

Transoniq

Hacker

The Independent News
Magazine for Ensoniq Users

The Windup, the Pitch

Editing Sampled Sounds in the TS-10 and TS-12, Part 4

Robby Berman



Grrreetings! Okay, who's still with us after our harrowing experience with wave modulation in TS/ASR sampled sounds; show of hands? Good, good. Those of you who decided to forgo that little adventure, welcome back. Let's carry on with our discussion of using sampled sounds from the ASR/EPS family in the TS synths.

Those of us who began with electronica way back in the pre-disco daze tend to do our sound programming as if we were still plugging wires from module to module in an old gigantic, one-voiced Moog synthesizer. First we deal with the source of the signal — in the TS, that would be the waves, or samples, in this case — and then move on to pitch settings before proceeding to filters, enveloping and such. Having already beaten our sampled sound

waves to a quivering pulp, it's pitch time for sure.

Getting Our Bearings...

Let's get oriented by picking a normal TS sound, BABY-GRAND from bank R2-0. Press the Select Voice button: we've got a GND-PIANO wave selected (a wave in the TS actually being a collection of related wave-samples that fill up the keyboard, all welded into one big glob of sound). Now press the Pitch button. Here we find the Pitch settings for the GND-PIANO wave. On the top line, we have a parameter that allows us to program GND-PIANO's wavesamples to play at a particular octave above or below their original pitches; we also have similar parameters that allow us to play the waves above or below their original pitches by semitones, or in cents (the FINE parameter). We also see parameters relating to the glide behavior of the wavesamples. Press the Pitch Mods button to see how the pitch of GND-PIANO's waves will be altered by a modulation source — not at all it turns out, since MODSRC=3D*OFF* — and how much they will be altered by Envelope 1 or the LFO associated with GND-PIANO. There's also a parameter for setting the pitch table to be used by GND-PIANO, in this case, the SYSTEM pitch table.

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Heading off the Map...

Load the sampled sound Vocal Snips from the SSD-100 disk that came with your TS. Once you've loaded the sound, hit the Select Voice button and select LAYER 2, WAVESMPL 1. It's "Hey-ay-ay-and-so-on-again (try not to get the willies if you were involved in the Part 3 imbroglio)." Press the Pitch button and we'll see how our little world has changed.

Well, now, for once things look simpler with sampled sounds. Much simpler. In the place of the five parameters available on the Pitch page with standard TS sounds, there's but a mere two here now. How come so?

First of all, what we're viewing here are the Pitch parameters for a single sampled wavesample, remember, not the whole slew of them packed into a TS wave. This gives us sample-by-sample control that eliminates the need for the old top-line Pitch parameters (we'll explain this in a mo'). On the other hand, parameters such as the two glide parameters found on a standard pitch page are applied in sampled sounds to an entire layer at once, not to individual wavesamples, and so are not presented on this display. This actually parallels the use of glide parameters in standard sounds, since they, too, are applied to groups of wave-samples: TS waves.

The standard OCTAVE and SEMITONE parameters are replaced here by the single WS-ROOT-KEY parameter. This parameter accomplishes what those two missing amigos accomplished, but in a different way. Remember that a sample is really just a recording of sound that can be played by the keys on a keyboard. Of course, as you play a sample up the keyboard, its pitch goes up, and as you play downward, it goes down. But at which key will it play at its original pitch? That key is called the "root key." The WS-ROOT-KEY parameter determines this key for the selected wavesample. You can adjust this parameter to raise or lower the pitch of a sample as you would with the standard Pitch parameters, but in a perhaps unexpected way.

As you can see, the root key for the wavesample we've got selected is D4, the white key just above Middle C. When you play D4, you're hearing the sample as it was originally recorded. Play Middle C, and its pitch has gone down a tad. Play D4 again to memorize what it sounds like. Now the tricky part: set the WS-ROOT-KEY to C4. Play D4 again. Whoops — it's now higher. So wait a minute: lowering the WS-ROOT-KEY made the pitch go up? Can you follow why this happened?

Play Middle C. Ah, now when you play Middle C, it plays at its original pitch, sounding like it used to when you

played D4. What we've done is change the root key, the key at which the sample plays at its original pitch. D4 used to be the center of that action. Now that D4 is two semitones above the root key, the sample plays at a higher pitch there. The pitch at which a key will play a sample depends on its distance above or below the sample's root key. Try setting different root keys and just keep banging on D4 to see what they do to the pitch. When you're done, you can reset the root key to D4, if you like.

FINE-TUNE acts in the same way as its standard counterpart, raising or lowering the pitch of the selected sample in cents — it does not work in the backwards manner of the WS-ROOT-KEY parameter.

Press the Pitch Mods button. This looks more similar to the Pitch Mods display associated with a standard TS sound, though with some different options. You can adjust the BEND parameter to choose the sample's maximum pitch bend when you whang the pitch bend wheel forward or back, or you can set the sample to use the system-wide pitch bend settings. You can also apply a noise generator to the pitch of the sample. At low settings, noise can add a touch of natural-sounding pitch variations to the sample as you might hear with a real player on many instruments. With higher values, noise wacks out the sample. Give it a try. The standard MODSRC/MODAMT parameters are available, as are the parameters for applying some of Envelope 1 or the LFO to the selected sample. The pitch table parameter is missing, since in sampled sounds, it's a parameter that applies to the whole layer at once. We'll check out the layer parameters in a future installment of this series.

Next time, however, it's on to the filtration facilities in TS sound factory. ■

Bio: Robby Berman is a musician living among the hummingbirds, squirrels and bears — Yes, bears. Who'd've guessed such a thing? Run away! — in New York State's scenic Mid-Hudson Valley. His most recent bid for world dominance is the double opus "Rings and Rings."

eTH — A Faster, Cheaper Hacker

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Front Panel

RND (🎵🎵)

Ensoniq News

Ensoniq Tour: Ensoniq is planning a tour to present Paris (Professional Audio Recording Integrated System). The following is a preliminary lists of tour dates. Look for a final list in next month's *Hacker*.

July 14th	Denver	Pro Sound
July 15th	Hollywood	Guitar Center

July 16th	San Francisco	Guitar Center
July 17th	Seattle	American Music
July 22nd	Boston	Guitar Center
July 23rd	New York	Mannys
July 24th	Philadelphia	Medley
July 29th	Atlanta	Guitar Center
July 30th	Miami	Guitar Center
July 31st	Washington	Washington Music
Aug 5th	Dallas	Guitar Center
Aug 6th	Chicago	Gand
Aug 7th	Detroit	Guitar Center

Syntaur Tuned Percussion

Syntaur Sample Set 9

Tom Shear

Product: Syntaur "Tuned Percussion" Sample Set 9.
For: EPS, EPS-16+, ASR and TS.
Price: \$29.95.
Contact: Syntaur Productions, 5402 W. 43rd St., Houston, TX, 77092.
Phone: (713) 682-1960 or (800) 334-1288.

This well-crafted four-disk set is for those of you with an affinity for the melodic sounds various things make when you hit them (sorry, no samples of your boss being hit... maybe next time). In keeping with Syntaur's usual standards, the set includes 19 extremely well-sampled/programmed sounds on four disks, with brief very useful documentation detailing the name of the artist who created the sound, size and effect info, a brief description of what the sound is and where it came from, and what each of the patch selects do. And unlike many third-party sound developers, the patch selects ALWAYS do something. The programming on these, like the rest of Syntaur's sounds, is extremely detailed. Every bell and whistle available is exploited and available for your own personal use and abuse. So without further rambling, let's take a look inside, shall we?

Disk 1

The first disk starts out with a beautifully done struck mallet sound called WOOD BARS which would be perfect for your next World Music extravaganza, or, as the manual

suggests, Yes cover. Next up is RAINFOREST which originated as a steel drum, but then was cross-fade looped into oblivion resulting in an eerie, detuned metallic bell that would be excellent for soundtrack or industrial work. Very unique, and under the right fingers, very creepy. An entry from the Emulator 3 comes next, with EIII TYMPANI. This sound is clear and has a depth missing from most tympan samples I have heard. You can really move air with the low notes. BELLS & WHISTLES is for those of you to whom "salsa" doesn't just mean a tasty condiment. A tuned sleigh bell shake, a police whistle, and a triangle are all waiting for you to take them south of the border. Finally, we have CAST IRONLID, a beautifully clear sample of, you guessed it, a cast iron pot lid being struck. The result is a great sound not unlike a cleaner version of a gamelan mixed with one of those hollow windchimes. Hmm. I'm going to have to start rummaging through my pots and pans more often...

Disk 2

This disk starts with XYLOPHONE, which annoyingly has the default set so that there is a keystrike when you lift the key too. While this double-note effect is cool for emulating mallet techniques, it probably should've been made available as a patch select, rather than the default instrument. A regular, single-hit version is available in the patch selects. Next up are some very nice stereo ORCH HITS. Well done, but does anyone really use orchestra hits

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, & 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, MR & 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.

any more? A hybrid instrument is next with KALIMBALOG, which as you may have guessed, is a combination of kalimba and log drum. Patch selects make each instrument available on its own. Finally, we have the best sound on the disk, TRASH PERC which is a very useful metallic clank type sound that I could see be implemented in a wide variety of ways from percussion tracks to attack transients for other synth sounds.

Disk 3

T1 POTCOVER starts off this disk sounding like the less-percussive cousin of disk one's CAST IRONLID. For what it's worth, I thought Todd Speer's homemade sound was better than this memory hog (1069 blocks!?!?). A nice sound, but hardly worth the block space. A very authentic STEEL DRUMS sound is next, and yet again, the default gives you that key-up strike. Yes, you can remove it (this time with the mod wheel), but as I mentioned before, this should be a patch select or something to add in rather than the default. VFX MARIMBA follows up with a very synthetic sounding marimba sound that would cut through a mix nicely. Finally, we have CLAVARIMBA, another one of those instruments that sound real, but is unlike any real instrument you have heard. This is basically a woody, xylophone/marimba-type sound that is very dynamic and realistic. The key-up strikes are on patch selects this time instead of being the default.

Disk 4

This disk starts off with the perfect complement to Disk One's BELLS & WHISTLES, a very vibrant set of AGOGO BELLS. Useful throughout the whole range, and quite realistic. This could really kick your rhythm tracks into high gear. CHIMES & BELLS follows with four different percussive bell sounds that could be used equally well as both cow-bell replacements or ethnic-sounding melodic accompaniment. For nostalgia buffs, ESQ WAVEBEL is included. It captures the classic preset dead-on (even down to the tasty vibrato) and at only 102 blocks, no less! This almost makes up for the memory-abuse of T1 POTCOVER... GLOCKENSPIEL is next, and is one of the few instruments that is actually a sample of the real thing and not a synth or drum machine. Sounds just like the real thing and will fit in just fine with the rest of your synthesized marching band. A K2000 provided the source of SYNTH BELL, but you would swear it was a chorused DX-7. A very nice, and extremely memory-efficient recreation of what a friend of mine refers to as, "The Taco Bell." Finally, things round off with an electric piano type sound that switches sounds out on the attack portion

between standard tine attacks to, conga, to clave. Very nicely done. One of the better electric piano sounds I have heard, especially because it is slightly different.

Although there are some flaws (mainly a few sounds that could be smaller), this set is well up to Syntaur's upper-atmosphere standards and truly sports a little of something for everybody. If you're in dire need of melodic percussion sounds then you are the person who really NEEDS to pick this set up. As always, the programming is top-notch, the samples clear, and the documentation useful. Now if



you'll excuse me, I'm going to go sample the sound of my boss's head being struck... hmm... surprisingly hollow-sounding... ■

Bio: Tom Shear has a percussive attack, and a smooth, gradual decay.

Ensoniq's CDR-14

John May

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

Product: *CDR-14 — Analog Digital Synth Resource.*

Price: \$199.95.

From: Ensoniq Corp., 155 Great Valley Pkwy., Malvern, PA 19355.

Phone: 610-647-3930 (voice), 610-647-8908 (fax).

As I pull up Microsoft Word to write this article, I am reminded of the vast amounts of data we as humans can archive these days. I am also reminded of how that can sometimes be just as much a disadvantage as an advantage. Word doesn't boot up any faster than the word processor I was originally using on my Apple II back in 1984, it just does a bunch of more stuff. Funny thing is, most of the time I just want to type letters on the page...

This same idea is making itself more and more prevalent in the world of CD-ROMs for our venerable Ensoniq keyboards. I've got 10 CD-ROMs full of sounds, over 200 times what originally came with my ASR (assuming an average of 300 megs/CD-ROM), yet I don't feel like I have 200 times the options for sounds. I still feel just as frustrated when it comes time to find a sound I like, and I still end up having to settle for something else, thinking "Well, I guess it'll do..."

The problem is that the majority of manufacturers making CD-ROMs for Ensoniq and other keyboards these days aren't concerning themselves with the musicality of the sounds. They're just concerned with getting the biggest samples. I mean, c'mon, who doesn't want *huge* samples!?! Who cares if you only get 10 instruments, 8 of

which you have no use for? Don't you want that 30 second sample of the TR-808's open hi-hat? Who cares if you need to spend your kids' college money on RAM to be able to load that killer piano sound that'll end up costing you more than the piano itself?

How's this for a revelation — I want a sound with some playability, some originality, some way to put some of my own human form into it. Instead, I get sounds that don't respond at all to anything I do. No matter how hard I hit the key, how much I twiddle the mod wheel or how furiously I pound on the patch select buttons (remember those?), I end up with exactly the same thing. Not very exciting, huh?

Well, there are still a few believers in the idea that we're trying to create music with our instruments (music? what's that?). Our friends at Ensoniq are trying desperately to convince us that the sampling keyboard can be an instrument, not just an expensive tape recorder. At least that's what I gather from hearing their *CDR-14: Analog Digital Synth Resource* CD-ROM. These sounds aren't just good when compared to other available CD-ROMs for Ensoniq 'boards, they also stand up when compared to Akai, Roland and all the others as well. I've always been a fan of Ensoniq's programming and these people really know what they're doing. It is also this reason that made me originally buy an Ensoniq keyboard over another company's product, since I knew I couldn't get Ensoniq sounds for non-Ensoniq samplers (their plan worked!).

The sounds on this disk cover quite a broad range of styles

and timbres, though if you don't like synth sounds this disk is probably not for you. It contains your normal distribution of the old keyboards: Moogs, ARPs, Yamahas, Casios and the like. Included are both analog and digital synth basses, pads, leads, sweeps, stacks, vocals and drum kits. Say that three times fast! This is a great library to build your sound foundation on, or at least the synth side of it.

