

Transoniq

Hacker

...But the years are long.

ASR-X News & Tips

Eric Montgomery



Okay, some of you folks have probably been hankering for a new OS version for the original ASR-X (Black Box). Well, it is here, 2.67! I'll try to mention all the areas addressed in the new OS, as well as give you some info that may jumpstart you into some new tunes and the furthering of your production skills.

2.67 features faster routines for the Undo function, loading of AIF files and SCSI saving.

There is a new parameter in the system MIDI area called Playlist Effects Loading. Press System/MIDI, go to set System prefs, press Enter and turn the Parameter knob till you see Playlist FX Load. It normally defaults to the OFF position. The reason this was implemented was that the X was trying to reload the effect preset between sequences or when a sequence restarts. With this new feature, the X will no longer pause or hiccup between sequences when the cause is related to playlist effect loading problems.

SMDI now works correctly with Windows95. Your windows computer will now recognize the X and you can do SMIDI (SCSI/MIDI) transfers with a sample editor like Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge. As a small tip, I tried doing some transfers with Sound Forge and I had to make these settings in SF to get it to work. In SF, go to Tools, then Sampler. Click

Configure. Send to should = Kurzweil K2500. SCSI Host should = 1aic78xx. SCSI Sampler should = Ensoniq ASR-X sampler. Sample Bias should = 0. After those settings are made, you should be able to send a sample to the X or X Pro!

You will get improved EPS/ASR Instrument Importing. The velocity settings and other aspects of convert loading of other libraries are now better than ever.

Did you ever save a song with the Loop Playback set to off? You may have found that after loading the song back into memory, the Loop Playback was set to = On. Well, it will not be that way any longer.

All Song file saves now preserves sequence loop status.

Another topic I have been questioned about is the amount of samples in memory when a sample is edited. As a quick tip, assume you just took a sample and have set start and end times for the sample. Now it is just the way you like it. Time to truncate it, right? Right. Press Pad Process and go to Truncate, press Enter. Now you can test the sample by pressing the Scratch pad, and it sounds great! Before you send that sample to the pads, be sure to select the sound that the original sample was sent to. Press and hold the track Sound button. Press the Exit/No button. Release both buttons. The screen will display, "Delete ---and all references?" Answer yes.

Another question that has been popping up is, "How do I get a drum loop to work in a sequence?" The answer is not necessarily product specific, but pertains to any sampler/sequencer and definitely to the MR/ZR series and the ASR-X/X Pro because you may have EXP-3 installed. That expansion board has lots of drum grooves that would sound great

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This newsletter is stopping publication November, 1999 (Issue #173).

Issues remaining: **7**

If your address label indicates more than 7 issues remaining, please let us know if we need to work something out with back issues or something.

If your label indicates less than 7 — not to worry: a partial-year renewal notice will be sent about the same time as your second-to-last issue.

in the background of a drum pattern that you have already created. I usually recommend that you count out the groove first so you know how long the sample is. Normally a drum loop is only about 1 to 2 bars long. A loop of more than 4 bars will take a little finagling to get it to work.

Assume we are working with a 1 bar loop. Record the loop into a sequence for 1 bar, it is okay if it goes over into two bars. If it does, press and hold Stop, using the parameter knob, locate to the measure you want to delete. Press the Sequence Process button and go to "Erase trk — to end," press Enter. Quantize the track to 1/16th. Now all you have to do is adjust the tempo of the sequence to get it to match the tempo of your loop. You will know that the sequence tempo is too fast if the loop re-starts too soon. You will know the sequence tempo is too slow if the loop pauses playing and then re-starts on its own. A cool way of getting used to matching tempos is to create a simple drum groove and quantize it. Now you have some drum parts that are already in time to match to! One more idea about tempo matching is to use the Tap Tempo function. Play the loop and tap the Tap Tempo button in time with the loop. That should also get you pretty close to the correct tempo settings. Just in case you are using a long sample, say... 4 bars long, you will have to go through a few more steps to "fine tune" the sample. You can try adjusting the Fine Tuning of the sample to get it closer to the correct time. Press the Pad Edit button. Turn the Parameter knob till you see Fine Tuning =. Adjust that number while the sequence is playing and you may find that gets the sample the rest of the way there. On the

ASR-X Pro you have Integer tempo settings. That can also allow you to "fine tune" the sequence and sample to get everything to match. After you got the loop to work in the sequence, press the Sequence Process button and go to Append. Using the Append function will double the length of the sequence whenever it is used. A 1 bar sequence appended will turn into a 2 bar sequence, 2 into 4, 4 to 8, etc. After the Append function has been used, you can go to other tracks and add other instruments to the sequence.

"I am always having problems with my ASR-X and my Iomega Zip drive. Is there a fix for these problems?" Yes and no. Some exploration has led me to construct a checklist that may ensure healthy storage via a Zip or Jazz drive. Here ya go!

1. Be sure that the Zip or Jazz cartridge that you are about to format is not the "Tools" disk. (The Iomega Tools cartridge is locked and cannot be formatted. You must use a Mac or windows formatted cartridge to re-format over them.)

2. Try to avoid using adapters for SCSI connections. The cable needs to be a:
50 pin SCSI-2 connector (ASR-X/X-Pro side) to
50 pin SCSI-2 connector (Iomega Jazz) or
25 pin D connector (Iomega Zip).

3. Be sure that Termination is On in the X/X-Pro (System-MIDI >Set System Prefs area) and on the last drive in the SCSI chain.

4. Be sure that the SCSI ID number of the X/X-Pro (System-MIDI >Set System Prefs area) is different from the SCSI ID number of any drive connected to the X/X-Pro.

5. Be sure that you have the latest OS installed in your ASR-X/X-Pro. For the ASR-X Black Box: 2.67. To order the most current OS Chips through the web:
www.ensoniq.com/html/asrx/software.htm

For the ASR-X Pro Red Box. 3.04. To check your OS and download the current OS from the web:
www.ensoniq.com/html/asrxpro/asrxproosupdate.htm

6. Check for bent pins on both ends of the SCSI cable.

7. Never save files to your hard drive with the same or default name.

8. BACKUP YOUR DATA: Always save an extra copy to a different cartridge or floppy.

Hint: If there is a problem formatting, remove all other devices from the SCSI chain. The ASR-X/X-Pro and the drive you want to format should be the only devices connected.

Hint: The ASR-X/X-Pro can use an Iomega DOS formatted cartridge without having to re-format it with the X!

I hope the ASR-X operating system discussion and the tips have helped you get over the hill that may have been impeding your productions. Good luck, be funky, think EMU<>ENSONIQ! ■

Bio: Eric has written music and engineered for Integrity, Salt Records, several commercials, and for Ensoniq. He has done sound development for after-market Fizmo sounds and is working on his third solo CD Project.

Front Panel

RND ()

Hacker News

As we're getting down near the end, if you have any articles, questions or comments burning to get out, you should probably get 'em to us during the next few months...

Also, we still have the soon-to-be-a-collector's-item Hacker T-shirts — but when they're gone, they're gone. If you've been depriving yourself, NOW's the time. \$14 within the U.S., \$18 outside the U.S.

Ensoniq News

The new news on Ensoniq is that Fizmo Rack will be coming soon. Expect to see the SMPTE card for Paris probably at the end of March or the beginning of April. Lastly, soon there will be an OS upgrade for the ASR-X Pro (Red Box only):

Ensoniq Introduces ASR-X Pro 4.0

Ensoniq introduces 4.0 software for the ASR-X Pro. The new software adds Direct Audio Sampling, SoundFont[®] bank importing, Xplode — a process that automatically splits parts of a sampled beat into separate samples — as well as other system enhancements. Version 4.0 will be standard on all new ASR-X Pro's upon its release and it will be available free at www.ensoniq.com.

With Direct Audio Sampling, ASR-X Pro can now extract audio directly from any standard audio CD using a CD-ROM drive that is capable of CD audio extraction. Users can specify start and end times, and a new sample is created without any loss of sound quality. Version 4.0 introduces the ability to import sounds in Creative Labs' SoundFont format. Customers can now take advantage of CD-ROM libraries like E-MU SYSTEMS Module Mania Series, which contains sounds from the popular Proteus[®], Vintage Keys, and Planet Phatt modules. In addition, countless sounds

are available in this format on the internet.

