wreak havoc on floppy drives. Condensation on the drive mechanism when moved into a warm (or humid) environment out of a cold equipment truck is the chief cause of this behavior. You should see what humid salty air off the Gulf coast does to electronics. Apple Computer doesn't warranty any of its switching power supplies longer than 90 days in Southern Florida because salty air is so corrosive. (Sodium metal reacts so violently with water it's stored in kerosene!)]

I'd suspect either you got a lemon floppy drive or the tour was unusually hard on the instrument. I'm not trying to say the roadies were big burly guys who unloaded your gear out of a cargo net, but shipping and handling of an ASR requires a pretty good case (SKB, Anvil or better). Since the problem surfaced immediately after you purchased the instrument, I'd suspect an infant mortality or intermittent problem in the floppy.

Glad you're up and running reliably...]

Hello all,

I have just purchased an MR-76. I am really pleased with the quality of sounds, etc. The only problem I have is trying to balance the RHYTHM/SOUND level for live performances. I know the FX/Mix-down gives an extra 27 on the MIX to sound when turned but the level of most of the RHYTHMS is still too loud. Even if I edit the RHYTHM, set the MIX to 50, and save, it still reverts back to the original value.

Please, can anyone help me? I am really stuck.

Thanks,
George P Brennan
Derry, Ireland
106703.1144@compuserve.com

[PF - George: That's a known bug fixed in the O.S. 2.0 update. Feel free to give Ensoniq a call at 610-647-3930 to request the O.S. 2.0 ROMS. Also, as outlined in the Hacker (Issue #140), transfer the drum machine pattern into a rhythm track - then the sequencer will record and remember levels.]

TH -

I recently had my ASR-10 stolen from my home, and I was wondering if there was some way I could publicize this in your publication, both the printed and Web versions. I'm a former subscriber who was forced to retire from the music biz a couple of years ago, and dropped my music subscriptions as well (sorry, but it was necessary). I notified Ensoniq customer service of the theft, and they provided me with your Web address.

Change of Address

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

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

Please let me know what I need to do to get the word out about this.

A brief description of the keyboard: serial no. ASR-11437, was purchased from Paragon Music in Omaha, NE in early 1994 with SCSI installed, upgraded to total of 10 meg RAM, and has the old fluorescent display. One possible identifying characteristic: the keyboard still had the factory sticker on the front just above the actual keyboard highlighting the new version 2.0 O.S. featuring 2-track digital audio recording (I never removed it).

Obviously, I'm sick about this. I would appreciate any suggestions you may have concerning the finding of my keyboard.

By the way, I was browsing through the current Interface letters, and it sure looked familiar. I give you guys a lot of credit for hanging in there with Ensoniq and providing such a unique service. And what happened to Clark "Chrome" Salisbury?

Thanks for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Todd E. Henseler
toddhenseler@webtv.net

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[TH — Sorry to hear about your keyboard — maybe this will help.

Clark's sound development business has been just taking off lately and he just plumb ran out of time. Pat Finnigan has stepped in to take his place as Answer Czar.]

[PF — Todd: I sympathize with you: I've never had anything as expensive "procured" from me, but I can recall in the '70s when my mikes, cables and odds and ends were lifted. I can only surmise what level of biped would glom the tools we mortgage our souls for to make our living...]

TH —

Are there any plans to release any sound disks (besides the synth one) or Rhythm disks for the MR Series keyboards?

Matt Savard
msavard@rain.org

[PF — Matt: As the MR-series use PC-format floppies, you can load any *.wav or *.aif file into an MR-series box that contains a FlashRAM card in one of its expansion slots. As far as Rhythm disks go, I haven't heard of any (maybe because the "Drum Machine" is SOOOOOO comprehensive). Readers?]

Hello friends,

My name is Jo Borges and I have a question for you.

I am a reader of *Transoniq Hacker* and I am an ASR user. I would like to know how I can make a copy of my hard disk to CDR. I have some cool sounds in the HD and other cool sounds in some CD-ROMs. I would really like if someone could show me some light in how can I make a CDR with the archives in my HD. I have a PC with a Turtle Beach system CDR with Ricoh drive 2x/4x and the Corel CD Creator software. I read some answers for questions like mine, but I don't understand how my PC will read the HD's archives, because Win-

dows does not recognize that drive.

Thanks a lot,
Joilson Borges
joborges@mandic.com.br

[Midi Mark Productions, midimark@themall.net — Dear Sir, this should be a very straight-forward method. First, save your sounds to a hard disk. Then, use your CD burning software to make an exact copy of the disk (disk image) to your CD. Of course, you'll have to unplug your hard disk from your sampler and put it in the SCSI chain of your computer.