What really shines through, however, are the "new" sounds that it contains. Not just revamped versions of the old stuff, these sounds are creative and expressive. I did not find one single sound that didn't respond to the mod wheel, patch selects and/or velocity, and they all respond in a musical way. We're not just talking different volumes for different velocities or more vibrato when you push the mod wheel. We're talkin' filter sweeps, sample start modulations, and all the other goodies that your Ensoniq board can do while the others cannot.

The disk is also laid out in a very logical manner, with hierarchical directories that get more specific as you move down them, making it very easy to find the sound you want. It also includes a large booklet-type manual with a description of each instrument as well as its size, category and modulation source descriptions. Another perk of

buying an Ensoniq CD-ROM for your Ensoniq board is that each sound also has a "direct-access macro" assigned to it. This allows you to jump directly to the sound you want by holding down the "load" button and typing in a 4 digit number, couldn't be easier. Needless to say, you'll never complain about poor documentation with this one.

My only complaint with this disk is that it contains some of the same sounds found on Ensoniq's *CDR-4: AS Archive Vol. 1*. *CDR-4* is a disk containing AS libraries 1-14, originally released on floppies. (Sounds from Disks AS-11 and AS-12 appear on both *CDR-4* and *CDR-14*.) Don't get me wrong, the sounds on both disks are all great, I'm just suggesting that you may want to buy one or the other, and not both. However, most of the sounds on each are unique to themselves, so if you've got the extra cash, don't listen to me.

Ensoniq has always made great sounds in my opinion, and *CDR-14* proves this point once again. Rarely do you find a hardware manufacturer that also has an ear for the sounds. The advantage of this is clear: when the sounds are made by the people who make the hardware, and vice-versa, you can bet they'll exploit the machine for all it can do, and this can only result in better and more flexible sounds for us, the end user. ■

Doin' The Shuffle: A Primer

The Ensoniq Keyboard and *Your PC*

Pat Finnigan

Okay, I'll admit that I've been a little testy about this whole General MIDI thing and made more than a few snide remarks about it (music for the musically challenged, etc.). But don't expect me to apologize, because I certainly won't; neither should you. I'm sorry, gang, but I take a very dim view of someone imposing a musical standard on me without my consent/assent, so when someone tells me this is the way it's gonna be without so much as a courtesy, I'm gonna rave and rant. So there, I'm done raving and ranting. Let's come to grips with this newly elected military leader and meet General MIDI. He didn't ask for our input, he just went to the top (Microsoft) and determined this

standard. And unless you're a Macintosh user, well, deal with it. I don't think it's fair, ethical, or musically inspiring to adhere to a standard I don't particularly agree with, but it's the PC standard, and everybody has given in (even our Malvern brethren), so enough of the griping: let's deal with how to get our stuff out of our keyboard and into our PC.

Why share our wares with the GM gang? So people will know, to quote Steven Jobs, how "insanely great" our Ensoniq computer is when they can hear our work. Given, getting the music to the keyboard is a snap: getting it over into the PC and massaging into music is

another job entirely. Usually it's more work than composing the piece was. But sooner or later, your PC and your music will mix — after all, Ensoniq keyboards are a synth/sampler and Macintosh mix (the heart of all Ensoniq keyboards is a *Motorola*, not an Intel processor), so they've already met. Let's talk about getting your tune into your PC. For the sake of simplicity, I'll allude to *Cakewalk For Windows* as my example, although earlier DOS versions of *Cakewalk* or *Questar* or other sequencing programs should respond to the same message. Here we go...

(A) MIDI up your Ensoniq to your PC properly. No MIDI outs to MIDI outs; ins go to outs.

Slave your PC to follow "external" sync (also called MTC for MIDI Time code) so your keyboard is the clock. Some will argue slaving to the PC clock; I feel the nuances of your sequence will come across better if you slave to the same clock you wrote the sequence on. Otherwise you'll spend an hour trying to figure out what PPQ (pulses per quarter note) to send your keyboard, and with selections from 1/16th to 1/480th, save the headache and sync to your keyboard. Later you can adjust the PC tempo to the keyboard tempo and be done.

(B) *Always* set your keyboard's MIDI mode to "Multi." This ensures MIDI track data stays on its selected channel. Not that it's gonna move around unless by design: this ensures all tracks send their data on the specified MIDI channel. Actually a MIDI IN mode, I've discovered selecting Multi mode seems to reduce the Type 127 errors from my keyboard, but there's no quantifiable reason why it should. Just set it and forget it.

(C) Use a pre-prepared slate of 16 tracks as your default. In the Windows version, CFW 3.0 has a template all made out for you: in other programs, simply create 16 tracks — one for each MIDI channel. Ensure the track # and the MIDI channel # are the same. They really don't have to be, but it sure makes things a heluva lot easier when you try to edit the sequence once it's in your PC. You can always delete or "kill" empty tracks later.

(D) Disable Poly-Key pressure, Song Position Pointer, Send Sysex and Send Program Changes from your

keyboard. Chances are whatever sound card, external synth, or other playback MIDI device won't know how to respond to Polykey pressure and interpolate it as channel aftertouch. Most of us Ensoniq users dedicate tracks to specific instruments (since we have a minimum of 8 or 16 sequence tracks and 16-24 Song tracks), so it's doubtful you'll need to send program changes. Besides, it's a ton easier to insert them at the beginning of a song on the PC than locating them all and deleting them.

(E) Drums are always a problem since, unless you're using an Ensoniq 'board that supports the GM drum map, they won't play the corresponding drums on another GM synth. In this case, you want to use a CAL macro (that's short for a *Cakewalk Application Language* macro) that will take each note # from your drum track and automatically create a new track and bounce it there. You have to specify which track and which MIDI channel # you wanna do this to, but it works flawlessly. Then you can transpose the note/track to the correct drum note.

For instance, I've got some early SQ-1 sequences with the snare on Eb3. I simply expose this Eb3 to E2 to get it to play the GM snare note. With CFW 3.0 or other apps, you can get a "piano roll" view of the track, double click on the Eb3 to select all the Eb3's and then drag them down to E2. Be warned; drums are the toughie since different manufacturers follow different drum maps. Some sequencers have preconfigured selectable maps: *Windows' MIDI Mapper* will let you do it too if you don't mind fishing through your manuals.

Well, there it is, in a nutshell. And again, these are more guidelines than rules, so experiment to taste. I warn you laptop users — if you don't turn off Polykey pressure, you'll crash your computer unless it's pumped up to 8 Mb RAM: poly aftertouch *really* generates gobs of MIDI data that's often ignored anyway by the host, so caveat emptor. Song Position isn't really much of a deal unless you start and stop the sequence a lot (Mony-Mony comes to mind) or use the patterns of an external drum machine, in which case you need the beatbox to chase your MIDI data. The real beauty (or, in my case, necessity) of transferring your Ensoniq data into the computer isn't to generate *.wrk files. It's to generate *.mid files (SMF's or

Standard MIDI files — which is a real misnomer as there's Type 0 and Type 1 SMF's) that can be imported into a transcription program like Encore or Finale. Then you've got sheet music to give the guys in the band, but well, I won't even go into that. This is

a brief, not a precis.

Oh yeah; don't forget to switch MIDI computer sync back on... ■

Backward Guitar

Dan Rohde

A unique backward guitar effect has been used by a few musicians where they have recorded a guitar solo, then played the tape backwards and overdubbed this odd-sounding track onto a song. Actually I'm not 100% sure they did it this way, but I can't imagine how else "Castles Made of Sand" by Jimi Hendrix and "I'm Only Sleeping" by the Beatles could have been done, unless time travel was involved. (Perhaps with a volume pedal, but I doubt it.) Though the trusty ADSR envelope has its limitations, it also offers many possibilities, especially if we incorporate a few of the other programming goodies available on the KS-32, which happens coincidentally to be the same kind I have in my basement.

Backward Guitar should, I thought, begin quietly, like the tapering off or decay at the end of a string's vibration — the last part is heard first. Also, at the end of this sound I wanted to hear a slight attack, such as the type created by the pick twanging the string — the first part heard last. My first unrealistically hopeful efforts to simply play a sample backwards (under Wave, Direction = Backwards)

met with defeat. The sound was sort of close, but there was no way to control and vary the duration of the sound since the sample played backwards always lasts less than a second. So I gave up and went on with my life.

A couple months later, as I sat contemplating the order of the universe, which I seem to be doing more and more as I near my 150th birthday, it struck me: Couldn't I use Key-up (Under Wave, Delay Time) in conjunction with Direction = Backward so that the attack would always occur at the end of the sound? Yes, Yes, YES!!! After that inspiration, I had only to create and fuse together two different Amp envelopes: a beginning slow crescendo envelope and an ending short attack envelope.

Voices 1 and 3 are the slow crescendo, each being identical, fairly slow "Ramp Up" type Amp configurations (Figure 1). For a slower Ramp Up — a more gradual increase in volume — you can increase either the Attack or the Decay settings, but the ones shown work pretty well. Velocity Level = 19 provides some control over the initial

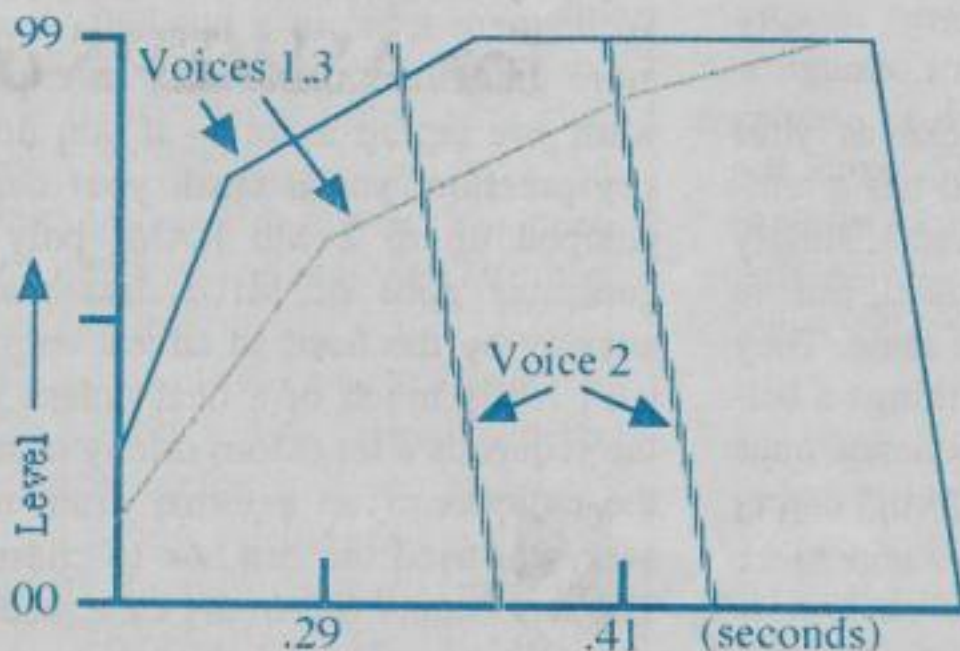
amplitude, Velocity Attack = 13 gives you some control over how fast the amplitude will increase.

Under Pitch, Voices 1 and 3 are slightly detuned, -03 and +01 respectively. Modsource = Pressure +50 allows you to raise the note's pitch about one step with key pressure, which is supposed to simulate a bending guitar string. With Glide = Off you hear more than one note being played at a time; Glide = Retrigger seems to sound better if you only plan one note lead lines. Try them both to see. You could also set Voices 1 and 3 differently for the best of both worlds.

Figure 1 Dan Rohde

Voices 1, 3
 20 75 99 99
 25 30 35 20
 VelLvl=19
 VelAtk=13

Voice 2
 99 95 00 00
 03 00 00 00
 VelLvl=19
 Mode=Finish
 VelWn>036
 Delay=Keyup



SQ/KS/KT Prog: BACKWARD GUITAR

By: Dan Rohde

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	On	On
Wave Class	Expansion	StrngWv	StrngWv
Wave	NylonGtr	GtrVar1	ElectGtr
Delay Time	000	Keyup	000
Wave Direction	Forward	Backward	Forward
Start Index	00	00	00
MODSCR	-	-	-
MODAMT	-	-	-
Restrk Decay	20	20	20

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	-	-	-
Noise Rate	-	-	-
Level	-	-	-
Delay	-	-	-
MODSRC	-	-	-
Wave	-	-	-
Restart	-	-	-

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	20	99	20
Peak	75	95	75
Break	99	00	99
Sustain	99	00	99
Attack	25	03	25
Decay 1	30	00	30
Decay 2	35	00	35
Release	20	00	20
Vel-Level	19	19	19
Vel-Attack	13	00	13
Vel Curve	Linear	QuikRise	Linear
Mode	Norm	Finish	Norm
KBD Track	+00	+00	+00

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	00	+01	+01
Semitone	00	00	00
Fine	-03	+03	+02
ENV1	00	00	00
LFO	00	00	00
MODSCR	Pressure	-	Pressure
MODAMT	+50	-	+50
KBD Pch Track	On	On	On
Glide	Off/Retr	Off	Off/Retr
Glide Time	00	-	00

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	2Lo	2Lo	2Lo
Filter 2	2Lo	2Hi	2Lo
FC1 Cutoff	064	75	80
ENV 2	+30	+07	+20
FC1 KBD	00	00	00
MODSCR	Wheel	Wheel	Wheel
MODAMT	+10	+10	+10
FC2 Cutoff	70	000	80
ENV2	+10	+10	+10
FC2 KBD	00	00	00
FC1MOD-FC2	On	On	On

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	99	37	99
Boost	On	Off	Off
MODSRC	Wheel	Wheel	Wheel
MODAMT	+05	+05	+05
KBD Scale	+00	+00	+00
Key Range	E1-G7	E1-G7	E1-G7
Output Bus	FX1	FX2	FX1
Priority	Med	Med	Med
Pan	-14	00	+14
Vel window	>000	>036	>000

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

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	99	99	99
Peak	99	99	99
Break	99	99	99
Sustain	99	99	99
Attack	20	20	20
Decay 1	20	20	20
Decay 2	20	20	20
Release	10	10	10
Vel-Level	00	00	00
Vel-Attack	00	00	00
Vel Curve	Convx	Convx	Convx
Mode	Norm	Norm	Norm
KBD Track	00	00	00

EFFECTS — CHORUS AND REVERB	
FX-1	15
FX-2	10
Decay time	20
HF Damping	53
Chorus Rate	20
Chorus Depth	25
Chorus Center	47
Feedback	+03
Chorus Level	53
MOD (Dest)	-
BY (MODSRC)	-
MODAMT	-

The Filter settings let you modulate the tone with the Wheel by +10. I enabled Envelope 2 = +10 so that a higher key Velocity would also increase the Cutoff levels, brightening the tone. A quick way to create Envelope 2 settings is to choose the Full On Default. Wheel also increases Volume under Output by +05. Timbre could be chosen for both these Modsources if you want a permanent setting in a sequence.