Xplode accurately splits up parts of an audio loop, into separate samples, a function that previously required a computer and software system. "New features like Xplode, Direct Audio Sampling, and SoundFont bank importing represent Ensoniq's understanding of the ways musicians, producers, and sound designers are using Ensoniq samplers today," says Scott Peer, Ensoniq director of product development and software engineering manager. "Combine these new features with resampling (through effects and the internal synth) and the ASR-X Pro is clearly in a class by itself."

For owners of the original ASR-X, many of the Version 4.0 system enhancements, including a new Disk/Global system preference that allows smoother sequence-to-sequence transitions during playback, faster SCSI operations, and improved EPS/ASR-10 importing, are available in Version 2.67 for the ASR-X from Ensoniq Customer Service.

My (En)soniq Journey Through Time

Part II

Joe Travo

The SQ-80

After American Music installed a new keyboard module (almost \$200, and the VFX still didn't work), I got Steve Coscia at the factory involved. He told me to send the unit back to the factory, and they'd make sure it got fixed right. The only problem with doing this was that I'd be without a loaner, and my backup keyboard is just that: a backup, okay in a pinch, but rehearsals and gig every week required a keyboard that sounded good and that was dependable. When I mentioned that my keyboard was back at the factory for repair, the lead vocalist in my blues band said she might be able to help me, and the next time I saw her, she had an Ensoniq SQ-80 in good working order that she had borrowed from her brother. Although different in terms of "double-clicking" to layer patches, and somewhat different in sound quality, there was that great keyboard feel, the velocity and aftertouch, the patch select buttons, and the fluorescent display. Having 10 patches up on the display all at once took some getting used to at first. In addition, look at all the potential storage — cartridge, diskette, even tape (!). I borrowed it from the vocalist's brother for a few weeks, and it was a great (and familiar) substitute for the VFX, but different, too. I think Craig Anderton said it best in a review of the SQ-80, when he said it was *evolutionary* — not *revolutionary*. (In my opinion, the VFX was revolutionary.)

The TS-12

At the big music jamborees at my friend's ranch in the hills, one of the regulars was kind

enough to provide a keyboard rig with a TS-12 as the centerpiece. Although the sounds were improved over the VFX and SD families, and there were more of them, the thing I noticed first (and most) was the incredible weighted keyboard. As I said above, I love the feel of Ensoniq keyboards, but this was above and beyond what I had been accustomed to. On the occasions where I get to play a real upright piano, after I get warmed up, I start developing that style that makes use of the resonance inherent in the piano "box." I found myself doing the same thing with the TS-12, because of the great response of the weighted keyboard.

The EPS

The story behind the EPS is a lot like the one behind looking at the SQ-80, then buying the VFX. I looked very seriously at a used ESQ-M, and had pretty much decided to buy it. I even took the money to the store, but the ESQ-M had already been sold. I started looking at new units, and even got pretty well-versed in sample rates and desirable features and everything. Then suddenly, this used EPS Classic with a 2-meg expansion showed up in the *Hacker Classifieds*, at a great price. The kicker is that the seller lived only an hour away, so I was able to try it before buying, and the rest is history.

When I realized that I could get all the desirable sampling features I wanted, *plus* that good-feeling velocity-response polyphonic-aftertouch keyboard attached to it, my decision was made. The EPS worked fine for two months, then started exhibiting symptoms

of the dreaded keyboard module problem. When I loaded the OS (2.49) I'd get the "KEYBOARD FAILED — TRY AGAIN?" message. The tech at American Music replaced a cable and did a thorough cleaning, and this alleviated the problem temporarily. When I brought it back the second time, I was told that it needed a new keyboard module, and they didn't think anything else would work. Not wanting to spend another \$200 for a potentially dubious result, I thanked them for their diagnosis. I discovered that the only time I have any problems with the unit is after I've moved it, so I developed a work-around: I don't move it. I use it in my home studio, and it works and sounds great.

With my interest in these older keyboards, I sometimes I feel kind of like a classic car enthusiast. My main keyboard, the VFX, just turned 10 years old, and it seems that "technology years" are kind of like "dog years." My VFX has been repaired a few times in addition to having OS 1.51 and some modules replaced. The most recent repair, at the factory, that replaced the DSP chip, the fluorescent display, and updated the OS, worked too well. Now, every time I turn the unit on, it does a "hard reset," and I lose my RAM sound banks. Like I said, though, I love the VFX, and so that I can keep using it, I shuffle around the sounds I need with my DataDisk and a RAM cartridge, loading my RAM bank in just before a performance, and until I can buy a new Ensoniq board, I'll keep doing this, 'cause I'm just an Ensoniq guy.

Bio: Joe Travo (still the LizardMan) lives in Visalia, which is in Central California, where he continues to play keyboards with AUGUST, a Latin/funk band, (whose CD "Then & Now" is doing well) and a blues/rock band (formerly SUSHI BLUES) that has changed its name and members too many times to remember. Friends (and innocent bystanders) say he is both electric and eclectic.

HACKER BASEMENT TAPES

Steve Vincent

Mint For Pillow

Lord Humungus

CD: *Mint For Pillow* (c) 1998 Humungus Music

Artist: Lord Humungus

Equipment: Ensoniq ASR-10, Kawai R50, Casio SK-5, Tascam DA30mkII, Tascam DA38, Boss SE70, Logic Audio for Mac.

Contact info: Humungus Parts and Labor, 5599 Gonzalez Ct., Concord, CA 94521; Email: lordh@lmi.net, Internet: www.lanminds.com/users/~lordh (under construction).

Most artists I know wish for their music to speak for itself, more or less. But whenever I receive a CD or tape for review, I try to figure out the context in which the project was imagined, produced, engineered, and published. A corollary to my quest is the search for the artist's intent: what is this person trying to communicate? Often the answers to my queries are quite direct in the liner notes or accompanying letter, but as often as not there is little included in the packages I receive to

give me clues, and I must piece together the evidence from the music itself. This is usually an enjoyable process, and many are the times I have found myself immersed in the music, having completely forgotten the questions initially energizing my reviewer's quest. Part of my need for "answers" is driven by the obvious task I have of attempting to describe the music to you, the readers of *Basement Tapes*. This demands some level of categorization, or at least a simile or two ("this music sound like

such and such an artist's work...").

My first exposure to a *Basement Tape* artist happens when I tear open the manila envelope from Eric and Jane containing the CD, tape, or occasional vinyl recording. "*Mint For Pillow*" is a CD with a minty-metallic green cover (like the wrapper to an Andes mint), with the title, "*Mint For Pillow*" spelled out in chocolate brown mint pillow letters. The words themselves communicated nothing to my imagination, aside from their literal meanings, and perhaps the association one makes with one's first night in a five-star hotel or a cruise ship, where you normally receive a mint on your pillow (the sheets having already been turned down, of course; don't ask me why they do this). But no clue so far as to the music contained on the CD.

I usually try to listen to at least part of a CD or tape before I read the accompanying letter and liner notes. In this case, I listened to about three of Lord Humungus's tracks, then I put the CD away for about a month and a half, because it sounded too raucous and clangy for my sensibilities at the moment. (It was probably New Years Day.) Coming back to it now, my mind is open, and I am delighted by what I hear.

Lord Humungus included a letter with his CD "*Mint For Pillow*" in which he lists his musical influences (Severed Heads, Young Gods, My Bloody Valentine, Curve, Skinny Puppy, Depeche Mode, New Order, Duran Duran, Orbital), his equipment list (see the top of this article), and a bit of his musical history, as well as a brief description of this project. From the word processor of His Lordship:

"This collection of songs was recorded over the past year and a half or so, but some of the songs were originally written as far back as 1989. This is the first true attempt at something remotely commercial. I've been a fan of sampling since I found out what it was, so nearly everything I do involves sampling one way or another. Also, I am a product of the '80s and as such, most of my music is deeply rooted in '80s pop culture and the '80s sound. Tongue in cheek is often the order of the day.

"A large portion of the percussion sounds (hi-hats, kicks, snares, etc.), as well as some of the bells and synth pads, are samples of me making sounds with my mouth. When I only had the tiny Casio sampler, I found that the most versatile and cool sounds I could get were the ones I made with my own voice. When I got the ASR-10, I found that was still the case, though to a lesser extent. There are also generous portions of stock ASR sounds, which unfortunately, are probably damn easy to spot."

