# Electronic Musician

COMMAND CENTERS

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EM GUIDE TO COMPACT MIXERS

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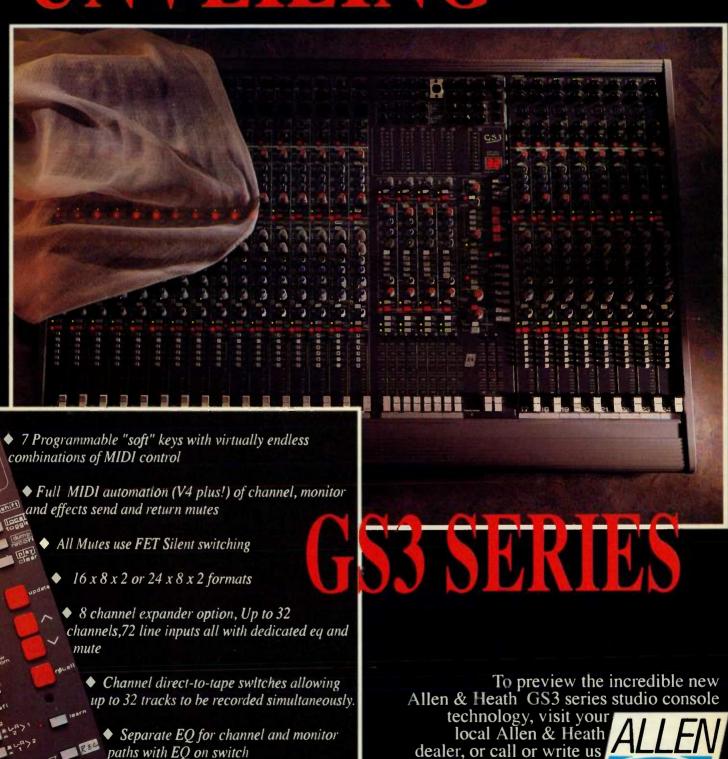
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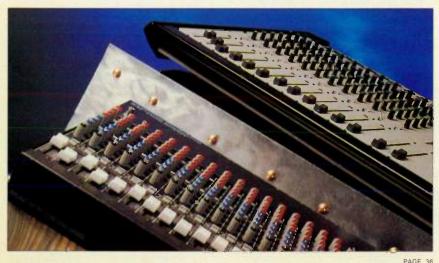
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#### THE FRONT PAGE

#### **Get Small**

Break through creative ruts by downsizing your system.

t's late. You're in the throes of a creative flourish, composing and arranging one of your best efforts yet. Your well-stocked personal MIDI studio isn't impeding your efforts; you've made sure of that. Over the years, you've dutifully bought everything you need and painstakingly arranged it into a workable system.



You're at no loss for timbral variety; with a keyboard, two synth modules, and a sampler, you can make more noises than most people hear in a lifetime. Yet, when it comes time to arrange your new piece, you can't figure out what sounds to use. There are too many choices.

After a minute or two, you remember something stored as a SysEx file on your computer's hard disk that might do the trick. You boot your editor/librarian, search for the right bank of patches, load the sound, dump it to the synth in question, and...nothing happens. After a frustrating, time-consuming round of troubleshooting, you discover that you forgot to compensate for patches recently programmed into your MIDI patch bay. Once you adjust the appropriate parameters, everything gets where it needs to be. But now it's 45 minutes later, and you've lost momentum. Time for bed.

Administering massive patch files and other all-too-familiar scenarios put a serious dent into electronic music-making, often leading high-tech musicians to wonder if all the hassles are worth it.

If you ever reach this point (and who hasn't?), try something radical: Get rid of most of your gear. Not permanently, of course, but as an experiment, force yourself to work within some narrowly defined limits (like a single keyboard and sequencer) and see what happens.

The irony of today's advanced product development is that we now can get more done with less equipment. I know this sounds heretical, but let's be honest: A 24-voice, 16-part multitimbral keyboard with built-in effects, in conjunction with a MIDI sequencer program and a one-in, one-out MIDI interface, provides a helluva lot of musical capability. No, it's not enough for sophisticated applications, but if you can't make music with a no-frills setup, there's something wrong.

You may find that these limitations yield pleasantly surprising results (and send some of your gear on a search for a permanent new home) by forcing you to concentrate on making music, rather than negotiating the pathways of a large system. Also, having to rely on fewer tools helps you learn more about specific instruments and programs. When you know there's only one manual you need to look through to find out how to do something, you'll be more inclined to actually crack it open.

Even if you've assembled a trouble-free mega-system, you may want to work out a basic subset for composing. Put together a single bank of essential sounds for each instrument and stick with them. Discipline yourself to avoid tweaking programs and sequences until the structural elements are fully composed using the basic system. The options presented by modern gear make it easy to get mired down in time-consuming detail work and lose sight of the bigger picture: the composition itself.

There are no simple solutions for enhancing creativity and improving musical output. But if you find yourself getting lost in the techno-twilight zone, you may want to try a simple reduction plan. Get small.

Bl D'Donel

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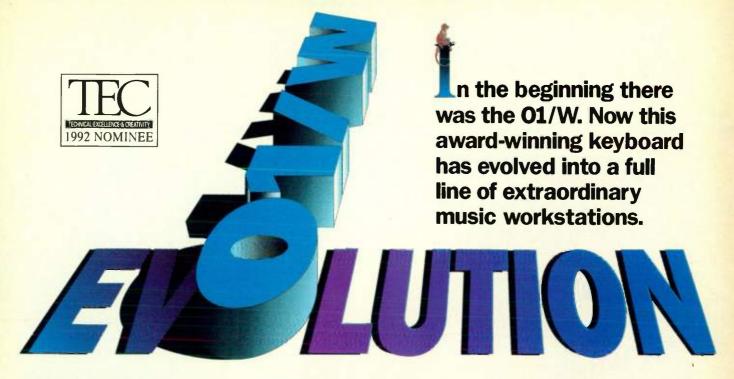
(Address changes and customer-service inquiries)
PO Box 41094

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Electronic Musician: (ISSN: 0884-4720) is published monthly by ACT III Publishing, 6400 Hollis St. 812, Emeryville, CA 94609, 61992 by ACT III Publishing, Inc. This is Volume 8, Number 8, August 1992. One year (12 issues) subscription is \$24; outside the U.S. is \$44. Second Class postage paid at Oakland, CA, and additional mailing offices. All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced or quoted in whole or in part by any means, printed or electronic, without the written permission of the publishers. POST-MASTER: Send address changes to Electronic Musician, PO Box 41525, Nashville, TN 37204. Editeur Responsable (Belgique. Christian Desmet, Vuurgatstraat 92, 3090 Overijse, Belgique.

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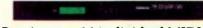


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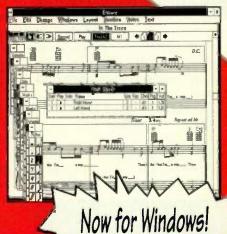
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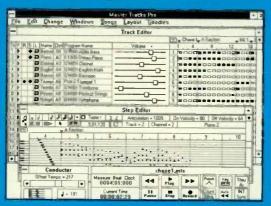
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and	much	more
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Goto Filter Insert A PC 4 + ++ T4 Lead Guitar					
Event	SHPTE	Chan	Data		
A	0 00:38:06	4	24		
a	0 00.38.06	4	B2 199 (58 0: 0 055		
\$	0 00 38 06	4	G3   1111   167   0: 0:051		
P.	0.00:38:06	4	D3 1111 i65 0: 0 050		
9	0:00:38:24	4	63 1 109 165 0 0 123		
-	0:00:38 24	4	D3   109   i46   0 0 106		
ab	0:00:38 24	4	B2 181 154 0 0 148		
2	0.00.30.03	4	0		
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-	0.00.39 03	4	C3 199 i 103 0 0 026		
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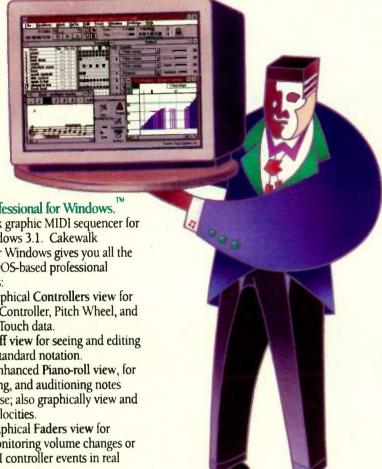
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#### **DIGITAL DEBATE**

Digital Fluency" ("Recording Musician," June 1992) makes the following statement regarding digital recording: "Reducing overall signal level to avoid clipping does not compromise sonic quality...'

I'd expect you to know that every 6 dB drop in input level reduces resolution by one bit. To prevent a peak higher than 3 to 6 dB below digital overload (which, as you state, is nasty), the nominal average level should be no higher than 20 to 24 dB below overload.

This translates into a resolution of 12 bits. On low-level information such as ambience and reverberation tails, the resolution becomes eight bits or lower. It does not take golden ears to hear the increase of digital grunge and loss of quality at lower levels. At a low enough level, digital "gates" off, hence the often-heard comment about the "sterile, dry" sound of digital.

These phenomena are well-known amongst professionals. In order to minimize them, many professionals use a compressor/limiter in front of the A-to-D converters.

> Marvin Caesar President **Aphex Systems** Sun Valley, CA

Author David Miles Huber responds: I agree that signal levels should be kept as high as possible, within reason. These levels also depend upon the type of signal that's being recorded. If instruments are heavy in high-level, transient peaks, you should keep the overall signal lower than if the levels stayed within a relatively small range (such as a heavily compressed signal).

Your comment about using a compressor/limiter to limit the dynamic range makes sense for certain types of sampling, but certainly shouldn't be followed as a hard-andfast rule when recording digitally. As always, it's up to us to balance digital's good points with the bad.

#### POP PHILOSOPHY

enjoyed Michael Molenda's article "The Architecture of Pop" (May 1992). In its clearest, articulate form, Molenda's theme rings to my discontent about the present, decrepit state of pop music and successfully spurs me to dissect the author's typical and dangerous perspective on

I fear this group of bigwig producers and its subjective interpretation of how a pop song should be: a pre-packaged formula that must dazzle in the first twenty seconds or suffer the garbage-can fate. It's a sad truth that "sales figures and chart position are the sole measures of a successful pop record." But this state of affairs largely was created by the same producers who use it as a crutch in the massive task that faces them-choosing the good from thousands of bad. The generic producer asks exactly Molenda's question: "Why are masses of people seduced by a specific popular work?" The answer is that the mass media markets anything into a seductive form and pumps it down the public's throat. Producers and music publishers serve as the crucial link between artists and listeners. And when they assume listeners can't appreciate much beyond New Kids on the Block, they treat us as such. Ever hear of self-fulfilling prophecy?

A little patience might be in line when reviewing demo tapes. Great art does not always jump out at you; it should take some work/participation on the listener's part. Impossible to dedicate such attention to so many candidates? Producers who have managed

such miracles as successfully promoting Nirvana have the power to take more time with new priorities and direction.

#### Jason Schmidt New York, NY

Jason-I always try to educate musicians on the realities of the music business. In the fifteen years I've worked in the industry, things haven't changed much: A pop song is more about marketing than music. I didn't make the rules, but if I want to sell a song, I (usually) try to follow them. However, I never use the rules as a crutch, just a guideline.

The media has never been 100 percent successful at "pumping [pop acts] down the public's throats." For every New Kids on the Block, there are a dozen well-promoted acts that fail. And, thankfully, there are people closer to the street than some pop producers wish to tread. Occassionally these street cats discover a Nirvana. But the single that broke the Nirvana record, "Smells Like Teen Spirit," is a classic pop track dressed up with rude guitars. I never considered the song cutting-edge or even alternative. Hey, I would have signed Nirvana in a flash (and I'm an old fogey). Unfortunately, they didn't think to send me their tape. - Michael M.

#### ARTIST'S VISION

believe in artistic license, but maybe you should tell Brian Cronin the next time he illustrates a cover (April 1992) that keyboards alternate between sets of two and three black keys. It's no big deal. Keep up the good work!

#### **Gerald Hill** Santa Barbara, CA

Art director Andrew Faulkner responds: Many of the artists used in EM are chosen for what they can bring to a subject with their artistic interpretation. Unlike photography, illustration allows us to view reality from a different perspective. Brian Cronin's rendering of a reyouan naive at first glance, but if you note how he had buttons as decoration throughout the piece, it becomes obvious how deliberate his choices were.

## **JUMP START** YOUR MUSIC



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#### ONE HAPPY ROBOT

My feeling about the negative rap MIDI gets ("The MIDI Trap," February 1992) is that it's sour grapes from the non-MIDI arena. The article's opening story concerning a veteran film composer's attitude toward MIDI probably stems from the fact that he has lost a lot of gigs to MIDIequipped facilities. Sour grapes! A lot of people comment about the "robot sound" of some MIDI music. As far as I can tell, that "robot sound" accounts for some of the most successful and creative rap, dance, industrial, and alternative music.

MIDI musicians also are criticized for not knowing music theory. Joe Jackson once called us "push-button idiots." I think the real "theory" here is that these guys slaved for years with music theory and practice, starved for their art, and then bitterly watched some "non-musician" make a million with one of those "robot tunes."

Before MIDI, I had all these tunes in my head and that's where they stayed. MIDI changed that by allowing me to share my musical thoughts with everyone else. I love MIDI. I'm sick of MIDI people allowing themselves to be intimidated by a bunch of sour grapes. Go ahead, MIDI guys and gals, don't be afraid. Quantize. Robotize. Completely dehumanize. If you like it, then go ahead and do it some more!

Before there was written music, there was music. And people liked it just as they now like a lot of the stuff that you seem to love to hate. I believe it was Benny Goodman who said, "If it sounds good, it is good."

> **Phil Radelat** North Bergen, NJ

#### **VIDEO QUERY**

I am a videographer. I'm familiar with the conventional techniques of editing and sound mixing but computer enhancement is where I start getting lost. I am interested in recording live audio and video for use on a Macintosh so that the sound may be altered while still being synched. What do you recommend I use?

#### **Gregory Treadway** Atlanta, GA

Greg-I believe what you're asking for is two separate hard-disk recording products, one video and one audio. The video portion



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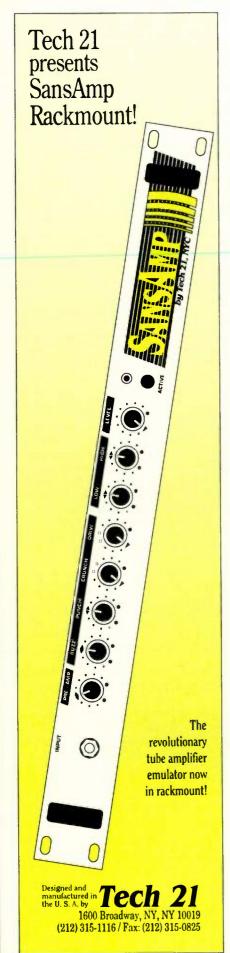
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#### LETTERS

could be handled by SuperMac's Video Spigot, RasterOps' VideoTime, or an equivalent video digitizing board. The audio could be recorded via a Digidesign Audiomedia II card (or a MacRecorder if you only want 8-bit audio). RasterOps also offers the MediaTime board, which combines a video digitizer and 16-bit Audiomedia hardware onto a single NuBus card. Whether you recorded your material with this board or two separate products, however, you would still end up with separate files that you would have to synchronize in a QuickTime editing program like Adobe Premiere or Macromind Director 3.1. Once recorded, you could edit the sound files offline with Passport's Alchemy, or Digidesign's Sound Designer II. If you want to process it in real time, you could run the audio outputs of the hard disk through any available signal processor. Note that you will need a gigantic hard disk to work with digitized video and audio files .- Bob O'D.

#### DETAILS, DETAILS

Wow! I always thought electronic signals being sent through wire, or optical signals in optical fibre, traveled at nearly the speed of light, barring resistance and/or reflectance. Wouldn't James Clerk Maxwell and Albert Einstein, (not to mention Steven W. Hawking) be surprised to find out that they actually travel an order of magnitude slower than that!

In the July 1991 issue, Gary Hall writes in "The Technology Page" that light would travel only about five inches in four nanoseconds. Now a nanosecond generally is accepted as being one thousand millionth of a second. (I put it in these terms in order to be clear. In the USA, a billion is a thousand million, or 10 to the ninth power, whereas in the UK and some other European countries, it is a million million, or ten to the 12th power.) Given this, light will travel about 47 (not five) inches in four nanoseconds. The calculation is relatively simple: 186,000 (the speed of light in miles per second) times 5,280 (feet in a mile), times 12 (inches in a foot), all divided by 1,000,000,000 times four (the number of nanoseconds). Even if Mr. Hall has chosen the British system, the answer is still wrong. It is disturbing that Mr. Hall can't do simple arithmetic, but it is even more disturbing that your editors didn't catch the error. Perhaps this is because EM is either poorly-

written or poorly-edited, or both. And if there are objections to my hyphenation, it would be better-suited to address those objections to the editor who used "better-suited" instead of the more correct "better suited" in "What's New" (see page 122) in the April 1992 issue.

In this vein, I wish your writers and editors would learn to use English properly, and in particular, cease the practice of verbing nouns. I refer you again to page 122 of the April issue. Ignoring the split infinitive in the first sentence, I submit that programmers program and editors edit, but authors write—they do not author, nor do they use "authoring tools." Ughh!

#### Bruce Nolen Palo Alto, CA

Gary Hall responds: This is great. Now I finally can prove someone reads this column. Seriously, thanks for the correction on my butterfingered calculation. I hope there weren't any accidents on the freeway as a result of trying to use this information. Bruce-One of the joys of working with the English language is that it always changes, enough that Webster's New World Dictionary is frequently updated to reflect modern usage. Webster's has accepted such nouns-turned-verbs as "to author" for many years. This is particularly true now that "authoring tools" have become an entire product category in the world of multimedia software. Magazines provide an especially playful and creative medium for the language. If you prefer dated, limited usage of our language, I suggest you stick to legal documents. Also, according to The Chicago Manual of Style, "better-suited" is hyphenated when used after the verb "to be," or before a noun-Anne-Marie P.

#### **ERROR LOG**

June 1992, "What's New," p. 20: The correct address for KAT is 300 Burnett Rd., Chicopee, MA 01020; tel. (413) 594-7466.

Address correspondence to "Letters," Electronic Musician, 6400 Hollis St. #12, Emeryville, CA 94608, Published letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Corrections to articles are listed at the end of "Letters." We compile these published corrections annually; to receive a copy, send an SASE to "Error Log Listing" at the above address.

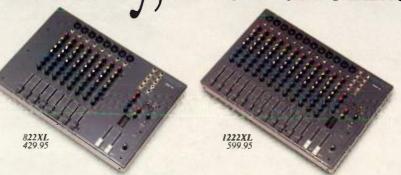


# The other guys missed the bus. Actually, 2 of them.

Why settle for a simple 16 channel stereo mixer, when you can have the 1642 4 bus mixer for \$1099.

Or if 8 or 12 channels are enough, you'll find most of the same features on the 822 and 1222 stereo mixers, starting as low as \$429.

With four similar discrete outputs (Sub1, Sub 2, Left and Right), the 1642 may be used as a 16x4 for recording, or, by assigning the subs to the L/R outputs, as a 16x2x2 for sound reinforcement. Each channel of the 1642 has a 3-band EQ



Also available as 822XL and 1222XL table top versions at the same prices.

with Adaptive-Q circuits for a contoured response that adds clarity to the highs and warmth without "boomy-ness" to the lows.

The 822 and 1222 models are offered in two versions, designated XL (table top) or RM (for rack mounting). Each comes with phantom power, 3 bands of EQ, 1 monitor and 2 effects sends,

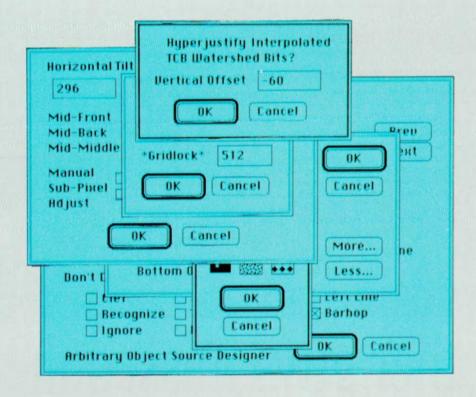
and monitor & headphone outputs. We're so confident that you'll love our new mixers that we'll back them with a two year warranty. So if you want some great mixers with low

fares, don't miss the bus. Check out the 1642 and the rest of the DOD lineup at your favorite Dealer now.



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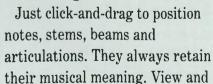


# Ok! Ok! Cancel!

Until now, producing music notation on a computer meant choosing between two evils. Simple programs with limited capabilities or complicated programs designed for computer masochists, not composers.

Composer's MOSAIC reclaims the elegant artistry of traditional notation while retaining the flexibility of advanced computer publishing. Without an endless

sea of dialog boxes or arcane tools.



edit a voice as an individual part, condensed score and full score—all at the same time. Modify margins, staff layout, text and footers directly on the page. Enter lyrics wordprocessor-style and then autoflow them below any voice. Slurs and ties re-shape with a click of the mouse. Unlimited undo and redo lets you experiment without losing your ideas.

MOSAIC has both real and step-time MIDI input and playback and supports the MIDI Time Piece. Advanced features include complex meters, cross-staff beaming, unlimited multiple voices on a single staff, automatic meter and key change warnings, nested triplets and tuplets, and more.

From complete symphonies to pop lead sheets, Composer's MOSAIC offers you the freedom to produce your manuscripts quickly and elegantly.



Mark of the Unicorn

#### **New Products**

Our summer selection includes a multi-effects processor and several dynamics processors, a hard-disk recorder, multi-port MIDI interfaces, and sequencers for the NeXT and PC.

#### **EFFECTS PROCESSORS**

In addition to classic Eventide pitch shifting, Eventide's H3500 Dynamic Ultra-Harmonizer (\$3,495) offers sampling, delay (up to 22 seconds), flanging, chorusing, reverb, and sound effects. Pitch can be shifted one octave up and two octaves down. The H3500's eighteen algorithms include two new ones, Mod Factory 1 and 2, that provide dynamic effects modules such as compression, ducked delays (the delayed signal is heard during pauses between program material), bpm-calibrated delays and loops, and level- and envelope-sensitive choruses and reverbs. The software modules can be patched together in any combination. The product is available with either 11.8 or 47.5 seconds of stereo, 16-bit, 44.1 kHz sampling. Sample memory, which can hold two separate samples, can be accessed via delay-loop presets in Mod Factory mode. The H3500 comes with Eventide's sampling software, which offers effects such as pitch shifting without changing playback length and time compression/expansion without pitch transposition. Parameters can be controlled via frontpanel "soft key" buttons, a 10-key dataentry pad, and an alpha wheel. The manufacturer claims a frequency response of 5 Hz to 20 kHz ( $\pm 1$  dB,  $\pm 0.5$ dB typical) and .01% THD (.007% typical) at 1 kHz. The Mod Factory (\$250) and sampling components (\$995 for 23.71 seconds and \$1,995 for 95 seconds) of the 3500 can be added to existing H3000s.