Voice 2 simulates Backward Guitar's delayed attack (also Figure 1). Under Wave, Delay Time = Keyup is like the end of the stock KS-32 Mandolin sound. Wave Direction = Backwards adds a little authenticity since it actually does make the guitar sample play backwards, though it sounds okay Forward, too. The Amp envelope settings create a short punch for the end "attack." Changing the Peak and Attack settings even a little bit creates a substantially different sound, so you might want to experiment a little with them. Mode = Finish makes sure the entire Amp envelope is heard for every Keyup event.

Output = 37 is meant to give Voice 2 about the same volume as Voices 1 and 3. You could raise or lower it to suit your taste. It seems to add an interesting feature to the sound. The Hendrix and Beatles songs mentioned above don't really have a lot of attack at the end of their sound, but they didn't have Ensoniq keyboards in their studios, right? Under Output, I tried Velocity Window >036 to add

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even more variety, since this means Voice 2 will only "detonate" above a certain Velocity level. This also keeps the end attack from overpowering a short, softly played note. If you want to hear the end attack for every key event, set Velocity Window = >000. The Effects = Chorus + Reverb are pretty much stock settings.

The Backward Guitar patch makes some pretty strange noises, sort of in-between the cries of a stegasaurus caught in a tar pit and the whining of whales when they don't get their way. Try overdubbing two or three layers in the

prerecorded background of some of your existing sequences, or just use it to rip out some live leads. ■



*Feedback welcomed at
darohde@muscatine.k12.ia.us.*

The SD-1 (and/or TS) As Controller

Frank Fortunato

One of the great features that gives long shelflife to an old synth like the SD-1 is its function as a great controller. While the synth is getting close to dinosaur age, and while current controllers can do much more than the SD-1, it still has many excellent features not found on the newest of the current crop of keyboard/controllers. In addition, there are still many very satisfied fans out there who still enjoy the sonic richness of the SD-1 sounds. Adding a module or two can add new life into any setup, and the SD-1 more than meets the challenge of getting control of these additional modules or keyboards.

The best introduction into the controlling features of the SD-1 is to review its ease of use in handling multi-keyboard setups in preset mode where the SD-1 can control up to three additional MIDI sources.

This beginner's article will look at the SD-1 as a controller in live playing situations. For our purposes here we will use the SD-1 controlling one external module (let's use a Korg X5DR) in preset mode. Later we can look at the controller features in sequencer mode. Remember that TS users will find the material here virtually identical for their synths.

PART 1 **Setting Up An External Module With The SD-1**

1) **Selecting a sound selects it twice:** After making the

obvious MIDI and audio connections of the SD-1 and a second MIDI sound source, let's select a favorite SD-1 piano or electric piano sound to start us down the path of a preset layer. Remember that selecting any sound in the SD-1 selects it twice. Any selected internal sound also gets placed into the buffer as part of a preset as well.

2) **Status:** Go to the performance section and press the midi button. Page one is the MIDI status. Notice that your internal sound is placed in the preset as one of the three voices, and is selected as well. Double click on another of the three voices. (That flashing layered sound continues to delight me and reminds me that Ensoniq came up with the easiest way to make layers of any keyboard on the planet). Using the data entry scroll up and change the status from "both" to "local" to "MIDI" for your layered (flashing) voice.

(Now let me pause for my one and only tangent. While the "both" status allows the SD-1 to control both its internal as well as an external sound the feature has its limitations on the SD-1. The "both" setting does not give you individual control of volume, transposition, and other joint parameters. What you do to one also affects the other. For instance, if you don't like the octave setting on the module you can change it with the transpose button in the preset, but it will also change the transposition of the internal setting. You can of course go in and reprogram the voice architecture of the internal or external sound so that the

octaves match. But that defeats the purpose of the preset function, namely, the ability to make quick layers and splits with various adjustments without having to change anything in the internal architecture of the internal or external sound. To get around this limitation most of the time I set the external sound on its own MIDI status. Tangent over.)

3) Channel: Press the MIDI page again and you come to MIDI channel. Keep your MIDI channel set to channel one and be sure that your synth is also set to channel one.

4) Program: Pressing the MIDI page a third time brings you to the program. As you scroll with your data entry you can find the external synth program of your choice. Find a nice pad or string sound.

5) The other parameters: Now go through the other parameters of your preset performance setup. I find it so helpful that the SD-1 can not only control the volume, octave and key range but even things like the release time of my favorite X5DR string patch.

This would be a good place to store your preset but let's make one more setting that will give the SD-1 some additional controller flexibility

6) MIDI volume control: Go to the volume page (top left button) and select the volume for the layered (MIDI) voice. With the volume selected for the external module you can simulate a little two channel mixer feature in performance. Any time you move to the volume page you can now use the data slider and control the MIDI volume of the module. The master volume slider can control the Ensoniq internal voices so that you have two independent volume control sources. Obviously an outboard mixer gives a much simpler volume control, but it's nice to know you still have individual control of volumes right from the SD-1 as well.

7) Use the CV pedal: If you still haven't gotten around to using a CV pedal, drop what you are doing and get down to the nearest music store and get one! To have volume control of your whole SD-MIDI setup the CV pedal works wonderfully. Set it to "volume" on the system master page. The CV pedal controlling both the internal and external volume allows nice fading out and fading in of your complete rig.

8) Store the voice: While we still have several other useful settings that we can make, let's store the preset at this point by depressing the preset button on the left and hold

it down as you choose one of the ten storage locations.

PART 2 Those Amazing Patch Selects

The SD-1 again moves into its own elite class having the patch select feature that gives instant real time control of up to four variations of each internal sound or preset. I have found fantastic surprises when auditioning the patch select variations. The potential of each sound was totally hidden to me until I took the time to see how they were programmed in their variations. It is worth re-reading the manual on patch selects and how to alter and store the sounds with their different patch selections. For my purposes I always set the best variation for my taste to the left patch select. I'll explain why.

1) Use the double pedal: For patch selecting in live performance it is always easier to use the dual pedal to access patch selects unless you are just playing with one hand. One of the great features of the TS is having two dual pedal connections. On the SD we have to settle for just one. I usually set FS1 to left patch select, and FS2 to sustain. These options are chosen in page one of the master section. It's for that reason that I always set the variation that is best for my use to the left patch select that I access with the left pedal.

2) Test drive the patch selects in preset mode: When reviewing the variations of my presets with patch selections using my left patch select pedal I will most often find the change is usable. Nothing needs to be changed on the patch select section of performance. It is set to "live." If the change is not useful I set the patch select for each voice of my preset to "00" which disables any patch selecting. If you find that you like the results from the right patch select or both right and left select and don't want to play them live with your patch select keys, you can always make a second or third copy of the presets and store them with the variation settings. To store the left patch select, store it as "*0." The right patch select version can be stored as "0*" and the right-plus-left version is stored with the "***" selected.

3) Don't overlook the "hold" feature: The special "Hold" parameter on the patch select page is yet one more feature setting the SD-1 apart. By setting the patch select to HOLD, it holds in memory the patch select variation and allows you to keep playing as if that parameter were "held down."

In my work as a church musician I will often need to add a

punchy brass sound to a piano patch for some upbeat worship times. I made a copy of my favorite SD-1 brass sound and stored my copied version fully muted in the "live" setting. I "open up" the sound and access it with the left patch select. I then stored that sound in preset mode with one of my strong SD-1 piano patches as well as with the hold feature selected. The brass sound is there ready to use in the preset, but it is muted until I need to add that extra punch to my piano sound. I merely depress the left pedal and the sound is there!

Here are the two simple rules for hold mode in patch select:

A) to engage the hold setting: depress the pedal (or patch select button) BEFORE playing the keys.

B) to disengage the hold setting: depress and release the pedal (or patch select button) BEFORE playing the keys.

PART 3 Using The Buffer In Performance

Another amazing feature of the Ensoniq synths is the edit buffer. It can be very useful as a performance feature and not just an editing feature. Try this out:

1) **Edit a preset:** Make an alternate version of a sound or preset that you use regularly. That sound now resides in the edit buffer ready to be recalled at any point. You can have a change in the volume, key zone, whatever! One of my main presets is a combo of a piano and strings sound. Before a performance I will edit that preset by deselecting the string sound, leaving just my favorite piano sound in the edit buffer.

2) **Toggle between preset and buffer:** Then when playing any preset I can press the same button that is lit and move to the sound stored in the buffer (my piano sound). To go back to a preset just press any of the ten locations. Repeated depressing of any preset toggles between the stored sound and whatever sound happens to be in the edit buffer.

The keyboard even keeps the edited sound or preset in buffer memory when you power down. As long as no other change has been made your preset in the buffer is intact.

3) **Finding and restoring a previous preset:** After playing the sound in the buffer over several minutes its easy to forget the last preset you used. In edit mode no stored

preset is selected but Ensoniq makes it easy for us to return to the preset we last played before we went into the buffer zone. Simply press and hold the preset key (one of the four buttons on the left side. The preset that I last used, or the preset that I just altered will flash while I depress the preset button. I can then release the preset button and select the button that was flashing and I'm back home with the chosen preset. If you keep holding the preset key (on the left) when you select the preset (one of the ten) you will of course store the edited version and lose the original stored version.

PART 4 Two Final Reminders

Before signing off there are two little things to mention by way of reminders.

1) **Name the preset by storing it:** We all welcomed the preset upgrades in the TS series, especially the feature that allowed us to store presets and name them similar to the way we name internal sounds. This feature of course is not available for the SD-1 preset mode, so we need to memorize the locations of our presets.

But there are some ways to help our poor memories. Ensoniq developers did at least allow for the naming of single presets that we save to disk. So, one handy way to keep track of your presets is to also store your important ones individually to disk with a descriptive name for the preset. Loading that preset from the disk places it in the buffer ready to play or store internally.

2) **Name the preset by making it a sequence:** Finally, don't forget that any unused sequencer locations make ideal homes for presets, and we get to name them as well just as if we were naming a sequence. In fact it is just that — a sequence with no recorded data on the tracks. And as we all realize we can make monster presets by layering up to twelve sounds in sequencer mode.

So don't be intimidated that you are still using an old keyboard like the SD-1. You have a very powerful controller at your disposal, and controlling presets begins to unleash its usefulness. ■

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MR-Flash

MR-Flash

Getting Flashed by the MR-61/76

James Rosand

From that very first day that I opened my issue of *Keyboard Magazine* and saw the two page glossy ad for Ensoniq's new MR-61/76 keyboards, I knew that I had to have one. Being a song writer, I was instantly intrigued with the compositional features of this new keyboard from Ensoniq. It was the fact that you could directly load a standard MIDI file into the sequencer via a DOS-formatted floppy that really piqued my interest.

Being a TS-12 owner I really enjoyed the ability of loading EPS/ASR samples into my keyboard. I have always felt that Ensoniq has been a leader concerning compatibility features between their product lines. The MR-61/76 follows through by providing the ability to load .aif/.wav files into a flash expansion board that remains intact even when powered off. This advertised feature was the feature that really pushed me over the edge as to buying my new MR-61.

I just received my MR-Flash Sample Memory Board. Within the amount of time it took me to unscrew the seven sheet-metal screws, open the hinged case and insert the small plastic circuit board stand-off into the MR-61's motherboard, I had installed the Flash Memory Board. Again, I must applaud Ensoniq's new user-installable memory cards and ROM upgrades. The installation manual is to the point and clearly takes you through the whole installation procedure. This is a convenient way of upgrading one's keyboard.

After a brief verification procedure, I was ready to start experimenting with my MR-Flash board. I'll have to admit that I was so anxious to try it out that I sort of skipped over some of the detailed documentation (compliments of our own Robby Berman.) This later came back to haunt me in the form of not understanding the concept of how the Flash board handles the factory pre-loaded samples in its memory.

I fired up the demo sequence that played the pre-loaded samples and was totally blown away. Hang onto your hat because this is some really amazing technology. There are

over 1007 Kbytes of really cool samples that are instantly available. When the time comes when you choose to load in your own .wav or .aif samples, Ensoniq has conveniently included a floppy disk with all the pre-loaded samples and demos safely tucked away on diskette.

Earlier I mentioned that I had skipped over some of the documentation in the manual that caused me some grief later on. The next morning when I fired up my MR-61, I couldn't find any of the Flash Samples. It was like they had disappeared. When I attempted to reload the samples off the diskette, the MR-61 gave me a message that the sample was already loaded and would I like to overwrite the sample? It wasn't until I re read the documentation that I learned what the problem was.

There are two kinds of RAM built into the MR. Flash and DRAM memory. Basically the Flash RAM is permanent and remains even when you turn your MR off. DRAM on the other hand is similar to the type of memory that computers use. It goes away the moment that you turn off your MR. "When the MR-61/76 loads sample data from a floppy, the data is stored on the MR-FLASH board." As the sample loads, the MR-61/76 automatically creates a sound that uses the newly imported sample data. This new sound is assigned to the *CUSTOM and USER-SND Sound-Finder categories. The new sound is "linked" to the sample that resides on the MR FLASH board.

When I initially installed my MR-FLASH board, these linked sounds were assigned to the MR-61/76's DRAM memory. When I shut off my MR-61 that evening, I had unwittingly erased my sound links to the actual samples residing on the MR-FLASH board. This is why they appeared to disappear when I fired up my MR-61 the next morning. When I reloaded the samples from my backup diskette and saved the sound links to INT-FLASH RAM memory slots, the samples were again all there. I could now turn off the MR-61 and still access the samples via the permanent INT-FLASH memory locations. Please read the manual, it really helps....

Now, let's see what the MR-FLASH board can do with ordinary .wav samples. By ordinary I mean the plain vanilla .wav files that you can find on your PC. I picked "The Windows Sound" .wav file that plays when I boot up

WIN95. I simply copied the windows.wav file to an ordinary 3.5" HD floppy and inserted the disk into my MR-61. I pressed the "LOAD" button and before I knew it the .wav file was loaded into the MR-FLASH board. I selected the sound and pressed "middle C" on the keyboard and there it was in its full glory. I thought I was booting WIN95 on my MR-61. The .wav sample doesn't loop and it gets faster and higher pitched as you move up the keyboard. Still, you have a perfect sample inside your MR-61/76.

Here is where the fun really comes in.... During the process of loading in a .wav or .aif file, the MR establishes a link to the sample residing in the FLASH expansion board. This sound then plays the .wav sample. You can now edit the .wav sample just as if it were any other sound in the MR's memory. I immediately turned the "INSERT EFFECTS" loose on the sample and could bend and shape the sample anyway I liked. All other edits are fair game also. Transpose the .wav file, key range or any edit you can think of... it's done. This is really great stuff. Don't forget that you can now send this .wav sound to your 16-track sequencer for use in that new sequence you are working on.