What does Lord Humungus sound like? (I'm also curious about what a guy calling himself Lord Humungus looks like, of course... My self-inflicted nickname on a softball team jersey was once "Mr. Big," and the only thing "big" about it was the mistake it was to make that my nickname; the women in the bleachers cat-called me mercilessly, the guys derided me. I guess the implications and innuendo were just too much...) Anyway, back to the music: *Mint For Pillow* is truly creative expression, not quite dance, not pop, not rave, but vocal-centric electronic, with the music "close in" to the creative expressiveness of the vocals. It is "electronic music." This is most obvious in the percussion tracks and the sounds The Lord uses. As he mentions above, most of the percussion samples were recordings of his own mouth noises. Which one of us sample-maniacs hasn't sampled our own voice and toasted a few evenings creating sequences with the (literal) sound bites? In the case of Lord Humungus, these homemade samples lend a very unique quality to his percussion tracks. I also heard samples of what I'd lay money was an SM58 being tapped on the windscreen. While Lord H. mentions no guitars in his equipment list, I heard a few instances of what sounds like highly-processed guitar and/or bass, adding a slightly more organic element to what could be "too" electronic of a sound. Also helping to humanize these electronic tracks are generous sprinklings of highly-processed vocal effects (reverse gate, pitch-shifted, etc.). All these elements combine to make a very interesting and lively mix.

To my ears and musical sensibilities, it is the human voice that communicates the deepest and broadest levels of emotion, so I'm a bit partial to vocally-centered music. "*Mint For Pillow*" is such music, even though it is not necessarily the lyrics and their propositions which communicate; rather, it is often simply the sound of the voice, or a few choice words, which conveys the feelings. What kinds of feelings are evoked in Lord Humungus's music? Well, this listener got a good dose of his tongue-in-cheek, mixed with a bit of anger at times, some not-too-heavy cynicism, and even some eroticism (although tempered with lightheartedness; this is no Enigma spirit-eroti-quest). In general, I refer to this whole "layer" of musicality (this whimsical, tongue-in-cheek attitude) as "the blues attitude," even though there isn't the slightest hint of blues in this CD. The ability to weather life's hard knocks, come out of it with an intact sense of humor, and sing about it.

Enough generalizations; let's get into a few of Lord Humungus's tracks:

"*Sharon and Karen*" — The opener begins

with cool processed guitar pluckings, morphing through some vocal-like effects into a dance-floor beat. Unfortunately the subject matter of the song, Sharon and Karen, doesn't hold much interest for anyone perhaps except Lord Humungus. On the positive side, the vocals are wonderful, with lots of interesting and musical harmonies.

"*Before I Get Near*" — Discordant harmony parts create an irritating tension in this 2nd track. It's effective as a tension-builder, but not really pleasant listening.

"*Man Fall In Water*" — Dreamy vocal parts weave a hypnotic melody over a very interesting sample-groove backdrop. Sampled chords (like extended orch-hits) are pitch-shifted over a multilayered percussion groove. An airy time-delayed mallet-like instrument plays a brief melody in the instrumental break. Overall, a mildly melancholic feel.

"*Quit Ridin*" — As happens often on this CD, the intro leads you to expect one thing, then stops and the groove starts in a completely different direction. This one begins with a heavy, darkish swelling over a beat that promises to make all hell break loose and kick ass, but instead drops into a kind of electro-shuffle vocal tune. These one-eighties certainly keep you from falling asleep. As do the lyrics, if you're listening: "Quit riding me man / Quit riding me man / Quit riding me man / Or I'll kick your fucking teeth in."

"*Sweet Envelope*" — "The paper boy was murdered today... I almost didn't see it happen." This could almost have been a Beatles song on the *White Album*, British accent and all. The vocal melody takes center stage in this short tune, in the style of "*Dear Prudence*," and does it very effectively. (The fact that he sounds just a bit like Sting doesn't hurt either.) This track showcases the songwriting genius of Lord Humungus: a very memorable, engaging tune with only the bare minimum of accompaniment (a guitar strumming mostly one chord). Bravo.

"*Wooden Eye*" — My favorite track on this CD, "*Wooden Eye's*" lyrics were co-written with Laura E. Half-spoken lyrics with a limey accent cause one to crack a smile over the young man's broodings. Comparisons of one's misfortunes over having a wooden eye ("I can't see shit") with having a wooden leg, etc.

"*I Say Cry*" — If Korn lost their guitars and had to "sing" with laryngitis (I can dream, can't I?), their hard rap might sound like this. But I could listen to this a lot longer.

"*Long Pleasure*" — Totally cool vocals, and

vocal effects, propel this song towards an equally cool instrumental break that makes an entrance like a shreddin' guitar solo, but ends up being a more flutish keyboard sound. The solo section ends with the only musically effective use of a steam whistle (or train whistle) sample I've ever heard (at 3:15). Two thumbs up on this creative montage of tongue-in-cheek eroticism (two — or three — puns intended).

"SWB Goes Shopping" — While a sampled harp plucking a minor melody would normally fail to engage me in the intro to a song, once the string pad comes in you can hear more musical genius from The Humungus One. The harp plucks a plodding 8th-note pattern, but after a few measures electronic percussion fills between the cracks with hyper-drive hi-hat and snare rolls, but not overdone. There is a wonderful balance here between sensitive, almost classical elements, and obtuse electronica. This CD ends with perhaps the most ingenious tune of all.

Lord Humungus's vocals remind me at times of Wang Chung, Sting (well, just once), the Beatles, and Greg Lief (who's Greg Lief? Anyone who procured a copy of the *Hacker Compilation Tape*, circa 1990 or so, heard Mr. Lief's immortal *"To Kill A Cow."*). And

it's the vocals on this project that tie it together. As mentioned above, often the lyrics are obscured by the vocal's place in the mix, effects, or just plain purposeful garbling, but it is the vocals, perhaps more accurately the vocalizations, which make *"Mint For Pillow"* sound unique to my ears.

When asked about how he recorded his vocals, Lord Humungus stated: "Some vocals were recorded with a Realistic dynamic through the ASR's inputs (yeesh!), some through a borrowed SM58 (great microphone) and, once I purchased it, my SM81 (which I will record with henceforth). Most vocals were recorded dry and with minimal or no compression. I found it easier to record vocals with the SM58 than with the SM81, however. All the vocals were tracked on the DA38, with about a million overdubs. It was incredibly easy to overdub and comp tracks on the DA38."

His Royal Humungusness at times sounds just a wee bit sloppy in his production, with some sequence-timing glitches audible and an unbalanced (to my ears) mix in places. This is explained in part by the fact that Lord H monitors through headphones. But there is no question: *"Mint For Pillow"* expresses lots of musical genius. My only real big "suggestion"

would be to place a stronger track in the first position on the CD.

If you enjoy listening to any of his lordship's musical influences (Skinny Puppy, Depeche Mode, Orbital, etc.), I have no doubt you would be glad to get a hold of *"Mint For Pillow."* Email L. Humungus at lordh@lmi.net.

If you want your tape run through the wringer, just mail it off to: Basement Tapes, *Transoniq*, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland OR 97221. Please include your e-mail address! (And you'd better hurry!)



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



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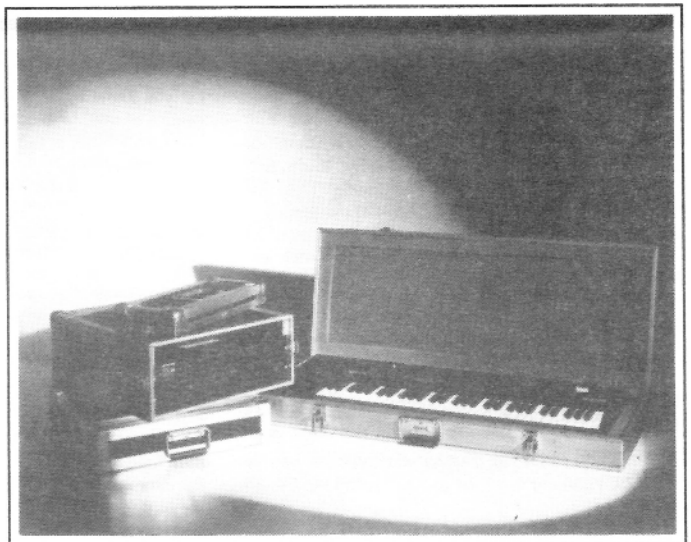
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Electronic mail - Internet: interface@transoniq.com. In many cases a quick answer can be obtained by posting to our interactive, on-line Interface at our Web site (<http://www.transoniq.com/interface.html>) or calling Ensoniq CS at 610-647-3930.