> Eventide One Alsan Way Little Ferry, NJ 07643 tel. (201) 641-1200

#### **DIGITAL AUDIO**

Following up on its Audiomedia entrylevel hard-disk recording system, Digidesign is shipping Audiomedia II



**Eventide H3500 Dynamic Ultra-Harmonizer** 

(\$1,295), a 2-track system that consists of a NuBus card and the company's well-known Sound Designer II audio editing software. The hardware features a 33 MHz, Motorola 56001 DSP chip; S/PDIF digital I/O; stereo analog I/O on RCA jacks; and 16-bit converters that sample at 44.1 kHz. The software includes non-destructive playlist editing, SMPTE sync, real-time digital EQ, and pitch shifting with time-correction. Audiomedia II will eventually support four tracks (mixed down to two outputs) in Digidesign's DECK digital audio recording software and Opcode's Studio Vision integrated sequencing/ digital recording programs. It will support two tracks in Mark of the Unicorn's Digital Performer and Steinberg's Cubase Audio (when available). Existing Audiomedia owners will be offered a software upgrade to Sound Designer II for \$149.

> Digidesign 1360 Willow Rd., #101 Menlo Park, CA 94025 tel. (415) 688-0600

#### MIDI INTERFACES

Mark of the Unicorn is shipping the MIDI Time Piece II (\$595), an enhanced, 1U rack-mount MIDI interface/patch bay/processor for the Macintosh. The MTP II offers 8 × 8 MIDI matrix merging and routing with independent In and Out ports (for 128 MIDI channels). It can rechannelize on input and output and mute MIDI

data on any cable. The device reads and writes SMPTE time code, supports SMPTE jam sync and freewheeling, and converts SMPTE to MTC and Direct Time Lock. Unlike the earlier MIDI Time Piece, the MTP II has a  $16 \times 2$ backlit LCD display, a hardware panic button, an internal power supply, four programmable data and control knobs. click-to-MIDI, and onboard memory for 128 patches, which respond to Program Change messages. It can accept a bulk dump from an original MTP, so your old MTP setups can be used with the new machine. Two footpedal inputs admit continuous or momentary pedals.

> Mark of the Unicorn 222 Third St. Cambridge, MA 02142 tel. (617) 576-2760

MIDIMAN is shipping the MM-401 (\$99.95), an MPU-401-compatible MIDI interface for PC-compatibles. The interface comes bundled with software, including a generic SysEx archiver, a MIDI viewer/channelizer, and an MPU-401 diagnostic program. The company also introduced the MacMan (\$99.95), a miniscule 1-in, 3-out Macintosh interface with MIDI receive/ transmit indicator LEDs. A Serial Thru switch bypasses the MIDI circuit, routing the data to a printer or modem. Finally, MIDIMAN is offering Mac Syncman (\$324.95), a 2-in, 6-out Mac interface and sync box with SMPTE

#### WHAT'S NEW

reader/writer and regenerator that operates even when the Mac is turned off. The interface can be configured as a 1-in, 6-out interface, or a dual 1-in, 3-out box, and includes dual Serial Thru switches and MIDI receive/transmit indicator LEDs. The synchronizer supports SMPTE/MTC, Direct Time Lock, and Smart Song Pointer.

MIDIMAN
30 N. Raymond Ave.
Suite 505
Pasadena, CA 91103
tel. (818) 449-8838

Passport Designs released two 1-in, 3-out MIDI interfaces for PC-compatible and Macintosh computers. The MPU-401-compatible PC interface (\$129) is a half-slot card. The Mac interface (\$89), which replaces the company's earlier model, features flashing MIDI receive/transmit indicator LEDs.

Passport Designs 100 Stone Pine Rd. Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 tel. (415) 726-0280

#### SOFTWARE

Pinnacle Research is shipping Presto (\$295; introductory price \$149), a graphical sequencer for the NeXT computer. The program integrates sequencing functions with the computer's DSP capabilities (using the NeXT Music Kit) to let you synthesize sounds and modify them while sequencing "on the fly." Presto includes a library of editable sounds, including piano, electric bass, strings, voice, woodwinds, and percussion. The user interface includes dragand-drop measure editing and graphic and event-list note and MIDI-controller editing. Transforms include Quantize, Randomize ("humanize"), Transpose, Velocity Adjust, and Time Shift. All editing functions except part-deletion operate in real time. The program lets you simultaneously edit multiple files and reads and writes Standard MIDI File, NeXT Score, and Playscore formats. Presto transmits MIDI Clock for synchronizing external devices. The initial release is beta version 0.9b, but users will receive a free upgrade to version 1.0 (expected in late 1992). The company also offers a line of NeXT MIDI interfaces.

> Pinnacle Research 4725 E. Sunrise Dr., #435 Tucson, AZ 85718 tel. (602) 529-1135

MIDIconcepts announced EZ MIDI Pro (\$149), a 128-track sequencer for IBM PC-compatibles (80286 or better). The program features pulldown menus, mouse support, SMPTE/MTC sync, a SMPTE hit-point calculator, up to 768 ppgn resolution, and Standard MIDI File support. Four assignable virtual faders provide real-time MIDI Continuous Control, and you can edit pitches and controllers on the same screen. EZ MIDI Pro can address up to four MIDI Ins and eight MIDI Outs (depending on the interface), supports MPU-401compatible interfaces and Sound-Blaster Pro, and uses EMS and extended memory. The list of editing functions includes Bounce, Extract, Fill, Filter, Offset, Quantize, Retrograde, Scale, and more.

> MIDiconcepts 2253 Chesterton St. Simi Valley, CA 93063 tel. (805) 582-1591

#### **DYNAMICS PROCESORS**

Drawmer replaced the DL241 Auto-Comp compressor with the DL251 Spectral Compressor (\$1,200). The DL251 is a dual-channel, full-band compressor with a sidechain input. The new Spectral Enhancement circuit boosts the highs without increasing output level, emulating the function of a 2band compressor. The device has switchable hard-knee/soft-knee compression with a threshold offset to minimize level changes when switching between the two. The peak limiter has been refined to handle low frequencies and high-level signals better than the DL241. A Stereo Link feature lets you switch between averaging (for most music applications) and peak-hold compression (for post-production and effects). Inputs and outputs are electronically balanced, with XLR connectors, and the unit is switchable between -10 dBV and +4 dBm levels. Drawmer also showed the DS404 Quad Gate (\$1,149), a 4-channel, frequency-sensitive gate, and the DS201B (\$849), a dual-channel, frequency-sensitive gate. QMI (distributor) 15 Strathmore Rd. Natick, MA 01760 tel. (508) 650-9444

The Afterburner (\$599), from ARX Systems, is a 1U rack-mount, single-/dualchannel compressor/limiter. In Dual Channel mode, it acts as two independent devices, with variable threshold, ratio, and output gain. Its variable Enhance function boosts certain frequencies to compensate for the loss of highs and lows during compression. In Alternative mode, the Afterburner acts as a single-channel, 2-band comp/limiter with separate dynamic control of highs and lows. The unit has a hardwire bypass, a passive RFI filter on the input, and a sidechain insert point. Inputs and outputs are balanced XLR and TRS jacks. ARX also offers the DI-1 single-channel direct box (\$125). which can switch automatically between 9V batteries, phantom power, or an external DC supply. The direct box has a continuously variable gain trimpot (∞ to +15 dB), battery-check switch with LED, audio ground-lift switch, and phantom power LED.

> ARX Systems PO Box 842 Silverado, CA 92676-0842 tel. (714) 649-2346

#### **PREAMPS**

The Soldano/Caswell X99 (\$2,600) is a MIDI-controlled, all-tube preamp that provides parameter control via motorized potentiometers. The 2U rack-mount device offers real-time MIDI Continuous Control of preamp gain, bass, mids, treble, and output-level pots and has a separate Bright switch. The X99 has three gain modes: Clean, Crunch, and Overdrive. Settings can be saved in 128 user program locations. The signal path uses five 12AX7/7025 tubes.

Soldano Custom Amplification 7625 Hayvenhurst Ave., #29 Van Nuys, CA 91406 tel. (818) 780-0690



**Drawmer DL251 Spectral Compressor** 

# Just feel the Color in these Black and Whites

KS-32

Weighted Action MIDI Studio

As a pianist, do you find that today's synthesizer workstations have the right sounds and features but just don't feel right? Then check out the new KS-32 Weighted Action MIDI Studio from ENSONIQ. With a 76-key weighted action keyboard (with pressure sensitivity), the KS-32 gives you the dynamic response of sitting at your favorite piano, with all the benefits of an integrated MIDI workstation. With 32 note polyphony you can play the KS-32 like a real piano, without worrying about running out of notes. The 180 internal sounds cover a variety of piano, electric piano and organ styles, as well as orchestral, solo wind and pop sounds. And 20 dedicated drum kits, with support for both the ENSONIQ and General MIDI drum maps, give you more drums than any other comparably priced keyboard available today. If you use other MIDI gear, you'll appreciate the KS-32's MIDI controller features. Press one button to take the

current sound you're playing and combine it
with control of up to 16 internal or
external sounds, with instant key
splits and layers. And when you

get an idea for a song, you have an onboard 16 track sequencer with a whole host of recording and editing features. 

But in the end it's the feel of the KS-32 that will

win you over. Finally, you can play from a whisper to a roar based on your touch, not your amplifier! So if the feel of your keyboard is important to you, call **1-800-553-5151** to find the Authorized ENSONIQ Dealer nearest you. Then go try the *KS-32 Weighted Action MIDI Studio* for yourself, and see if we didn't get the feeling right.

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FAX (219) 432-1758

#### WHAT'S NEW

BBE introduced its 1U rack-mount 381 Guitar Preamp, 383 Bass Preamp, and 386 Acoustic Guitar Preamp (\$299 each), which use BBE's Process sonic enhancement. Rather than add harmonics (as with most "enhancers" or "exciters"), the BBE Process compensates for phase and amplitude distortion by phase-correcting the high frequencies and delaying the lows by approximately 2.5 ms. The 381 offers switchable clean and distortion channels with separate volume pots and master left and right volume pots. The clean channel has three bands of EQ, while the distortion channel has 4-band active EO and a Drive control. Independent stereo "recording" outputs with filtering are supplied for speaker simulation. The 383 offers 6-band EQ (at 60, 125, 250, 600, 1,800, and 3,600 Hz) and has a compressor with In/Out and Threshold switches. A Punch switch adds adds low- and high-frequency enhancement, and an internal crossover has frequency and balance controls for bi-amping through the high- and low-frequency outputs. An effects loop and XLR and 1/4-inch outputs (with XLR ground-lift switch) complete the package. The 386 provides quasi-parametric EQ (level and frequency controls), a notch filter, and an input gain control, and has an extremely high input impedance for piezo pickups.

> BBE 5500 Bolsa Ave., Suite 245 Huntington Beach, CA 92649 tel. (714) 897-6766

Pendulum Audio is offering the HZ-10SE Preamp System for acoustic instruments (\$650 with single-pickup preamp module, \$720 with dual-pickup module). The system includes a single-rackspace main preamp unit and a preamp module. The rack-mount device offers four bands of fully parametric EQ, two effects loops, a mute/effects footswitch, and unbalanced and TRS balanced stereo outputs. The phantom-powered preamp module, which is designed for piezos, magnetic pickups, mini-mics, and dualpickup systems, is available in several versions. One version of the module can be implanted in the instrument, two (floor and belt-clip modules) use a standard \(^1/4\)-inch instrument cable, and one plugs directly into the instrument's \(^1/4\)-inch endpin jack. The module connects to the main preamp with an 18-foot cable (included) that can be extended through a snake or mic cable.

Pendulum Audio PO Box 339 Gillette, NJ 07933 tel. (908) 665-9333

#### MISCELLANEOUS MIDI

German company FriendChip (distributed in the U.S. by Euro-Stuff) unveiled the DC K..AT desktop controller (\$599). Designed to control any Mac, ST, or PC sequencer or hard-disk recording program, the unit offers a scrub wheel and 21 different buttons for operating up to 35 software functions. The company is also shipping the Mac-K..AT (\$199), an ADB-based Macintosh peripheral that offers seven switches and two Shift keys that control up to 21 software transport and edit functions.

Euro-Stuff 4455 Torrance Blvd. Suite 159 Torrance, CA 90509 tel. (800) 726-6491 or (310) 542-6490

#### **ELECTRONIC PERCUSSION**

ddrum introduced the ddrumAT (brain \$4,995; 5-trigger set \$5,350; set with pads \$6,650), an electronic triggering system for acoustic drums that



ddrumTrigger

## THE RIGHT PLACE TO START



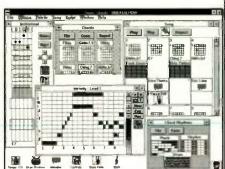
Guitarists, Keyboard Players, Electronic Musicians...

#### Plug in your POWER CHORDS

Power Chords is a new, fun to use, fully graphic song writing program for Windows.

- create chords on an on-screen guitar (or other stringed instrument) or have Chord Request' create them for you
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- create songs by visually arranging objects representing the various parts
- record in from MIDI instruments or import and export standard MIDI files
- supports General MIDI and Roland GS standards - select instruments by name
- compatible with any sound card or MIDI interface supported by Windows
- create great music on-screen no input instruments required

Power Chords requires an IBM or compatible computer running Windows 3.1 (or 3.0 with the multimedia extensions) and can use any sound card or MIDI interface supported by Windows.



Power Chords is only \$84.95 available from:



Howling Dog Systems

Box 80405, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5H 3X6

(604) 436-0420 CIS: 70044,2736

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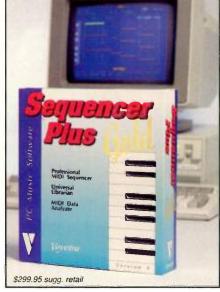
# C Music Software

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#### WHAT'S NEW

consists of ddrumTriggers and the ddrumAT module. The triggers are available in three different models for tom, snare (with separate rim sensor), and kick drum. Instead of requiring adhesives, the triggers clamp onto standard drum rims, and the sensor softly presses against the drum head. The triggers are not affected by different drum tunings, and you don't have to dampen the drum heads. A metal casing protects the trigger from being damaged by accidental hits. The trigger output uses an XLR connector. The ddrumAT module provides a selection of sampled acoustic drum sounds. MIDI functions include Program Change, Note Assign, Gate Time (between Note On and Note Off), and Local On/Off.

> ddrum PO Box 166 25 Lindeman Dr. Trumbull, CT 06611 tel. (203) 374-0020

Drum Workshop's Acoustic Drum Triggering System (\$365/4-trigger system; components available separately) uses internally mounted, AT Series, active triggers that track at the impact point without deadening the drum or affecting tuning. Because the triggers are internally mounted, they cannot be damaged by stick strikes. A multichannel mini cable connects to an external trigger/DC power unit. The trigger/power unit routes up to four trigger signals via 1/4-inch jacks.

> **Drum Workshop** 26907 Lavery Ct. Unit 16 Newbury Park, CA 91320 tel. (805) 499-6863

#### LINE TRANSFORMERS

The Rane FLT22 Line Transformer (\$159) converts two line-level signals to isolated, balanced outputs using a pair of low-distortion, wide-bandwidth, nickel-core audio transformers. All inputs and outputs are via terminal strip. The FLT22 is a module for the Flex Series HR-format chassis and can be expanded to four channels with an Option 44 card (\$89). It can be mounted horizontally or vertically, or can stand alone.

> Rane Corp. 10802 47th Ave. West Mukilteo, WA 98275-5098 tel. (206) 355-6000

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KURZWEIL'

# COMPUTING THE SCORE

very year or two, a ground-breaking notation package is introduced amid claims that it is faster, easier to use, and more powerful than any previously released program. And while those claims often are true (better packages are coming out all the time), a single notation program has yet to emerge that does for musicians what Excel has

done for businesspeople or what *PageMaker* has done for desktop publishers.

While we wait for the ultimate package to appear, there are many ways to improve the utility of available programs. Here are a few tips to help you get more out of your existing notation software.

#### STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Many people find themselves writing for similar groups of instruments, so before you enter a single note, create templates for the ensembles with which

you frequently work.
In addition to obvious things like clefs and instrument names, include place holders for titles, credits, copyright notices, and anything else you regularly use.

In a notation program, the order in which you do things makes a big difference. For example, don't bother tweaking

the page layout before you enter the lyrics; long words often require additional space between notes, which affects the layout of measures in a system. As a rule of thumb, enter notes first; go on to dynamic markings, articulation markings, and lyrics; and then take a shot at the layout.

This procedure works because many graphic objects must be positioned relative to other objects. If you move a note, any articulations, dynamics, slurs, or lyrics must move with it. Some programs are better at this than others. Most of them keep track of



BY STEUE PEHA

# The Perfect Match



Finally, a wireless to match N/DYM® performance: the new Electro-Voice MS-2000AH wireless microphone system.

Our new N/DYM Series III microphones take neodymium dynamic technology to its highest level yet. In a rugged package, they combine condenser-like frequency response, low distortion and sizzling high output – all N/DYM hallmarks – with the lowest overall handling noise available.

In the MS-2000AH wireless system, advanced audio and RF circuitry brings out the true sound of the N/D757B microphone. Our exclusive DNX™ companding gives you a wide, noise-free dynamic range while eliminating compander "breathing." And the dual-receiver true-diversity design switches automatically to the receiver with the strongest signal.

The MS-2000AH has more features to optimize and simplify setup than any competitive system. A continuously variable mic level on the transmitter and audio level metering on the receiver match the wireless to the voice of the performer. Output of the rack-mountable receiver is fully

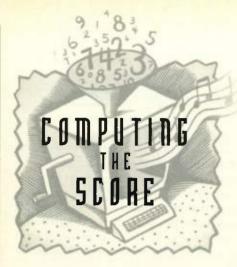
adjustable and equipped with the connectors to match any mic or line input. RF signal and diversity channel meters aid antenna setup. The internal power supply eliminates bulky plug-in adaptors.

Electro-Voice MS-2000A wireless systems\*: extraordinary values with all the features you want and the superb sound of N/DYM. Visit your EV dealer or call us at 800/234-6831 for more information on The Perfect Match.



Also available are MS-2000AB bodypack systems and the GT-1000 professional guitar transmitter.





for an entire track or song. Otherwise, play the notes in staccato passages with longer durations.

#### **CREATIVE QUANTIZING**

Even if you don't read music, you probably understand rhythm better than your computer does. Using some creative quantizing, you can coax your notation software into producing the results you're looking for.

Let me use a personal example. A couple of years ago, I sat down to transcribe some very complicated jazz piano

performances. Using an appropriate quantization level, my notation software correctly transcribed the rhythms in about seven or eight out of every ten measures. Unfortunately, two or three out of every ten measures were hopelessly mangled. If I changed the quantization setting to more accurately match the music in these measures, the measures that previously had been transcribed correctly came out wrong.

Finally, it occurred to me that I could duplicate the track I was trying to transcribe. By quantizing one copy with one rhythmic value and the other copy with another value and importing both copies into my notation program, I could pull out the correct parts from each copy to create the best possible transcription.

Here's a highly simplified example of this technique:

The swing eight-note rhythms of jazz and some pop styles present a unique challenge. The goal is to take eighth notes that have been played with a triplet feel and notate them as though they were normal "straight" eighths.

Few notation programs are sophisticated enough to handle something like this automatically, but by combining track shifting with quantization in your sequencer, eighth notes can be notated correctly (see Fig. 1).

When people play eighth notes with swing, the second eighth note in each beat is played on the last third of the beat, as though it were an eighth-note triplet. Quantizing to eighth-note resolution straightens these eighths out by moving the second eighth note in each pair back to the middle of the beat. However, eighth-note quantization is quite coarse; large parts of your music might be ruined. In general, quantizing to sixteenth notes produces better overall results, but all the swung eighths end up as sixteenth notes on the last quarter of the beat.

To prevent this from happening, shift the entire track forward in time before you quantize so that quantizing to sixteenth-note resolution pulls the offbeat eighths to the middle of the beat and not to the last sixteenth note. If the off-beat eighth notes fall exactly on

#### Hey Greg, what do you do with your 56K?

Greg Edward is the president of Reflex Productions in Woodland Hills, CA. His production/engineering credits include: Corey Hart, Jefferson Airplane, Bob Seger, John Mellencamp, Stevie Nicks, R.E.M., The Beach Boys, Dillinger, and several Damn Yankees singles.

"The 56K has become an indispensible tool for my every day routine. It's perfect for sequencing and editing albums that I produce for Virgin, Warner Brothers, Polygram, and BMG Records. The Playlist is great! I use it to sample and fly in sound effects, vocals, guitars, etc. The system is ideal for creating and editing effects and drum sounds for mixing. The 56K also helps me quickly rearrange the sequence of music on DAT tapes for CD preparation.



I've worked in many mastering houses which refuse to let desktop workstations in the door because of the colorization which they add to the sound. My 56K has changed a lot of those opinions because what you get out is exactly what you put into the system. I also like the fact that I could pick the A/D quality level I wanted.

In an industry where your work reflects the quality of your tools, the 56K is the most important sound tool I've added in years."



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# A P

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Phantom consoles offer a level of performance that is inspiring. A.R.T. has taken the fidelity of world class recording mixers and made the technology available in a professional console that is as silent as its' name implies. Production unit will vary slightly from photo.

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the last eighth-note triplet (or 66 percent into the beat), move the track forward about four or five percent of one beat. That's about five clock ticks at 96 ppqn, or as many as 25 ticks at 480 ppqn. The more the music lays back (plays behind the beat), the more you'll need to shift the track to keep those off-beat eighth notes from becoming sixteenths.

#### **OTHER CHALLENGES**

Keyboard parts pose a bigger challenge to notation software than single-line instrumental parts. Even simple piano tracks often include multiple independent voices and other complexities that confuse the most savvy of notation programs.

The best thing to do is split the right and left hands onto separate tracks. If your sequencer has good graphic editing capabilities, this doesn't take long and saves you a lot of time in the long run. (If your music has hand crossovers, splitting hands won't work very well, but to be honest, crossovers are difficult to deal with anyway.) Once the hands are split, you may want to further separate any independent voices within the left- and right-hand parts. Transcribing multiple voices on one staff is almost impossible for a computer program to notate correctly.