Do you think we are done yet? Not yet! I'm a real fan of Garth Hjelte's Ensoniq MIDI-DISK TOOLS and Ensoniq DISK TOOLS programs. These programs are great for editing your EPS, EPS-16+ and ASR samplers via computer. Both programs have the ability to convert Ensoniq WSs to, yes, you guessed it, .wav files. I was able to take an original disk that came with my EPS-16+ (disk ED-001) and read the FLUTE 1 WS with my PC's floppy drive. I then was able to convert the WSs to .wav files. I then copied these .wav files from the PC onto a 3.5" HD floppy and loaded them directly from the floppy, into my MR-61 FLASH expansion board. I'm still experimenting with the WS conversion process.

There is just too much information to cover here in one article. Armed with the Ensoniq DISK TOOLS program, an MR keyboard and a FLASH Expansion board, you can really do some amazing things with original samples from Ensoniq samplers. This is a dandy product. ■

The MR-Flash ROM Board: Like A Flash!

Eric Montgomery

First, I want to get all the skeptics out of the way. I am glad that Ensoniq's engineers had the insight to move on to a format that seems to be worth more to the lowly PC or

MAC user who doesn't have a ton of software or a huge computer system. It supports the standard sample file format (.WAV and AIFF) that my computer uses. Now I don't have to be concerned about finding a program that addresses my sampler and my small budget. That in itself is a nightmare. If you are just getting started with using your computer to work a few samples around you might want to try using a few simple programs to get the hang of manipulating samples. If you have Windows and Internet access it will be a good idea to try Awake. The URL to contact them and download a demo version is:

<http://hem.passagen.se/fmj/fmjsoft.html>

This software is capable of some sample editing and saving to several different file types. The most important file types it can save and load are, you guessed it, .WAV or AIFF. Those are the only two sample file types that the MR will read. You will also need Giebler Utilities software to be successful at getting those EPS, EPS-16+ and ASR samples into the computer. Their contact info is:

Giebler Enterprises

(610) 933-0332

<http://users.aol.com/giebler/>

I also want to mention that the MR-Flash does *not* work on the MR-RACK. It is designed for the MR-61/76 only. Believe me, I tried every possible combination and sysex dump. It doesn't work. I also want to get rid of the rumor that Flash will expand the sequencer memory or the internal RAM memory to hold more instruments. It does not expand those sections of the unit.

Let's also be clear about the internal Flash and Flash ROM. There is a huge difference. The internal Flash is like a battery-backed RAM that comes as a standard on all MR keyboards and the Rack. It is designed to be used as a means of temporary storage for internal instrument and rhythm data only. The Flash ROM is designed to hold sample data only.

After following the instructions on the installation of the Flash board, let's listen to the funky samples and demo sequence that came along with the Flash option. Put the MR-Flash Expander disk into the drive and Press the LOAD button.

Use your PARAMETER and VALUE knobs to get to:

ALL RAM:FLSH DEMO

Press ENTER. This file loads the demo and RAM sounds

that address the samples that were pre-loaded onto the board. If you want the sounds or pointers to stay in memory after powering down, you must load the file entitled:

Sound Bank:FLASH DEMO

into Internal Flash (as opposed to loading them into RAM). Warning: Loading into internal Flash memory will erase whatever is presently there.

After listening to the funky demo, I became rather inspired to load up some of my own groovin' samples. I used Giebler to get the samples into my computer via floppy disk. They were originally sampled on the ASR-10. Once they were on my hard drive I opened Awave and accessed the sample. After listening to the sample you can decide whether your sample needs looping, truncating, or rate conversion. After all of these things have been addressed, you are ready to save to disk. Once that is done, take the disk out of your computer and pop it into your MR.

There are no hidden procedures when it comes to loading a sample file. Just press LOAD and use your PARAMETER knob until you find the menu that says:

1-WAV Sound or 1-AIF Sound

If there is more than one sample file on your disk you will have to use your VALUE knob to access the others. Press ENTER. Use your PARAMETER knob to choose what location you want your patch data to go into, RAM or internal Flash. Use your VALUE knob to choose a blank location. Press ENTER. You have just loaded your first sample!

There are a few thoughts to keep in mind while using samples. The sample itself loads onto the Flash board. The patch data or pointer that addresses the sample can go into internal Flash or RAM, you have a choice. If you choose RAM, and turn the MR off, you will power up to the horror that you can't find the sample. If you check the flash board by going into the librarian and accessing the section on erasing samples you will find that the sample is there and you just can't get to it. AHHRRGG! (the Charlie Brown thing). That is really frustrating. All RAM is lost when you power down the MR. If you have already loaded your sample into RAM, and you wish it had been loaded to internal Flash:

1> Have the sound selected and press the SAVE button that is in the Soundfinder section.

2> Press ENTER

3> Select Single Sound with the VALUE knob, press enter.

4> Re-name your sound if you wish, press ENTER

5> Choose a sound type, i.e. Loopgroove, synth bass, etc. press ENTER At this point a blank internal Flash location has been selected for you automatically. Press ENTER. Now you can safely turn off the MR and still use your samples the next time you turn it on.

For you hip-hoppers, dance-techno people, maybe even advertisement or commercial song writers or any other type of performer, this is the coolest thing happening! No longer do you have to squirm while you load a sample in front of a hundred people. It is not necessary to waste that precious (and expensive) time in the studio loading samples when you could be mixing your tune. Now you can work on a song with samples and not have to worry about load up time or loading the right samples to match the song. They are going to stay in the keyboard until you decide to erase them! Wicked!

I hope this covers loading samples into the MR. It is easy to do and it is gratifying to have sounds in your song that you hear on the radio, on your favorite CDs, or even sounds that no one else has heard before. The bottom line is that sampling and using samples has changed the way we create all kinds of music. Whether it is Rock, R&B, Dance, or even a music genre that was created because of samples (Hip-Hop and Rap), it has changed our song writing and production tools for life. Used in a tasty manner, a simple drum loop, guitar riff or vocal sample can bring renewed life to a song. If you plan to try and release or copyright the material, remember to use only licensed samples to protect yourself. Above all else, have fun and turn on the Flash! ■

Bio: Eric Montgomery is currently working for Ensoniq in the Customer Service/Technical Support Division. Aside from work, he is an independent Composer/Producer. He is presently working on a project that is to be distributed to several Contemporary Jazz stations and Record Labels.

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

Trapped By Emotion by Nurvis (Paul Nurminen and Susan Orvis)

Tape: *Trapped By Emotion* (c) 1997 Nurvis Music

Artist: Nurvis (Paul Nurminen and Susan Orvis)

Contact Info: Paul Nurminen, 304 West Oak Ave, El Segundo, CA 90245-2213, Phone: 310-640-9253, Email: Nurmix@socal.com.

Equipment: Ensoniq EPS, SQ-R, KMX-16, Roland JV-880, D-110, Alesis HR-16, Boss DR-660, Digitech DSP-256XL, Alesis Microverb III, BBE Sonic Maximizer, Kawai MX-8SR, DBX 266 Compressor/Gate, Atari Falcon 030 running Cubase Audio, Tascam DA-20, Shure Beta Green 5.0 microphone.

Nurvis is not a psychological condition, it is the combination of the last names of its members, Paul Nurminen and Susan Orvis. And the music is a combination of their two talents, Paul producing the music and Susan providing the vocals. This songwriting duo presents an eight-song demo, five vocal tunes and three instrumentals — “the instrumentals will have vocals in the near future, but for now you’ll have to use your imagination if you want singing” writes Paul.

The instrumentation is “big,” unashamedly using total synth and sequencing technology, not attempting to fool the ear with acoustic instrument emulations. Interestingly, this relieves some tension that I never noticed existed before in other projects, but was always there, when synthesists attempt to make their zeros and ones sound like “the real thing.” The pressure is off here, just electronic sounds, but pure music nonetheless. In some ways, the actual composition takes center stage because people like me aren’t analyzing how “close” the sample comes to sounding “real.” The organic, human element is provided by Susan’s rich, sweet voice on the vocal tracks.

I’m Sorry — This opening track immediately makes me think of the theme to *Top Gun* (“Take My Breath Away”), compositionally, vocally, and instrumentally. In the middle of this breakup song is a spoken-word section (supposedly Paul’s voice) offering lame apologies for being a schmuck (“Give me another chance,” “I’ll change,” “You know the others meant nothing to me,” etc.), which will arouse either wry chuckles or chagrin, depending on which end of a breakup the listener has

been on. I swear Susan is singing the words “Just like a man” in the background. Whatever.

Clouded — This ballad-like instrumental is apparently one of those tracks that “will have vocals in the near future.” On its own, it doesn’t quite hold one’s attention as an instrumental piece, even though it is excellently composed and recorded. It simply wants vocals. The instrumentation sounds like the “best of the ’80s” synth-based tunes.

A Certain Look — Susan can certainly write lyrics with a vitriolic edge, fueled ostensibly by the angst of painful betrayals and unfulfilled promises and hopes. Frankly, it is refreshing to hear the straight-forward blast from the hurt party; not a victim-y whining, but the cutting truth: “I was your friend, not some dumb chick to screw” “Little man, couldn’t handle real love” “Think you’re funny? Well, I’m not laughing.” I’m assuming Susan’s lyrics reflect human experiences, not a stereotype of all maledom. Ahem. Anyway, this song, like a number of Nurvis tunes, has a techno-dance edge, with slightly Madonna-esque vocals.

Forgotten Times — Another dance-instrumental awaiting vocals. The pulsing 16th-note bass line and the synthy hi-hat on 2 and 4 will get dancers on their feet, or aerobics classes pumping. A nice piano melody/solo enters on some of the verses, showing a bit of musical subtlety in Paul’s arsenal. Where’s Susan? Her wonderful voice and lyrics could really make this tune a standout.

Warm Eyes — The dance genre continues on Side B with what I can only describe as “bubble-gum techno” because the vocal melody is from the “Hey la, hey la, my boyfriend’s back” era, but the perc tracks and instrumentation are from the ’80s dance dimension. Susan’s vocals seem to lack energy in this tune, perhaps because the lyrics are not hers (they were written by Julie Trainer), or maybe because they’re “nice” (*smile*). I keep waiting for her to pull the “bait and switch,” but this is an authentically positive song.

Nonplused — This instrumental is reminiscent of Infor-

mation Society, although the drum tracks aren't quite as techno-sounding (too "acoustic" a kit here). The ideas here are all good ones, but the choice of sounds is just a bit off to my ears. Pulsing 16th-note parts should use sounds with cleaner attacks, not swelling envelopes. The overall effect of these sound choices makes the tempo feel like it's dragging, when it should be pushing the beat a bit. Perhaps tweaking the quantization would help.

In The Stars — This track could be the hook for a Discovery Channel series on Astrology. Spoken-word vocals explain the basics of astrological theory in scientific language, interspersed with Susan's singing during the chorus, bringing in the romantic, human elements. This is a high-energy, well-produced track; my only gripe: it's too short!

Squish Squish — This is the Susan we have come to know and love, opening the tune with the words, "Dirty, sweaty animals act better than you." Ahhh, sit back and relax while she blasts the hell out of her ex-boyfriend. No doubt these lyrics will find a ready audience in the meat-market lounges, where many of the patrons will be

able to relate. She continues, "When exposed or imposed upon by an asshole, When exposed or imposed upon by a creeping crawling shit like you; Then foolishly I took a chance on, only to be crapped on, by an S.O.B. that only Satan could love; wait, I take that back; I need not attack Satan; even Satan has some redeemable qualities, and knows pure filth, filth like you, filthy beast that you are; Satan knows you, you can't hide, 'cuz you're a filthy beast." And believe it or not, these are the *nice* things she has to say! She starts to get nasty after this. You've got to hand it to Susan, when it comes to expressing her disgust, she doesn't namby-pamby around.

Okay, wringer time. "*Trapped By Emotion*" was sequenced and recorded direct-to-disk in Cubase Audio for the Atari, yielding pristine audio. Overall, the mixing and engineering are excellent, with all elements sitting wonderfully in the mix. A few times I found myself wishing the vocals were just a teeny bit more "present," but then again, uhhhhh, maybe not. (Just kidding!) I might suggest mixing the vocals a bit more dry, as the reverb at times interferes with the cutting nature of the lyrics, making Susan sound too "sweet." And I don't



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think Susan wants to sound too sweet. As I mentioned above on "Nonplused," the sounds Paul has chosen often don't "cut" through crisply enough for the techno dance beat he is trying to create. It's not always the "attack" of the patch that's the culprit, either; at times I notice that too long a decay can blur the necessary spaces between notes, especially on the "buzzier" synth sounds. These criticisms aside, Paul and Susan's compositions could definitely breathe life onto a sleepy dance floor. Again, the instrumentals do need vocals; they are not strong enough compositionally to stand on their own.

Lyricaly, the themes Susan and Paul present are true to life. This is the way some people talk about those who have hurt them. At the very least, the lyrics express the way some people feel about those who have hurt them, and could provide a cathartic outlet for the victimized listener. Not all music comes from our "happy place." Okay, enough psychoanalysis.

Paul wants you to know that "Trapped By Emotion" is

available at his contact address (see above) for \$10, and "questions are free." ■

Tapes Recently Received

Pendler — from Jorgen Teller

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



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

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Ensoniq MR-76, w/ EXP-1 Wave Expansion Board, MRD-1 Sound Disk, Soft Cover, Mark of the Unicorn MR-Editor/Librarian Software (Macintosh). AKG headphones. New 1/97. Excellent condition, originally \$3,100 — priced to sell at \$2,500. Call Bill at (515) 253-0140 (Iowa).

Ensoniq KT-88 for sale. Never used. Includes: LeCover dust cover, MS-1 sheet music stand, generic keyboard stand, CV-1 pedal, shipping. \$2,100 or best offer. Call Greg at 860-242-5251.

TS-12 with 8 meg update, library, and case. \$2500.00. Wayne Thompson, (503) 286-6389, synsin@spiritone.com

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.

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

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

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 wanted some info on what I get from upgrading my EPROM version of software on my EPS Classic. I have version 2.0 and want to go to the latest version. What will it do for me and my old faithful...????

Thanks,
Kevin Sykes
Kazper@paclink.com

[PF - Kevin: I can't remember what additional features there are between Version 2 and the latest (this was many years ago...), but I do know it makes for more robust (read more crashworthy) operation with less of those pesky "Error 144-reboot?" prompts when sending large amounts of MIDI data. I believe (and I've slept since then) that O.S. 2.49 required ROM V. 2.40, but I'd call Ensoniq Tech Support at 610-647-3930 just to make sure. My two EPS Classics have been running O.S. 2.49 w/ROM V. 2.40 EEPROMs since 1989, and short of some power supply repair, have been running flawlessly with this latest version of software and firmware. It is for this reason that I'd recommend doing the upgrade even if it offers NO new features simply because it's the most recent version for Old Venerable...]