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 in the printed version of TH is subject to space considerations.

TH -

Two unrelated TS-12 questions:

(1) I'm using Cakewalk on a Windows 95 PC as my sequencer. I wrote a song using four internal sounds from the TS-12, and on all four sounds I'm using different patch selects (**, **, 0* and 0*). The problem is, when I start the sequencer, all of the sounds go back to LIVE, not necessarily on the display, but LIVE is what's coming out. When I click on the patch select soft button while the sequence is playing, ** or 0* automatically go back to LIVE. I am sending a program change from the sequencer to get the sound. Is there a way to send a MIDI message to tell the TS-12 which patch select I want (I know this is a unique Ensoniq feature, and I love it!), or do I have to change the patch select while the sequence is playing? I read the section in the manual about "Latching Patch Selects," which should change the default patch select for the track, but I'm guessing this isn't valid when using an external sequencer with program changes, as it didn't seem to hold the change. I'm getting around the problem by taking the program changes out, and just selecting the sounds on the TS, and this worked, except for whatever track was selected within Cakewalk - this selected track would revert to LIVE. So I just select an empty track in Cakewalk, the corresponding track on the TS reverts to LIVE and I'm okay. Any suggestions?

(2) Early on in the life of my TS-12, one of the lower keys, and then soon another, lost its "spring." I'll try to explain... the heavy weighted action seems to be gone on these two keys - whereas the other keys take some weight to push them down, these just go down with hardly any resistance. It feels like the main source of resistance (a spring?) is gone. Fortunately, touch sensitivity and after-touch are still functioning. I put off getting it fixed, and as time goes on, I resist getting it done only because the TS has been so good over all these years, and I'm afraid of bringing it to a tech and getting it back with other problems. Has anyone had this experience with the weighted keys, and if so, do you know if it's an easy fix?

Thanks to all for listening! :-)

Anthony Ruocco
anthonyr@geocities.com

[PF - Tony: (1) Yes; patch select messages are xmitted as CC#70. Values of 0, 32, 64 and 127 select 00, 0X, X0 and XX.

(2) The weights have come unglued from the offending keys. Take your TS to an Authorized Ensoniq Service facility, have them remove the keyboard and reglue the weights back on the "light" keys. That's hoping the weights to these keys are still stuck somewhere in the keyboard assembly. Expect to pay about an hour of bench time to have this surgery performed...]

TH -

Garth told me that I could use DISK2CD to burn a Syquest 44 meg SCSI to a CD burner to have a copy byte-to-byte of the cartridge full of homemade sounds for my ASR. Anybody successful or have some tips?

Vielfaure@aol.com

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) - Just for clarification, DISK2CD is a DOS program that can take a SCSI source and write a byte-for-byte copy onto a CD burner. It is made by GoldenHawk <http://www.goldenhawk.com/products/freeware.htm> - we recommend it for people whose regular software might not support byte-for-byte copying. Mr. Vielfaure has reported to me that even DISK2CD does not work for him. It may be because of the CD burner he has. I think it's best for him to contact the CD-burner manufacturer and get their thoughts.]

Hi,

I'm looking for an opinion.

I have been a faithful Ensoniq user and have subscribed to *Transoniq Hacker* in the past.

My SD-1/32 is starting to malfunction, I still want to keep it and possibly repair it, but I want a new keyboard to travel with.

I have owned a Mirage, an ESQ-1, a SQ-80, and an SD-1 - so I'm loyal to Ensoniq. I have looked at the ZR-76 and wasn't too happy with it. I use the patch select buttons on the SD-1 to kick in and out layers and have built my playing style around this machine. The are no patch selects on the ZR-76, and it looks like I can only have 3 layers. Are there other ways of turning on and off layers with the ZR?

Do you know if there is flexibility in the sounds that volume or note on and off could be externally assigned? I could buy midi pedals and midi controllers and assign them controller numbers to control turning on layers if this is possible. Is this possible?

Without this, I fear that I will have to pursue another keyboard.

Thanks,
Mark Sufferling
suff@execpc.com

[PF - Mark: The ZR won't fit the bill. It WILL let you assign multiple sounds and layers on a single track of the sequencer via the Soundfinder (stack/split/layer multiple sounds per track), but nothing as convenient (or, in the case of we veteran Ensoniq users, NECESSARY) as the patch select buttons. All stuff must be preprogrammed on the ZR, which pretty much obfuscates it from the live performance flexibility arena (IMHO). Put your feelers out and search for an SD-1/32 or a TS-10/TS-12, 'cause that's the only options 'ya got for this kinda technique...]

[John Seboldt (rohrwerk@pconline.com) - I would agree that a "new" SD-1 or TS would be the best long-run solution. With a little work in Unisyn, however, you CAN tweak patches to do some of what the patch select buttons did. On my MR-61, I have used the modwheel, and/or the second footswitch jack set to one of the SysCTRL functions, to add/delete patch layers. Any controller can be used as a "trigger" for a patch layer to be active or not, even the "patch select" controller no. 70 (see previous letter) so the ZR will respond to patch select buttons (from an external device). With an SD or TS as controller, you can use the ZR for some

fresh new sounds at 44 kHz while still playing from your cool, poly-pressure-sensitive and patch-select-button-enabled "old" keyboard. It's gotta be a both/and proposition, though, and ya gotta get into the computer patch edit routine.]

TH -

Our church owns an MR-76 which we purchased new in January 1997. In April 1998, we had to have the board replaced (yes, the one year warranty had just expired!) Recently, while using the Legato Strings setting, the sound became "warbled." We called the music store where we purchased the MR-76 and was told to perform a reinitialization. We did the "soft" version and that seemed to fix the problem. However, today, the same problem started again, so we performed the soft reinitialization, and after that did not work, we did the "hard" reinitialization. Unfortunately, that did not work, either. It seems the Legato Strings are the only sound that is affected. Any advice for fixing our MR-76?

Thanks,
Brenda Bates
bates@connect.net

[PF - Brenda: Sounds like ONLY the Legato Strings patch is affected, so I'll bet the patch is corrupted. If I knew exactly what you mean by "warbled" I could be more helpful. I'll just, for the sake of convenience, assume "warbled" means vibrato. Is this a ROM sound or a UserFlash sound patch? If this is a user sound try copying the closest sounding string patch from the ROM bank over the Legato Strings patch, and see if the warbling persists. Does moving the modulation wheel forward and backward have any effect on the sound?

If these hints don't help, a call to Ensoniq Tech Support is in order...]

[Kyle (WARNERPRD@aol.com) - Brenda, not sure if this applies but I thought I would share it. When I bought my MR I had it maybe 2 months, and I noticed on certain patches there were rogue noises and sounds that were there, but weren't that noticeable, but I knew they shouldn't be there. You could either hear them with note on or note off. (key down key up), or some sustaining sound after note off. I had developed a relationship with the music store, via cash sales, and the local Ensoniq factory rep. They allowed me to sit in on a training session of sales persons on the MR and I brought my board with me. He checked it out and did the same procedures you did, but no help. His conclusion was a corrupt effects program for the whole unit. I received a new board and all has been fine. Not sure if any of this will help, but I'm sure Pat's advice will.]

TH -

I was greatly saddened to read the verbal fist-fight between Pat and Robby Berman. Both of these guys have been great sources of information, assistance, ideas, and inspiration to Ensoniq users for years, and my interactions with each of them places them both in the "heck-of-a-nice-guy" category. Each has made some good points, and maybe after the dust settles, all of us on this bandwagon can step back and see what improvements might be made.

I dream of seeing everyone kiss and make up, and living synergistically ever after. I dream of new and wonderful Ensoniq keyboards, with a nice fat Hacker in every box. I dream of reading the Hacker every month, well into the next millennium (assuming the world doesn't end next January 1). Here are my two-cent suggestions for getting closer to those dreams. (Please, no punches!)