No matter how incredible your notation program is or how much effort you expend editing a sequence prior to transcription, you'll probably never get exactly the kind of notation you want. There are two reasons for this problem. As we've seen, there is often a significant difference between the

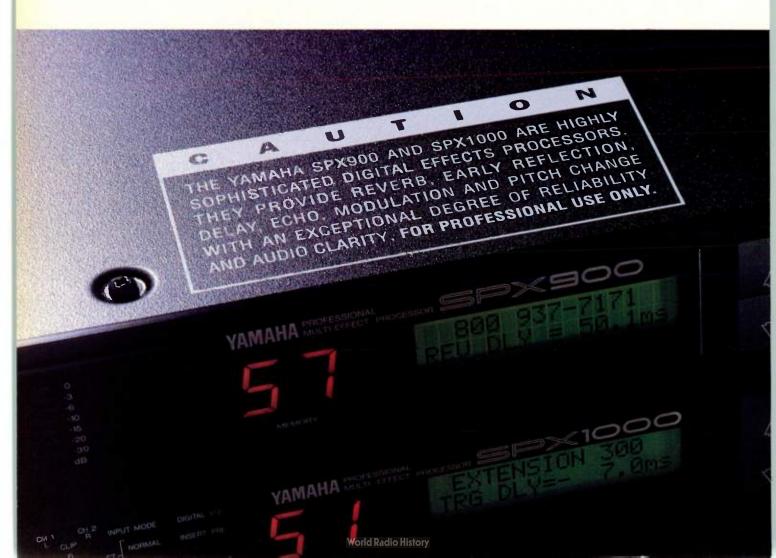
way something is played and the way it's notated. That difference has to do with style, and we can hardly expect today's personal computers to have a complete understanding of musical styles as they apply to transcription.

The second reason is that MIDI files don't contain information about important things like beaming, enharmonic accidentals, and articulations. So, even if the ultimate transcription program is introduced someday, you'll still have to correct a few sharps and flats, adjust the beaming, and put in your own articulation marks.

#### **GRAPHIC MUSIC**

It isn't enough just to know how to get your music into a notation program. You also need to know how to get it out. Moving your score into a word-processing or DTP environment usually is a matter of deciding which graphics file format to use. Most notation programs save their files in three graphic formats: EPS, TIFF, and bitmap.

The EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) format generally produces the best



results. However, EPS files are large, slow to print, and must be printed on expensive laser printers to achieve the best results. You should use this format if you intend to print on a PostScript laser printer or high-resolution (1,200 to 2,400 dpi) PostScript imagesetter.

TIFF (Tag Image File Format) files also can be large and slow to print. Exporting TIFF files usually produces good results, although usually not as good as the EPS format. The primary advantage of TIFF files over EPS files is that they can be printed on less expensive non-PostScript printers without sacrificing quality.

The bitmap format is the simplest of all. It is low-resolution (generally 72 dpi), so the files are fairly small and easy to work with. Of course, the print quality is much lower than either TIFF or EPS. On the other hand, bitmap files can be imported or pasted into almost any word processor, graphics program, or DTP environment. If your notation program can't export graphics in any known format, you can produce a bitmap file by taking a screen



Here's "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" played in 4/4 with a swing feel as you ideally might like it to be notated. The problem, of course, is getting the swing 8th notes transcribed as straight 8ths and still get the triplets in the 3rd measure. Most programs can't do this automatically, so it's up to you to do a little quantizing beforehand.



Quantizing to 8th notes takes care of the swing 8ths. But the 3rd measure is ruined.



Quantizing to 8th note triplets fixes the third measure but does not straighten out the 8ths in measures 1, 2, and 4.

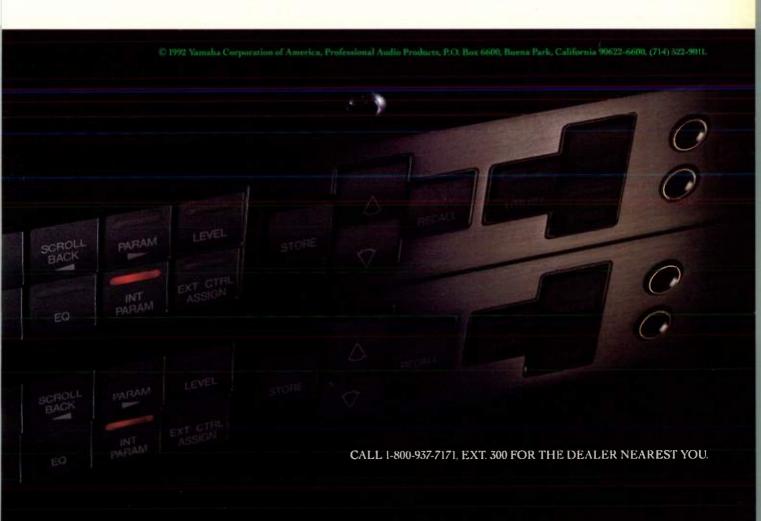
FIG. 1: By quantizing the same part two or more ways and then combining the results, you can usually get your sequences to notate properly.

shot of the score. This works fine for small examples, but it's impractical for exporting whole pages or entire scores.

#### LYRICS

Many notation programs allows you to

import text from a word processor. I highly recommend that you take this approach if possible. Typing and editing text is much easier in a good word processor than it is in most notation programs (and don't forget about the





# LASTING POWER

In a field where products come and go as often as Madonna changes hairstyles, it's remarkable to find two keyboards that continue to perform as industry top sellers year after year. The Kawai K4 and KIII Digital Synthesizers.

Frankly, we aren't surprised. There are good reasons why the K4 and K1II have been so popular with musicians and why they continue to be. First of all, they offer the kinds of sounds most in demand. Both are highly flexible in sound programming, easily updatable with tons of new sound programs that show off that flexibility, and best of all, sensibly priced.

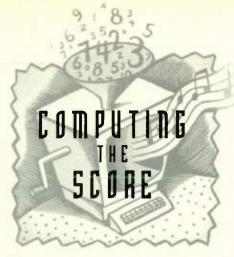
Just take a quick look at the specs: KIII: 16 Voice Digital Synth, Multi-Timbral, Multi-Layering, 256 Waves, Digital FX, Velocity and Aftertouch, Retail Price \$895.00. K4: 16 Bit, 16 Voice Digital Synth, 256 DC and PCM Waves, Multi-Sampled, Multi-Timbral, Multi-Layering, Resonant Filter, Digital Drums, Digital FX, Velocity and Aftertouch, Release Velocity, Analog, Acoustic and Digital Sounds, Retail Price \$1445.00. Both units are also available in rack-mount form as the K4R and KIIIR.

But great specs are only part of the answer. The bottom line on the continued success of the K4 and KIII is something thousands of musicians already know: THEY PERFORM — consistently, professionally and reliably. And while they don't try to be the flavor of the moment, they do provide an unbelievably rich arsenal of sounds to complement setups from the most miniscule to the most fully blown. Get some lasting power out of your keyboards — add a K4 or a KIII to your set up. Better yet, a K4 and a KIII.

### KAWAI

Digital Magic.

Kawai Professional Products Group, 2055 E. University Drive, Compton. CA 90220, (215) 651-1771. Kawai Canada Music Ltd., 6-000 Shawson Dr. Unit #1, Mississauga, Ont., Canada L571L8. Prices shown are suggested retail.



benefits of spell-checking).

Some notation programs attach lyrics to notes automatically by looking for spaces at the ends of words and in the middle. Unlike regular writing, lyrics need hyphens inserted in every word that contains more than one syllable. Some word processors do this automatically if you ask them to display all discretionary hyphens in your text. If you can export your lyrics with all the hyphens intact, you can save yourself some tedious retyping. Even if your word processor can't do this automatically, you're probably better off doing the hyphenation in a word processor because you can check your word breaks against the word processor's hyphenation dictionary.

#### UPGRADING YOUR HARDWARE

It's easy to forget that notation programs are not really music programs at all. They're heavy-duty graphics and page-layout programs in disguise. Nobody would think of using *Illustrator* or *PageMaker* on a Mac Classic or a 16-MHz 80286 PC with 1 MB of RAM. Nevertheless, people run notation programs on machines like these all the time. While low-powered machines are just fine for sequencing, they aren't satisfactory at all for most notation-related tasks.

The best way to improve your productivity with notation software is to upgrade your computer hardware. RAM is the first place to start. (At less than \$40 per megabyte, it's also the cheapest improvement you can make.) If increasing your RAM still doesn't cut it, you may need to upgrade your microprocessor. For the Macintosh user, there are all sorts of accelerator boards starting at a few hundred dollars. While the idea of microprocessor upgrades is just beginning to catch on

in the PC world, Intel's new line of affordable and speedy '486SX chips were designed from the ground up for easy upgrades.

#### A FINAL NOTE

It takes some ingenuity to get the most out of today's crop of music notation packages. But there is some good work being done by composers, arrangers, and publishers using off-the-shelf software. We're also starting to see software that can make rough transcriptions of a live performance instantly in real time. It won't be long before computers have the horsepower and programs have the smarts to produce good-looking notation just about as fast as you can play it in from a keyboard.

Steve Peha is the president of Music Technology Associates, a Bostonbased group of music and computer professionals who provide product-development and consulting services to companies in the music technology industry.

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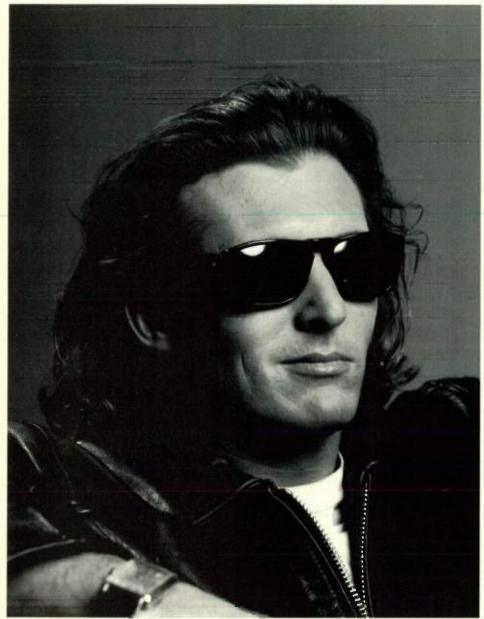
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NORMAL BIAS

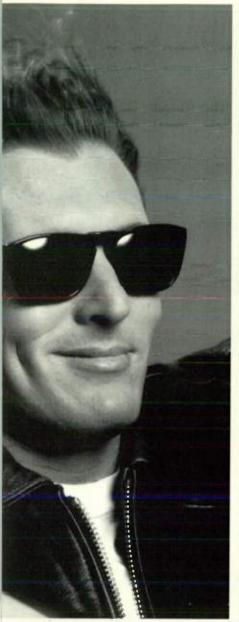
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Maxell has a tape for those whose passion for music isn't normal or high, but intense.

The tape is XLII-S. The power behind it is Black Magnetite—a higher output magnetic material harnessed by Maxell engineers.

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## BIAS

the magnetic coating on any normal or high bias tape, Black Magnetite helps XLII-S deliver higher maximum output levels and a wider dynamic range.

This might explain why CD Review magazine called XLII-S "head, shoulders and torso above the rest"

## **BLACK MAGNETITE**

in their analysis of high bias cassettes.

"You'll know you're hearing something good," said their reviewer, "when your heart leaps into your throat."

That's not normal. That's not high. That's Maxell XLII-S with Black Magnetite.



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uite simply, the mixing console is the heart of an audio system. All the synthesizers, tape decks, and digital doo-dads in the world don't amount to more than a hill of silicon without some way to combine and route their outputs.

> The importance of mixers is evident by the plethora of models offered by a host of manufacturers. The sheer abundance of mixing consoles is enough to turn purchase decisions into university-level research projects. At EM, we may be crazy, but we're nobody's fools; we've made no attempt to compile a comprehensive mixer guide of all sizes and types. In the interest of sanity, the scope of this survey is limited to models designed primarily as nerve centers for the home studio. The criteria are as follows: compact mixing consoles with faders, having up to 24 channels, and costing no more than \$6,000.

#### **CHART TALK**

Our chart (pp. 40-45) offers a selection of parameters that we feel represent the most salient mixing-console features. This is not to say the details we don't mention are insignificant, but it's difficult to list every technical nuance in a general overview. The chart provides fundamental product information to get you started. Obviously, more thorough evaluations are recommended before you decide which mixer best fits your needs, working habits, and budget.

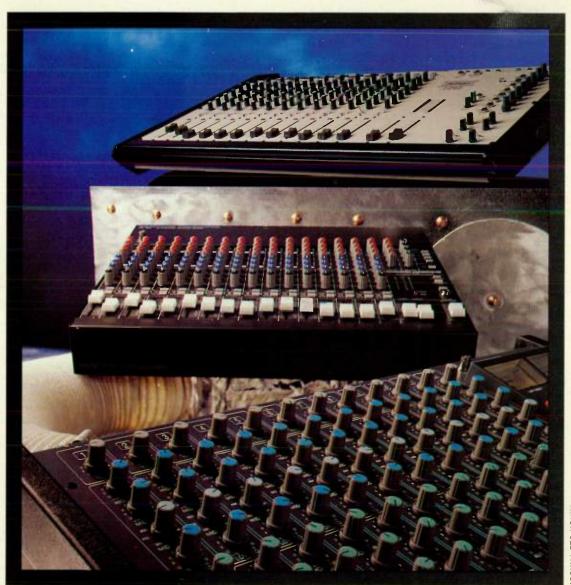
#### CONFIGURATION

This column denotes the standard marketing niche of each console. The first number lists the total number of input channels the board offers, the second gives the number of subgroups, and third notes master outputs. For example, a designation of  $16 \times 8 \times 2$  describes a 16channel board with eight subgroups and a stereo output bus.

Standard mono inputs are represented by a number only, while an "S" designation marks a stereo input. Thus, the entry  $8/8S \times 8 \times 2$ identifies a board with 24-channel input jacks, but only sixteen console "slices." (Pan controls on stereo

# Cellier 5

#### COMPACT MIXERS



JOSHUA ETS-HOKIN

#### COMMAND CENTERS

input channels act as balance controls.) Some models, such as the Soundcraft Spirit Studio 16, allow simultaneous tape and source returns on the input modules. A 16-channel mixer with this feature would be designated 16 × 8 × 16 × 2.

#### **MIC INPUTS**

This category provides the number of balanced XLR microphone-level inputs. One current trend is to offer mic inputs only on some of the total channels, which is why the number of mic inputs does not always correspond to the number of channels.

It is wise to investigate a mic input's noise performance (especially in its area of maximum gain) and sound quality. Most boards with mic inputs also include a variable preamp trim

#### LINE INPUTS

The number of channel inputs accepting line-level signals is listed under "Line Inputs/Type". This is assumed to be an unbalanced 1/4-inch phone jack, unless otherwise indicated. (Some



Carvin FX2444

models utilize RCA jacks.) Stereo lineins that act as left/ right inputs feeding a single console slice are marked with an "S."

#### **INSERTS/DIRECT OUTS**

The "Inserts/Direct Outs" column gives

the number of input channels that accept some type of insert loop patching. Although not specified in the chart, some mixers use 1/4-inch TRS phone jacks for both sends and returns, while others utilize separate 1/4-inch TS jacks. The former arrangement requires special adapter cables; the latter takes up more panel space. Except on some high-end professional boards, insert loops are unbalanced.

Generally, boards with mono and stereo inputs offer insert patching only on the mono channels. Nominal levels at insert patches vary widely and are not always clearly documented. This information glitch is unfortunate because levels at insert patch points often are well below the nominal output level of the board, making it difficult to drive signal processors crippled with weak input gain.

Direct outs are useful in multitrack recording situations, as they can be employed as channel sends to outboard gear. These outputs usually are routed through unbalanced 1/4-inch jacks operating at levels similar to the insert points.

#### **EQUALIZATION**

Ah, equalization: the great unequalizer of mixing boards. Console EQ separates the champs from the chumps. Unfortunately, the limitations of language thwart attempts to describe the "sound" of a mixer's EQ, so we give a basic listing of the number of bands and type. Although this information

(continued on p. 44)

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#### **GUIDE TO COMPACT MIXERS**

Manufacturer/ Model	Configuration	Mic Inputs (XLR)	Line Inputs/ Type	Inserts/ Direct Outs	Equalization (Bands/Type)
Alesis 1622	16x2x2	8	16/1/4"	16/8	2/high and low shelving
Allen & Heath GS3	16x8x2	16	16/1/4"	16/16	3/swept mid, low
Allen & Heath Scepter	12x2x1	12	12/1/4"	12/12	3/swept mid, switchable low
Biamp Cascade 12/342c	12x2x1	12	12/1/4"	12/0	3/fixed
Biamp Cascade 16/342c	16x2x1	16	16/1/4"	16/0	3/fixed
Biamp Integrity Tri-Power	12x2x1	12	12/1/4°	12/12	3/fixed and 9/graphic (2)
Biamp Maxxam 8+8	8Sx8Mx2	2	8S 8M/1/4°	8S-8M/0	n/a
Biamp Newport 16/344	16x4x2x1	16	16/1/4"-2S/RCA	16/0	3/fixed
Biamp Newport 24/344	24x4x2x1	24	24/1/4"-2S/RCA	24/0	3/fixed
Biamp Rackmax II/12	12x2x1	12	12/1/4"	12/0	3/fixed
Biamp Rackmax II/16	16x2x1	16	16/1/4"	16/0	3/fixed
Biamp Rackmax II/EX	16x2x1	16	16/1/4"	16/0	4/fixed
Boss BX-16	16x2	0	16/1/4"	0/0	2/fixed
Boss BX-8	8x2	0	8/1/4"	0/0	2/fixed
Boss BX-80	8x2	0	8/1/4"	070	2/fixed
Carvin FX1244	12x4x2x1	12	16/1/4"	16/16	4/fixed and 9/graphio (2)
Carvin FX1244D	12x4x2x1	12	16/1/4°	16/16	4/fixed and 9/graphic (2)
Carvin FX1644	16x4x2x1	16	20/1/4"	20/20	4/fixed and 9/graphic (2)
Carvin FX2444	24x4x2x1	24	28/1/4"	28/28	4/fixed and 9/graphic (2)
Carvin MX2488	24x8x8x2	24	36/1/4"	32/32	3/sweepable
Electro-Voice Interface 8P	8x4x2x1	8	8/1/4"	8/8	4/high-low sholving, swept mid
Electro-Voice BK-842	8x2x1	8	8/1/4"	8/0	3/high-low shelving, swept mid
Electro-Voice BK-1242	12x2x1	12	12/1/4"	12/0	3/high-low shelving, swept mid
Electro-Voice BK-1642	16x2x1	16	16/1/4"	16/0	3/high-low shelving, swept mid
Electro-Voice BK-2442	24x2x1	24	24/1/4"	24/0	3/high-low shelving, swept mid
Foster 454	8x4x2	8	8/1/4"	8/8	3/fixed high, swept mid, low
Fostex 812	12x6x2 or 12x8	12	12/ 1/4"	12/12	3/fixed high, swept mid, low
Fostex 820	20x6x2 or 20x8	20	20/1/4°	20/20	3/fixed high, swept mid, low
Kawai MX-4S	4Sx2	0	8/1/4"	0/0	n/a
Kawai MX-8BR	8x2	0	8/1/4"	0/0	n/a
Kawai MX-8SR	8Sx2	0	16/1/4"	0/0	n/a
Kawai MX-16	16×2	0	16/ 1/4"	0/0	2/high low shelving
Mackie 16•8	16x8x2	16	32/1/4"	16/16	4/high-low shelving, swept mids
Mackie 24•8	24x8x2	24	48/1/4°	24/24	4/high-low shelving, swept mids
Mackie CR-1604	16x4x2	6	16/1/4"	8/8	3/fixed
Peavey SRC-1600	16x4x2	16	16/1/4"	16/0	3/shelving/sweepable
Peavey SRC 2400	24x4x2	24	24/ 1/4"	24/0	3/shelving/sweepable
Peavey MDIII-12	12x2x1	12	12/1/4°	12/0	3/shelving/sweepable
Peavey MDIII-16	16x2x1	16	16/1/4"	16/0	3/shelving/sweepable
Peavey Unity 1000 S.M.	18x2	12	18/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Peavey Unity 2000 S.M.	20x2	12	20/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Peavey Unity 1000-8	8x2	8	8/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Peavey Unity 1000-12	12x2	12	12/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Peavey Unity 2000-12	12x2	12	12/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Peavey Unity 2000-16	16x2	16	16/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Peavey AMR 1242	12x4x2	8	28/1/4"	12/4	3/swept mid
Peavey AMR 64	6x4x2	6	14/1/4"	6/0	3/swept mid
Roland M-120	12x2	0	12/1/4"	0/2	n/a
Roland M-12E	12x2	0	12/1/4"	4/2	2/fixed
Roland M-160 II	16x2	0	16/ <sup>1</sup> /4"	0/2	n/a
Roland M-16E	16x2	8	16/1/4"	16/0	3/fixed
Roland M-240	24x2	0	24/1/4"	0/0	n/a
Roland M-240R	24x2	0	24/1/4"	0/2	n/a
Roland M-24E	24x2	12	24/1/4"	24/0	3/fixed
Ross Systems Minimix	16x2	16	16/1/4"	0/0	2/fixed
Ross Systems PC7250	7x1	7	7/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
	8x2	8	8/1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Ross Systems PC8400 Ross Systems RCS 802	8x2	8	8/1/4"	8/0	3/fixed

KEY: A=automatable; F=onboard frequency oscillator; H=headphone out; MM=MIDI muting; MP=mic pads; P=powered; PP=phantom power; R=rack-mountable; S=switchable +4 dBm/-10 dBV; T=talkback