[PF - Kevin: ...Additional news - I just discovered the most spectacular change when upgrading ROM V. 2.0 to ROM V. 2.40 and using OS V. 2.49 with ROM 2.40. Just working on a buddy's EPS Classic and it turns out that using ROM V. 2.40 and OS V. 2.49 you can change the interleave of your hard drive. This may not seem like much, but if you change the interleave of your hard drive to 2:1 or even 3:1, you'll cut your SCSI load times in about half! If you don't use SCSI disks, it might be a moot point.

Also, I've discovered with ROM V. 2.40 and OS V. 2.49, you CAN boot from SCSI ID #0. Can't do that with an older ROM version.]

Hi guys!

Only one question. I am the proud owner of an ASR-10 and a Macintosh II CI. I have also the Alchemy 2.5. I have read in the *Hacker* that it is possible to work with Alchemy and ASR-10 together. I can't do it. When I try to do this (via SCSI or MIDI), a message appears saying that the connections are wrong. But the connections are right! I'm aware that the version 2.5 does not support specifically the ASR-10. But for this version, the EPS and the EPS-16 Plus are the same sampler. So, I thought that the ASR-10 could be supported too by this version. Please, an answer.

P.S. Sure, the *Hacker* is a great magazine.

Thanks,
Teodoro Pedro Cromberg
Cromberg@SUDNET.COM.AR

[PF - Teodoro: The ASR-10, although generating the same MIDI Manufacturer's ID code, does indeed have a different MIDI Device ID#. Consequently the header information Alchemy expects never gets received, as it's expecting an EPS MIDI ID#. You'll need to contact Passport Systems to either (a) obtain the ASR-10 device driver or (b) upgrade to the most recent version of Alchemy (which I think is V. 3.0). Although similar in architecture and interface, the EPS/16+/ASR-10 are totally different instruments. Consider: if Alchemy is expecting 13-bit words out of an EPS and you're sending it 16-bit ASR words (or EPS-16+ words, for that matter), what's Alchemy to do with the extra data? Kinda like pouring 20 gallons of water into a 10 gallon jug. And best of all, we haven't even touched on what version of System software your CI is running! Get the latest ASR-10 driver and, if required to use this new driver, upgrade to the latest version of Alchemy. Upgrade charges are minimal for an application of this power. Life will be good again...]

[Richard Martinez (martinezr@mail.dec.com) - In the response to Teodoro, it was

mentioned that "If Alchemy is expecting a 13-bit word from out of an EPS and you're sending it 16-bit ASR words..." This sounds like the EPS is a 13-bit sampler. It was my understanding that the EPS had a 13-bit analog-to-digital converter, saved samples as 16-bit, and played the samples back with a 16-bit digital-to-analog converter which made it a 16-bit sampler. That is why the samples are interchangeable between the EPS, EPS-16+ (16-bit analog-to-digital converter), and the ASR-10. Please correct me if I am wrong. Thanks.]

[PF - Richard: This sounds very similar to the official Ensoniq answer to the same type questions a few years back. It was my understanding the EPS was a 12-bit sampler with a 13th bit floating-point mantissa. So yes, my analogy of 13 gallons of water into a pail designed for 16 really holds no water at all (nyuk-nyuk!) since there's 3 gallons (or bits) of air in the example. So, in fact, the issue is purely the ASR-10 MIDI ID header - Teodoro's version of Alchemy can't handshake with his ASR.

Would Ensoniq or the *Hacker* would please reiterate the official Malvern response for my own clarification, as well as our inquiring readers? Is the original EPS Classic a 13-bit ADC with a 16-bit DAC?

[TH - Ensoniq had the following comments way back in TH #56...

"The EPS uses 13-bit samples as source material, and all internal RAM is indeed 13 bits wide. Any signal processing operations are performed with 16-bit resolution to prevent signal degradation. The sample interpolator and digital filters have 24-bit resolution and the final signal is played back through a 25-bit floating point converter with 13 bits for waveform data and 12 bits of volume control. Though it is correct that the EPS stores and plays back 13-bit samples, you can still get excellent results generating DSP samples at 16 bits and then sending them over to the EPS for playback. This is exactly how we create many of our factory sounds."

Guys,

I'm trying to remember the correct MIDI settings on my EPS (which is transmitting) to Cakewalk. I can't remember and have a project due this Tuesday.

HELP....

Thanks.

M. Moore

McMOORE@cybersol.com

[PF - Mark: Good to talk to you today. For the rest of you readers, Mark couldn't get his EPS Classic to talk MIDI to Cakewalk Apprentice. It appeared through our conversation that the EPS wasn't set to multi mode, he might have had the gameport MIDI dongle connected backwards (does the "Out" MIDI cable actually mean the computer's MIDI Out or is it labeled so as to be connected to the keyboard's MIDI Out? Not the first time for this anomaly - I've done it too), and Cakewalk Apprentice doesn't slave to external MIDI Sync. It's good to know I'm not the only guy out there who has more than a special fondness for Old Venerable. Mark's up and running famously now, will meet his deadline for a Keebler spot due tomorrow morning.]

TH -

I guess this is my last resort... I have had this set-up for over a year now and I cannot get anyone to solve the problem or offer a solution.

My studio has a Yamaha Promix 01, D-88, D-38 and an Ensoniq SD-1. I need someone to tell me how I can make use of the Promix 01's 525 controllers it sends out. The problem is with the Ensoniq. It only has one (1) field for receiving ex-controllers. So, in the beginning, I thought I could only record one of the 525 from the Yamaha at a time. I did some trial and error and found some "universal" controllers... volume and so on, to the point where I had 8 that I could have recorded. But, that is as far as I have been able to figure. I am so, so disappointed that out of all of what that board can do for me, I can't figure out how to take advantage.

Any type of feedback is welcome!

P.S. Both support groups, Yamaha and Ensoniq seem to blame each other and never really get to the point of helping me.

Rick

RWaters445@aol.com

[PF - Rick: By ex-controllers I presume you mean the realtime Sysex the Promix 01 sends out when you move its faders or change settings/parameters. The SD-1 will record this information, but yeah, there's a lotta hoops you've gotta jump through to get this to happen. Fortunately, since you own an Ensoniq piece, you won't be diddling on it very much to achieve this result.

Since the SD-1 sports a 24-track sequencer, on any of the songs you've recorded, create a new track. Set it to record on the same MIDI channel that the Promix is sending out Sysex info on. Ensure you set the SD-1 to "Sysex On," and that the SD-1's BASE channel (usually MIDI channel #1, the default unless altered and saved) is NOT the channel your Promix is sending the SysEx on. Record-enable this track on the SD-1, and after you've started recording this track, whale away on the Promix. The SD-1 is recording all this on the track you just created and will send it out on playback. Since the Promix has motorized faders, you can verify proper operation on playback if these faders move. If the Promix's MIDI operation is dependant on active sensing, this may or may not work, as Ensoniq doesn't clog their MIDI pipes with FE's every 300 milliseconds...

I don't know if each channel of the Promix xmits on a different MIDI channel or not, but if it has 525 controllers that can xmit MIDI information, it's going to be sending some pretty specific codes/bank select/MSB/LSB-type data: pretty heady stuff that you'll need to bone up on from the Promix's MIDI Implementation Manual. Nine times out of ten (and again, this depends on your specific configuration and use of the Promix) a simple "snapshot" of current settings, fader position, etc., should be sufficient for most applications. This way, each song of the SD-1 can play back this "snapshot" to set the Promix for the settings you MIDI xferred. I'm sure there's more to it than this, but without knowing any more about the Promix and your specific configuration,

the above will work. But using the SD-1 to do this is like driving a Porsche to the grocery store - an old obsolete Sysex playback/recorder (like an Alesis MMT-8 or MIDIDisk) will do the job for about \$150 and free up your SD-1 for more musical chores.]

Hi,

I am the owner of an ASR-10. It is two years old now and I want to get the latest system disk. Where can I get it? The disk AD-002 (the one with orchestra strings on it) isn't working anymore - can I get another copy of that for free? If so, where?

One other thing I would like to know is, when I am recording a sequence on my ASR, sometimes I want to change the tempo in real time, eg. I want it to speed up towards the end of the verse sequence to go into a faster chorus sequence. When I try to move the tempo value in record mode it won't do anything. Is there any way around this problem?

Thanks, and I look forward to your reply.

Alfred Dale Tuohey
atuohel0@scu.edu.au
Southern Cross University
Lismore NSW Australia

[PF - Alfred: Point your browser to www.ensoniq.com. You can download the latest version of the ASR-10's OS (V. 3.53) from there, as well AD-002. If that's a problem, contact The Electric Factory down under. Contact Michael Allen at mallen@geko.com.au or voice at 03-480-5988. They're the Australian Ensoniq distributor and can help as well.

The ASR does NOT have a "conductor" or other tempo track to control playback tempo. The workaround is to determine how many measures you want the ritardando (er, accelerando) to take place over, then copy this section of x # of bars to a new sequence location. Repeat this process by the number of bars in this section; if it's an 8-bar accelerando, copy this section to 8 new sequence locations. Strip all but the first bar from the first copy, all but the second bar from the second copy, etc. Now that you have 8 sequences of one bar each, increase the tempo of each bar (sequence) by 1/8 of the desired change you're looking for, so that by the end of

the 8th bar you're at the desired tempo. Chain them together in the song, kick back and listen. Not as easy or as elegant as a tempo track, but just as effective...]

Hi!

I am a programmer/musician/student. I am initiating a project codenamed VirtuArt. The goal of the project is to create simple, affordable (in fact, free) and powerful sequencer software. After 6 years of frustration using current sequencers, I've decided to make my own. And for that, I need help from people like you, to tell me what you'd like to see in tomorrow's MIDI software.

This is a unique opportunity for you, as a musician, to tell me what you've always dreamed of in a sequencer – and to have real results. When I get enough responses, I will setup a mailing list, discussion forums and a chat channel where we can discuss and exchange ideas. Ideas that are retained will then be implemented in the project. People will then become beta testers if they are willing to, and will be given a close insight on the product. There will be a freeware "Lite" version, and a full version. Those who contribute to the project will also be given a free copy of the full version when it is finished.

E-mail if you're interested!

Regards,
Dominic Filion
dfilion@homemail.com

[PF – Dominic: If you write a sequencer as powerful as the Ensoniq interface, I'll bet Malvern would like to hire you. Mac or PC based?]

TH –

Now that I've seen the ASR-X on Ensoniq's website, I'm wondering if they're

planning a keyboard version and/or retrofit kit for the ASR-10. I would love to have my ASR-10 souped up with these new features, especially the 32 meg of RAM!

Joseph Castiglia
JoeCass@msn.com

[PF – Joseph: Only Ensoniq will be able to answer that one. I'd like to think such an upgrade would be possible, but I'd strongly doubt it'll happen. And not for hardware reasons – these guys build indestructible gear that performs WAY past its lifetime. Since the ASR-X has no keyboard, I'm afraid Malvern would have to respin the hardware, as well as rewrite the OS to accommodate a keyboard mechanism. THAT, by definition, is a completely new instrument, not an upgrade. Maybe we'll see an ASR-X keyboard in the future. But that's NOT a prediction – more of a hope. If you call 610.647.3930 maybe they'll give you the scoop...]

[TH – And, of course, Ensoniq may have some comment here when this set of letters goes to them and then to print.]

[Ensoniq – The ASR-X is a completely new design. This makes it impossible to offer this product as an upgrade for any ASR-10 product. The fact is, the ASR-X would really work better WITH your ASR-10 than as a replacement for it.]

Dear Hacker,

I am from the UK. I own a TS-12. Am I the only person in this country who has one? I have recently been in touch with Key Audio Systems – the UK distributor for Ensoniq. I was inquiring about getting the latest operating system disk for my keyboard. I have just received a letter telling me that the operating system is not available. I think the TS-12 is an awesome keyboard and is still in big demand in the UK, but it is let down by the very poor customer support in this country. I had to

order my CV-pedal from the USA! Why nobody stocks it in the UK is beyond me. Why, oh why, do I have so much trouble getting help? Shop assistants also seem to be afraid of helping me with Ensoniq equipment. Please tell me why this is.

I have recently been told that the ASR-10 is available at a ridiculously cheap price here in the UK. If I was guaranteed some decent support, I would buy it within the next month. Otherwise, I will have to resort to purchasing a sampler beginning with E, A, or even R. Surely somebody can save me from this disaster...?

Let me point out again that the TS-12 is superb. It has one of the best, if not the best weighted-action keyboard I have ever played. The sounds are warm, deep, and usable. The sequencer, programming facilities, effects are outstanding. The patch select buttons are a gift. The support is pants. There is one thing stopping me from saying this is my perfect keyboard – it cannot load samples from other formats. For goodness sake, how difficult is it to read a *.wav file?? I won't sell my TS-12, ever! If the time ever comes when the sounds are dated, the keyboard action is still something that makes the TS a VERY capable mother keyboard.

John Ogden,
106144.3022@compuserve.com

[PF – John: I just went to <http://www.ensoniq.com/midi/binary.htm#ts> and sure enough, it ain't there! I don't know what's happened here, because the O.S. for the ASR, the 16+, etc., are all available. I'll leave a message with the "Webmaestro" to see where the TS-series O.S. is lurking at their URL.

The ASR-10 is THE most-supported sampler on this blue ball. It will read Roland and Akai-format sample CDs as well. If you plan on doing this seriously, ensure you get an ASR-10 Turbo (with 16 Mb RAM, SCSI, Digital I/O) so you don't have

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Missing or Damaged Issues?

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.)

to piece the instrument together in the UK – get the big dog first time out, right? If you're as with the Ensoniq sequencer environment as I am, you're gonna love the ASR since the sequencer interface is VERY similar. It's been doing direct-to-disk for two years now. The A, E & K wannabes are just now offering this as an option on their warez this year. The ASR-88 has an almost identical action and feel to the TS-12, so if you're after weighted action, bag the 88 if you can locate one. It's torqued up right out of the box; it ships as a turbo.

If you're a PC kinda guy, there's enough shareware out there to get *.wav files into Ensoniq format. You WILL need Gary Giebler's utilities to get them onto an Ensoniq formatted diskette medium, but you're talking \$40 here. And the A, E, & R boxes can't do that.

I've said this for some 10 years, I'll say it again: "If you're gonna bag a sampler, make sure it says Ensoniq on it." You'll never regret it...]