For the Hacker and Pat:

(1) Grant Ensoniq permission to think like a business, where profit is not a dirty word. A business has to make money, or it isn't going to make anything else (like keyboards, for instance). It doesn't make financial sense for Ensoniq to spend their time burning ESQ-1 chips, repairing someone's Mirage disk drive, or upgrading the SD-1's operating system because someone thinks it should do such-and-such. Yes, they should support their products, but at some point, this support must diminish. They do support their current products, and they also support their recent products (you can still call with ASR-10 and KS-32 questions, and you can usually still get these repaired). But the long-obsolete products have to be let go at some point.

The *Transoniq Hacker*, Syntaur Productions, Rubber Chicken Software, and others have found a niche in providing after-market support to Ensoniq users; we've made it part of our jobs to take up whatever slack we can. But when someone asks us at Syntaur why we don't sample all the neat ASR-X sounds into the Mirage, or why we don't make a pseudo-General MIDI patch set for the VFX-sd, we have to say that it just doesn't make financial sense for us to offer such time-intensive support for such an old product.

Before the *Hacker* suggests that Ensoniq should do this or that, or before it slams Ensoniq for not doing such-and-such, it should perhaps consider whether it makes financial sense for Ensoniq as a business, and then tone down that suggestion or remark accordingly. Of course, those writing in to the Interface may show no mercy because their EPS needs a disk drive and they want it cheap and now, and I can understand the virtues of printing these letters as is. But it is the Hacker's responsibility to be an accurate source of information, and that accuracy should not just apply to technical details, but also to the way that Ensoniq must operate in the real (i.e. business) world. I'd love to see those trusty ASR-10's and TS-10's rolling off the assembly line, too, but we've got to accept that it cannot happen because it won't make Ensoniq any money. (And neither I nor Pat nor the *Hacker* is in any position to question this; we don't have the past sales figures, the cost analyses, etc. to make this judgment. Only Ensoniq does.)

(2) Spend some time making sure that all the technical info presented is accurate. It's easy enough – and free – to email someone for a quick verification. I would hope that someone at Ensoniq would respond quickly to such queries, if they are presented in an efficient manner. If not, I'm sure that a network of other power users could fill in. I, for one, would be very willing to help in any way I could, and I would guess that the same applies to the owners of other third-party Ensoniq-related companies. Perhaps Pat could send out such queries before he posts his answers, or if not, the *Hacker* could do it before posting them. This could apply to submitted articles, too. Since the *Hacker* doesn't have an in-house staff of twenty techno-heads, it could send every article off for feedback from an outside source. The *Hacker* has been great at printing corrections and follow-up information, but it would be nice to have most of this done before readers ever see it.

(3) Pat's comments and responses are often worded in such a "trendy" manner that they are hard to understand. I'm pretty much a techno head myself, but much of the web-speak, etc. eludes me. As long as there is a *Hacker* printed on paper, keep English as the language of choice. I also feel that the string of secondary postings gets a bit

long and irrelevant at times, and wish that there was some Interface editing, but I realize that opens up another can of worms. Anyway, Pat deserves a world of thanks for his contributions. Being able to tell a guy things like what resistor to replace in his power supply makes the *Hacker* a truly valuable resource.

For Ensoniq:

(1) Don't forget the little guys – those of us who are your greatest supporters, and who spread the word like the gospel. It's sad to see that Ensoniq will allow the *Hacker* to fade into oblivion, when it would just take a bit of support (see #2 above) and perhaps a bit of encouragement to help turn things around. If the *Hacker* slams Ensoniq and prints erroneous information, then Ensoniq won't want the *Hacker* in its boxes. But if the *Hacker* responds to Interface slams with a respect and understanding for Ensoniq's business position, and does its best to verify facts before publication, then maybe Ensoniq will put it back in the boxes....?

The simple question for Ensoniq is: Have more people been turned on or been turned off to Ensoniq keyboards by the *Hacker*? The answer has to be that way more have been turned on – and have gotten great support, and have developed a fierce loyalty to Ensoniq, through these pages. Unless Ensoniq disagrees with this contention, I feel that it would be unwise to offer anything but its support.

And the same applies to us other little guys. I have built my entire business on Ensoniq keyboards, and used to enjoy a close working relationship with many of the folks at the company. I feel very much out of the loop these days. I have a great respect and friendship with many Ensoniq employees, but feel that the company has distanced itself from those of us fighting for them in the trenches. Toss us a crumb now and then, and we'll fight much harder.

(2) Take a look – from the customer's point of view – at the customer service process. We get lots and lots of calls here for tech support. When we suggest that Ensoniq may have more informed answers than we can provide, we are invariably told that the caller can never find a human in the Ensoniq voice mail system to ask a question of. And make sure that when things are repaired, they are really repaired. It seems simple enough to check something after you've worked on it, to make sure you've fixed the problem, but our ASR rack is about to make its third trip back to Malvern for the same problem... I don't want to sound like I'm slamming Ensoniq; I'm sure that these are areas in which the company will want to improve, and I'm confident that they will.

(3) I think it would be great for Al Charpentier to zip a quick note (or even a lengthy one) to the Interface. A few words from the president of Ensoniq could take the place of pages of speculation from others. And it would be a great show of support, not only for the *Hacker*, but for the dedicated Ensoniq owners who read it.

(4) Make an ASR-2000 keyboard that reads EPS/ASR-10 disks, has patch select buttons and polyphonic aftertouch and resonant filters.... (Just thought I'd throw that in while I had your attention.)

Now, let's all have a virtual handshake and promise to be nice.

Sam Mims
Syntaur Productions

[TH – Couple comments... We've ALWAYS been VERY market-oriented here at the *Hacker* – the last thing we want any company like Ensoniq to be doing is to be making decisions that are NOT based on financial considerations. However, this doesn't mean that we have to agree with everything they do. If their track record on

such decisions were really great then the last few years wouldn't have played out the way they did. Sometimes there are short-term vs. long-term *financial* tradeoffs that seem to be forgotten. Sometimes it even makes long-term FINANCIAL sense to be offering money-losing support for old, obsolete instruments – it just depends.

While we DO expect our writers to fact check their articles, this Interface is a different critter entirely. You and the other power users are certainly encouraged to speak up when you have an answer or a correction or whatever to what shows up here – but we're not going to get into a lot of back-and-forth checking here. This thing is barely manageable and takes a lot of time as it is. Pat's always been expected to check on things he's not sure about – or to just say so, or mention where else they might find an answer and then move on.

We'd certainly like to see you pop in here more often...]

[PF – Sam: Well-measured words from a guy whose market is disappearing as fast as pre-1995 Ensoniq keyboards. Hope your ASR-rack gets fixed this time...]

I truly apologize to all who don't understand my "trendy" manner as I suffer from a deplorable excess of personality. Listen to the Jim Rome Show for my spin of this forum...]

[Kyle (WARNERPRD@aol.com) – Check this out you all... Hacker... Ensoniq... Syntaur:

Am I crazy or what? I am moving into the world of SAMPLERS. Hooked up with a full-blown EPS-TURBO 16+ – gonna take a while to get up to speed. The deal is: look elsewhere or go for the best there was/is? Hacker, Pat, Eric, Jane... you're hot to go – where would I be without you? Sam Mims, you got my business – look for my checks in the mail. I need your software. Ensoniq, you have taken me where no man has gone before. Come on, keep me on track. Your board I've got now, the EPS, the MR, and the KS-32 (that got ripped off). Dude, I probably would still be playing a Hammond M3 or B3 and a Rhodes 76 piano in a lounge if you hadn't cared what boardists like me really needed. Whatever you choose to do in the future for direction and for finances, keep me hooked up, so what I have will last me until the next giant leap in keyboards happens. Please put the insert back in the new keyboards. Pat... a big THANK YOU.]

[synth-axe@juno.com – If you want to talk about personal support from Pennsylvania, ask Allen Organ to fix your RMI. They built it over 30 years ago and you can still call for support and repair. IT CAN BE DONE!!]

[PF – Gang: I can parrot the Musician's manual as well as anybody else, but if that truly answered ALL questions, well, this forum would have to charter. If what I speak isn't accurate, it's only because Malvern doesn't get back to me...]

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) – Sam, I liked your letter – you could just as well be speaking for me. I'll add my two cents (only two) in a future issue.]