	Aux Sends/ Aux Retu <i>i</i> ns	Mute/Solo	Tape Returns	Meters (Number/Type)	Notes	Price
	6/8	yes/PFL	2	2/PPM	H,R,S	\$899
	4/4	yes/PFL	40	10/PPM	F,H,MM,PP,T	\$4,595
_	4/4	yes/PFL	14	2/PPM	MP,PP,R	\$2,700
-	4/1M-2S	no/PFL	1	2/PPM	A,H,PP	\$1,759
_	4/1M-2S	no/PFL	1	2/PPM	A,H,PP	\$2,099
	3/2\$	no/PFL	2	2/PPM	A,H,P,PP	\$2,499
	4/4\$	no/no	1	2/PPM	A,H,PP,R	\$1,332
	4/4	no/PFL	2	6/PPM	A,H,PP	\$2,699
	4/4	no/PFL	2	6/PPM	A,H,PP	\$3,383
	4/1M-2S 4/1M-2S	no/PFL no/PFL	2	2/PPM	A,H,PP,R	\$1,659
	6/1M-2S	yes/PFL	2	2/PPM	A,H,PP,R	\$1,999
-	2/2	no/no	0	2/PPM	A,H,MP,PP,R	\$2,859
	2/2	no/no	0	2/PPM 2/PPM	H	\$795
	1/1	no/no	0		H	\$495
	6/4	no/PFL	4	2/PPM 4/VU	H	\$450
	6/4	no/PFL	4	4/VU	H,MP,S,T H,MP,P,PP,S,T	\$1,469 \$1,679
-	6/4	no/PFL	4	4/VU		
-	6/4	no/PFL	4	4/VU	H,MP,PP,S,T H,MP,PP,S,T	\$1,689
	4/2	yes/PFL	8	8/VU	H,MP,PP,S,T	\$2,289 \$3,679
	6/8	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MP,PP,R,T	\$4,506
	3/3	no/PFL	2	2/VU (peak LED)	H,PP,R	\$1,314
7	3/3	no/PFL	2	2/VU (peak LED)	H,PP	\$1,572
	3/3	no/PFL	2	2/VU (peak LED)	H,PP	\$1,894
	3/3	no/PFL	2	2/VU (peak LED)	H,PP	\$2,600
	2/4	no/PFL	8	4/LED	H,PP	\$1,195
	3/6	yes/SIP	12	8/LED	H,MM,PP	\$1,995
	3/6	yes/SIP	20	8/LED	H,MM,PP	\$2,995
	1S/2S	no/no	0	6/LED	н,мР	\$249
	2/2\$	no/no	0	2/PPM	H,MP,R	\$425
	1M-1S/2S	no/no	_ 0	2/PPM	H,MP,R	\$595
	3/3\$	no/no	0	2/PPM	H MP,S	\$795
	6/6	yes/SIP	16	10/PPM	A,H,PP,S,T	\$2,995
	6/6	yes/SIP	24	10/PPM	A,H,PP,S,T	\$3,495
	7/4	yes/SIP	0	2/LED	A,H,PP,R,S	\$1,099
	6/8	no/PFL	4	4/PPM	H,PP	\$1,999
	6/8	no/PFL	4	4/PPM	H,PP	\$2,599
	6/4	no/PFL	4	2/PPM	H,PP	\$1,299
	6/4	no/PFL	4	2/PPM	H,PP	\$1,549
	2/1	yes/no	1	2/PPM	Н	\$699
	4/2	yes/no	1	4/PPM	Н	\$799
	2/1	no/no	1	2/PPM	Н	\$449
	2/1	no/no	1	2/PPM	Н	\$599
	4/2	no/no	1	4/PPM	Н	\$699
	4/2 2/2	no/no	1	4/PPM	Н	\$899
	1/1	yes/no	4	2/PPM	Н	\$1,449
	2/2	yes/no	0	2/PPM	H,R	\$599
	2/2	no/no		2/PPM	H,R	\$595
	4/4	no/no	0	2/PPM	H,R	\$985
	4/4	no/no	0	2/PPM	H,R	\$1,195
	4/4	yes/no	0	3/PPM	H,PP,R	\$2,295
	4/6	no/no yes/no	0	2/PPM 2/PPM	Н	\$1,495
	4/4	yes/no yes/no	0	3/PPM	H,R H,PP	\$2,595
	4/4\$	yes/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,PP,R	\$2,795
	1/1	no/no	1	2/PPIW 2/LED	Р.	\$995 \$730
	2/1	no/no	0	2/PPM	P	\$1,250
	3/2S	no/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,PP,R,S	\$600

#### **GUIDE TO COMPACT MIXERS**

Manufacturer/ Model	Configuration	Mic Inputs (XLR)	Line Inputs/ Type	Inserts/ Direct Outs	Equalization (Bands/Type)
Ross Systems RCS 1202	12×2	12	12/1/4°	12/0	3/fixed
Ross Systems RCS 1602	16x2	16	16/ 1/4"	16/0	3/fixed
Ross Systems RCS 2402	24x2	24	24/ 1/4"	24/0	3/fixed
Samick SM 820	8x2x2	8	8/1/4"	8/0	3/fixed
Samick SM 1200	12x2x2	12	12/ 1/4"	12/0	3/fixed
Samick SM 1600	16x2x2	16	16/1/4"	16/0	3/fixed
Samick SMP 900	8x2x2	8	8/ 1/4"	0/8	3/fixed and 5/graphic (2)
Samick System 84	8x4x2	8	8/1/4"	8/0	4/fixed
Samick System 124	12x4x2	12	12/1/4"	12/0	4/fixed
Samick System 164	16x4x2	16	16/ 1/4"	16/0	4/fixed
Samick System 244	24x4x2	24	24/ 1/4"	24/0	4/fixed
Soundcraft Delta SR-16	16x4x2	16	16/1/4"	16/16	3/1 fixed, 2 variable
Soundcraft Delta SR-8	8x4x2	8	8/ 1/4"	8/8	3/1 fixed, 2 variable
Soundcraft Spirit Live 8	8x3	_ 8	8/1/4"	8/0	3/1 fixed, 2 variable
Soundcraft Spirit Live 16	16x3	16	16/ <sup>1</sup> /4°	16/0	3/1 fixed, 2 variable
Soundcraft Spirit Live 24	24x3	24	24/ 1/4°	24/0	3/1 fixed 2 variable
Soundcraft Spirit Monitor 16	16x8	16	16/ 1/4"	16/0	3/1 fixed, 2 variable
Soundcraft Spirit Monitor 24	24x8	24	24/1/4"	24/0	3/1 flxed, 2 variable
Soundcraft Spirit Studio 16	16x8x16x2	16	16/1/4°	16/16	4/2 fixed, 2_variable
Soundcraft Spirit Studio 24	24x8x24x2	24	24/ 1/4"	24/24	4/2 fixed, 2 variable
Soundtech PC830	8x2x1	8	8/ 1/4", 2/RCA	8/0	3/swept mid
Soundtech PC1250	12x2x1	_12	12/ 1/4", 2/RCA	12/0	3/swept mid
Soundtech \$T122	12x2x1	_ 12	12/ 1/4", 2/RCA	12/0	3/swept mid _
Soundtech ST162	16x2x1	16	16/ 1/4°, 2/RCA	16/0	3/swept mid
Soundtracs Solo LIVE 16	16x4x2x1	16	16/ 1/4	16/16	4/swept mids
Soundtracs Solo LIVE 24	24x4x2x1	24	24/1/4"	24/24	4/swept mids
Soundtracs Solo MIDI 18	16x8x16x2	16	16/1/4"	16/16	4/swept mids
Soundtracs Solo MIDI 24	24x8x24x2	24	24/1/4"	24/24	4/swept mids
Speck Electronics Model SSM	24x2	0	24/1/4"	24/24	3/sweepable
Studiomaster 82D	8x2	8	8/ 1/4", 2/RCA	0/0	3/fixed
Studiomaster 122D	12x2	12	12/ 1/4", 2/RCA	0/0	3/fixed
Studiomaster 1620	16x2	16	16/ 1/4", 2/RCA	0/0	3/fixed
-	8x2x1	8	8/1/4", 2/RCA	0/0	3/fixed
Studiomaster 82RB	16x4x2x1	16	16/ <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> ", 2/RCA	16/0	3/fixed
Studiomaster 1642D	8x2	8	8/1/4°, 2/RCA	8/0	3/swept mid
Studiomaster SM 82RG	12x2	12	12/ 1/4°, 2/RCA	12/0	3/swept mid
Studiomaster SM 122RG Studiomaster SM 162G		16	16/ 1/4", 2/RCA	16/16	3/swept mid
	16x2 24x2	24	24/ 1/4", 2/RCA	24/24	3/swept mid
Studiomaster SM 162G-24		8	8/ 1/4", 2/RCA	0/0	3/fixed
Studiomaster 82PH	8x2	12	12/ 1/4", 2/RCA	0/0	3/fixed
Studiomaster 122PH	12x2		16/ 1/4", 2/RCA	16/16	4/swept mids
Studiomaster SH 1621	16x2x1	16	24/ 1/4", 2/RCA	24/24	4/swept mids
Studiomaster SH 1621-24	24x2x1		16/ 1/4", 2/RCA	16/16	4/swept mids
Studiomaster SH 1624	16x4x2x1	16		24/24	4/swept mids
Studiomaster SH 1624-24	24x4x2x1	24	24/ 1/4", 2/RCA	16/16	4/swept mids
Studiomaster SH 1682	16x8x2x1	16	16/ <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> ", 2/RCA	24/24	4/swept mids
Studiomaster SH 1682-24	24x8x2x1	24	24/ 1/4", 2/RCA		3/swept mid, low
Studiomaster SM 168 Monitor	16x8	16	2/RCA	16/16	3/swept mid, low
Studiomaster SM 168-24 Monitor	24x8	24	2/RCA	24/24	3/swept mid
Studiomaster PL 162RG	12x4x2	12	20/1/4	12/12	
Studiomaster PL 4G	16x4x8x2	16	24/ 1/4"	16/16	3/swept mid
Studiomaster PL 4G-24	24x4x8x2	24	32/ 1/4"	24/24	3/swept mid
Studiomaster PL 8G	16x8x16x2	16	32/ 1/4°	16/16	3/swept mid
Studiomaster PL 8G-24	24x8x16x2	24	40/1/4"	24/24	3/swept mid
Studiomaster MD 4G	16x4x8x2	16	27/ 1/4"	16/16	3/swept mid, low
Studiomaster MD 4G-24	24x4x8x2	24	32/ 1/4"	24/24	3/swept mid, low

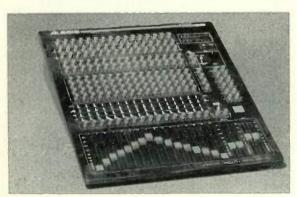
KEY: A=automatable; F=onboard frequency oscillator; H=headphone out; MM=MIDI muting; MP=mic pads; P=powered; PP=phantom power; R=rack-mountable; S=switchable +4 dBm/-10 dBV; T=talkback

Aux Sends/			Meters		
Aux Returns	Mute/Solo	Tape Returns	(Number/Type)	Notes	Price
3/2\$	no/PFL	0	2/PPM	H.PP.S	\$800
3/2\$	no/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,PP,S	\$1,000
3/2\$	no/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,PP,S	\$1,250
1/1	no/no	0	2/PPM	H,R	\$399
1/1	no/no	0	2/PPM	Н	\$499
1/1	no/no	0	2/PPM	Н	\$699
1/1	no/PFL	0	4/PPM	H,P	\$899
4/8	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,R,MP,PP	\$1,299
4/8	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MP,PP	\$1,499
4/8	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MP,PP	\$1,949
4/8	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MP,PP	\$2,299
4/4S	yes/PFL	6	20/PPM	H,PP,S,T	\$4,650
4/4S	yes/PFL	6	20/PPM	H,PP,S,T	\$2,950
4/4S 4/4S	yes/PFL	22	20/PPM	H,PP,R	\$1,295
4/4\$	yes/PFL yes/PFL	2	20/PPM	H,PP,R	\$2,395
0/0	yes/PFL	9	20/PPM	H,PP,R	\$3,495
0/0	yes/PFL	9	20/PPM	H,PP,T	\$4,250
6/4S	yes/PFL	10	20/PPM 20/PPM	H,PP,T H,PP,S,T	\$5,650
6/4S	yes/PFL	10	20/PPM	H,PP,S,T	\$3,995
3/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,MP,P,PP,R	\$5,650 \$1,499
3/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,MP,P,PP	\$1,999
3/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,MP,PP,R	\$1,099
3/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,MP,PP,R	\$1,299
6/4S	yes/PFL	2	6/PPM	H,PP,T	\$2,699
6/4S	yes/PFL	2	6/PPM	H,PP,T	\$3,599
6/4S	yes/PFL,SIP	16	10/PPM	A,F,H,MM,P,PP,S,T	\$4,299
6/4S	yes/PFL,SIP	24	10/PPM	A,F,H,MM,P,PP,S,T	\$5,999
8/8S	yes/SIP	0	2/PPM	H,R,S,T	\$4,975
2/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,PP,R	\$629
2/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,PP	\$839
2/2	no/no	2	2/PPM.	H,PP	\$1,049
2/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,PP,R	\$679
4/6	no/PFL	2	2/PPM	Н,РР	\$1,495
4/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,PP,R	\$765
4/4	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,PP,R	\$995
4/6 4/6	yes/PFL	2	2/PPM	Н,РР	\$1,395
3/2	yes/PFL	2	2/PPM	H,PP	\$2,020
3/2	no/no	2	2/PPM	H,P,PP	\$1,495
6/8	no/no yes/PFL	2	2/PPM	H,P,PP	\$1,795
6/8	yes/PFL	2	3/PPM	H,MP,PP,T	\$2,495
6/8	yes/PFL	2	3/PPM 7/PPM	H,MP,PP,T	\$3,760
6/8	yes/PFL	2	7/PPM	H,MP,PP,T	\$3,425
6/12	yes/PFL	2	11/PPM	H,MP,PP,T	\$4,875
6/12	yes/PFL	2	11/PPM	H,MP,PP,T H,MP,PP,T	\$4,050 \$5,600
8/0	yes/PFL	2	8/PPM	H,PP,T	\$3,750
8/0	yes/PFL	2	8/PPM	H,PP,T	\$4,815
4/0	yes/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,PP,R	\$2,595
4/4	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MM,PP,S,T	\$2,595
4/4	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MM,PP,S,T	\$3,470
4/4	yes/PFL	16	10/PPM	F,H,MM,PP,S,T	\$3,695
4/4	yes/PFL	16	10/PPM	F,H,MM,PP,S,T	\$4,620
6/2	yes/PFL	8	6/PPM	F,H,MM,MP,PP,S,T	\$3,995

#### **GUIDE TO COMPACT MIXERS**

Manufacturer/ Model	Configuration	Mic Inputs (XLR)	Line Inputs/ Type	Inserts/ Direct Outs	Equalization (Bands/Type)
Studiomaster MD 8G	16x8x16x2	16	32/ <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "	16/16	3/swept mid, low
Tascam M06	6x2	0	6/ 1/4", 6/RCA	0/0	2/fixed
Tascam M06ST	6x2	0	6/ 1/4°, 12/RCA	0/0	2/fixed
Tascam M108	12x4	4	12/ 1/4"	4/4	2/fixed
Tascam M1016	8Mx4Sx2	8	16/ 1/4"	8/0	3/swept mid
Tascam M1024	16Mx4Sx2	8	24/ 1/4"	16/0	3/swept mid
Tascam M1508	8x4x8	8	8/ 1/4"	8/8	3/swept mid
Tascam M1516	16x4x16	16	16/ 1/4"	8/8	3/swept mid
Tascam M2516	16x8x2x16	16	16/ 1/4"	16/16	3/high shelving, swept mid
Tascam M2524	24x8x2	24	24/ 1/4"	24/24	3/high shelving, 2/swept
Tascam MM1	20×2	0	20/ 1/4°	0/16	2/fixed
Tascam MM100	16x2	0	16/ 1/4"	0/0	2/fixed
Tascam MM200	16x2	0	16/ 1/4"	0/0	2/fixed
Vestax RMC-88	8x8x2	4	8/ 1/4"	0/8	3/fixed
Yamaha EM2820	8x2	8	8/ 1/4"	0/0	3/fixed
Yamaha EMX2200	8x2	8	4/ 1/4"	4/0	3/fixed
Yamaha EMX2300	12x2	12	8/ 1/4"	4/0	3/fixed
Yamaha MC802	8x2	8	8/ 1/4"	8/0	3/swept mid
Yamaha MC1202	12x2	12	12/ 1/4"	12/0	3/swept mid
Yamaha MC1602	16x2	16	16/ 1/4"_	16/0	3/swept mid
Yamaha MC1604II	16x4x2	16	16/ 1/4"	22/0	4/swept mids
Yamaha MC2404II	24x4x2	24	24/ 1/4"	30/0	4/swept mids
Yamaha MR842	8x4x2	8	8/ 1/4"	12/0	3/swept mid
Yamaha MR1242	12x4x2	12	12/ 1/4"	16/0	3/swept mid
Yamaha MR1642	16x4x2	16	16/ 1/4"	20/0	3/swept mid

KEY: A=automatable; F=onboard frequency oscillator; H=headphone out; MM=MIDI muting; MP=mic pads; P=powered; PP=phantom power; R=rack-mountable; S=switchable +4 dBm/-10 dBV; T=talkback



Alesis 1622

provides valuable insight into a mixer's sound-sculpting parameters, it can't label an EQ personality as "clean and sweet" or "harsh and edgy." The fact that perceived sonic quality is completely subjective further complicates critical appraisal.

It is extremely important to audition a mixer's EQ with your own ears. (It's astounding to me that some people actually buy consoles "sound unheard" through mail-order houses.) There are a number of ways of implementing equalization, and design decisions have a profound impact on audio quality.

#### AUX SENDS/RETURNS

Aux sends are defined as buses labeled aux send, effects send, monitor send, or foldback. The majority of aux sends are 1/4-inch unbalanced phone jacks. Aux sends can be pre- or post-EQ and pre- or post-fader. Most sends

are mono. Many mixers allow user customization of the sends via internal jumpers. (Check your manual for specifics.)

Some designs do not make all aux sends simultaneously available. For instance, some consoles offer eight sends, but only four can be used at one time. Switches allow selection of send one or five, two or six, three or seven, and four or eight.

Aux returns generally are unbalanced 1/4-inch phone jack inputs with level and pan controls (if mono).

Stereo aux returns, designated with an "S" in the chart, are hardwired left/right. Mono sends and returns on boards that also offer stereo returns are labeled with an "M".

#### MUTE/SOLO

Mutes are channel on/off switches, generally located post-fader. The Solo function usually is destructive on a recording board (meaning that a soloed input replaces the master left/right mix in the monitors) and non-destructive on a sound reinforcement board (most commonly as a solo to headphones). Many boards within the chart's price range employ a prefade listen (PFL). Solo-in-place (SIP) is a high-end feature which maintains



Studiomaster SH1621

Aux Sends/ Aux Returns	Mute/Solo	Tape Returns	Meters (Number/Type)	Notes	Price
6/2	yes/PFL	16	10/PPM	F,H,MM,MP,PP,S,T	\$4,995
1/1	no/no	0	2/VU	Н	\$389
1/1	no/no	0	2/VU	Н	\$499
3/25	no/no	8	2/PPM	Н	\$799
6/2M-4S	no/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,MP,PP	\$1,399
6/2M-4S	no/PFL	0	2/PPM	H,MP,PP	\$1,999
3/2M-2S	no/PFL	8	6/PPM	H,R	\$1,199
3/2M-2S	no/PFL	8	6/PPM	Н	\$1,899
4/2M-2S	yes/PFL, SIP	16	10/PPM	H,MM,MP,PP,T	\$3,199
4/4	yes/PFL, SIP	24	10/PPM	H,MM,MP,PP,T	\$4,199
4/4S	yes/SIP	0	2/PPM	H,MM,R	\$1,099
4/4S	no/no	0	2/PPM	H,R	\$599
4/4S	no/no	0	2/PPM	H,R	\$799
3/2	no/PFL	8	2/LED	H,R	\$899
2/2	no/no	2	2/LED	MP,P,PP	\$1,195
2/2\$	no/no	0	2/VU	H,MP,P,PP	\$1,795
2/2S	no/no	0	2/VU	H,MP,P,PP	\$1,995
3/2S	no/cue	0	3/VU, 8/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$825
3/2\$	no/cue	0	3/VU, 12/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$1,095
3/2S	no/cue	0	3/VU, 16/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$1,295
4/4S	no/cue	2	8/VU, 16/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$3,600
4/4S	no/cue	2	8/VU, 24/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$4,300
3/2S	no/cue	8	6/VU, 8/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$1,295
3/2\$	no/cue	12	6/VU, 12/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$1,595
3/2S	no/cue	16	6/VU, 16/LED	H,MP,PP,T	\$1,795

#### LIST OF MANUFACTURERS

#### Alesis

3630 Holdrege Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90016 tel. (213) 467-8000

#### Allen and Heath

5639 South Riley Ln. Salt Lake City, UT 84107 tel. (801) 268-8400

#### **Biamp Systems**

14270 NW Science Park Dr. Portland, OR 97229 tel. (503) 641-7287

#### Carvin Corp.

1155 Industrial Ave. Escondido, CA 92029 tel. (619) 747-1710

#### Electro-Voice Inc.

600 Cecil St. Buchanan, MI 49107 tel. (616) 695-6831

#### Fostex Corp. of America

15431 Blackburn Ave. Norwalk, CA 90650 tel. (310) 921-1112

#### Kawai America Corp.

2055 E. University Dr. Compton, CA 90220 tel. (310) 631-1771

#### Mackie Designs Inc.

16130 Woodinville Redmond Rd. 2 NE Woodinville, WA 98072 tel. (206) 487-4333

#### **Peavey Electronics**

711 A St. Meridian, MS 39301 tel. (601) 483-5365

#### Roland Corp./Boss

7200 Dominion Circle. Los Angeles, CA 90040 tel. (213) 685-5141

#### Ross Systems

1316 E. Lancaster Ave. Fort Worth, TX 76102 tel. (817) 336-5114

#### Samick Music Corp.

18521 Railroad St. City of Industry, CA 91748 tel. (818) 964-4700

#### Soundcraft

8500 Balboa Blvd. Northridge, CA 91329 tel. (818) 893-4351

#### Soundtech

255 Corporate Woods Pkwy. Vernon Hills, IL 60061 tel. (708) 913-5511

#### Soundtracs PLC

262 Duffy Hicksville, NY 11801 tel. (516) 932-3810

#### Speck Electronics

925 S. Main St., Ste 255 Fallbrook, CA 92028 tel. (619) 723-4281

#### Studiomaster Inc.

3941 Miraloma Ave. Anaheim, CA 92807 tel. (714) 524-2227

#### Tascam

7733 Telegraph **R**d. Montebello, CA 90640 tel. (213) 726-0303

#### Vestax Corp.

2860 Cordelia Rd., Ste. 120 Fairfield, CA 94585 tel. (707) 427-1920

#### Yamaha Corp. of America

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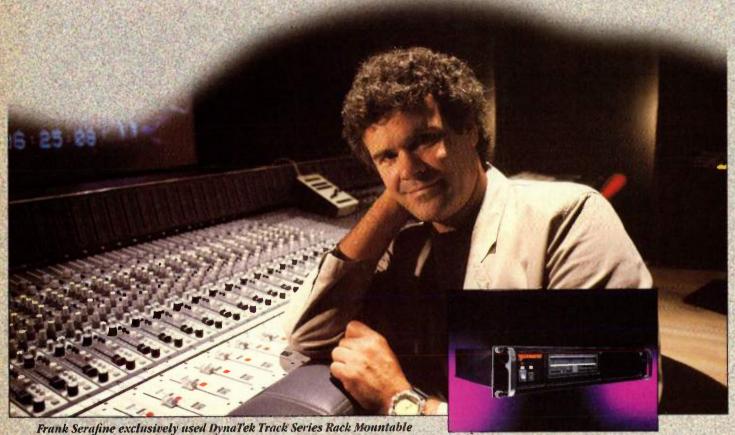
# Piece II. It Stands Alone.