I hope this helps — Midimark]

[PF — Jo: You need to make friends with Gary Giebler, purveyor and soothsayer of the Giebler Utilities for Ensoniq. His software will let you take ASR files and record them direct to your hard drive, format ASR disks, etc. Suffice to say he's the oracle of cross-file format utilities. You can reach him at:

Giebler Enterprises
26 Crestview Drive
Phoenixville, PA 19460
610-933-0332 (voice)
610-933-0395 (fax)

All ASR-PC file format mysteries and solutions will be revealed...]

Hi,

Finally, even the Ensoniq (EPS/EPS-16+/ASR-10) owner can purchase a comprehensive Sample and Groove Editor for his Atari computer that uses SCSI Sample Dump for blindingly fast sample dumps.

Zero-X from Copson DATA & Button Production has just released v1.92a, now with an Ensoniq SCSI driver for both ST/E and Falcon.

If you are looking for a fast Sample Editor with features as 100% automatic loop finding, DSP FX, Groove Editing (like ReCycle!) and much more I strongly recommend you to check out their site

(and why not download the demo):

<http://www.algonet.se/~mcalbert/Zero-X>

Regards,
Peter Segerdahl
Ensoniq owner since the first Mirage hit
the market

TH -

I can't seem to get my new MIDI setup
to work. This is what I have:

Ensoniq SQ-2 synth
CyberMax P-200 computer
Ensoniq VIVO90 soundcard
Midisoft Recording Session 4 software

I can't get my synth to input to the com-
puter and software. I've tried (I think)
everything from taking the synth in (it
was diagnosed as MIDI-out healthy),
switching soundcards to an older VIVO
version, downloaded VIVO90's new
driver, etc. - but nothing works. The
program will play pre-recorded demo
songs, but my synth won't input. Before
this new driver, a single keystroke on
the synth would crash the program.

Any ideas? I've been working at this for
almost two months. Do I have to pur-
chase a more expensive MIDI program?
Has this ever happened to anyone
before?

Help! I'm dying not being able to com-
pose and store!

Thanks for your help and ideas.
Craig Morford
Green Bay
cmorf@netnet.net

[PF - Craig: Is this a preconfigured sys-
tem with Windoze 95? What MIDI
interface are you using? Or are you
using the game port with a MIDI
dongle? Did you install the software
from the "Add new software" applet or
just double-click on the "Setup" icon
from the 3.5" floppy drive? Any other
apps competing for the same DMA? Any
other hardware competing/trying to
share the same IRQ as the Vivo?

*These types of questions are why I'd
give Malvern a call: I had trouble test-
ing our Targa card with a Vivo installed
in a Gateway 2000 Pentium Pro 200 sys-
tem under Windoze NT 4.0. They fixed
me right up. Give them a shout; relief is
on the way...]*

[Craig Morford (cmorf@netnet.net) -

1. No, my MIDI software didn't come
with the installed Win95.

2. Don't know the MIDI interface. Could
it be the VIVO Plug and Play?

3. Cable plugs into gameport.

4. I added the software by inserting a
CD and followed the commands.

5. Don't know how to find out about
what other apps are competing for the
same DMA & IRQ. But I'll try.

6. In the meantime, I'll try to get ahold
of Malvern but I would still appreciate
more input from you if you have other
ideas.

Thanks, Craig]

[PF - Craig:

1. Have you selected the VIVO MIDI
input and output in your software app?

2. Is the VIVO driver WIN 95 compat-
ible? Is it the latest version?

3. Okay, the VIVO gameport IS your
MIDI I/O: Is that selected (see #1)?

4. The VIVO software came on a CD?
Mine was floppy based, so when I saw
the "Setup" icon, I went to the "Add
New Hardware" applet and swapped
floppies when it requested them.

5. If your sequencer can play the inter-
nal sounds on the VIVO, you're probab-
ly okay. You just need to select the VIVO
as your MIDI I/O (as in #1).

6. I just thought of this after waltzing
around for an hour with a first time
user. The cable coming from your game

port has 2 MIDI plugs: one marked "In"
and the other marked "Out." Ensure the
"Out" cable is connected to the MIDI
"In" of your instrument. The most com-
mon of mistakes often go unnoticed.

Good Luck!]

[Craig Morford (cmorf@netnet.net) - In
response to your questions in order:

1. There is no provision in the software
to select VIVO MIDI input or output. It
just asks for MIDI drivers and the
choices they give me are internal or ex-
ternal synth (I've tried both), MIDI map-
per, and no MIDI.