[John Seboldt (rohrwerk@pconline.com) – Hey, remember that the TS operating system is not on disk, guys! Duhhhhh. It's all in the internal chips. Here in the US they say it needs to be done in the shop, and Ensoniq supplies the chips for free for your local shop to install at their cost (pretty small).]

[PF – John O, John S: Duhh is right! The TS-series OS is indeed FIRMWARE, not SOFTWARE based. As such, no such OS disk exists. Why didn't I remember the General MIDI upgrade to the TS's where you had to return the instrument to your friendly Ensoniq dealer to have the OS installed? Apologies to all parties: I've been having a grand time with Internet Service Providers, and simply had brain flatulence on this one. Kudos to John S for bringing this not only to my attention but also to our reader base. Thanx!]

[GNormand@aol.com – You can actually install the upgrade chips yourself, assuming the board is out of warranty, and also that you know something about delicate electronic components.

Remember the TS reads ASR samples.]

[midimark@themall.net – Hey, the TS will

load ASR and EPS-16+ samples and we have a ton of 'em available on floppy and CD ROM disks at <http://www.midimark.com>.]

TH –

I want to build my own output expander for the ASR-10 and figured out that I only needed to connect contra jacks to the corresponding points on a mini-DIN plug. I own an Akai VX600 which has an output expander working on this principle. Or do I need extra circuitry for the ASR-10?

Thanx if you could help me out with this, Ramsay
ramsay@mailoffice.net

[PF – Ramsay: The miniDIN plug on the back of the ASR outputs a multiplexed (mux'ed) signal and will ONLY work with the OEX-6. Simply connecting pins to 1/4" jax won't get you there. Bag the real deal – you'll save a lot of time, headache, and possibly \$\$\$ if you nuke the logic board of the ASR trying to roll your own...]

[Ensoniq – Heed Pat's warning on this one. The OEX-6/OEX-6SR is NOT simply a breakout box which connects jacks up to the connector, it has a lot of active digital and analog circuitry in it. While the EPS used a multiplexed analog output, the EPS-16+ and ASR use digital audio signals. These signals consist of high frequency clocks and digital audio bit-streams. In order to turn these into audio you need input buffers, multiple D/A converters and associated output filtering/buffer circuitry.]

G'Day,

I am sending a start message from Cakewalk to a TS so that its sequence will then send a key binding back to Cakewalk. But I want to get the TS sequence to stop and then restart, while the Cakewalk continues on. The MIDI start/stop generated by Cakewalk does work to start and stop the TS. I've tried the button up and down messages as specified in the TS sysex specs. They start the TS, but will not stop it. In fact, it appears that the TS will not respond to any sysex message once it is in sequence play mode. Is this correct, Ensoniq?

So this is a dead-end road.

It was suggested that I use the MIDI Start/Stop messages sent in Sysex. But, no one seems to know how to do this. Maybe someone does? Any suggestions?

If you are interested, I have posted my method to automate the lyrics display in Cakewalk on the Cakewalk General News group.

Mel Laraway
mlaraway@senet.com.au

[Andrew Ogden (106144.3022@compuserve.com) – When I bought my TS, I was able to name presets and sequences etc. by using the actual keys of the keyboard on the TS. When I did a reboot as instructed in the manual, this function failed to work. I just thought it would be a case of loading the necessary disk and hey presto! Obviously it's not that easy.]

[PF – Andrew, Mel, et. al.: Keyboard naming is an option that must be selected in the "Master" menu. This function defaults to off after a reinitialization. Switch it back on and you're back to "playing Names" ...]

Dear Hackers,

Help! My name is Michael Fogarty and for the last 25 years have lived overseas as a missionary, social worker, and musician. I am presently living in Japan. Garth Hjelt really helped me out a couple of years ago when I bought an Ensoniq sampler, but I am in need again.

I have an MR-76 and use it with a PC. My sequencing program is Cakewalk Pro Audio. I have successfully recorded quite a few songs with these applications but have a few questions which I would appreciate your help on. Here's how I do it. First I choose my tones for my 16 MIDI channels and send them one by one to the onboard sequencer of the MR-76. I don't actually record any data to the MR sequencer, but merely put the tone there. Normally I will save the tone to RAM so that I can use it in Unisyn, and therefore have to go back and forth from Soundfinder to the "MIDI-OUT:Xmit bnk:prg" screen when I want to edit my tones. For instance, if I want to raise the snare on my Song Edit kit, I have

to leave the MIDI-OUT screen, go to Soundfinder, find the kit, raise the snare, save it again to the Song Edit kit, and then scroll back to the MIDI-OUT screen to use it with Cakewalk. It works, but it's a little tedious in comparison to let's say a JV-1080. Is there a simpler way?

Another problem I have is I don't know how to save the FX. I can spend a long time on the FX in the different busses, and then save my MIDI-file, RAM, or All RAM, but when I load the MR back up the next day it seems to always default to EQ Reverb. I can't find anywhere in the manual how to save the FX.

Maybe part of the problem is I never owned an Ensoniq keyboard before. I have an EPS-16+, but it works quite differently being a sampler. I love it, and will soon be getting an ASR-10 unless the new desktop sampler will be coming out soon. (Sorry for the sideline. I'm just so excited to have someone who speaks English and Ensoniq to talk to. Any news on the new sampler? I heard that it might be under \$2000 - rumour?)

Maybe part of my problem is I don't even know what a preset and a performance is. I would like to have settings saved for live as well, but though I understand how Roland's part, patch, and performance works, I haven't quite come to grips with the MR-76. Anyway, I'm sold on the product, but know that I must be piddling around in puddles when there are oceans to swim. Somebody please help me.

Continuing on - I was really excited about the possibility of using ASR-10 discs in the MR, and now find out that you have to configure it through a PC. Is that going to be simple? Besides the ver. 2.0 ROM upgrade and the MRFlash expansion board, what else do I need? Is it some type of software for my PC? Is it going to be easy or will I be discouraged from configuring the discs because it's too time consuming? Could somebody explain to me how that works before I spend \$300 for the expansion board?

As you can see I am a pretty desperate case, and time consuming as well. My biggest thrill in life is helping others and making music - actually playing and recording, and if I am shown something technical or can read it clearly step-by-step

then I can get it, but I am more of a composer/arranger/singer than a technical whiz. Sorry for the bother guys! I do appreciate the help. Also, is there a new manual? I bought mine in October 1996.

Sincerely,
Michael Fogarty
a2007@awa.or.jp

[PF - Michael: I'd first ensure you're running the newest OS for the MR. 2.0 is the most current that I'm aware of, but George Brennan has been told that there is a 2.1 version to be released soon. A new owner's manual (excuse me, Musician's Manual) is also available - highly recommended. This should resolve the sysex problems you may be encountering. Be aware that the Unisyn editor is for the MR Rack. They don't have an MR-61 or MR-76 profile as yet...

Yes, the secret of using ASR sounds in the MR-series is to first convert them to a *.wav format, as the MR can only import WAV or AIFF files. The AWAVE program will do this. Point your browser to <http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps>. This will get you to Garth Hjelte's RCS homepage, where links to shareware apps like AWAVE can be located and downloaded.

Projected MSRP of the ASR-X was \$1595 last time I talked to Malvern, and it's gonna be a killer (should you expect anything less of Ensoniq?), so stay tuned.]

[TH - 2.1 has been released. No word on the changes.]

[Hi - My name is Edward Spyrka. I have the same problem and the same question as Michael. I also own an MR-76 but use it with Atari - Notator SL. Is there a simpler way to record than to go forth and back from Soundfinder to the MIDI-OUT?

Would you be so kind and explain me it step by step?

Sincerely yours,
Edward Spyrka
Edward.Spyrka@radio.opole.pl]

[PF - Mike & Ed: I've been twiddling with this for a coupla days now. The secret is to "Save Session," as this writes the entire MR settings (as well as edits) to disk. The

MR, on power-on, will ALWAYS default to a reverb algorithm.

Personally, I just "Save all Songs" - this gets me Instrument/Track assignments, Insert FX on the proper tracks/instruments, as well as the currently selected instrument active. Any edits I've done on the Insert FX (or global effects as well) seem to get loaded in this manner.

I think what's happening here is people are trying to edit sounds in the Soundfinder without saving them to a RAM location. As the sequencer is obviously a RAM-based area, saving there works for me...]

TH

With reference to a question posted by myself in TH #142 regarding RHYTHM/SOUND level and your answer that it was a known bug. I have so far been unable to get the O.S fix from my dealer or the UK importers. I have been told there is a OS 2.02 but it does not address this bug. I was recently informed that there is a 2.10 which has the fix.

Could you enlighten me as to what version is commercially available and does it address the RHYTHM "mix level" bug.

Thanks,
George P Brennan
Ireland

[PF - George: Most Ensoniq upgrades during the warranty period are free. The only monies you'd pay would be to a technician for the labor involved in replacing the ROMS. I personally don't know the differences between OS 2.02 and OS 2.10: I just had the OS V.2.0 installed and it seems to work just fine.

Your Ensoniq dealer CAN get you these new ROMS for your MR. Bert Neikirk told me that about a month ago they were indeed getting ready to do a production run of the new OS, so just have your dealer contact Ensoniq. If you feel you're getting a poke in the eye, contact Ensoniq US directly at 610.647.3930. And again, I can't say enough about their commitment to their customer base. Hang in there!]

[TH - And, at least on earlier upgrades -

and probably on this one, Ensoniq did provide a little "do-it-yourself" kit.]

TH -

What's the difference between a Sound-
scape PNP AWE32 and a Soundscape
VIVO 32? I frequently browse an on-line
auction site on which these cards can be
purchased for less than \$60 - are they
worth it?

JoeCass@msn.com

[PF - Joe: The PNP AWE32 is a Sound-
Blaster, and not a Soundscape. The major
difference between the two is that the
AWE32 has two 30-pin SIMM slots for
loading in *.wav files. The SoundScape, on
the other hand, with its own 68000-series
processor and exquisite wavetable, doesn't
need extra RAM on the soundcard to get
quality sounds. The PNP is the acronym
for "plug & pray" (er, plug & play) usual-
ly indicating it's kosher with Windoze 95.

I'm not familiar with the VIVO 32, but I'm
sure either of the cards is certainly worth
\$60 - MSRP on the SoundScape is \$179!
All versions of drivers (from NT down to
DOS) are available for these cards at En-
soniq's Webpage or their ftp site, so I
don't think you could get hurt bagging
either of these cards...]

[Joseph Castiglia (JoeCass@msn.com) -
Thanks for the very helpful info, however
now I'm really confused - I'm aware of
Creative Labs Soundblaster PNP cards,
but the auction site I mentioned states the
card for sale is an ENSONIQ PNP AWE32
- not Soundblaster! There seem to be dif-
ferent models of Ensoniq cards and I was
trying to find out the differences. The
cards come with a 30 day warrantee from
a re-seller, so I assume they are re-man-
ufactured, thus the low price. Maybe a call
to Ensoniq customer service would be in
order?]

[PF - Joe: Since Ensoniq has a Multi-
media division, I wouldn't hesitate to ping
them as well. If Ensoniq makes an PNP
AWE32 card, I'll bet Creative Labs has
something to say about that. Malvern
OEM's a variety of cards out to computer
companies for inclusion in specific models
(Gateway uses a VIVO card for OEM
sound, for example), but this is such a

dynamic industry you'd really want to
speak with Ensoniq as to what version of
their card is called what in an OEM box...

...I just visited w3.ensoniq.com - no PNP
AWE 32 cards are referenced. The card in
question is either a Creative Labs PNP
AWE 32 or an Ensoniq VIVO 90 or
Soundscape/Soundscape Elite. Easy way to
tell, again, is if there are SIMM slots on
the soundcard. SIMM slots indicate a
Creative Labs product. No Ensoniq cards
utilize SIMM expansion (unless they're
keeping it a secret).]

[Craig Morford (cmorf@netnet.net) - Joe,
I'd stay away from an Ensoniq VIVO 90.]

[TH - Craig: Maybe you could elaborate
on that a little...?]

[Craig Morford (cmorf@netnet.net) - Yes,
to elaborate...]

I've been trying for 4 months to get that
soundcard to accept MIDI information
from my SQ-2. Any MIDI files that I've
loaded from other sources, when played,
garble the notes and sustain all notes
played. Talked to dozens and dozens of
people from all companies involved. No
go. Not a happy camper.]

[Craig Morford (cmorf@netnet.net) - I've
written several times over the past four
months about my inability to get any MIDI
to work with Midisoft Midikit Recording
Session 4, a CyberMax computer, Ensoniq
VIVO90 soundcard and an Ensoniq SQ-2
synth. Well, Joseph at Ensoniq just sent me
the older version sound card, the Ensoniq
VIVO (not 90), and BINGO!!! I'ma doin'
midi! Finally, after four months of trying,
success. Thanks for your ideas and sup-
port, people! Now maybe I can post more
music oriented (vs. tech oriented) ques-
tions. Stay away from that VIVO90!]

[Ensoniq - The difference between these
two cards is moot because neither is an
Ensoniq card, based on the names. We
also see very strange advertisements on
the Internet for what are supposed to be
our sound cards. In actuality, these cards
are probably ours with very strange
names. Ensoniq does NOT make or sell
either a Soundscape PNP AWE32 or a
Soundscape VIVO32. We do make a
VIVO90 card that happens to be PNP.]

Howdy!

Just got a computer to call my own, so I'm
trying to find my feet. (They're not where
I left them...) I've been having problems
with a project involving audio tracks. I just
found out from Ensoniq my Zip drive isn't
supposed to be fast enough for disk
tracks.. Don't think it was on the sheet I
got with my unit... It was working fine for
over a year, then problems popped-up. I
tried to use Ram Tracks instead and got
the same things happening. Ensoniq CS is
helpful, but gave me some bad info. The
guy claimed the "scratch-pad-limited-
nature" feature was a one-take proposition
- no punching-in...Turns out by recording
in add mode, I was creating a different file
each punch-in. Replace mode was the
answer. I'm still concerned about using the
Zip for Disk Tracks. Maybe someone
knows a special configure recipe to help...
After getting past this hurdle, I resumed
laying harmony vocals only to get a Fatal
Error 145, destroying an afternoon's work.
The next day after finally getting it in the
can, I got an Error 144 (reboot) after
making some sequence replace overdubs.
What do these messages mean? I'm also
wondering if an occasional hang is some-
thing I have to accept - it happens once in
awhile for unknown reasons - no buttons
active, must reboot...

Anyway, it's great to finally be online. By
the way, I was one of the original Mirage
guys and after re-subscribing for my
ASR-88 purchase was surprised to see the
occasional Mirage question/comment. I
used to be listed under the Transoniq-Net
for MASOS questions, and would be glad
to offer help on anything I can still
remember about the Mirage....

That's all for now...
TheWackman@aol.com

[PF - Wackman: Welcome back!