Mark of the Unicorn

# "Intelligent design, dependable... flawless performance"

Frank Serafine, President Serafine Inc.



Frank Serafine exclusively used DynaTek Track Series Rack Mountable

Data Storage in the production of

#### THE LAWNMOWER MAN THE

Hollywood knows it can depend on Frank Serafine for creative sound design.

For digital data storage, Frank knows he can depend on DynaTek.

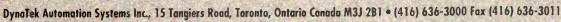
For years, Frank has used digital technology to produce sound effects for such innovative projects as "Tron," "The Day After," "Star Trek" and most recently, "The Lawnmower Man." Low noise, ergonomic design and its vast selection of media has made
DynaTek's "TRACK" series Frank's choice for rack-mountable data storage.

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"The Launmower Man" image couriesy of Allied Vision Lané Pringle Productions and New Line Cinema Corporation. "CyberBoogie" created by Angel Studios.



#### COMMAND CENTERS

the stereo panning of soloed inputs. A cue function routes the selected input to the headphone jack without affecting the master monitor mix.

#### TAPE RETURNS

Consoles intended for sound reinforcement don't require multitrack tape returns, but mixers in this price range often attempt to service recording and live sound. Tape returns are either *in-line* or *split*. In the former case, the tape monitor pot appears on the correspondingly numbered channel client in the letter there is a separate

the tape monitor pot appears on the correspondingly numbered channel slice; in the latter, there is a separate section of tape monitors (typically in the master section). Tape return connections usually are unbalanced <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch phone or RCA.

True in-line setups, where the channel input and tape return signals are separate signal paths, don't usually appear in the level of console we've charted. Most designs share tape-return jacks, which can be switch-selected from the front panel to access the tape monitor or channel input.

Some split monitor designs also utilize dual features. A submaster module might have a button that switches between a group-submaster function and a tape-return function. In addition, tape returns can be brought into a channel line input.

#### **METERS**

There are three types of metering commonly found on the mixers surveyed: an LED peak/clip indicator, a PPM (peak reading) LED ladder, and the good, old-fashioned VU meter. The most common arrangement is a clip (or overload) LED on each channel and either a PPM or VU display in the master section. VU meters also may contain a peak/clip LED. On some models, meters in the master section can be switched to select alternate sources for metering.

#### SHOPPING TIPS

Yes, now that you ask, there are other details you should look at when shopping for a mixer. Check out the length of the faders and the integrity of the controls. Mixing is a tactile art, so the feel of a control is a reasonable indicator of its quality. Look for convenience features like a separate solo

(sometimes marked "PFL") volume level pot so you don't blast yourself accidentally when soloing something

up. An onboard oscillator makes

Soundcraft Spirit Monitor Console

calibrating levels an easier chore. See if channel muting is noiseless. If the mutes click, your practical uses of the feature are severely limited.

Grounding is a vital issue. Because all signals meet at the mixer, a coherent grounding scheme is essential. Does the mixer have only a two-wire AC plug? This configuration makes grounding

considerably more difficult. Is there a grounding post on the back which can be employed as the star ground point for all equipment in the system? Checking now for these features saves experiencing the heartbreak of hum during a critical session.

Most important, consider carefully what you want to use the board for—now and in the foreseeable future—and make sure it suits the application.

Mechanical and audio performance can be evaluated only by use. When you're shopping, ask lots of questions. Don't nod your head until you understand the answers. Mixing consoles are a vast, complicated market, and any good salesperson tempers that fact with understanding and consideration.

Larry "the O" Oppenheimer chases electrons to and fro under the name Toys in the Attic.



#### Optical RAM

New materials and beam-steering technologies make optical random-access storage a reality.

By Gary Hall

he October 1991 "Technology Page" featured a new class of materials that might store digital information in three-dimensional arrays of enormous capacity. It turns out we may see these materials sooner than I thought. Labs at the University of California at Irvine and San Diego have already made substantial progress toward optical RAM (ORAM), with commercial products expected in a few years.

Optical RAM promises enormous storage capacities, on the order of a terabyte in a block about the size of a

> sugar cube. A terabyte is a million megabytes. In other words, a terabyte is to a megabyte as a megabyte is to a single byte. Or look at it this way: The number of bytes in a terabyte is one followed by twelve zeros. Numbers like this change things at a fundamental level.

Optical RAM also promises to be astonishingly fast

and will be non-volatile to boot. All of this bodes extremely well for the development of new computing technologies because memory capacity and speed are the great enablers of computer power.

Computers manipulate symbols. More memory means that more symbols can be manipulated at once. More important, it means that the symbols themselves can be more complicated and interesting. Computers couldn't even boot up until they had a few hundred to a few thousand bytes of memory. My first KIM-1 had 1 KB of RAM and could barely manage to communicate in hexadecimal on a 6-digit LED display. With 16 to 64 KB of RAM, computers could work with letters, words, and short phrases as commands.

Today, with a few megabytes of dynamic RAM (DRAM), we use fullbore graphic interfaces and handle complex chunks of information effortlessly, cutting, pasting, and passing data between multiple programs running simultaneously. It's more fun and more useful than the computers of yore. Memory capacity goes a long way to determine the richness and complexity of the computer's universe.

Technically, ORAM is a cube of transparent styrene plastic impregnated with a photochromic substance, which changes color under the influence of light. Holographic lenses focus a pair of polarized laser beams onto spots as small as a single micrometer (one millionth of a meter), changing them from transparent to opaque and back again (see Fig. 1). These lasers can focus at any depth into the material, creating many thousands of layers of storage, as though a huge number of highcapacity RAM chips were stacked on top of one another.

Information is retrieved one layer at a time, using a two-dimensional array of phototransistors to read a layer in a single flash. This promises to give ORAM an enormous data-transfer rate, perhaps a megabyte every five microseconds. The individual bits retain their state without power, but only if kept at the low temperatures of dry ice or liquid nitrogen. The photochromic dopants that have been studied so far do not retain data at room tempera-

The real story behind the technology

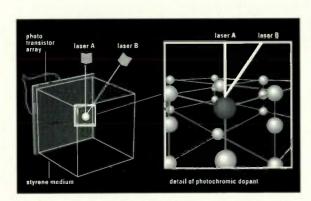


FIG. 1: Tightly focused and phased laser beams turn tiny areas of a "doped" styrene matrix opaque or transparent. Each tiny area represents a single bit of information.

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#### TECHNOLOGY PAGE

of ORAM is the focusing mechanism. Scanning holographic lenses are used to handle addressing in the first two dimensions. A number of these lenses are electro-optically "dropped into the beam" of the lasers at a frequency of around 1 MHz. The right lens is selected by timing the laser to flash at the exact moment that the lens is "in the beam."

In addition to the angle of the beam, the *phase* of the light itself must be swiftly and accurately controlled. An element called a *spatial modulator* is used to control the phase of the laser beams in order to focus on individual points in 3-D space.

When can we realistically expect to

Optical RAM
promises enormous
storage capacities,
on the order of a
terabyte in a block
the size of a
sugar cube.

see ORAM in use? Current predictions include real-world devices within a few years, but the first products are expected to be expensive appliances that cost as much as current mini and even mainframe computers. The costs of these machines eventually will come down, of course, but the cost curve is hard to predict because the technology is different and, at least at first, bulky.

Even the initial costs are a fraction of the cost of comparable amounts of conventional RAM. Perhaps entrepreneurs will figure out how to sell timeshare memory, renting out storage space and access to richly modeled interface worlds. It could start a whole new industry; maybe we could call it "virtual realty." Yeah, that's the ticket.

Gary Hall would like to remind readers that the information in this column is abbreviated and not sufficient to build a working unit.

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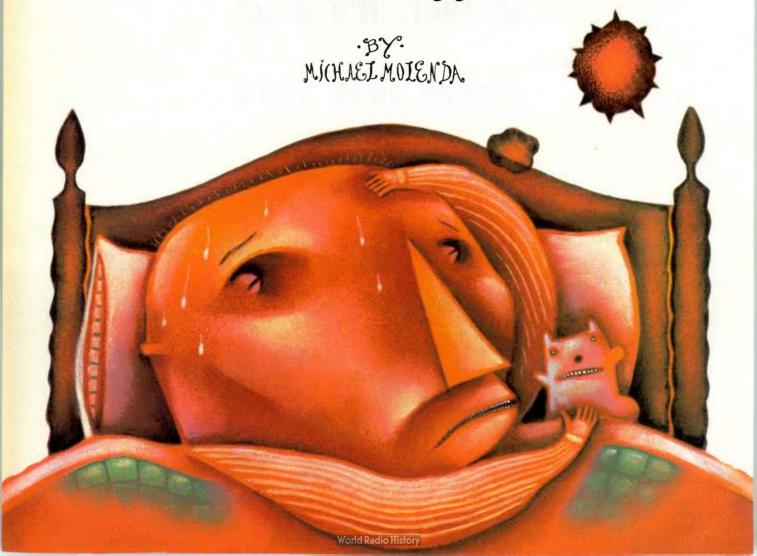
your girlfriend.

#### Roland

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# PERSONANCE.

Voices of experience reveal the nightmares that haunt live gigs.







a rational world, one plus one equals two. The perfect predictability of mathematics allowed Sherlock Holmes to invoke deductive reasoning with the utmost confidence that the geometry of evidence would unmask the crimi-

nal. And today, as more and more musicians translate volatile creativity through computers, the infallibility of numerical equations is vital.

Unfortunately, the concert stage is not a rational world. It is a lawless wasteland of improbabilities masquerading as certainties. The only infallible truth is that live performance tallies more tortures than Dante's nine circles of hell. I know. I've been there.

I've been knocked unconscious by bolts of lightning exploding from poorly grounded microphones and nearly crushed by falling spotlights. In Texas, I actually played inside a chicken-wire cage while drunken collegiate cowboys (who presaged virtual reality by believing they were trapped inside *The Blues Brothers* movie) tried to decapitate me with Lone Star beer bottles. I've tripped over stomp boxes, fallen off stages, accidentally knocked bassists into the audience, and outlived more pieces of equipment than I can count. None of this was supposed to happen.

buy any brand of 16-channel mixer, consider why the CR-1604's become the rack-mount mixer of choice for top pros (request our literature packet and we'll include an astonishing list of touring and session players, studio producers, engineers, songwriters, sound track composers and late-night talk show bands who rely on Mackie).

design features. One reason we specialize in mixing boards is so we can be maniacally meticulous about details others overlook. Some details help make the CR-1604 rugged and roadable. Others contribute to the mixer's excellent sound quality. And some, like our unique gain architechture and mix amp topology aren't really details at all, but rather represent a fundamentally better way to mix music.

**I** engineering means phenomenal sound. Compare our specs and features with anyone. But remember that the bottom line is what your ears tell you. Put a CR-1604 through a hands-on work-out and you'll understand why several major-label CD releases have been recorded and mixed solely on Mackie mixers.

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BETTER-THAN-DIGITAL. -9Cul5 SIN ratio with 108:05 dynamic range (vs. digital with -9Cul5 SIN and 9Cul5 dynamic range). Incidentally, when comparing specis, make even they reflect real word conditions as ours dis. Write Faper on Mixer Specifications with our iff packet. Read it to appreciate the fanatical engineering that went into the CR-16Cul5 specis. And why we affer vastly from mixers that morely masqueriade as a Macke.

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Music Factory) and Bashiri Johnson (Whitney Houston). ULTRA-DENSE CIRCUIT TOPOLOGY. For

outmile, unlike budget mixers which cut corners with passive circuitry, we added input and output buffers so the CR-1604 is compatible with a much widerrange of devices. This ultra-miniaturization was an engineering and munufacturing challengs. But whatchya expect from fanalics?



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#### PERFORMANCES

ortunately, experience counts for something in this business. If a musician lives through a few years of everything going wrong, he or she learns to prepare for the inevitable. Therefore, to save future generations from the horrors of stage blight, we've assembled some cagey professionals to discuss survival techniques. (For a more technical look at preparing for a live performance, see "Making the Gig" in the April 1991 EM.)

#### THE ART OF DOISE



Larry Walker Live-sound engineer, Hatfield and Walker Sound and Lights

ost musicians distrust live-sound engineers and immediately assume we're going to mess them up. This is why communication is so important. I always call the act to determine their needs and deal with equipment and budget limitations long before loadin. Nobody enjoys unpleasant surprises on the day of the performance.

Starting the gig on a good vibe helps ensure a smooth performance. Always set up everything before the act arrives, even if it means getting to the hall an hour earlier than scheduled. Make sure all of the mics are wired, monitors tested, feedback tuned out, and basic monitor and house volume levels set. It's emotional suicide to tweak system problems in front of an anxious band; they'll never trust you. However, if the act walks onstage and everything is ready to go and sounding good, they'll elect you emperor of the world.

Sound checks are problematic because you're mixing in an empty room. The audience isn't there to absorb sound, the band often is uninspired, and stage volume levels tend to be unrealistically polite. So the real sound check is initiated during the first few songs of the set. It's crucial to keep focused here because, in effect, you become a member of the band. It kills me the number of times I've seen a vocalist desperately waving down a soundperson who is at the bar talking to friends. The soundperson is responsible for catching the performer's cues regarding monitor levels, as well as assessing and adapting to sound changes prompted by the artist's adrenaline rushes.

Because stage volume levels tend to increase. I recommend additive mixing for the house sound. For Instance, you can assume the rhythm section in a small club is going to be plenty loud, so it doesn't make sense to pump up the drums in the system. I start with the instrument fader levels very low to avoid burying the vocals in the mix. Then I close my eyes and listen to the live mix as I would a record and make sure every sound is clearly audible.

#### OF DRUMS AND DRUMMERS



Chad Smith Drummer, Red Hot Chili Peppers

pare parts are essential. I always carry enough extra hardware to completely assemble a second snare drum and always have a spare snare and kick pedal readily available onstage. These are minimum survival tactics because I play hard and blow through snare heads every show. I even weight down the snare stand with sand bags so it doesn't dance around.

But if you really want to fend off performance nightmares, don't piss off the monitor mixer. Occasionally you go on and everything that was great during the sound check is all twisted when you hit the stage for the first song. Maybe all you hear are guitars screaming: no drums, no bass, no vocals. This really throws you because you're worried about how everything sounds and can't concentrate on your playing.

Obviously, if you start screaming at the monitor mixer, he or she won't do a thing for you. It pays to be polite and patient; after all, they're often trying to do six mixes at once.

And remember, absolutely everything you need to know about the art of live [rock music] performance is in the movie This Is Spinal Tap.

#### "GUITAR GUIGNOL"



Joe Gore Guitarist, Tom Waits

ometimes avoiding catastrophe is a matter of protecting yourself against the obvious. I saw the Blasters open for Queen at the Inglewood Forum and [guitarist] Dave Alvin walked onstage without his guitar strap. It wasn't the coolest thing to do in front of thousands of people. Also, prepare yourself for "acts of God." I once played a show where the left side of the stage collapsed. Equipment was sliding off the stage like the ballroom piano in that old movie scene dramatizing the capsizing of the Titanic. Luckily, I had Velcro-ed my Lexicon LXP-5 to the top of my amplifier and taped all my stomp boxes and cables to the floor.

Regarding more mundane tragedies, remember that anything digital can crash and probably will. Digital signal processors aren't happy sitting on top of each other in equipment racks, so leaving ventilation space between units helps avoid system crashes.

Stage-monitoring tensions can be alleviated by determining the directional nature of your guitar speakers. The classic problem with guitarists cranking up their volume is less a matter of deafness than amp placement. Sometimes, if you stand two feet in front of an amp, you can't hear a thing, vet twenty feet away the volume is at the pain threshold. The volume debacle is one reason I'm a fan of low-wattage

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#### PERFORMANCES

about it: Would a soundperson ask a guitarist to use another guitar? Hey, don't use that Takamine, the house Martin sounds better.

#### BASSIC INSTINCTS



Glenn Letsch Bassist, Robin Trower

lways make sure your bass is fed into the house sound system so the audience can hear you if your amp goes down. I even carry a spare direct box to ensure [a club's] equipment limitations don't knock me out of the house mix. If your amp blows, make sure the monitor mixer puts some bass in the side fills so you can hear yourself. Amps always seem to blow up or melt down, so have spares available. Also, preventative maintenance saves a lot of headaches. I have my rig checked out and serviced at regular intervals.

#### KEYBORRO CRASHES

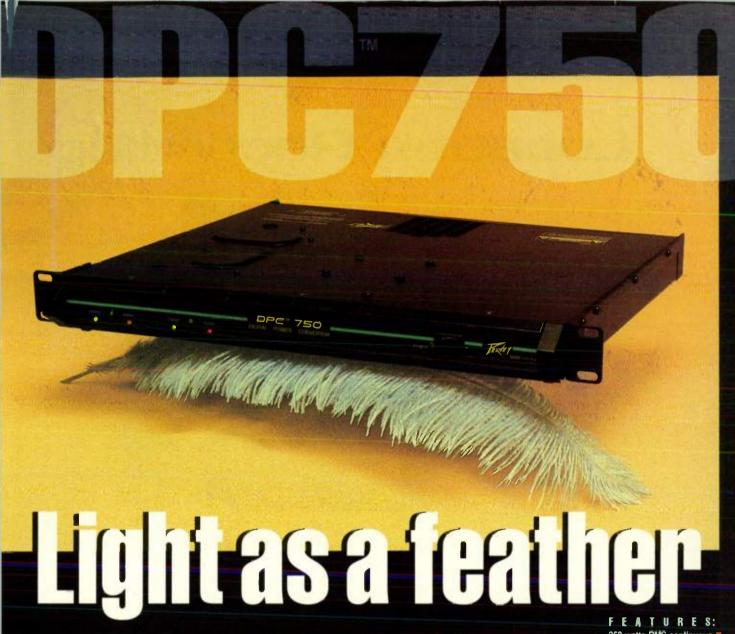


Harry Mello Keyboardist, XTender

keep everything pretty simple live because the band complains if I don't change tones fast enough. Sometimes the pause between songs is just a few seconds, so I use general tones that need only minor adjustments for specific arrangements. I also program

(continued on p. 116)

**World Radio History** 



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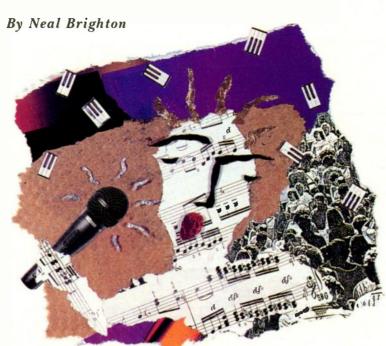
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#### **Location Recording**

Getting the excitement of a live performance on tape can be an ordeal if you cower from the unexpected.



ive location recording provides a sterling example of Murphy's Law run amok: Whatever can go wrong will go wrong. Unfortunately, it doesn't always pay to hide within the controlled confines of the studio because the sweat and energy of a live performance is nearly impossible to capture in a clinical recording environment.

A classic example of the vitality inherent in live recordings is Peter Frampton's "Frampton Comes Alive," a multimillion seller in the 1970s (and for a time, the biggest selling rock album in history). Frampton's pop genius literally came alive onstage, as few noticed the original albums that provided material for the live shows. Subsequent studio releases also paled by comparison, and Frampton's popularity sputtered into one-hit wonderland.

#### **FOOTWORK**

Can good recording technique exist harmoniously amidst the unpredictability of a live performance? It's not an easy relationship, but careful preplanning can make the difference between capturing an incendiary performance and tripping over a beehive of frustration.

First, it's extremely important to visit the venue before the show. A thorough site-check fills in important details such as room acoustics, what equipment is needed, what length audio (microphone line) snake is required, and the AC power situation.

Be sure to take comprehensive notes and introduce yourself to the stage manager or house soundperson. You must co-exist with this person during the performance, so it helps to familiarize yourself with his or her personality and technical chops. The soundperson has valuable information such as the number and type of mics and direct boxes available, whether the house board has phantom power, and other tips that can make your job easier.

#### **POWER**

Clean, consistent AC is often the biggest problem facing the location recordist. Pristine power is a pipe dream when the venue is an old church or theater with lines that have been wired and rewired over the years. For most situations, a rack-mounted line conditioner with voltage regulation offers surge protection, maintains

consistent voltage levels, and diminishes radio frequency (RF) and electro-magnetic interference (EMI). Extreme cases may require an isolation transformer. This device transfers power through two separate, shielded coils that completely filter out RF and EMI.

Because power spikes and grounding problems are common in old buildings, it's best to find a free circuit that can be dedicated to your recording system. (Most recording equipment doesn't require a lot of juice, so a 20-amp or 25-amp circuit should work fine.) If this isn't possible, make sure the chosen circuit is free of lighting equipment or motorized appliances that can cause power surges and audible pops, crackles, and hums.

To minimize grounding problems, plug all of your equipment into one central power strip that is directly linked into your circuit. Do not lift all your grounds. Proper grounding is essential in live applications where power fluctuations and other problems are common.

#### **EQUIPMENT**

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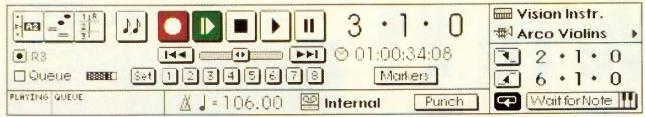
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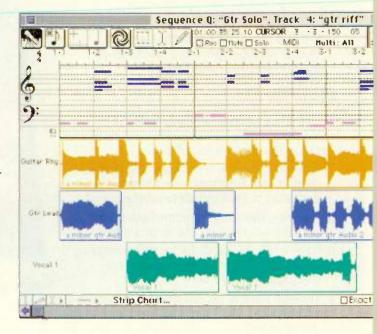


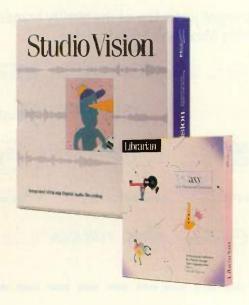
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#### RECORDING MUSICIAN

more than two microphones and a DAT recorder, although simple systems certainly deliver the goods for reference or personal documentary recordings. Be prepared to cart a considerable load of gear: a mixer, assorted microphones and mic stands, a snake and cable junction box, cables, headphones, small monitor speakers (if applicable), duct and masking tape, felt pens, notepads, and a tool box.