2. VIVO soundcard came pre-installed
with the computer. The VIVO driver is
compatible with WIN 95. My other
media works just fine, CD plays fine, I
get sound from MIDI files off the inter-
net through the media player. I recently
downloaded their most recent driver and
it didn't help.

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	2.00
MR-61/76	2.00

3. VIVO came installed, driver and everything. No CD or floppy. I have copied the new (and ineffective) driver onto floppy.

5. I can't even play internal sounds from synth in computer via VIVO.

6. Tried the In and Out cords back and forth, and checked them a thousand times. Input cables couple and plug into the game port. I've even tried them backwards.

Thanks for your comments, keep 'em coming. I'm still stumped.]

[PF - Looks like you've jumped thru all the hoops I would have. Better give Ensoniq a call. Maybe there's a VIVO Oracle up there who can demystify this particular problem.]

[Ensoniq - If you already have the latest drivers from our BBS, then change the IRQ setting on your PC from interrupt (9) to interrupt (7) or (10). Make sure you are using the correct cable because a standard SoundBlaster cable will not work. You need a cable with a MIDI amplifier and an opto isolator. The cable you need is available from Pacific Interconnections at 1-800-706-0510.]

Hi friends,

This is Eze from Messina Italy and I need help!

I'm a ASR-10 user since it was available on market and I love it, even though I'd like to get more than 16 Mg RAM and a graphic display. For this reason I recently bought PEAK to see at last my samples through AppleVision: it's a great program! But I got sick when I tried to transfer sounds from the sampler to Mac 7600 and vice-versa through the SCSI port: the program freezes.

I also tried with Alchemy with the same tragic result.

Please tell me if I have any chance to transfer my samples through SCSI, be-

cause I cannot wait that long using MIDI. I changed the Mac internal CD-ROM ID from 3 to 5 'cause I thought it could create a SCSI conflict with the fixed ASR ID 3, but nothing.

Waiting for a helping hand.

Cheers!

Eze

[PF - Eze: What version of Apple System software are you using? Systems later than 7.5 use SCSI Manager 4.3 which is an asynchronous xfer protocol. In System 7.5 this is an extension that can be disabled. Later versions of 7.5 (i.e., 7.5.1, 7.5.2, Update 2.0, Son of Buster, etc.) rolled the extension into the System software so that it no longer can be disabled.

But what you may be experiencing are termination issues, ID issues, SCSI voodoo, etc. I would recommend contacting Passport Systems (authors of Alchemy) and getting their input on your particular configuration, since they do this type of support on a daily basis. Terje's Node (<http://fysmac04.uio.no/eps.html>) is recommended as he's written some mondo EPS/ASR->Mac Utilities NO user should be without.

Also, check the obvious: good quality cables, proper connections, termination in first and last devices only, etc. Ensure you have the latest version of Alchemy (as well as the latest ASR driver for Alchemy), along with the recommended versions of the Apple MIDI driver and MIDI Manager (if Alchemy requires it). Keep us posted on your progress and status!]

[roger69@phuq.com (Roger Weeks) - I'd like to add my plea for help to this problem, along with two other responses that I received from my post to the EPS-mailing list.

I've got a Mac 7500, running System 7.5.5, with internal CD-ROM set to ID 5, external SCSI hard disk ID 1, external ZIP drive ID 6, and ASR. All of the SCSI cables work just fine when this whole chain is not connected together.

However, I cannot find a way to bring up the whole system without something not working. If I boot the ASR first, it can't find a SCSI boot device (I usually boot from the Zip drive). If I bring up the Mac first with the external drives turned on, when I bring the ASR up the Mac freezes.

The only termination in the chain is on the ASR and on the Mac.

I would LOVE to hear from someone who actually has this working.]

[PF - Roger: I don't know if you can do this w/7.5.5: I've done it successfully on System 7.1, but that's not an option w/7500/120's. Have you turned off virtual memory?

Try a different order of SCSI devices, as SCSI voodoo involves moving pieces in the chain to different locations (as well as different SCSI ID's). Point your browser to <http://fysmac04.uio.no/eps.html> (Terje's Node). He's not only a very knowledgeable Ensoniq/SCSI Oracle, he's got MANY links to other URLs that might be able to provide assistance.

I'd suggest a minimal setup with only one drive b/w the Mac and the ASR (to minimize problems). Load minimal extensions (You're not gonna need QuickTime, Applescript, AppleTalk * all the other assorted sundry of init parade on startup to do this). Any other advice from readers?]

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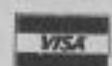
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