We're not moving 64k back and forth be-
tween keyboard halves in hex anymore, are
we? You'll discover than very few, if any,
removable media has a SUSTAINED data
xfer rate to keep up with audio tracks. I
thought it would be mondo cool to burn a
CD with my audio tracks on it, only to find
out it's WAY too slow for ATRK duties.
There's an issue with Zip drives and ASR
compatibility, but if you can format Aip

carts, you don't have an affected unit.

Only Authorized Ensoniq Tech Support personnel are privy to those error codes. You might talk to the tech at your music store and see if you can bribe him out of a copy of those codes for a free lunch or something. I think a 144 is a MIDI buffer overflow, but I'm just guessing here. Or see if Malvern will volunteer what a 144 or a 145 is. I've never seen a 145, so if you do find out, ping us back here...]

[Ensoniq - Zip drives are NOT recommended for Disktracks because Zip drives don't have "intelligent caching." like there is on the Bernoulli, for example. Regarding error codes, occasionally they can be meaningful in context (e.g. system error 144 when you're in a MIDI loop). Generally, the error codes that our products display are NOT for diagnosing problems on your keyboard. These codes are for engineers to design products around chipsets.]

Hi,

I'm a long-time subscriber (first issue Nov 1986!) and I need some help.

I recently upgraded from an SQ-2 to an MR-61. I also have an SQ-R+ and would like to donate the SQ-2 to our local high school's instrumental music program. Shortly after I bought my SQ-2 (and before I bought a computer) the memory "glitched," and I lost all the factory presets and sequences. I have a Mac, and all of Ensoniq's support files are PC only :-(. Is there anyone out there in Transoniq Hackerland who has a sysex dump of the internal data from an SQ-2 so I can re-initialize this synth before I donate it? I will gladly pay for the disk and postage....please email me at youngman@eznet.net

Hopefully...
Gerry Youngman
Mendon, NY

[PF - Gerry: The only thing you can't restore from the factory settings on your SQ-2 are the sequences. Unless the SQ-2's came from Malvern with some tricked out RAM sounds for these sequences, you should be able to restore all the patches by reinitializing the unit. Any readers out there with the original SQ-2 sequences?]

[Craig Morford (cmorf@netnet.net) -

Gerry,

The SQ-2 re-inits back to factory defaults very easily. Too easily, in fact, I've done it by mistake a few times.]

TH -

I have received and installed the EPROM U200 containing O.S Ver 2.10. To my dismay it doesn't solve my problem with setting Rhythm volume/mix levels.

Maybe I am trying to do something that is not possible or going about it the wrong way. (It wouldn't be the first time.)

I am trying to edit a Rhythm, set the MIX to 40 and save it as a *custom* Rhythm. It saves the Rhythm to FLASH alright but the MIX has reverted to 100 when accessed at a later date. (This also happens with the VAR, it reverts to 1.)

Basically what I am trying to do is to create *custom* Rhythms which are preset to a desired volume level for practising and live performance. I want their residency to be in FLASH memory. (I assume that ROM Rhythms cannot be edited.)

What I really really want is to be able to adjust the global volume of all rhythms either permanently, semi-permanently or interactively. I am easy, just like the "SPICE GIRLS."

If any of the above are not possible, can the Rhythm levels be set editing the drum-kit zone by zone?

Any solutions or suggestions would be greatly appreciated as this issue has become a Holy Grail, haunting my everyday conscious existence.

Thanks,
George P Brennan
Ireland
george.brennan.doe@nics.gov.uk

[PF - George: I'd recommend copying the rhythm pattern to a sequence track (as outlined in Tony Ferrara's article in the Hacker of a coupla months ago). This way you can edit the track level and save it as part of a preset/sequence. As the Drum Machine section of the MR is totally independent of the track sequencer. This may, in fact, be the only way to get a controller #7 handle on the drum part.

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I'm so busy exploring the sound engine of the MR I've never diddled with the Drum Machine to the level you're taking it - apologies. It seems to me that copying the drum pattern into a track is like copying a ROM pattern into a RAM location, where you could not only edit volume, but the note data as well. I'll tinker with this in the next few and report my results...]

[TH - The article by Tony mentioned by Pat was in Issue #139.]

Hello -

I have a rather unusual question. I'd like to sample a section of a song from a CD, and then slow the sample playback to 1/2 speed or slower to pick out a difficult, fast riff that's being played. At the same time, I'd like to maintain the original pitch. Is this possible? If so, how would I do this?

Thanks for any help you can offer.
Mike Randolph
randolph@emerald.gene.com

[PF - Mike: If you've got an ASR-10, it's a snap - just use the "Time Compress/Expand" function under the Command/Wave functions. It's outlined in the ASR's Musician Manual on page 182, but just to make it easy, here's the deal...

Sample the section you want, assign it a track and save it. If it's a long section this will take multiple floppies (but you've got the SCSI interface, right?) Once selected, Cmd/Wave/Scroll to the "Amount=100%" screen and set it to 200. Press yes, and the "Quality=99" screen pops up. Higher quality values equate to longer processing time, so try a low value first just to make sure you're expanding the sample by double the time.]

Hi guys!

Only one question. I am the proud owner of an ASR-10 and a Macintosh II CI. I have also the Alchemy 2.5. I have read in the *Hacker* that it is possible to work Alchemy and the ASR-10 together. I can't do it. When I try to do this (via SCSI or MIDI), a message appears saying that the connections are wrong. But the connections are right! I'm aware that the version 2.5 does not support specifically the ASR-10. But for this version, the EPS and

the EPS-16 Plus are the same sampler. So, I thought that the ASR-10 could be supported too by this version. Please, an answer.

Thanks,
Teodoro Pedro Cromberg
Cromberg@sudnet.com.ar

[PF - Teodoro: As I answered in your previous posting, upgrade from Alchemy 2.5 to 3.0 or newer. Life will be good again when your IICI and ASR can handshake and trade data.]

Hi,

I'm Gunnar from Berlin, looking for anybody who could help me with an instrument definition for Cakewalk for the MR-61. I'd be glad, if you drop me a message...

Greetings from Berlin (wonderful weather today...)
Gunnar Schlenner
schlenner.bln@sni.de

[PF - Gunther: I'd recommend using the "GM Sound Map" of Cakewalk and setting the MR to GM Mode to start, as this will get you up and running and selecting the proper sounds and patch selects. As the MR-Series is expandable to 84 Mb of WaveROM, this would represent a few thousand instruments that would simply be radical to sift thru in a MIDI Mapper. I'll bet there's some enterprising individual out there in the ether that has done this already. Readers?]

Hey guys & gals!

Long time! I've just "reverted" back to an EPS-16+ that is equipped with a PS Systems 4x expander and was wondering if you all ever hear of SCSI kits available for either the expander or a full Ensoniq expander w/SCSI. I've heard that PS is kaput... Didn't you guys run a SCSI "how-to" article way back when? Looking forward to hearing from you!

Ben Ash
BAshjr@aol.com

[PF - Ben: I'm one of the biggest SCSI nuts out there working with Ensoniq gear. The PS Systems 4X expander will NOT

work with the Ensoniq SCSI interface. The Indiana National Guard Band I work with (yes, I'm a weekend warrior) purchased an EPS Classic back in 88 with the SCSI expander and a PS Systems 4X expander, and they couldn't talk to each other. We had to return the PS Systems 4X and exchange it for an Ensoniq 4X. The PS Systems 4X was kinda cool in that it didn't stick out of the back of the EPS like the Ensoniq 4X, but that didn't really mean much since it wouldn't work with the Malvern SCSI adapter, so back it went. The Maartists 4X expander worked famously with the Malvern SCSI adapter, but they're NLA (outta business as well). As memory prices fell, profit margins eroded, and these companies disappeared.

I've had discussions with Ensoniq back in 1989 about the SCSI issues (and pin 3 issues on the Ensoniq SCSI expander), but if you want reliable and quiet operation, doff the PS 4X for whatever you can get for it and bag the Ensoniq 4X and SCSI card. You'll spend more than quite a bit of time organizing and writing files to a SCSI drive - using the Ensoniq hardware will guarantee you won't be doing all that work in vain (or doing it again next week).

Now if the Flash option was still available...]

[Ben Ash, Jr. - PF: Thanks - I was afraid of that... Guess I'll have to spring for the Ensoniq part, though I sure wish I could find a used one around somewhere. I don't relish paying Ensoniq the \$350 they're asking for theirs now!]

TH -

Anyone heard of SCSI communication problems connecting an ASR to a Powermac 8100? My IICI works great but the 8100 and ASR seem to hate each other. Any info appreciated.

TimS@nyo.com,internet

[PF - Tim: The 8100 is a dual-buss machine - there's two SCSI busses on this Powermac. This probably isn't the issue though, unless one of your SCSI drives or peripherals is trying to share the same SCSI ID of the ASR.

I'd venture to say it's more of a system-related issue. Are you using 7.1.2 or

7.5.3, 5., 7.6? Early versions of the Power-Mac OS (inclusive of 7.1.2 and 7.5, 7.5.1) include an extension called SCSI Manager 4.3 which allows asynchronous xfers over the buss. I don't think the ASR or the drive it's sharing like this arrangement. Try opening the Extension Manager and unchecking this particular extension so it doesn't load at startup.

Most all the SCSI-related problems with later Mac OS's revolve around the older Apple HDSC setup app, which is not cool with OS 7.5 or later. To successfully update your OS to 7.5.2 or 7.5.3 (either Buster or Son of Buster updates 1.0 or 2.0) you want to install the newest SCSI driver for your Mac HD, and this might be the problem as well.

I'm using a 7100/80 chipped up to 90 MHz, and my ASR drive seems to get along fine with it.

Try downloading EPScsi from <http://www.op.net/~mikeh/ensoniq.html> or EPSm from Terje's Node at <http://fysmac04.uio.no/eps.html>. These are two very cool utilities for ASR SCSI drive maintenance.

Hope this helps!]

[PF - Tim: This just in... ensure 32-bit addressing is enabled in the Memory control panel of your 8100. You might want to switch "Modern Memory Manager" off, although I'm pretty sure the MMM CDEV is germane to NuBus-to-NuBus xfers/addressing/etc. You might try it anyway, just to check. Hope this helps!]

Dear Ensoniq expert,

I have a 3.5 floppy with data from an Ensoniq VFX-SD. Can you convert it to a SMF General MIDI file?

Urgent.

Thanks,
Michael Reichel
reichelm@dcsengr.hqusareur.army.mil

[PF - Michael: Point your browser to <http://www.giebler.com> and request the VFXSMF package. This'll let you convert your SD-1 sequences into SMF type 1 files. You'll need the Ensoniq Disk Manager (EDM) from Gary as well, but these are the recommended warez to get to there

from here. Highly recommended.]

[Michael Hyman (mikeh@op.net) - To PF: It might be good idea for you to stop using "Warez" to describe Giebler, Waveboy, and other software, as you have been doing in TH. "Warez" is a counter-culture hacker-slang term meaning illegally pirated commercial software.]

[TH - Always learning. More importantly, ahem, we here at the Hacker wish people (and by this we mean everyone on the planet) would stop using "hacker" when they mean "cracker." "Hacker" *used* to be a term of honor - back when we started this 'zine...]

[PF - Gang: To the installed base of readers, "warez" is late-'70s slang for software obtained illegally, i.e., copied, pirated, etc. "Cracked warez" are illegally pirated "warez" that've been hacked to obvert the copy protect scheme. Our honorable advertisers practice neither, nor have I ever said or inferred anything that could be misconstrued as such. To the contrary, I point a lot of readers to them. I use the term endearingly as reference to an era of both Hacker and Ensoniq days gone by. In this era of political correctness, I knew I should call them "wares" - THAT's why I didn't. However, in the interest of avoiding misunderstandings and squabbles, from now on I'll use an "s" instead of a "z." And I'm still an Ensoniq evangelist, regardless. I don't write for "The Trasoniq Experimental Software Engineering News Magazine." I write for the HACKER.]

TH -

I've just bought a Compaq Presario and I'm wondering if you can tell me if I can set it up to record Disk Tracks with the hard drive, then dump the data to my zip drive for storage. I'd also appreciate any information about other nifty things I may be able to do with my computer/ASR-88. (I pretty much used to skip the computer application articles in the past...)

Thanks in advance for steering me in the right direction.
TheWackman@aol.com

[PF - Wackman: The ASR requires a dedicated SCSI hard disk to record disk tracks to. This means that you cannot use the in-

ternal hard drive of your Compaq for these duties, as the drive MUST be dedicated to the ASR's SCSI interface with its own discrete ID. You CAN bounce them to the ZIP drive for archival purposes if it's one of the ZIP drives that will work with the ASR (some of the later ones wouldn't format).

Bouncing the tracks to a ZIP drive would still require a dedicated SCSI hard drive connected to the ASR for Disk Tracks, though...]

Hello,

I have just finished sampling my ol' TR505 on my Mirage. The kick drum came out really well. I would like to reverse the kick sample for the "reverse effect." How do I go about doing this?

Mike Prager msp49487@email.csum.edu

[PF - Mike: You need MASOS (the Mirage Advanced Sampler Operating System). It's a requirement for the serious Mirage owner, and it's relatively inexpensive. You can obtain MASOS from Syntaur Productions at 800.334.1288 or 713.682.1960. Been awhile since I've handled a Mirage question - good to know it's still actively used. One thing about MASOS, to edit lower keyboard half samples you've gotta bounce them into the upper keyboard half (like a buffer). And you'll learn a bunch of hexadecimal in the process!]

Hello again!

I e-mailed a couple times before about my trials and tribulations in the keyboard marketplace. I had a Roland XP-50, then an Ensoniq MR-61, then an Ensoniq TS-12, and now I have just purchased an Ensoniq ASR-10. The ASR-10 has SCSI, 16Mb of RAM, and the 3.5 OS installed. I also have a Compaq Presario 520 with 486sx (66 MHz), 3.5" floppy, and a CD ROM drive.

I want to utilize sample CDs that are available from Rubber Chicken, Masterbits, ProRec, Syntaur, and East-West. It is my understanding that I can use both audio CDs and CD ROMs with my ASR-10.

My musical tastes are in Ambient, Industrial, Techno, and Synthpop. My previous keyboard purchases left me without

much support for these types of music. I believe that the ASR-10 is my answer to this problem. Ensoniq does make the most user friendly products on the planet! I hope I can grow and prosper with my new purchase.

What publications, online help, or people should I subscribe to or contact to get the most out of my ASR-10 and computer? Please note that I am still a neophyte to the keyboard world.

Thanks again,
Paul J. Pappas
pappa_pj@cowley.uwlax.edu

[PF - Paul: Audio CD's can be used to sample from, but you cannot read them directly from an ASR-savvy CDROM or load directly from an audio CD. The Presario is a nice PC clone to use Gary Giebler's Ensoniq utilities.