The mixing console is the heart of the system. Whether you're recording to multitrack or 2-track, professional recordings require a quality mixer to effectively process the signals and route them to the tape deck.

Live recording applications often are not as stringent as studio mixing sessions, so live recording consoles don't need bells and whistles. However, the board should be well-constructed (it's

#### TRAGEDY CHECKLIST

Because the live environment is a whirlpool of uncertainty, the sensible recordist is steeled against a possible Waterloo. Here are a few of my favorite safeguards:

- 1. A flashlight to search out the faulty cable connections you'll discover as soon as the house lights go out.
- 2. A collection of adapters and odd cables to hook up lastminute equipment changes no one told you about.
- 3. Extra batteries to run direct boxes when the phantom power on your board fails and all your spare batteries turn up dead.
- 4. Extra microphones and micstands because the house doesn't have the microphones they promised.
- 5. Miles of extra 1/4-inch cables to save the skins of dullard musicians who forgot to bring their own
- 6. A solid hand truck to move all the extra junk you swore you wouldn't need.
- 7. A good selection of candy and soft drinks because you won't have time to eat dinner.
- 8. A pad of paper and a pen to write down the mistakes you won't make next time.

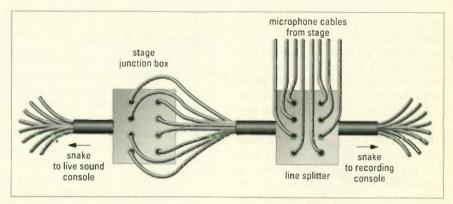


FIG. 1: Line splitters allow recording and live-sound engineers to "share" microphone lines during a performance.

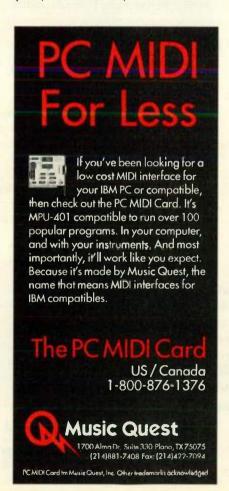
going to take many lumps and bumps during transport) and feature insert points on its input channels, reasonable equalization, a few aux sends, and enough bus lines to feed the applicable recording deck.

Don't even dream of tapping into the house console. Few boards are capable of servicing two masters (in this case, live sound reinforcement and recording) simultaneously. In addition, taking your feeds off the live sound board puts you at the mercy of someone else's

equipment and mixing skills. Although I have produced reasonably successful "live to DAT" recordings using a combination of feeds from the live mixer and my own microphones, it's a tricky practice, and I certainly don't recommend it for multitrack recordings.

#### **SPLIT PERSONALITIES**

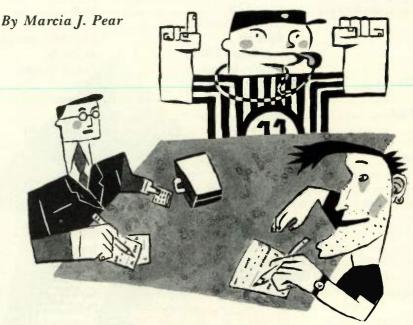
Once the mixer is positioned, and you've established your audio "nerve center," logistics take center stage. For example, you have your job, and the





#### Mediation: Let's Make a Deal

You say you
want a
resolution?
Don't litigate,
mediate.



AD MICALLI P

n entertainment mediator is the working musician's Monty Hall: a skilled third party who can suggest a harmonious alternative to the "sue me, sue you" blues. Making a deal that everyone can live with is what mediation is all about. Together with its close cousin, arbitration, mediation helps artists avoid the clogged court system and years of costly litigation.

Conflicts over contracts, royalties, song ownership, and creative control crop up frequently (and often unexpectedly) in the course of a musical career, and blind faith is no substitute for legal savvy. Because 95 percent of all disputes settle before going to trial, a skilled mediator can save a musician the expense of traditional legal proceedings.

#### MEDIATION DEFINED

Think of mediation and arbitration as winning with words, not warfare. These methods are quicker, cheaper, and less stressful than a lawsuit because they return justice without judge or jury.

In mediation, an experienced and neutral third party (the mediator) helps both sides assess their positions, consider the arguments of the other side, and reach a mutually acceptable solution. An arbitrator is required when the two parties cannot reach a settlement through mediation. Like a judge, the arbitrator listens to evidence regarding the dispute at a hearing and renders a binding decision.

A combined approach, med./arb., offers the best of both worlds. If a mediator is unsuccessful, the same person (acting as arbitrator) can render a legally binding decision. The clients benefit by avoiding the time and expense of preparing another appeal.

#### **WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN...**

In practice, mediation and arbitration can help a musical relationship evolve (or dissolve) and work to mitigate differences during the "marriage." Unfortunately, just as early domestic bliss prompts couples to turn deaf ears to potential problems, eagerness for commitment—from a manager, record label, video production company, or band member—often causes musicians to tune out caution. An awareness and commitment to mediation/arbitration in the genesis of a relationship can help avert hard feelings (or even a

break-up) down the road.

"Someone who knows what a production deal or record contract should include helps all parties come to a sound, informed decision," states Lynda Martyn, principal of the San Francisco-based Arbitration & Mediation Association, Inc. (AMAI). "Attorneys negotiate deals only with their clients' interests in mind. An entertainment mediator/arbitrator accommodates the interests of each party, and helps move the deal forward quickly and inexpensively. Also, negotiations take on a different personality when the participants discuss an agreement face-to-face."

Mediation strategy formed part of the career plan for D'Cückoo, a percussion-based technopop band that designs and builds its own marimbas and drum triggers. D'Cückoo attorney and mediator Cherie Porter has drafted numerous contracts for the four female members, including an exclusive distribution agreement with Tower Records, deals with computer companies to feature the band's likeness and sound in video games, and live performance video rights.

"I insert an arbitration clause into



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HEARD IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES

#### WORKING MUSICIAN

every contract," asserts Porter. "Although we haven't exercised it, an arbitration clause is a great safeguard against expensive litigation."

#### **CREATIVE LICENSE**

Creative contributions always should be converted to percentages of ownership, or they can sound a discordant note when you've scored a hard-earned hit. That's what happened to songwriter Ingrid Chavez.

Chavez contended she wrote the lyrics to Madonna's "Justify My Love," but was persuaded to surrender credit and reasonable royalties. Although Chavez eventually received fair compensation after an out-of-court settlement, the situation illustrates the importance of mediating creative ownership before a product is released.

For instance, songwriting partners must decide whether the composer/lyricist is entitled to a bigger chunk of royalties than the partner who contributes musical ideas alone. A mediator/arbitrator schooled in music publishing rights can help the parties determine the contributions to

the final product and how to allocate copyright privileges.

#### **SPLITSVILLE**

Even if your partnership is amicable, splitting up can be far from friendly once the tangible and intangible assets

of an association (instruments, leasehold interest, copyrights, licensing agreements) are up for grabs. "From a future business standpoint, it makes sense to avoid hostility if possible," counsels AMAI's Martyn. "Mediation is the best alternative precisely because

#### CRYSTAL BLUE PERSUASION

Early in 1990, pianist Kevin Setchko and his band Crystal Wind received an offer from a management team. Letters flew between the band's Mount Shasta base and Los Angeles, and within two months, Crystal Wind had a management contract. The group was delighted.

"It was a mutual search," explains Setchko. "We were looking for a manager to relieve us of the business end so we could concentrate on music."

But their elation was shortlived. One of the two managers began embezzling money from Crystal Wind's account. When repeated phone calls failed to resolve the situation, Setchko reviewed his contract and discovered an arbitration clause that could be used to legally dissolve the management partnership. He hired an entertainment attorney, filed for arbitration, and a few months later received a judgment in the band's favor.

"Arbitration was a lot simpler and cheaper than a lawsuit," says Setchko. "People told us there was nothing we could do, but the arbitration process forced a resolution."

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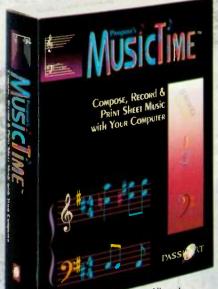
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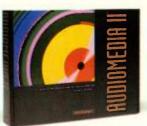
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#### WORKING MUSICIAN

you have been partners, and the musical community is small and close-knit. From an emotional standpoint, mediation also helps you get on with your career and your life. If your songs or other assets are tied up for years in the courts, it not only diverts your creative energy, but freezes your potential income from those sources."

Unfortunately, many bands exist for years without written partnership agreements. It's easy to fall into these "casual relationships" if an act doesn't hit the big time (no money, no worries). However, it's amazing how many assets are accumulated by marginally successful working bands who perform consistently and release self-produced records. And what happens if two members of a band want to leave and form a new band using the same name?

"A mediator/arbitrator is extremely helpful in identifying the key issues of a dissolution, such as ownership and control of creative properties, future distribution of recordings, cost allocation, and the rights to the group's name," advises entertainment attorney (and recording artist) Pennie Sempell.

#### PAPER TRAILS

Aural tradition ensures that the beat goes on, but keeping your musical career on firm legal footing requires committing your ideas and plans to paper.

By now it should be obvious that an arbitration and mediation clause is an essential element in any contract or agreement. AMAI (tel. [415] 563-0254) has developed a standard, three-paragraph clause stating exactly what parties can expect from the arbitration and mediation process in the event of a dispute. If an argument precedes a contractual arrangement, you can gain after-the-fact protection by getting all parties to submit to binding mediation/arbitration.

Additional insurance is secured by documenting everything from discussions about idea origination and creative control to transactions regarding fees, royalties, and copyrights. While a formal agreement drafted by an entertainment attorney is always best, a letter of understanding signed by all parties is preferable to a handshake. Also, save receipts for studio time, equipment

rental, dinner with a prospective business manager, and other related expenses.

#### A FINAL NOTE

Mediation and arbitration are two alternatives for musicians in potential or actual conflict, enabling both parties to let off steam and arrive at a viable resolution, guided by an objective and knowledgeable catalyst. Especially if the relationship is or has been of value to you, these options can help you feel comfortable with the outcome and, hopefully, allow you to remain friends.

Within this framework, a mediation/arbitration attorney who specializes in entertainment is the ideal choice because this individual has an intrinsic understanding of what you do. Sempell offers a colorful analogy: "If you have a skin problem, you wouldn't go to a dentist."

Marcia J. Pear is a San Francisco writer, principal of Pear Communications, and novice keyboard player. She's made a contract with herself: practice, practice, practice.

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Computers in the **Studio** 

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ost people believe MIDI was developed to connect and remotely control keyboards from different

manufacturers. But there was another incentive: Developers wanted to use personal computers to make music, and they hoped MIDI-a standard digital code that represents performance gestures and other information about electronic musical instruments-would accomplish this. Shortly thereafter, music software was created, and lowcost computers became music collaborators.

Today, creative developers have produced an enormous variety of software, from music printing to compositional aids to sound editing and organizational tools. Taken as a whole, these programs have made personal computers an invaluable assistant in any personal electronic music studio.

#### BASICS

Before exploring the musical applications of computers, let's cover some basic information. First, there are four types of computers, or "platforms," commonly used by musicians: Apple Macintosh, Commodore Amiga, Atari

ST and TT, and IBM PC-compatibles. Each type of computer comes in several varieties with different levels of computing power.

Connecting a computer to a MIDI system requires a MIDI interface. The Atari ST and TT include a MIDI interface as standard equipment, but the other platforms require a separate, optional interface. An interface can take the form of an external box that connects to one of the computer's serial ports, or a circuit board installed in an expansion slot. Either way, the interface includes one or more MIDI In and Out jacks, which allow MIDI data to be sent back and forth between the computer and connected MIDI devices, such as synthesizers and samplers.

Most musical applications for computers involve MIDI in some way, so it would be a good idea to brush up on this subject. (For more information see "From the Top: What is MIDI, Anyway?" in the January 1991 EM.)

#### SEQUENCING

One of the most common musical applications of computers is sequencing. This application requires little computing power because the amount

of information carried by MIDI is relatively low. In contrast, sequencing provides a lot of musical options.

By recording the sequence of MIDI messages (which result from such performance gestures as playing keys on a keyboard, hitting drum pads, stepping on a sustain pedal, etc.) on different "tracks," a sequencer program simulates a multitrack tape deck within the computer. These MIDI messages can then be edited and manipulated in a wide variety of ways and sent to MIDI instruments, which respond as if their own keyboards were being played directly. (For more about the concept and process of sequencing, see "From the Top: How Sequencers Work" in the April 1991 EM and "From the Top: Sequencing Made Easy, Parts 1 and 2" in the March and April 1992 issues.)

Quite a few sequencer programs are available for the four platforms. Among them are Opcode's EZ Vision and Vision and Mark of the Unicorn's Performer for the Mac; Steinberg's Cubase for the Mac, Atari, and PC-compatibles; Dr. T's KCS and Tiger Cub for the Atari and Amiga: The Blue Ribbon SoundWorks' iga; and Twelve Tone's Cakewalk and



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Voyetra's Sequencer Plus for PC-compatibles (see Fig. 1).

A variation of sequencing called algorithmic composition generates new musical phrases or whole compositions based on parameters that you specify. For example, you might play a single phrase into the computer, which then repeats the phrase and alters it in real time as you play something else. Programs that provide these capabilities include Dr. T's M for the Mac, Atari, and Amiga; and Jam Factory for the Macintosh.

accompaniment. These programs allows you to type in the chord changes to any song and then generate bass, drum, and rhythm parts in a style that you select from a menu. Some even include a sequencer that allows you to record your own parts along with the accompaniment. Such programs include PG Music's Band-in-a-Box for the for the Amiga.

#### Another variation is called automatic Mac. Atari, and PC-compatibles; Soundtrek's The Jammer for PC-compatibles; and Blue Ribbon's Super Jam

#### NOTATION

One of the first things most musicians want to do with a computer is transcribe a performance and print music notation. Unfortunately, music notation is very complex, and no program yet exists that can transcribe perfectly what you play. Depending on what you want to do, using notation software can be more frustrating and time-consuming than writing by hand. Also, unless you read music, these programs are virtually useless; they don't provide a shortcut for untrained musicians.

But notation programs can also be quite useful. Those of us with illegible hand notation are spared the embarrassment of exposing our music to other musicians. Also, individual parts can be extracted from a score with a minimum of fuss and bother. Notation programs also allow relatively easy transposition, in case your clarinet part must be read by an alto sax player.

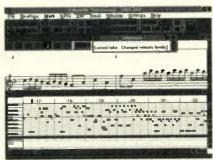


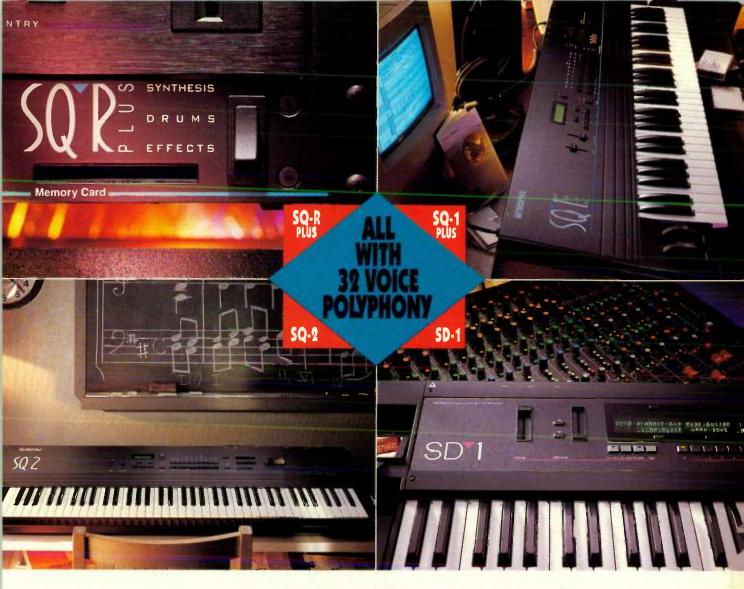
FIG. 1: Twelve Tone Systems' Cakewalk Professional for Windows sequencer for PC-compatibles. The lower portion of the screen is displaying notes in "piano roll" format, above which are some notes in standard notation.

Word-processing functions such as cutand-paste and global editing make certain tasks far easier than taking pen or pencil to manuscript paper.

Most notation programs let you enter music in one of two ways: directly, or by importing a sequence file. Direct entry is accomplished using the computer keyboard and/or mouse, or by playing on the MIDI keyboard. Most programs also transcribe sequence files, particularly those in the Standard MIDI File format. (For more about computer notation, see "Computing the Score" on p. 24.)

Fueled by dreams of musicians everywhere, many companies have developed notation programs (see Fig. 2). These include Passport's Encore and Coda's Finale and MusicProse for the





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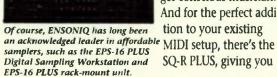
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#### MAGICAL MIXOLOGY



Radio History

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FIG. 2: Coda's *MusicProse* notation software for PC-compatibles. The symbols in the upper left portion of the screen provide access to common music notation elements.

Mac and PC-compatibles; C-Lab's *Notator* for the Atari; Dr. T's *The Copyist* for Atari, Amiga, and PC-compatibles; and Temporal Acuity Products' *Music Printer Plus* for PC-compatibles. Being rather intensive graphics applications, notation programs need as much graphics computing power as you can provide.

#### HARD-DISK RECORDING

As personal computers have become more powerful, and memory and hard-disk storage less expensive, recording audio digitally onto a hard disk has become practical for home studios. (Though at 10 MB a minute for CD-quality stereo, you still need a huge hard disk for any serious work.)

Hard-disk recording systems use an analog-to-digital converter (ADC) to convert an incoming analog (audio) signal into digital format. It sends the signal directly to the hard disk, creating a sound file. If the incoming signal

comes from a DAT or CD player with direct digital outputs it is already in digital form. Many systems include digital inputs for this purpose.

Once it is on disk, the sound file can be edited and manipulated on the screen in ways that would be impossible with analog tape recordings (see Fig. 3). Digital audio files can be edited using cut-and-paste, digital signal processing (DSP) such as reverb and EQ, and many

other functions. To hear the sound file, the signal is converted back into analog form by a digital-to-analog converter (DAC) and played over speakers. The file also may be transferred directly to a DAT without leaving the digital domain.

Most personal computer-based hard-disk recorders are limited to two tracks of playback due to the speed at which data can be retrieved from a hard disk; there can be no

delays while sending digital audio data from the hard disk to the DAC. However, many systems let you assemble many tracks of digital audio and select the parts of each track you wish to play at any particular time. You also can mix many tracks down to two within the computer without the sonic degradation that accompanies analog tape mixdowns.

Common hard-disk recording systems include Digidesign's Sound Tools and Pro Tools (a 4- to 16-track system) for the Mac; SunRize Industries' Studio 12 for the Amiga; and Turtle Beach's 56K and Spectral Synthesis' The Digital Studio (four to sixteen tracks) for PC-compatibles. Several companies have combined MIDI sequencing and hard-disk recording into one integrated package. These systems include Opcode's Studio Vision and Mark of the Unicorn's Digital Performer for the Mac.

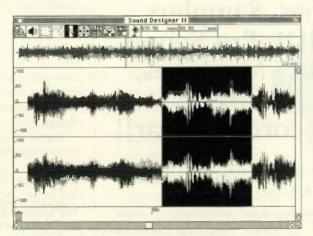


FIG. 3: Digidesign's Sound Tools hard-disk recording system for the Mac uses the company's *Sound Designer II* software. The inverse-highlighted area is selected for editing.

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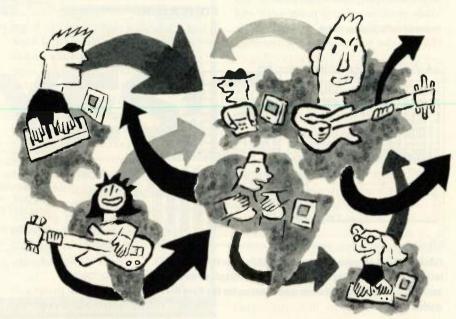
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#### Remote Collaboration

By David (Rudy) Trubitt

In the high-tech global village, musicians can collaborate no matter where they live.



ne unfortunate side effect of electronic music technology is the isolationist view it fosters among its users. I certainly fell for the notion, "Wow, I've got all this stuff and I can do everything myself!" After a few years of frittering, I've realized there is more to working with other musicians than the hassle of scheduling rehearsals.

Ironically, the technology that brought us this isolation also makes it possible to work with musicians anywhere on the planet. Remote collaboration can take many forms, from simply discussing or playing musical ideas over the phone to mailing scores or multitrack tapes back and forth. This month's column looks at a different aspect of remote collaboration.

#### STANDARD MIDI FILES

Standard MIDI Files (SMFs) offer an easy way to exchange all sorts of musical ideas. Using SMFs is not entirely worry-free, as discussed in the January 1992 "Computer Musician" column, but they are an effective tool for remote collaboration. By exchanging SMFs among two or more people, musical ideas can be developed and arrangements fleshed out. Hopefully,

the resulting music will be greater than the sum of its parts.

However, this type of remote collaboration is a non-real-time experience. Missing are the benefits of the direct human interaction that is at the core of successful working relationships. But there's something to be said for the parties involved having some time to work on their own.

Successful collaboration is more than simply sharing SMFs. Once you've received a file, you need to find the appropriate patches, unless you happen to have the same MIDI equipment as your collaborators. Even if you do, you may need to embed System Exclusive patch dumps into your sequences to ensure that you have the right patches. Also, details such as pitch bend range and the function of assignable controllers like mod wheels must be considered. The goal, obviously, is to allow everyone to hear more or less the same piece.

General MIDI (GM) can be a big help in this regard (see "MIDI for the Masses" in the August 1991 EM). If you've got GM-compatible equipment at both ends, everything will be that much easier. Even so, using GM files is no guarantee that the music will

sound identical from one system to the next. Good verbal communication and thorough documentation is essential for successful file sharing.

#### **TELECOMMUNICATION**

You could simply mail floppy disks back and forth, but telecommunication (or telecom) lets you send the data over phone lines directly. Using a modem and a telecom program with your computer, you can exchange SMFs, programs, and text files with anyone else who has a modem and telecommunications program.

There are two basic approaches to remote collaboration using telecom: online services and direct connection. Online services include large national and international computer systems such as PAN, CompuServe, and GEnie, as well as smaller local bulletin board systems (BBSs). These systems provide a variety of services, including databases of synth patches, samples, sequences, shareware, and other information. Typically, you can download (receive) files from and upload (send) files to these databases, allowing them to be shared by all the members of the system.