Folks at the Hacker –

I have an ASR-10 that is 2 years old and have never had a problem with the sampler until now. Every time I try to load the initial O.S (3.53), the board will not tune. I get a message: -FILE OP ERROR NUM=040-? No matter how many times I attempt to retry I continue to get this message. I tried it with all my copies of the original O.S. disk. Maybe the disk-drive is out of order – I don't know! Can you please offer me some insight to this?

Thank you.
Thomas K.

thomas.koslowski@ruhr-uni-bochum.de

[PF – Thomas: This is one for Ensoniq Tech Support. It sounds like (A) the OS software, (B) the OS firmware (ROM), and (C) the keyboard version aren't getting along very famously. It could be something as simple as that, but as the file of error codes are internal Ensoniq use only, I don't know what error that points to. Give the gang up in Malvern a ring at 610.647.3930. And please ping us back with the results for future reference. Thanx!]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – Your ASR-10 needs to either go to a service center or come back to Ensoniq for service. If you have Internet access, go to our website and look up a dealer at this URL:

<http://www.ensoniq.com/CFDOCS/service/searchform.cfm>

If you want to send the unit to Ensoniq for service, call 610-647-3930 and ask for Customer Service. Ask for an RA# and be sure to have your serial # handy.

File op error 040 means that the disk drive needs to be replaced or that the mainboard needs replacement. A diskdrive is \$95. If it is the mainboard, the price is \$150. If it is sent to Ensoniq, installation for either part is \$40. The repair will take 5 to 10 business days.]

TH –

I would like to make an inquiry on my ZR-76. When I send the rhythm to the rhythm track it will not stay in sync with the sequence. I tried to change the tempos on the drum track to match the sequence. Didn't work, first it gives the message "select new seq tempo/meter will be used? proceed?" but this won't work either. Would appreciate any help you can give on this. I use my sequencers live and it must be in sync.

Thanks,
Jim Siegeler
jims@bluebon.net

[PF – Jim: As Ensoniq still offers support on this unit, I'd give them a holler at 610.647.3930. Haven't seen this behavior on the MR's, so maybe it's a ZR-specific issue. Good luck!]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – The drum machine is always in time with the tempo of the sequence. I would suggest trying this: Send a drum machine pattern to the sequencer. Choose a track and assign a sound to that track. Go into record mode. Is the click in time with the drum pattern? If so, maybe your other tracks are out of time and not the drum machine. If you have access to another ZR or to an MR try loading that same sequence that has problems and see if the problem exists in another unit as well. If so, it is the sequence. If not, the problem goes back to your ZR and the unit needs service.]

Hi TH:

I have a couple of questions.

I'm running Cakewalk 5.0. I'm using a KT-76 as a master keyboard, and am driving the KT-76, an SD-1, an SQ-80, and a few other brand modules.

(1) Running the KT-76 in Multi mode, with an 8-track Preset assigned to MIDI channels 1 thru 8. I may want to have channel (Preset track) 1 play the FM Tines sound with its Chorus + Reverb effect algorithm. In Cakewalk I assign a track to select bank #11 for the ROM bank with effects. (This is discussed in the KT-76 Owner's Manual, page 36. I've already defined my instruments in Cakewalk.) Now if I want to play a bass part on channel

(Preset track) 2, and I don't want the Chorus effect on it, selecting the normal bank #1 (which does not select a sound and its effect) instead of #11 seems to confuse the keyboard. The KT-76 seems to switch to whatever the last bank/sound assignment was. (Did I just answer my own question?) Do I have to set up my Preset so, for example, track 1 outputs to VOICE, track 2 outputs to FX2 or DRY, etc.? Or is there a way I can select sounds with effects and sounds without effects, or sounds with some effects, just by bank/sound assignments in Cakewalk?

(2) Whether playing a Preset on the KT-76 in Multi mode, or playing one sound on the KT-76 in Poly mode, once a KT-76 track is recorded, if I am recording another track on another MIDI channel and totally separate instrument, movements of the pitch bend and mod wheels can be heard affecting the sound(s) the KT-76 is playing, although the movements do not seem to be recorded. Do I disable this in the KT-76 or Cakewalk, and how?

By the way, Pat, we've had the computer sequencer vs. on-board Ensoniq sequencer talk. I understand your point. I got pretty adept at my SQ-80 and SD-1 sequencers. However, there were learning curves associated with them, just as there was (is) with my KT-76, so I don't think having a learning curve with Cakewalk is out of the ordinary or unreasonable. Personally, I was getting dissatisfied with certain aspects of the SD-1 sequencer, and finally loaded up Cakewalk months after I had bought it. I really like it, even prefer it to the on-board sequencer. I can really hear the difference in the timing resolution, and I don't feel like I have to quantize everything to get it to sound together. I find it easier to groove with Cakewalk. I am very happy with my set-up, especially with the KT-76 as the main keyboard. Now if I can just get these few bugs worked out...

It's been wild watching the discourse on the Ensoniq/Hacker breakup, and the demise of TH. A few points: (1) I'll be sad to see the Hacker go. (2) I agree with Sam Mims that Ensoniq is a business first and has to do what it has to do. (3) Ensoniq Customer Service has always been very good to me. However, I made my mind up a long time ago that I was not going to buy any more Ensoniq equipment. My last purchase was an Alesis QSR. The Transoniq Hacker was the only thing that kept me excited about Ensoniq equipment, although being excited about getting the Hacker was never a problem. (4) Where else can you see words like "frou-frou" in actual usage?

Any answers to these questions will be greatly appreciated. Jane, Eric, you've been terrific. Steve Vincent, your review of my basement tape was a highlight of my life. Hacker Patch Sam and all the other contributors, you've been like crusaders for the Ensoniq cause, and we've appreciated you. So long.

John R. Bolles
Allegra Recording Company

[PF – John: Answers, in order:

(1) Yes, this can be done. Order the External Command Specification document from Ensoniq: this document details all the sysex commands to simulate button presses on your KT-76. Using this document, you can write a sysex string to do exactly what you're trying to do, xmit it on the MIDI channel # of the track you wish to change the FX setting on, and away you go. Here's an alternate way of doing this...

Enable system exclusive on the KT-76 and in Cakewalk as well. Create a new track in Cakewalk called "Sysex." Set the MIDI channel of this track to the MIDI channel # of the track you want to invoke these changes on. Set it to record and start your sequence. Press the front panel buttons to navigate to the FX track assignments, make the changes you wish, and then stop Cakewalk. You've just recorded a sysex message to change the FX track assignment on this MIDI channel...

If you look at this track with the sysex filter disabled, you'll see the string of hex codes that your button presses sent out via MIDI. This string actually changed the FX track assignment you were looking to do. Now all you'll have to do is place this string a few beats ahead of the location in your song where you wish the FX to change, and presto, you're done. When you're satisfied that you've positioned it in the correct place in your song, merge this track into the particular song track it belongs in, and presto, you're done. Some folks just keep the sysex tracks separate for organizational purposes, so this last step isn't a requirement, but it makes for less clutter on the track sheet if you're using a small monitor.

(B) Sounds like Cakewalk is "echoing" or "MIDI thru"-ing all continuous controller data to all MIDI tracks. I don't know where in version 5.0 you change this, but you want to disable this "feature" so it doesn't pull note data on other tracks up or down. Might be a KT setting as well, but I'm a bit fuzzy on this one. Might give Twelve-Tone Systems a call.

(C) Computer sequencers are ALWAYS more accurate and feature-rich compared to the earlier Ensoniq on-board sequencer. After all, they run at 12-60 times the clock rate of an Ensoniq keyboard. I just prefer the convenience of having the sequencer on the keyboard so I don't have to shift gears between what I'm playing and what the computer's doing with it. Actually, once I've done a tune and it has to go to a studio, I'll record it to Digital Performer if I'm going to a ProTools Mac-based session, or record it to Cakewalk if I'm going to a PC-based studio (like the one I work in a lot with a Rupert Neve console with the "Flying Faders" PC-based automation option). And, of course, I always make an SMF of the tune just for safety's sake...

(D) Thanks for the kind words: hope we've made a dent in your universe as large as Ensoniq has...]

Howdy!

Got a Q for anyone. HOPING you'll know the answer.

I use an EPS live. I'm in the process of switching to an ASR-10. Big problem: say I'm holding a string chord at the end of a song, and I hit "stop" to stop the sequence, the "hold over" chord being played also kills dead! Even when a song sequence stops the sequencer automatically, any hand-played notes also stop dead! EPS doesn't do this. Not good, as my band has lots of moody segues. This is death for me live. I won't be able to use my ASR-10. Know the answer? I've looked webwise, but I couldn't find it.