I'd recommend Garth Hjelte at Rubber Chicken Software as the place to start. Point your browser to <http://www.sound-central.com/~chickeneps> for the details on both hardware and software for your ASR. It's not only the world's MOST-supported sampler, but once you're done editing sound files and saving them to disk...

...you can load them into your TS-12. And, of course, a subscription to the Hacker is essential in your toolbox. You've got a lot of great Ensoniq gear that you're sure to find tricks and tips on using from the Hacker, so jump on in and welcome aboard!]

TH -

Just got my MR-76 back from the shop. Had 2.1 installed and they replaced some board on it that controls the "Yes" button which quit working when I installed 2.0.

The major problem I am having now is I cannot load most of my songs from disks. It says "Bad MIDI data can't read." (Oh no!) Ensoniq, please don't tell me my songs files are now corrupt!! I have been saving onto two separate disk thinking this would protect me.

The question I have is, can I reload the previous EPROM that was working before I install 2.0, and 2.1? I was thinking of saving the files as MIDI files. I believe it

was op sys 1.2.

I have the software from Giebler Enterprises "Diskette Managers" that I ordered to translate my SD-1 files to MIDI. Can this program help me in any way? The disk contains EDM and VFXSMF.

Lost! :-)
Anthony Brave
tbrave@olc.edu

[PF - Tony: You DEFINITELY need a copy of mrmidi.exe. This way cool little utility from our Malvern codewarriors parses all SMF types into the type of SMF that the MR likes and understands. It's freeware (of course) and if you call Malvern at 610.647.3930 they'll be able to give you their BBS# so you can download it. That should cure all the headaches you've run into, but if it doesn't...

Wash your SD-1 sequences into the SMF format with VFXSMF, save onto a freshly formatted floppy, THEN check your files with mrmidi.exe. I guarantee that'll work...]

[Ensoniq - The MRMIDI.EXE file is available from our website at www.ensoniq.com. To download this utility, go to our home page. At the home page, click on DOWNLOAD, then click on MUSICAL INSTRUMENT FILES, then scroll down to MR-61/76 files.]

TH -

Well, I was curious if anybody has any input on the new ASR-X? My thoughts are: Is this thing going to be made in a keyboard version like an ASR-10X, or 88X???

Kevin Sykes
Kazper@paclink.com

[PF - Kevin: Regarding a keyboard version, see my response to Joe Castiglia a little ways up the page - he asked a similar question.]

[TH - Regarding any input on the ASR-X, it's probably a little too soon right now - but we're sure to get plenty in these pages after it's had a little time to get out there.]

[Ensoniq - The ASR-X is a completely new design. This makes it impossible to offer

this product as an upgrade for any "ASR-10X" type product.]

TH -

I recently purchased the MR-76 and traded in my SD-1. What a mistake. I am now converting my SD-1 sequences to MIDI files. When I import into the MR-76 things are way off. I know I would have to assign different voices but it seems to go beyond that. For one thing the the track assignments don't look correct. When I composed I never messed with MIDI channels, I left them as they were. When I click on the MR track it comes up with "Assign MIDI ch to tracks," I say ok.

My problem is I no longer have the SD-1. Is there a SD-1 editor available somewhere that will allow me to change MIDI ch, and sound to GW?

Thanks :-)
Tony Brave
tbrave@olc.edu

[PF - Tony: As before, after doing the conversion from SD-1 format to SMF format, check your SMF's with mrmidi.exe (from the Ensoniq BBS, it's free). As long as they load into the MR, you're good to go. Depending on the channel and track assignments you used on the SD-1, you may be able to press play on the MR and go, or you may have to assign MIDI channels to tracks (as prompted) and then assign the proper respective voices to these tracks.

Once you've converted your SD-1 files into SMF's, any computer-based sequencing program will let you change MIDI channel assignments and voice selections. Resave as an SMF and load into the MR. Once you get the proper "slate" organized this way, assign instruments and MIDI channels/patches to this slate and save. This should make the xlation process a lot less painful. I've used Cakewalk for Windoze to do this very thing, and it works flawlessly. The secret here is to get your channel and track assignments to line up with the GM spec (drums on MIDI channel #10, patch selects pointing to GM instrument maps, yada-yada-yada). Once you've got the knack of that under your belt, xfers should be a snap...]

TH -

Subject: Unisyn (Mac) Wrinkle!

I have a happy ending to share for any of you who, like me, are using older Macs in their studios. For some time now, I had problems with the Unisyn freebie for my MR-61, trying to run it on my SE/30 under System 7.0. Not just the startup "bad header" problem (I got past that), but some waveforms not showing up (just "Unknown!" - even the whole category of Transwaves turned up "Unknown!" - real bummer).

Well, lo and behold, it needs 32-bit addressing turned on in the "Memory" control panel! (I did have Mode32 installed, but for some reason this setting had been neglected and nothing else showed up this problem!). All is fine now.

Hope this helps some other poor ancient hardware scrounger...

John Seboldt
rohrwerk@pcOnline.com

[PF - John: Glad you found the bug spray. 32-bit addressing is a requirement for most all applications that are System 7 savvy. If you look at the "About this Macintosh" applet, you'll also discover that your System takes up MUCH less RAM than it used to. Mode32 is necessary for your SE/30 to address installed memory over 8Mb, but it's good to know the Mac (and not the MR-61) was the culprit here.]

Every time you "Zap" the PRAM (Command-Option-P-R on startup), 32-bit addressing is switched off. Sounds like the Memory CDEV wasn't ever reset after clearing PRAM in some point in time. Thanx for sharing this one - there's a LOT of compact Macs happily grinding away at musical chores: glad to hear yours is happy again...]

Hi all,

I own an ASR-10 (SCSI-ZIP, 10MB) and I would like to read WAV or AIFF files from computer formatted floppy disks (both HD -AND- DD) directly on the ASR.

I know that the ASR has an option to format disks as "computer" but if you format

a disk on the ASR, the computer doesn't recognize the disk and if you format the disk on the computer the ASR comes with a "Bad device ID" or similar message (at least with a DD disk).

Anyway, even if the ASR can read the disks, I doubt that his current OS (still 3.53?) can read the format of a WAV or AIFF file. (I hope I'm wrong with this...)

I understand that an advanced sampler like the ASR must have its own proprietary format to store other things than the wave itself. But these days, no company will try to sell a sampler or similar without the capability of reading samples in the standard formats (WAV or AIFF) formatted on a 720 or 1.44 disk.

Ensoniq has understood this (with the MR system 2.0, and the new ASR-X) and this way, users of non-pc platforms can benefit from this feature as Macs and Amigas can work with PC formatted disks with WAV or AIFF files. (And Atari ones too.)

Well, at least it takes me to my final point, to Ensoniq: Please, please, please... Do a revision on the ASR-10 OS, so the sampler can have this feature.

Please believe me - I'm not one of those asking for a "20bit, 32Mb with 72pin SIMMS, MR synth and resampling with FX" upgrade for the Mirage (or even the EPS the ASR or anything) but as I have seen on Ensoniq site, if the ASR-X (a machine based on original ASR, with many of his features) and the new MR OS can do this, I'd like to think that this can be possible and would give a joy to many existing (and happy) users.

On the other hand, this way you can sample sounds for use on the computer, but with the quality of the ASR.

Yes, I know that there are already excellent transfer utilities but not all are available for all platforms. Anyway, these utilities have many, many other features to do these other excellent things that can be done from the sampler OS. And that way, everybody will be happy :)))

I ask all users who like the idea to send some e-mail to Ensoniq, asking for this as this is a reasonable inquiry.

Bye,

Toni Altadill
machine@arrakis.es

[PF - Toni: I certainly appreciate your honesty in this letter. But I seriously doubt there's enough free code space in the ASR ROM to hack such a conversion utility in firmware. Even if it could be done in software, they'd probably have to nuke some other ASR feature to make room for it. And since a utility already exists for computer platforms (Giebler's PC Utilities), I don't think they'd have the time or resources to devote to writing such a utility on an already overtaxed OS. But then again, if I had my druthers, yeah.]

BTW, what's the purpose of the ASR being able to format a DOS floppy? I need to explore this a bit further 'cause I've always used my PC to format PC disks...]

TH -

A sales rep told me that there was a special way to set up the hard drive on the ASR-88 so that a computer running Cakewalk Pro Audio can change patches in a sequence.

I have no idea how to set this up and have looked all over the Ensoniq web page for a fax-on-demand document about it. I can't find it and I need to know how to do this.

Does anyone know how to set up two gigs worth of samples so that they can change in my songs using Cakewalk Pro Audio?

Thanks in advance,
Steve Conaway
plutocat@worldnet.att.net

[PF - Steve: I've done this very thing, and by accident. Was working with a buddy's EPS (with a 65 Mb SCSI drive attached) MIDI'ed up to a PC clone running Cakewalk V. 3.0. While recording the sequence from the EPS into the PC, I pressed a couple of track buttons. When we went to play back the sequence, at the point I pressed a track button, the EPS loaded a new sample into the track I poked at. The only problem with this was the EPS muted itself while it loaded from the hard drive. Once loaded, audio came back until the point in the sequence when I pressed another track select button, at which point the EPS muted itself and loaded another file into the track I poked at again...]

Sysex must be on (obviously). We had Multi Mode selected, and I think the patch # determined which file the HD loaded. There was a trick to getting the EPS Classic to load from SCSI while playing that involved cutting a trace on the SCSI expander, but I've slept since then, and I don't know if I (or Ensoniq) would recommend this procedure for the ASR as I can't say with 100% confidence that it will act/react in the same manner as the EPS Classic did. I'd talk to Ensoniq Customer Support at 610.647.3930 to get the scoop on this. Garth Hjelt of RCS has a FAQ on EPS/ASR tricks as well. Aim that browser at http://www.soundcentral.com/~chicken-eps/racs_tips.htm?20,18 and peruse items #4 & 5...]

TH -

The latest issue of *Hacker* has the MR Rack OS at 2.0. Ensoniq tech support claims it's at 1.5X. Here is their message to me:

"The current OS for the MR-Rack is 1.5x, however the MR-61 and MR-76 have now been upgraded to version 2.xx. If at anytime you'd like to inquire about any OS upgrades please give us a call at (610)-647-3930, Monday to Friday between 10:00am and 6:00pm Eastern Standard Time."

Michael Bedesem
Shrewsbury, Vermont
mpb@sover.net

[TH - Thanks!]

Hello fellow MR users,

Help. I'm having trouble figuring out the best way to use my MR-76 as a multi-timbral unit and a controller in my computer sequencing setup. I use a PC running Cubase and my main module up until now has been a Roland JV1080 along with an Alesis D4 with a Trap-Kat controller. I was using another keyboard as a controller, but now I want to use my MR-76 as a sound module and controller.

Here's how I'm using it. I push the track 1 button on the MR and set that channel to "MIDI-OUT." I use bank select and program change messages in Cubase to select the sounds. I only use ch 2-16 on the MR.

Here's the problem. With the JV1080 and the D4 I make my edits to the sounds (including effects) and store the info via a sysex dump with the song itself. Whenever I open the song I just play the track containing the sysex, the entire setup is dumped back to the modules and the song is ready to play. All my edits and effects parameters are intact. Can the MR-76 do this? Or do I have to use bank select and program change messages? If I use these messages how the heck do I control which sound gets the insert effect if two of the sounds I select use insert effects? Are these done by control changes from Cubase? If so, what are they?

Also, so far I've found the MR to be unstable and aggravating when used as a controller. It is very cumbersome and bothersome with it's "Update MIDI.. so and so?" requests every time you push a darn button. I'm using version 2.0 so I'm sure I'm up-to-date. If the piano, sax, and some of the other sounds weren't so good, I would have thrown the thing out the window last night. But as it stands I'm reluctant to incorporate its sounds into any new songs.

I would appreciate some help on this subject.

Jerry G.
JDGProd@aol.com

[PF - Jerry: First of all, if you're getting into the MR at the SysEx level, you're definitely gonna want to request a copy of the MR-76 SysEx specification (free from Malvern) at 610.647.3930. This will save you a lotta guesswork as far as automating button presses, MSB/LSB/etc. As with any synth with more than 128 sounds available, yes, you'll be using bank and program selects to access the MR's tonal palette.

Insert effects are global: if you're using the "EQ + DDL" algorithm, ALL tracks that route thru the Insert effect will use the selected algorithm. To ensure that certain sounds in your slate don't use the particular insert effect that one of your tracks requires, route the other sounds around the Insert FX buss. Remember, in the MR's Sequencer/Track areal slate, Insert FX are global for all 16 tracks UNLESS routed around the Insert FX buss.

The problems you experience are common

to keyboards that double as controllers. The fact that the MR-76 was designed as a complete production station probably exacerbates the problems inherent in using a computer "controller" to control the "keyboard" controller. The attendant difficulties in Local on/off, external MIDI control assignment, Sysex messages, and the like rear their ugly heads and make you wish you could remove the sound module from the keyboard controller. But that's true of any "Master" keyboard/sequencer/controller, and not germane to only the MR-76. And yes, as the MR-76 falls into this category, when it's asked to become a MIDI slave, it'll continually ask you if you wish to update MIDI settings when you press a button and issue a MIDI out command. That's what Local Off is about: disconnecting the MR-76's keyboard from its sound engine and looping it thru Cubase. No direct internal MIDI communication between the MR keyboard and its sound engine exists when in this mode.

But that's the difference between working with a passive tone module (like your 1080, or even an MR rack, for that matter) and its keyboard equivalent (like an XP-50/80 or an MR-61/76).

If it's getting to the point where you're considering experimental aerodynamics on the MR-76, I'd seriously consider speaking with Ensoniq Customer Support when you call to request the SysEx docs on your MR-76, as the problems in arbitrating two sequencers (the MR's & Cubase) is more akin to settling political disputes than making music. Two active presidents in the same Oval office doesn't really work very well, either. But that's just my \$.02...

I appreciate your frustration: it's a real PITA when you add new gear and expect it to seamlessly integrate into your rig without a hitch, because it not only never does (it's a different piece with different architecture), but also because there's a new learning curve involved. And that's the hard part. Learning the new is relatively easy, but forgetting/discarding the old (and familiar, I might add) is an herculean task, as old habits die hard. Hang in there, your efforts WILL be rewarded. And, in most cases, the journey IS the reward...

P.S. BTW, I understand the MR's are now up to OS V. 2.1.]

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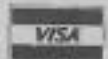
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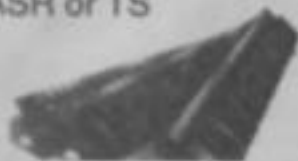
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