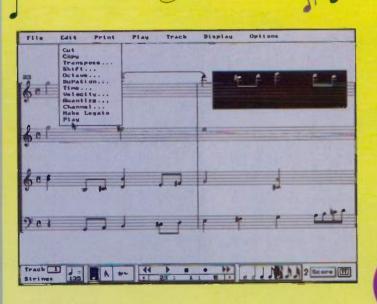
Other common services include private electronic mail ("e-mail") to other

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#### COMPUTER MUSICIAN

members of the system and public forums in which a wide variety of topics are discussed. You can use the email system to exchange SMFs and other files between other collaborators on the system. To participate in a forum discussion, download the messages pertaining to the topic of interest, read them at your leisure, write your own contribution to the discussion, and upload it the next time you connect with the system. For more on this topic, see "Going Online" in the November 1990 issue of EM.

One advantage of online services is that you and your collaborators can each connect with the service at your convenience. However, you also can connect your own computers directly in order to transfer files. Depending on your relative proximity, the cost of a phone call to your partner might be far less than the online service's connection charges. Also, this approach usually is quicker if time is of the essence.

If you are transferring large files using either online services or direct connection, it helps to compress them before sending. File-compression programs remove any wasted space in a file, making them much smaller in the process, saving disk space and transmission time. However, it creates a "binary" file that must be sent using a binary protocol such as XMODEM, YMODEM, or ZMODEM, even if the compressed file was originally text-only. In most cases, the person receiving the file must have a copy of the same file-compression program to "extract" the file, although some programs allow the file to "self-extract."

To put all this theory into practice, I'll describe a remote collaboration resource in operation today, linking musicians across the country and potentially across the world.

#### **NETJAM**

Netjam is part of Internet, an international computer network that evolved from a Department of Defense network called Arpanet. "I call it a computer network for music," says Netjam coordinator and guitarist Craig Latta. "It started out in 1990 with Standard MIDI Files as the basic data format. But Net-

jam is meant to be protocol independent. We also support digital audio data and *C-sound* [an academic computer-music language] data as well as Opcode *Max* patches and external objects."

Today, Internet connects nearly every major university computing center with research institutes and commercial businesses. If you're not attending a university, or don't work for a large corporation, don't despair; many online services such as PAN and The WELL offer Internet access.

Internet includes the Usenet news groups, a collection of SIGs that carry on lengthy text-based conversations and electronic mail. "Netjam started out on Usenet as a huge computer music bulletin board," says Latta. "As people started discussing computer music, they were really eager to talk about theoretical things. But after a while, they started to get tired of all this talking and wanted to hear some music. Of course, this is difficult in a text-based format. A few people thought, 'Well, we could send MIDI files around.'"



Unfortunately, Internet e-mail was designed for text files, not binary files like SMFs. However, most UNIX systems (and PAN) offer a pair of utilities called uuencode and uudecode. These utilities are the opposite of file-compression programs; they convert binary files to plain ASCII text, increasing their size by about a third in the process. After encoding, they can be transmitted by e-mail. Once the message is received, it is decoded back into the original binary file, which can then be downloaded from the system.

Netjam is almost entirely automatic, receiving submissions from participants and maintaining an archive of about 8 MB of SMF, Max, and digital audio files. If you have access to Internet, log on and send e-mail to "Netjam-request@xcf.Berkeley.EDU". When asked for a subject header, enter "request for info". You don't need to put anything in the message body; Netjam will recognize the subject line and quickly send you a detailed document about itself.

What's it like interacting with Netjam and its participants? As Latta

8

explains, "The basic steps are: create a file of musical data and then document what you've done in a text format." Your file then is submitted by uploading it to Netjam.

One of the Netjam members has even devised a program to detect the differences between people's studios. According to Latta,

"All you have to do is specify your setup in a certain way. This program then takes your submission and converts it into an intermediate generic format, which uses General MIDI as its starting point. Each person in Netjam has a file describing their environment.

modem PHONE LINE SERIAL MIDI module MIDI module MIDI module MIDI module MidiTap MidiTap MIDI module MIDI module MIDI module MEDIALINK MEDIALINK keyboard MIDI module MIDI module MIDI module MIDI module MidiTap MidiTan CONTRACTOR OF THE OWNER, OR SERVICE OF THE OWNER, OWNER SERIAL MIDI module MIDI module MIDI module keyboard computer computer

FIG. 1: With two MidiTaps each, collaborators can connect their MIDI systems over the phone line and jam in real time.

The intermediate format is then converted so it maps most reasonably onto what they have.

"Typically, a piece is submitted and people listen to it. There are a lot of compositions in the Netjam archive that are first takes. They haven't been

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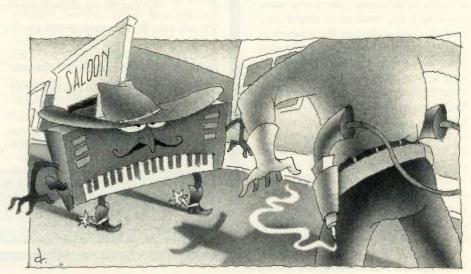
#### ASCAN

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# Questions and Answers

By Alan Gary Campbell

Our tech guru offers a heated discussion of soldering gear, explains why what you see isn't what you 'scope, and reflects on infrared remotes and forgetful K2000s.



CK DEROCH

What are the technical differences that distinguish soldering guns, soldering irons, and soldering stations? What are their different applications?

A. A soldering gun is so named because of its size, shape, and method of operation. The power to the heating element is controlled by a trigger in the handle. When the trigger is not engaged, the power to the element is disconnected and the tip remains cool, allowing the tip temperature to decrease after each use. Though a typical soldering gun has a high heat capacity, there is a brief delay after the trigger is engaged before the tip temperature rises to a useful level.

A soldering gun is used in soldering connections to large terminals on speakers, AC power-switching devices, large power transistors, etc. Many of these tasks also can be handled by a soldering station (discussed shortly). However, a soldering gun is not normally used with the smaller hardware and electronic components found in keyboards, effects, and the like. Many soldering guns produce a strong magnetic field and exhibit high static

voltages at the tip; both can easily damage sensitive solid-state components.

A soldering iron is a pencil-shaped device that contains a heating element designed to run continuously. Most modest-sized soldering irons have considerably lower heat capacity than soldering guns, and irons designed for use in soldering small solid-state components should not be used for larger work. Good-quality soldering irons (Ungar, Weller, etc.) exhibit a weak magnetic field and have a grounded, zero-potential tip to allow safe use with solid-state components. The principal disadvantage in using a soldering iron is that its low heat capacity requires that the user allow adequate recovery time between joints. This can be difficult to judge, as the heat capacities of disparate connections vary, and there is a tendency to rush. These factors can lead to poor work.

A soldering station makes use of a pencil device, similar in construction to a soldering iron, that is connected to a closed-loop, temperature-control network. This allows a control circuit to sense the tip temperature and compensate for varying thermal loads, which greatly improves the speed and

reliability of soldering. Such a circuit allows easy, dial-in adjustment of the tip temperature so the soldering station can be used effectively with work of various sizes and heat capacities. Moreover, modern soldering stations are free of extraneous magnetic and electrostatic fields and are safe to use with solid-state components. Many of these stations have sufficient reserve capacity to allow their use with large tips and large work.

A soldering station is a necessary accoutrement for a service center, as is a desoldering station. Although a station costs considerably more than an iron, it is a much better long-term investment for the serious do-it-your-selfer. A soldering station will outlast several soldering irons, and the quality and reliability of work produced with a station can be much higher. That means one less entry on the "Why doesn't this prototype work?" list.

Q. I have a 20-megahertz-bandwidth, dualtrace oscilloscope that, when used to monitor high-frequency clock and data pulses, gives a distorted, sometimes unstable image. Is this a defect, a limitation of 'scope design, or a sign that I need a better oscilloscope?

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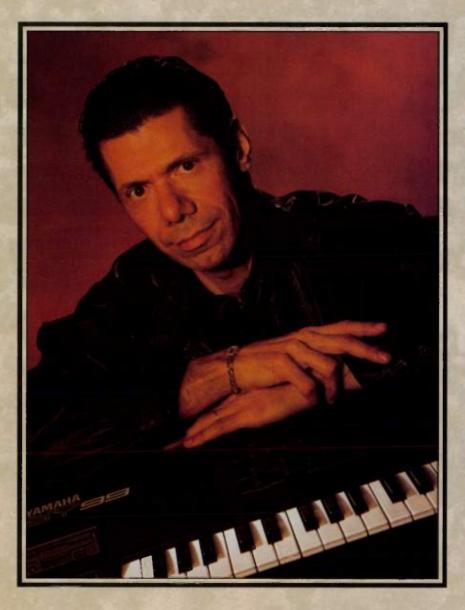
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#### SERVICE CLINIC

A. When you say "high-frequency," I assume you mean clock and data rates of 10 MHz or higher. Consider that to construct a square wave (the approximate shape of a 50% duty-cycle pulse) using additive synthesis, the first ten harmonics are required to produce a waveform that even resembles the shape in question, and a hundred or more harmonics would be better. With an average, 20 MHz oscilloscope, the rated bandwidth represents not the limit of flat response, but the -3 dB point. Thus, when monitoring a 10 MHz square wave with such a device,

#### A soldering station will outlast several soldering irons.

you are not able to fully register even the second harmonic, and each subsequent harmonic is further attenuated, as if the square wave were processed through a lowpass filter (which, in effect, it is). The resulting displayed waveform will necessarily exhibit "rounding" and "ringing," and these effects are made worse by using an incorrect probe, or one that is improperly grounded. Poor trace stability can be caused by inadvertently selecting the wrong trigger mode, or by a poorquality oscilloscope. Set the trigger control for high-frequency, capacitively coupled triggering (often termed "AC HF" or "AC Fast").

These problems do not necessarily indicate the need for a better oscilloscope, just a faster (read: more expensive) one. Fortunately, logic probes and analyzers can aid in troubleshooting high-frequency circuits at much less expense than a new 'scope.

Q. When I use one infrared remote control in my studio, several devices-even different brands-try to respond to the signal. Is there a way to stop this? Also, the remotes work poorly at angles. Is there a way to improve this?

A. A few remote-control devices allow the user to select transmit/receive channels, but most don't. The only solution in the remaining cases is to tape or velcro a small piece of dboard or plastic over the infrared sensor window on the affected equipment. Wired remotes solve these problems but clutter the control room.

Infrared sensors are most sensitive to signals impinging at a 90° angle to the plane of the device. Also, on some units, the sensor is mounted on a PC board that is set slightly back from the front panel, placing it in the "shadow" of the panel when viewed at an angle. (The transmissive cutout of the panel is generally not much larger than the sensor.) One solution is to place a piece of white cardboard or plastic near the sensor window at an angle of 90° or more to the panel, to reflect the signal back to the sensor. Some trial-anderror adjustment of the reflecting surface's angle may be necessary to achieve good results.

Note: Some materials that block or reflect visible light are transparent to infrared. If the above "fixes" don't seem to work, try using different mate-

Q. My Kurzweil K2000 synth keeps showing a "low battery" message in the display. I assumed I had bogus AA batteries, so I replaced them. That fixed it temporarily, but then it acted up again. This time, I tested the batteries, and they were fine! What gives?

A. The battery holders of the K2000 have crimped terminals. On a few units, the terminals are loose, which can cause these symptoms. (This is a defect of the terminal and is not Kurzweil's fault.) I suggest you take the unit to a Kurzweil authorized service center and have a technician solder the terminals.

Service tip: If the memory of the K2000 becomes "confused" (e.g., due to a power glitch), and the unit will not reset, turn the unit off and remove the batteries for about five minutes. This clears the memory. Then reinstall the batteries and power up normally.

Aside: The K2000 disk drive can format and write to 720 KB or 1.44 MB, M\$-DOS disks. Some apparent disk drive "errors" result from nothing more than selecting the wrong format for a given disk.

EM contributing editor Alan Gary Campbell is owner of Musitech, a consulting firm specializing in electronic music product design, service, and modification, and review editor of H&B Classical magazine.





# Reviews

#### E-mu Proteus/3 World **Sound Module**

By Scott Wilkinson

#### Can the world fit in a single-rackspace sound module?

hen E-mu announced the newest member of the Proteus family at the last NAMM show, I made a beeline for their booth. After all, over the past twenty years I've studied and performed in a wide variety of world-music ensembles, including Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Celtic, South American, and klezmer. How could I resist a Proteus filled with samples of instruments from around the world?

Except for the sounds, the Proteus/3 is identical to the Proteus/2 and Proteus/1, so I'll provide only a brief overview. For a more detailed look at the



E-mu's Proteus/3 World features 56 ethnic instrument samples, several common Western instruments, and a handful of synthesized sounds.

organization and operation of the Proteus family, see the Proteus/1 review in the October 1989 EM, "The Art and Craft of Using E-mu's Proteus" in the March 1990 issue, and the Proteus/2 review in the December 1990 issue.

#### **OVERVIEW**

Like the other Proteus models, the Proteus/3 is 16-part multitimbral and 32note polyphonic, with dynamic voice allocation. There is no onboard effects processor or sequencer. The Sub Outs are TRS stereo jacks that can be used as insert points for outboard effects, or as auxiliary line inputs. The user interface is wonderfully simple and straightforward; if you know how to use one Proteus, you know how to use them all.

In the Proteus/3, four megabytes of sample ROM hold some 56 new ethnic instruments, including winds, strings, and lots of percussion with various articulations and many tuned bars and gongs. In addition, there are some standard offerings (trombone, trumpet, French horn, pizz bass, arco strings, some trap percussion) and the ubiquitous harmonic, digital, and single-cycle waveforms. Contrived sounds include a variety of synthesized insects.

The samples are combined in various ways across the keyboard to form a total of 211 Instruments in the system ROM (which is different from sample ROM). These include multisampled instruments, ensembles, and percussion maps.

Instruments are combined into Presets, of which there are 128 in the system ROM and 64 in user RAM (256 RAM locations in the XR version). Each Preset includes one or two Instruments that are independently mapped to the keyboard and can be layered, split, or overlapped. Up to four Presets can be linked and independently mapped to the keyboard. Of course, layering at any level reduces the polyphony of the instrument.

It's important to remember there's more to the Proteus than sample playback. Proteus synthesis is based on combining samples and other complex waveforms as additive elements to be layered and crossfaded using EGs, LFOs, and real-time modulators. The Proteus/3 is rich with potential in this regard.

Like the previous models, the Proteus/3 includes five tunings to accommodate different styles of music: equal temperament, just intonation, Vallotti, 19-Tone, and gamelan (Pelog on the white keys and Slendro on the black keys). Also, one user-definable tuning

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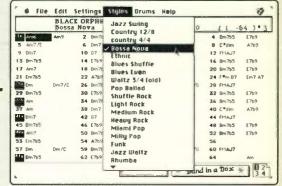
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PC Magazine Jan. 15, 1991 Technical Excellence Awards

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#### PROTEUS/3

table lets you specify the tuning of each note in the entire MIDI range.

While I applaud the inclusion of alternate tunings, they fall short of filling the requirements of this particular instrument. For one thing, Vallotti is a European Baroque temperament, and 19-Tone is a relatively contemporary tuning, neither of which are needed in this instrument. E-mu should have replaced them with some additional ethnic tunings such as the Indian 22-note octave or any one of several known Arabic tunings. As for userspecified tuning, I would like to see an octave-based user table in addition to the individual-note table. Also, the tuning resolution is a rather coarse 1.56 cents. I encourage E-mu (and other manufacturers) to implement the new MIDI Tuning Standard in future synths and samplers.

The operation manual is the same for all three models. It is well-organized and well-written, with plenty of illustrations and examples and a good index. An Instrument list reveals the samples that make up each Instrument. However, it should (but doesn't) indicate the key that plays the original pitch of each sample, as many of the samples are stretched over a large interval, making it hard to find the original pitch. I also wish the addendum included some discussion of world music and the appropriate use and orchestration of the sounds.

#### SAMPLING AND PROGRAMMING

And now to the heart of the matter. For starters, the sound quality is clean as a whistle. This is not surprising; E-mu has a well-deserved reputation for noise-free sample playback.

As I expected, some of the pitched instruments are multisampled. However, the split points between the multisamples in some of the Instruments exhibit an obvious and distracting tonal shift; examples include Troubadour (a French, nylon-string folk harp), Nylon Guitar, and the brasses. This effect is less obvious in the context of an entire sequence.

More disturbing is the fact that many Instruments consist of single samples stretched across most of the keyboard. This is also true for the Combination Instruments, in which several sampled instruments form an ensemble. As a result, articulations get compressed in the high range and elongated in the low range of these Instruments. Some of the worst examples are percussion Presets such as the Stereo Shake and Tabla Tarang, which should be part of percussion maps and not assigned to their own dedicated Preset. The Shakuhachi was sampled with vibrato, the speed of which changes radically across the keyboard.

Many ethnic instruments have relatively narrow pitch ranges. But unlike the Proteus/2, the Instruments in the Proteus/3 are not restricted to their normal ranges in the factory Presets. Restricting them would help in several ways. It would minimize the effect of single-sample transposition. More important, it would automatically educate musicians about appropriate use of these sounds. Of course, the ranges can be edited and saved to user locations, but most musicians don't know what the correct ranges are. Even if they did, it would be easier to extend a few ranges manually than to restrict many ranges.

Some of the instruments were sampled with a variety of articulations and variations, particularly percussion instruments such as Bata drums, Tablas, and Udu drums. The Jew's Harp is exceptional, offering four different and well-chosen variations. (Although this has become the accepted name of the instrument, I prefer to call it a Jaw Harp. This is less derogatory and more accurate because the instrument is not even used in Jewish music.)

Unfortunately, other instruments were sampled with only one or two different articulations or playing techniques. This limits the flexibility and minimizes the impact of these sounds, which often depend on a variety of playing techniques to compensate for their narrow pitch range. Examples include the Shofar, Shakuhachi, Shenai, Bagpipe, and Steel Drums.

On the positive side, some of the sounds include variations that are invoked with the mod wheel or sustain pedal. For example, Mod Sitar adds a scooping attack with the mod wheel, Fsw Bagpipe adds a finger trill attack to the chanter notes with the sustain pedal, Mod Harmonica adds a hand vibrato with the mod wheel, and Ocarina adds a sustaining trill with the mod wheel.

The earlier Proteus models were cited for some annoyingly short loops,

and some of the sounds in the Proteus/3 suffer from the same problem. These short loops result in a static quality during sustained notes, particularly in the Pizz Bass and brass sounds. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of EG rate-scaling, combined with samples that are stretched over wide intervals. In the lower ranges, the envelope decay covers the effect of a short loop, but in the higher ranges, the loop becomes obvious. Examples include the Saron and Oud.

Some of the sounds have inappropriate envelopes. For example, the Ocarina Solo decays rather quickly when it should sustain as long as the key is held down. The Tambura plays its entire characteristic droning figure with one key, but it decays to silence in the East Indian Combination Instrument. (It sustains as it should in the Tamburas Instrument.)

#### **HOW DOES IT SOUND?**

Many of the ethnic sounds are quite convincing as simulations of real instruments, at least in their appropriate ranges. Among others, I particularly liked the Koto, Spirit Catcher, Jew's Harp, Mbira and Bass Mbira, African Mallets, and Vodun Drums. The percussion samples are excellent in general, but the different keyboard mappings are surprisingly similar.

However, a number of ethnic sounds aren't convincing replicas. These include the Shenai, Shofar, Bagpipe, Shakuhachi, Penny Whistle, Irish Harp, and Didjeridu. The Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, and French Horn also are thoroughly unconvincing. Mediocre replicas include the Banjo, Suling, and Ney Flute.

#### **Product Summary**

PRODUCT:

Proteus/3 World

PRICE:

\$995

MANUFACTURER:

E-mu Systems, Inc. 1600 Green Hills Rd. Scotts Valley, CA 95066 tel. (408) 438-1921

EM METERS	RATI	NG PROD	UCTS FR	OM 1 TO	5
FEATURES	•	•	•		
EASE OF USE	•	•	•	•	•
PRESET QUALITY	•	•	•	4	
VALUE	•	•	•	•	

Interestingly, the electronic sounds are almost universally excellent. My favorites include Mizmerized, Ice Bella, Foreboding, and Heavy Tibet. There are several metal/industrial/pop sounds such as Kraftbass and Metal Cutter that acknowledge urban culture as part of the global community.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Two questions must be asked of the sounds in the Proteus/3: Are they quality simulations of ethnic instruments, and are they good, useful sounds regardless of their origins? In answering the first question, ethnomusicology purists might be disappointed. Although there are a fair number of excellent replicas, quite a few are not.

The answer to the second question is more positive. Although they aren't all accurate simulations, many of the sounds suggest an ethnic flavor and are useful in their own right. The electronic sounds are quite good, particularly for pads and sound effects. But despite their quality, I would trade the electronic sounds for more ethnic instruments. Electronic sounds are a dime a dozen, but where else are you going to find six different Cuban Bata drum articulations in a single-rackspace sample player?

A related complaint is the inclusion of standard sounds such as Western brass, arco orchestral strings, and trap percussion, which also should be replaced with more variations of ethnic sounds. These certainly are world instruments (we're still part of the world, aren't we?), but they are available in many other instruments, including the Proteus/1 and 2.

E-mu's ads strongly push the module's world music applications, and judged strictly in this context, it is uneven. However, it certainly provides many interesting and exotic sounds that expand the MIDI musician's tonal palette. From this perspective, the Proteus/3 is successful as a supplemental sound module that complements the other Proteus models.

(Special thanks to Jeff Rona and Ernie Rideout.)

#### Turtle Beach MultiSound (PC)

By David Miles Huber

Is this the 16-bit audio card PC owners have been waiting for?

ith the release of Microsoft's Windows 3.1. multimedia computing is the hottest trend in the world of PC-compatibles. PC users everywhere are discovering the joys and pains of multimedia and in the process are realizing the importance of audio to the multimedia experience. To fill the growing need, numerous manufacturers are offering plug-in boards with digital audio and synthesis engines. Up until now, however, these boards have been far below professional standards, typically offering 2operator FM synthesis and 8-bit



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#### MULTISOUND

digitizing with low sample rates. Turtle Beach's new Multi-Sound card changes all that.

Packed onto a fullsize AT card are a 16-bit, stereo, harddisk recording system based around a 40-MHz Motorola 56001 DSP chip; a 32-voice Proteus/1 sound engine, complete with 4 MB of 16-bit sampled sounds in ROM; a Windows-compatible MIDI interface; and a built-

in audio mixer for combining all these elements. Best of all, it retails for under \$1,000.