PleaseBabyPleaseBabyPleasePleasePlease!
Preston Klik
My Scarlet Life and Bed Of Roses
Kliktrax@aol.com

[PF – Preston: Sounds like the sequencer is sending an "All Notes Off" command upon pressing the stop button, yet the MIDI implementation sheet (in the back of the manual) claims the ASR-10 doesn't xmit or receive it, where the ASR-Rack box does. This is one for the gang at Malvern to explain to you. Give them a shout at 610.647.3930, as this sounds like an interesting problem.

I've never tried to hold any notes down after the sequencer has stopped, but my workaround would be to append a couple of extra measures to the end of the song, so that the song would stop playing, and 3-4 measures later (or however long you need to sustain a chord), the sequence ends. This is probably the easiest way to accomplish that result...]

[PK – That'd help IF I didn't sometimes shut a groove off for a bar or so by hand while playing – in the middle of a song, which means your workaround won't work for me (but it's a pretty good idea!). EPS handles "off" fine,

but Man! does an ASR-10 that's maxed-out carry a LOT more samples! So I'd rather use it. You're right that it sounds like a "all-notes-off command," and that seriously messes with my live show. Anyone else got an idea?]

[PF - PK: What did Ensoniq say/suggest?]

[WARNERPRD@aol.com - Pat F and PK: Doesn't a maxed out EPS with a HD installed in it fit the bill better? If he has the EPS, won't a 1 gig HD added on give him the sample space and then he can continue with the EPS? K.W.]

[Vincent, Steve (stevevincent@chiwest.com) - Preston, what about using your EPS's sequencer and keyboard as a controller, and just MIDI out to your ASR as a sound module?]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) - Steve, that is a good idea. I have checked different settings on the ASR and I am not aware of any way to get around that situation. I would go with Steve's idea.]

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) - Preston is unfortunately correct - the 16-Plus and ASR behave differently if you press STOP/CONTINUE or if the Song/Sequence ends. Internally it cuts off all the voices - it's not an ALL NOTES OFF thing. On the Original EPS it does not. The MIDI suggestion is a good one - it works. (BTW, check out Preston's band - they are quite good.)]

TH,

I want to convert some of my precious EPS B3 samples to .wav files, then use SoundBridge to load them into my Alesis QS7's ram card. Do any of you know of a utility for converting these samples to .wav format while keeping the sample loops intact? I have converted many EPS files to .wav using the different shareware utilities (Sound App, SoundHack, etc.), but the loop is the big issue here. Any help would be appreciated.

Steve Vincent
Tacoma, WA
vincents@harbornet.com

[PF - Steve: I think you have to go to another format, as *.wav file are simple playback files. I honestly don't think looping is in the *.wav spec: it's blind playback from start to end. I'm familiar with Soundbridge (I've wrangled with a Quadrasynth + Piano), but I never tried to stuff any looped samples into a PCMCIA card, as I filled it with sequences only to discover it took a QS6 or later to playback SMF's from the card slot...]

It's obviously possible just by looking at Alesis's ROM card library of offerings. Any feedback, loyal reader base?]

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) - I'm hearing more about the Alesis ability to import .wav and AIFF files (sounds like the MR/ZR). Due to your suggestion, RCS has updated the Tools programs to add the looping information to AIFF files. The question now is whether the Alesis will take this sort of thing.

A side note: Both the RIFF (.wav) and AIFF file formats allow for looping information to be stored in the format; it's really a question on how the playback machines decide to implement this. For example, Sound Forge supports looping, and can store and load looping information to/from the end of a .WAV file. But that same loop information will crash a ASR-X. Another example: A PC (using Windows API calls) can play a .wav file straight through, or loop it from beginning to end. The PC can't basically support programmed loops, unless a program, such as Sound Forge, programs it to do so. It's a common misconception that .WAV files don't support loops - they do, but most hardware that can load .WAV files don't support the looping.]

Dear Hacker,

Last year I finally saved up enough money to get my MR-76. It has been great ever since until about two months ago. My keyboard turned into a mute! No sound will come out of the MAIN or AUX outs. The phones jack still works, but I don't think anything is coming out of the "important" jacks. I don't do much MIDI with it so I can't tell if it is transmitting MIDI (not a concern right now).

Is there a "mute" function I might have turned on? Or better yet a MIDI bypass of some sort that I can't find? I am really not that skilled in all of the options for my keyboard, but I have been through them a few times to see what I can find. Maybe I set something accidentally?

The only other thing I can think of is I am using Mono plugs on my cables (just found out) from the MR to my receiver. I have tried plugging my stereo headphones into the left MAIN and left AUX outs, but I still hear nothing.

Another MR user suggested that maybe I blew a fuse. If you think so also, can you explain how I go about taking my MR's case off safely? I work on computers so I know all the basics of working with boards, etc. Specifically, what screws to take out and how to pull of the case (keys facing up, down, etc).

Troubled user,
Bryan McGill
bryan.mcgill@expeditors.com

[PF - Bryan: Perform a "hard" reset by holding down the Song Editor Erase button WHILE turning on the MR-76. Once the MR has dropped you into the SoundFinder, let go of the Song Editor Erase button. That should clear any corrupt data causing this problem and the instrument should operate normally, as this resets the instrument to the state it was when you unboxed it.

If this doesn't solve the problem, time to take your MR to an Authorized Ensoniq Service Center and have them diagnose it... Good Luck!]

[Bryan McGill (bryan.mcgill@expeditors.com) - Hacker, Thanks for the tip on Hard Resetting. I am sorry to report that it did not fix my problem. I have no idea how much it will cost to have someone diagnose this so I'm going to try a few other things first. I take it you haven't heard of anything like this before?

In honor of the service the Transoniq Hacker has provided to Ensoniq users over the years, Jack Tolin is offering a tape of original instrumental music tracking his Ensoniq-Hacker career. All sounds and music were produced exclusively on the SQ-1 PLUS 32-voice synthesizer. Jack is asking only \$5 per tape. Send all requests to 8602 East 79th Street, Kansas City, MO 64138. Email: Yahkohv@Juno.com.

Wanted: KT-88. Must be clean and in great shape. Studio use only. Gary Allan, garyallan@ameritech.net.

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Ensoniq EPS-16 Plus rack module, 8 outputs, SCSI expanded. Rarely used, great condition \$700 obo. baliraja@hotmail.com

Anyone else ever had this problem???

[PF - Bryan: Time to let the pros from Malvern wave the magic wand over your keyboard. Take it to an Authorized Ensoniq Service Facility and let them do their thing...]

[Steve Vincent (vincents@harbornet.com) - I don't know how the MR works, but most keyboards these days have global MIDI settings for the keyboard, like "Normal" or "MIDI Only." If the MR's keyboard is set to only send out MIDI data, then it will not play its internal sounds. I hope your problem is this simple.]

Hi guys,

I thought I would come to the experts for this one. I have passed this by Garth but I would like more input. I have come into an ASR-10R on the cheap and I am also considering buying a CD-R drive. My question is this, can a SCSI external CD-R burner be used as a CD-ROM for an ASR? The unit in question is the Professional CD Factory as sold by Sound Forge. I believe it uses a Panasonic 4x8 MKE-7502B. My reason for buying a CD-R is primarily for audio, but if it can be used with the ASR for sample input, that would be a plus.

I would also like to add my "shame on you" comment to E/E for the poor decision in dropping this fine rag. I have owned several Mirages, and an ESQ-1, and I currently own an SQ-80, Mirage rack, a TS-10, an ASR-10R, PLUS a Soundscape Elite and an AudioPCI. To say I have been a loyal Ensoniq user would be both true and false due to the other brands in my possession. I have always recommended Ensoniq products to my friends and associates, but I must confess that I can no longer continue doing that. The direction of Malvern has been too elitist for the likes of me. I truly admired the upstart attitude of the old Ensoniq as the Mirage made the "Emulator" an affordable technology. The advent of the workstation in the ESQ-1 turned heads (including mine). But making the expensive affordable is not in their plans, and what they are now offering seems so out of touch, I don't think I could say anything positive at all. Maybe if they supported the Hacker I would have a change of heart, but I don't see that in their narrow vision. If I were to speculate, I would say Emu is finally getting even.

Well, that's my point of view. Good luck to all. I hope you can help me.

Dennis Hoffer

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Synth-axe@juno.com

[PF - Dennis: There's VERY little documentation on this kind of compatibility, so all I could recommend would be to try it. Ensure that your music dealer offers a 30-day return policy, as I haven't seen any Panasonic mechanism that was compatible with any Ensoniq product. I'd be hesitant to try it unless I could return the drive if it didn't work...]

HELLO!

I have read somewhere how EPS-16+ disks with bad ID can be fixed, but where and how? This is important, as I have some very important and unique files on that disk. (NO BACKUP, strangely enough...) How do I do this, and who shall I ask?

Karl Gilberg
karlhans@everyday.no

[PF - Karl: This sounds like a job for our old friend Gary Giebler, purveyor of the cross-platform translation utilities for the Ensoniq keyboard product line. He offers a recovery service for disks just like yours: you can reach him at www.giebler.com, Voice # is: (610) 933-0332 Fax # is (610) 933-0395. He 'da MAN...]

Hello again.

I was just cruising the net and found the MR-ZR Web Page. There was a reference to a question about the use of the MR in studio use. The question, and answer to the question, was of no importance to me but a reference in it was. Mentioned was a fix to their problem and an upgrade in O.S. to 3.03. Is this a real O.S. upgrade for the MR? If so, what was the necessity and improvements in it? Also if there is, how do I get the upgrade?

Thanks again.
Kyle
WARNERPRD@aol.com

[Mell, Andres (amell@pandr.com) - Although the MR and ZR are identical in almost every way, the operating system mentioned applies only to the ZR - unless someone can correct me on this. The current OS for the MR series is 2.11.]

[PF - Kyle: And you'd have to talk with Malvern to find out what bugs have been fixed (er, enhancements have been added). Typically, to order the ROM upgrades, you'd call your Authorized Ensoniq Dealer and have him order them for you.]

Hi from a former subscriber back in the late '80s!

I stumbled across your web site... very nice! My question:

I would like to get a hard drive for my EPS Classic. Are mod kits for this still available? Where do I get one? Also I saw the promo on the ZIP drive article in the current issue - does this apply to my original EPS? A ZIP would be great.... Please let me know if this article applies to my sampler and I will immediately purchase this issue.

Thanks a lot,
Steve Lucas
risingearly@worldnet.att.net

[PF - Steve: The EPS is still SCSI-able with Rubber Chicken Software's New and Improved SCSI interface board. It does the Ensoniq SCSI interface one better by allowing a ZIP drive to be used with the EPS (which the original Ensoniq SCSI interface did not).

Ensure your memory expander has the connector for the SCSI interface, bag Garth's SCSI interface, and you're good to go...]

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) - Small important correction: the Original EPS will not work with a ZipDrive in any case. Pat is referring to the EPS 16-Plus, where the Ensoniq SP-1/SP-2 alone with a ZipDrive will not work adequately. The SL-1 SCSI Interface RCS sells remedies this issue and allows 16-Plus's top work with ZipDrives. My recommendation for Original EPS owners is to "bag" a Syquest EZFlyer 230, if you can find one - they work fine.]

TH -

I have a TS-10. The sustain pedal stopped working. I unplugged it (the 110 v. line) and then immediately plugged it back in and it worked! ...For about five minutes, then quit again. Got any idea what's wrong?

yostmeister@webtv.net

[PF - Yostmeister: Not a clue. Did you turn off the TS-10 between unplugging it and reconnecting it? Try another sustain pedal to see if the problem follows the pedal or the TS-10. Any readers experienced this anomaly?]

[John Bolles (jbolles@surfnetnetwork.com) - I've gone through two of the cheapo footswitches on my SD-1. The sustain action is created by the movement of a little wire inside that bent and eventually broke. Both footswitches worked intermittently for a while before they went south for good. It's pretty easy to take apart and look inside to see if this is the problem. I broke down and got the better, piano-style foot pedal. Works nicely.]

TH -

ASR-10 - error 009 reboot - I'm desperate... Please, is anybody aware of what this may be? Anybody had the same trouble? I was told that is something that could lead me to an 800 sterling pound repair. Just because it won't boot anymore? How a beautiful keyboard like this just suddenly stop working and give me such bill?

Please,
Mark D'Arcangelo
nowhere@cableinet.co.uk

[PF - Mark: That's a new one on me. My local tech doesn't even have an entry for error code 009. You might try an alternate OS disk, as I think error codes of this low a number are software (rather than hardware) errors. This is probably one for Ensoniq Readers?

(BTW, I spent five minutes waiting for someone in Ensoniq tech support to pick up the phone to discuss this; no one answered even after I had the operator xfer me directly to tech support. So much for no one ever contacting them for accurate info...)]

[D'Arcangelo - So the Ensoniq people gave me their opinion: "Error 009 is a no-clock error that will entail a board exchange." Do you still reckon that it is not about hardware but software? Should I consider that Ensoniq email as a bad joke? My repair centre told me that is a Digital Panel problem and that has to be replaced... Who's right? So it's like if your car had a puncture... you'll have to replace the entire car... Very much Disappointing. Good bye Ensoniq...very much sad to say. And thanks to you PF for the help...]

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) - It's hardware. The good side about part-swapping is that it's more guaranteed to fix your problem in most cases.]

Hi,

Please excuse my bad German school English.

Last July I bought an Ensoniq ZR-76. After a few weeks there was a little strange noise and for a moment it smelled like burned plastic.

Since then I have had some problems with my ZR-76.

When selecting the "Perfect Piano" Sound I change the octave setting to -1. And then when playing the keyboard hard in the region with standard C and the next higher C the sound plays quiet instead of loudly. Outside this region everything works fine. It also works fine if I use the transpose button instead of the octave shift.

The German support told me that is the normal behavior of a ZR-76. But I can't believe it. And I'm sure that it did work before this strange event.

There is another strange behavior but I don't know whether it occurred from the beginning: when playing back the MrCoffee sound over the Ideapad the sound changes and the echo plays very fast instead of its original speed. These changes remain active until I switch the Keyboard off and on again.

Does anyone have similar experiences?

Thanks,
Christof
cschadt@stahlgmbh.lb.uu.net

[PF - Christof: No, this behavior is abnormal. Since your ZR is less than a year old, it's under warranty - time to take it to your Authorized Ensoniq Service Center and have them square it away for you...]

Hello fellow Ensoniq users,

The floppy drive on my MR-61 died last week, probably due to the smoky clubs we always seem to work in. I called my local Ensoniq authorized repair site, and was quoted a price of \$375 (!) to repair the keyboard. As this is an outrageous price, I emailed Ensoniq and asked what a drive would cost. I was told the retail is \$95, but they would only sell a replacement drive to an authorized repair site. Simply put this means that Ensoniq does not allow you to repair your own unit. (Imagine if GM had the same policy.)

Long story short: I bought a Computer Shopper, found a dealer who had PC compatible SONY floppy disk drives, and I bought one for \$30 including shipping by FEDX and insurance. It took 10 minutes to install it, and it works like a champ. I would suggest that anyone can do this repair and save \$345. I have also decided that after a long relationship with Ensoniq (I own an ESQ-1, SQ-2, SQ-R+, ASR-10 and the MR-61) I will never buy another Ensoniq keyboard. If they will not support their units with repair parts, and support the obvious rip-off I mention above, they lose my business.

A Former Ensoniq Evangelist,
Gerry Youngman
youngman@eznet.net

[PF - Gerry: Yours is a happy ending, at least. Folks with the older 800k drives are out to sea, as they're no longer available. So at least your MR is operable...]

[Garth Hjelte (garth@chickensys.com) - Even with cars, it's the same thing. You can pay pay pay by putting your car in the GM service center, or you can get off really cheaply by learning how to fix your own car. The floppy mentioned is a Sony MPF 920-1. These do not work in ASR's or EPS's. EPS floppy drives are getting scarcer and scarcer - at RCS we have a waiting list of about 40 people for these.]

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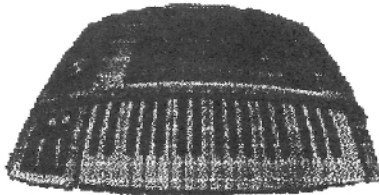
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