#### THE NITTY GRITTY

The MultiSound card transfers digital audio to and from disk at any of three sampling rates: 11.025, 22.05, and 44.1 kHz. It offers 64× oversampled, 16-bit A/D converters and 64× oversampled, 18-bit D/A converters and boasts an impressive -87 dB (unweighted) s/n ratio. Standard 1/8-inch, stereo minijacks on the card's backplate provide analog I/O connections (In, Aux In, and Out). The company also offers an optional kit for connecting the audio outputs of an internal CD-ROM drive directly to the Aux input on the card, without having to fuss with outside cables.

The card's MIDI interface terminates as a 9-pin multiconnector on the card's backplate. The (unfortunately optional) interface adapter is available for \$24. It connects your system to the card by three one-foot-long (In, Out, and Thru) cables.

The Proteus sound engine and ROM on the board are the same as in an Emu Proteus/1XR. The MultiSound includes all Proteus/1XR presets and a separate set of 128 General MIDI patches, thus ensuring compatibility with both Proteus/1 patches and GM applications.

#### SOFTWARE

Out of the box, the MultiSound system includes the card, user's manual, and audio cables. Two 3.5-inch diskettes contain several applets (small applications; see Fig. 1), system drivers, and Wave Lite, which is a scaled-down ver-

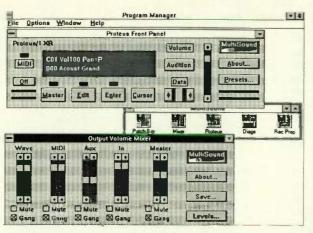


FIG. 1: Several "applets" are bundled with MultiSound, including the Proteus Front Panel and Audio Mixer.

sion of Turtle Beach's Wave digitalaudio editing program.

The Proteus Front Panel application provides a computer version of the standard Proteus front-panel layout. The controls give direct access to all MIDI and parameter controls found on the module. One exception is the Preset button, which allows access to either Proteus, General MIDI, or user patches. I would have preferred a fullblown editor/librarian with graphic editing, but at least you can use this to create your own sounds.

MIDI Patch Bay lets you move MIDI data between the Proteus, the MIDI interface, and the Windows operating environment.

Record Prep displays incoming analog levels for recording to hard disk. The most striking feature is the stereo VUmeter section. Each meter has two moving needles, one calibrated to VU ballistics and the other registering peakhold levels. I'm not sure why this wasn't simply incorporated into Wave Lite.

DOS and Windows Diagnostics are intended for testing your computer environment after installing Multi-Sound

The onscreen, 8-channel (four stereo-pair) Output Volume Mixer lets you combine the Proteus' output, hard-disk playback, CD-ROM audio (or any other signal plugged into the Auxiliary jack), and any stereo signal plugged into the Input jack. The program offers independent channel-muting, L/R channel balance, or ganged stereo level changes.

#### WAVE LITE

Wave Lite has a variety of basic cut-andpaste audio editing tools (see Fig. 2).





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#### MULTISOUND

Upon selecting the Record icon from the main set of function buttons, a Record dialog box appears, showing an LED-type meter display, standard tape-transport buttons, sample-rate selection box, mono/stereo select, and 8-bit/16-bit select boxes. A readout displays the remaining time available on the disk.

You select regions for cutting, copying, or editing by clicking the mouse and dragging over the desired portion of the waveform display. Pressing the space bar plays this region. If you want to change the in or out point, just press the Shift key and click the mouse over the appropriate edit point. Zooming is accomplished by using the Zoom bar located above the Waveform screen, or hitting the right mouse button. Using this feature, a segment of any size can be chosen and displayed in the larger Soundfile window. When the waveform is zoomed in far enough to see individual sample values, the Draw Waveform icon appears. This redraw application can be used to remove such "earsores" as ticks, clicks, and uneven edit splice points.

The full-blown Wave for Windows includes such necessary tools as markers, crossfades, and reverse waveform functions to Wave Lite's basic set. It also

#### **Product Summary** PRODUCT:

MultiSound Multimedia Sound Card

#### HARDWARE

#### REQUIREMENTS:

80386 or 80486 PCcompatible running Windows 3.0 with Multimedia Extensions or Windows 3.1, 2 MB RAM, VGA graphics adapter; CD-ROM drive optional PRICE:

\$995

#### MANUFACTURER:

Turtle Beach Systems Cyber Center, Unit 33 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. York, PA 17404 tel. (717) 843-6916

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FEATURES	•		•	4	
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VALUE	•	•	•	•	4

adds extensive DSP features, including gain adjust; 4-band, parametric, digital EO; time compression/expansion; and 3-D FFT analysis. Registered MultiSound users can upgrade to Wave for \$79. (The suggested retail is \$149.)

#### MIDI MAPPER

MultiSound is set up to talk MIDI in two ways: internally to the Proteus chip and externally to either its own MIDI interface, or an external card such

as a Roland MPU-401 or Music Ouest MOX-32M. It does so via the nifty little MIDI Mapper control panel included with Windows 3.1. MIDI Mapper lets you do things like remap data coming in on channel 5 to channel 8, choose MIDI interface ports, set up entire patch maps for a specific song or stage setup, and route source and destination notes. All these settings can be saved to disk and easily recalled by name. I encourage all of you who work under Windows 3.1 to get in there and play with MIDI Mapper; it offers more than you might think.

The MIDI Mapper MultiSound driver I reviewed offered the single option of routing data to both the Proteus and the card's internal MIDI port. Unfortunately, this meant data sent to my MIDI setup also was sent to the Proteus on the same channels, which isn't very useful.

Fortunately, help is on the way. Turtle Beach claims that the new driver they're working on will let you set your system up so each MIDI channel can be routed to either MultiSound's MIDI Out, MultiSound's MIDI Thru, another MIDI interface on the IBM bus, or the Proteus' MIDI In port. Not only will you be able to use your present 16channel interface, but by adding a MultiSound you'll have access to 64 MIDI channels: sixteen directly to the Proteus chip, 32 to MultiSound's ports. and sixteen to your existing interface. I wasn't able to try this, but it's an intriguing thought.

#### SYNC OR SWIM

By itself, the MultiSound card does not

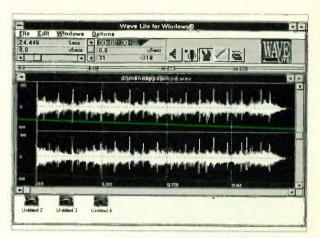


FIG. 2: The main screen of Wave Lite shows a graphic display of the audio waveform and offers tools for cutting, copying, and zooming into the data.

offer any synchronization capabilities to work with outside equipment, such as MIDI sequencers or video gear. However, if triggered by an external program that in turn is locked to MIDI Time Code, it allows you to play .WAV digital-audio soundfiles with sub-frame accuracy. Rumor has it that the next version of Windows will implement MIDI Time Code into its basic operating structure, which will make this procedure much easier.

In the meantime, Twelve Tone Systems' brand new Cakewalk for Windows sequencer offers the ability to trigger .WAV soundfiles directly from the sequencer, giving PC users a basic environment for locking together MIDI and digital audio. Unlike programs such as Studio Vision on the Mac, however, these .WAV files are not continuously resynched to a shared timing reference; they simply are triggered and then run under their own clock. On short files, this probably won't cause a problem, but files of a minute or longer might drift out of sync.

Another problem is that at the moment, you can't play a Cakewalk sequence (to hear the MIDI file) and record digital audio into Wave or Wave Lite at the same time. You must record the digital audio separately and then set up the trigger points in the sequencer. You can work around this limitation by playing back the sequence and recording the audio separately onto tape as you listen to the sequence over headphones. Once you're done recording, you can transfer the audio to disk and do any editing you desire. Remember to record multiple takes, as





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#### MULTISOUND

Wave Lite lets you open four soundfiles at once. The next step is to break the part into sections and save them as separate files (Versel. WAV, Verse2. WAV, Chorus I. WAV, etc.). All that remains is to program the .WAV trigger points into the sequence, and voila!

#### MY TWO CENTS

I am impressed with this board and am particularly happy to see it appear for the PC. What can you say about a system that offers hard-disk recording, a MIDI interface, and a Proteus/1 for the same list price as a regular Proteus/1 alone? It's a great deal. This will be especially true when new drivers have been written to take better advantage of channel routing to the Proteus and the extra MIDI interface that probably is installed in your system.

On the down side, even though the manual contained a great section on the basics of digital audio, there could be better coverage of MIDI Mapper as it relates to the specific MultiSound driver. Some of this can be found in the Windows manual, but I'd rather see Proteus-specific examples. Speaking of Proteus specifics, the Proteus manual doesn't come with the package, but is available from the company for an extra \$11. One other drawback to the system is that although you can adjust the levels internally, the Proteus and digital-audio outputs share the single output jack; there's no way to separate them. As a result, you can't process them individually.

In the hard-disk department, I found Wave Lite to be a bit too "Lite." Its basic editing capabilities seem well-suited to the multimedia PC soundcard market for which MultiSound is primarily intended, but the full version of Wave is a necessity for serious work. Most EM readers will find it impossible to work without markers, and the DSP functions are a big plus.

Unfortunately, I feel that there has been a serious programming oversight in both programs. Instead of managing memory in an efficient manner by accessing edit segments from the original soundfile in a non-destructive fashion, the program, in effect, tags edit changes onto the original soundfile and rewrites the whole thing as a new, and often much larger, soundfile. This waste of valuable disk space isn't kosher. I strongly recommend that the program be updated to take full advantage of the memory-saving benefits true random-access hard-disk editing offers.

My last gripe has to do with the speed (or lack thereof) with which waveforms are drawn onto the screen. Any time you zoom or make screen changes, it's coffee-break time. This can be sped up to a tolerable level by checking off the Turbo Plot option in the Display Setup menu. Nevertheless, I wish the program offered an option to write the waveform's graphic data to disk as a separate file. This would mean you'd only have to wait for the waveform file to be written once; after that, any screen redraws would be much faster.

Having said all this, my bottom-line feeling is that the MultiSound is a terrific deal. It offers features that would benefit most professionals who work under Windows and is the perfect starter system for the budding electronic musician or multimedia maven at a price that's hard to beat.

After having written way too many books, Dave Huber is finally getting back to his first love: studio recording and production. His new philosophy: "To hell with rules, let's make Muzak!"

#### Roland R-70 Human **Rhythm Composer**

By Al Eaton

The beat goes on with the latest in a venerable line of drum machines.

oland has been at the forefront of drum-machine technology for many years. From the classic sounds of the TR-808 to the modern-sounding R-8, the company consistently offers quality beat boxes at reasonable prices. The 16-bit, PCM sample-based R-70 carries on the tradition as a worthy member of the Roland line.

The R-70 is a 14-voice machine with 210 preprogrammed sounds, 32 user sound locations, pads, and a memorycard slot, but no sound-card slot. Unlike Roland's R-8 (reviewed in the May 1989 EM), you cannot add new samples, but the new beat box includes a simple, built-in effects processor.

The R-70 uses the familiar patternsong structure for creating its musical output. A pattern can be up to 99 measures long, and you can record up to 999 patterns (called "Parts" in Song mode) in one song. Up to twenty songs can be written into the 3,700-note internal memory or loaded on an optional M-256E memory card (\$79.95 each).

If you have any experience with previous Roland drum machines, operating the R-70 should be fairly simple. Even if you're new to the genre, the user's guide (a condensed version of the owner's manual) can get you up and running in no time. A wealth of diagrams and graphics prompt you through most of the commands and features, and a thorough MIDI section is included. It was easy to find answers to specific questions through the regular index and convenient topical index.

#### FRONT AND REAR

Unlike most drum machines, the front panel has a layout similar to a tape recorder, with Start/Stop, Forward, Backward, and Record buttons. In Song mode, the Forward and Backward buttons skip you through measures, patterns, and markers.

One of the more irritating things about the implementation of these buttons is that you can't go between Record and Play without stopping. Having a record/punch-in feature would make programming less of a chore and, in most cases, would help in the creative process.

The rear panel contains the following: a headphone jack; four audio output jacks; MIDI In, Out, and Thru; a jack that accepts a normally-open footswitch; and Tape Sync I/O jacks. All are <sup>1</sup>/4-inch phone jacks except the sync jacks, which are RCA. The R-70 offers intelligent tape sync, which means you don't have to rewind to the beginning of a tape to maintain synchronization. Roland's extra-large wallwart external power supply covers three strip outlets, which is especially bothersome.

In lieu of using the footswitch for

Start/Stop functions, you can assign it to function as any one of several front-panel keys, such as Shift, Flam, Roll, Erase, Pad Bank, or Pad Group. The switch also can be used to set the tempo: Just tap the switch four times at the desired rate, and with the fifth tap, the R-70 will start playing at the tempo you tapped in. A sixth tap stops playback.

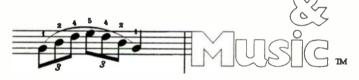
#### **COOL PADS**

The instrument pads (called "Key Pads") are well-placed and feel a bit more responsive than those on other Roland machines I've used, including the R-8.

The R-70 allows you to assign any of 242 instruments (32 user and 210 preset) to the sixteen velocity-sensitive Key Pads. One set of assignments constitutes a Pad Bank. You can switch between six Pad Banks using the Multi button or a footswitch.

One of the many useful R-70 features is Multi Bank, an idea introduced in the more expensive R-8 and R-8M. Multi Bank lets you assign a sound to

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#### **ROLAND R-70**

all sixteen pads and detune or change the tonal characteristics of the sound to create melodic percussion or bass lines. (There are four bass sounds.) I like using it to create bass and drum patterns without having to use any other instrument.

Six Pad Banks and one Multi Bank constitute a Pad Group, and the machine can store up to three Groups.

In addition to the sixteen Key Pads, the R-70 sports an additional surface called the "Positional Pad." One sound can be assigned to the Positional Pad for each Pad Bank. By hitting this long pad in different places, you can get different pitches or different tones and colors of the same sound (via changes in the Pitch, Nuance, Decay, and Pan parameters—explained shortly).

The Positional Pad is one of the most creative and useful features of the machine, as it allows you to program the subtle nuances a live drummer would play. I used it extensively for hihat patterns and cymbal rolls, hitting all over the playing surface with different attacks and accents. It worked so well that when I played a tape of the patterns to a drummer, he initially couldn't tell it wasn't a real drummer.

#### **ASK THE EXPERTS**

When programming drum patterns, you expect to find certain standard features, and the R-70 does not disappoint. It offers quantization and a Reframe function that lets you change the pattern's start point. The Swing feature lets you choose how many notes are affected, the delay time, and whether eighth or sixteenth notes are to be delayed to give a "swing" feel. The R-70's Flam and Roll buttons add to the ease of creating a "real drum-

mer" feel. The Roll button uses pressure to modulate volume. but doesn't send Aftertouch messages.

In addition to the classic Roland drummachine features, the company threw in a few unusual ones. With Rhythm Expert, the machine algorithmically creates patterns, called "Pattern Models," based on user-defined parameters. You can give

each pattern a different feel by adjusting three parameters. The Genre parameter selects the style of pattern, ranging from rock to African. Pattern Type determines whether the pattern will be a basic, fill-in, intro, or ending pattern. Pattern Length sets the number of bars for each pattern.

You can save up to sixteen Pattern Models in the Memo Box, a dynamic RAM location that is like a scratch pad. Once you shut off the machine, the Memo Box patterns are erased. This lets you work with different ideas and not take up regular user memory until you're sure you want to keep them. If you want to save your Pattern Models, you can convert them to user patterns and store them in battery-backed RAM.

Similarly, you can use Rhythm Expert to algorithmically create Song Models. Again, you select a genre and determine how many measures comprise each section. Rhythm Expert then composes a song structure, which you can convert into a normal song and save to a user-memory location.

The Rhythm Expert feature is a step in the right direction. The Models are fun and could prove especially useful to the novice programmer or the more experienced programmer looking for a basic pattern to get the creative juices flowing. I'd like to see Roland take it another step and let the machine algorithmically create variations on userprogrammed patterns.

#### SOUND THINKING

Most sounds are organized in groups: kicks, snares, toms, hi-hat, etc. Although it might be more interesting to have more exotic sounds from around the world, the R-70's sounds are crisp, clear, punchy, and best of



By striking different parts of the Roland R-70's unique Positional Pad (lower right), you can trigger distinct pitches and timbral variations of a sound.

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all, usable. There are no useless or poor-quality sounds. I could hear the sample loop on only one instrument (Vibslp), and it would not be noticed when mixed in a pattern with other sounds.

The instruments can be used for the coolest of jazz and the funkiest of rap. There's one nasty-sounding snare that no rapper should be without. You get a vast array of African, Latin, and Third World percussion sounds and an assortment of less-aggressive instruments (e.g., played with brushes). It is easy to put together highly processed rock sets or traditional, dry, country and blues sets. With the onboard effects, creating new-age sounds is no problem. I particularly like all the samples from old Roland drum machines, such as the CR-78, TR-808, and TR-909.

Some of the sounds can be found in other Roland products, and some can be found on one of the R-8 cards, but most are new and exclusive to this machine. The big advantage of the R-70 is that you get a great assortment in one machine, which is fortunate, as there is no way to add more samples. Up to two sounds can be layered per pad to give even beefier and more interesting instruments.

Although you can't add new sounds, you can edit several parameters of the factory patches. (You can use Solo mode to monitor a sound while editing.) The Pitch and Decay parameters are self-explanatory. Attack Damp changes the attack time. Nuance adds harmonic content, or gives the impression of the instrument being struck at different positions (e.g., near the rim or in the center). Brilliance adds highfrequency content, and Velocity Pitch raises an instrument's pitch as a function of Velocity. In general, you get enough editing features to make the machine sound like a drummer bash-

If you want realistic drum programming, it's important to determine which sounds will sustain and which will be cut off when you trigger the next voice. The R-70's solution is simple and straightforward. Assign Group is used when one sound is to be cut off by another, as with open and closed hi-hats. Polyphony determines whether an instrument with a long decay will be cut off (Mono), or continue to sound when that instrument is struck again (Poly).

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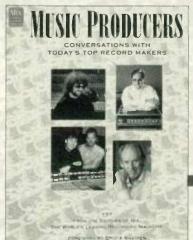
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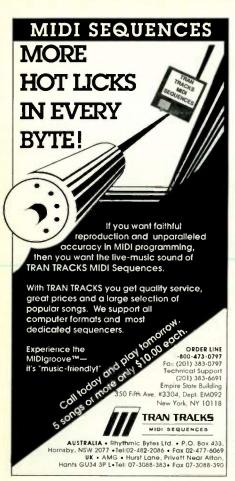
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#### ROLAND R-70

#### MIXER AND EFFECTS

Because the R-70 only has four outputs, you submix the instruments internally. The mixer is extremely basic, controlling output level, pan, and the output assignments. You also can use it to route signals to, and set levels for, the R-70's stereo effects processor.

The effects are divided into two independent sections. Effects 1 provides reverb and delay. The basic reverbs are Hall, Room, and Plate, and you can adjust the reverb time, cutoff frequency for the lowpass filter, and output level. Delay parameters include delay time (up to 450 ms), feedback, and output level.

Effects 2 provides chorusing and flanging. Adjustments include modulation rate and depth, feedback level, and output level.

The effects are of high quality and cause no degeneration in the audio. The reverb/delay section showed no digital grunge on any of the hall or plate effects and the stereo delays are quite nice. They proved especially useful in achieving ghost note effects, as the delay is almost indistinguishable from the original signal. The chorus/flanger section has enough control to create both subtle and far-out space effects.

#### MIDI

The MIDI implementation is thorough and particularly well-suited to using the unit as a MIDI sound module. In addition to MIDI note messages, the R-70 transmits and receives Velocity: Start, Stop, and Continue; MIDI Clock; Song Position and Song Select; Pro-

#### **Product Summary**

PRODUCT:

R-70 Human Rhythm Composer

PRICE:

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#### MANUFACTURER:

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gram Change; Volume; Modulation; and System Exclusive. Eight General Purpose controller messages (controllers 16 to 19 and 80 to 83) permit real-time modulation of pitch, decay time, Nuance, and pan. If you elect to control pan via MIDI, the pan settings in the internal mixer are overridden.

The machine also recognizes (but does not transmit) Expression Pedal, Pitch Bend, Release Velocity, Pan, All Notes Off, Controller Reset, and Data Entry messages.

The R-70's MIDI functions are classified into Instrument and Performance sections. To use the machine as a sound module-such as with a sequencer-you program Instrument sections, which consist of drum-set assignments together with settings for section volume, pitch bend range, and MIDI transmit and receive channels. The drum sets include seven common setups that are programmed for General MIDI-a power set, TR-808 set, jazz set, brush set, etc.—plus four user sets and two setups, called All 1 and All 2, that include everything. Drum sets can be changed via MIDI Program Change, and the instruments can be changed via MIDI General Purpose controllers. (The R-70 also can send the controller data when the instrument is played.)

The four Performance sections are sets of control parameters for playing internal instruments from a MIDI kevboard. Each section triggers one instrument mapped to a contiguous keyboard zone. You can set overall section volume and pitch-bend range and determine whether incoming Modulation messages control Decay, Nuance, or nothing. A Key Follow feature lets you modulate pitch, decay time, Nuance depth, and pan as a function of position on the keyboard.

#### HERE'S THE BEEF

I enjoyed the overall quality of this instrument but would like to see a few features implemented to give it more bang for the bucks.

First on my list: more audio outputs. This is my beef with most new drum machines on the market, not just this one. The four-output configuration isn't enough for pro applications, as it would take two or more passes to lay most songs to tape for additional effects processing and EQ.

If you must have only four outputs,

being limited to two onboard effects at any one time doesn't help matters. Your mix could suffer from not enough, or too much, of a good thing. Nonetheless, the effects processor puts the R-70 ahead of most competing machines.

The unit's 14-voice polyphony (two more than the R-8) seems adequate, although I'd like a few more voices. I experienced some voice-stealing on long, sustained sounds when using intricate rhythm patterns or patterns with many parts.

#### CONCLUSION

Overall, the R-70 has relatively few drawbacks, except for the lack of a sound-card slot and the limit of four audio outputs. With its editing features and large assortment of good sounds, the unit is adequate for pro studios. In addition, the R-70's strong, clean sounds and ease of use make it a worthwhile investment for small pre-production studios. If you have a small home studio where mixer inputs and outboard gear are minimal, the R-70 could be just what you're looking for.

(Thanks to Mark Okimoto, Robert Blewet, and Sidney Payne.)

Al Eaton is an independent producer and the owner of One Little Indian Recording and Productions in the San Francisco Bay Area.

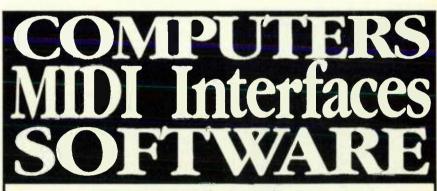
#### Passport Designs Encore 2.5 for Windows (PC)

By Dennis Miller

Passport opens new windows for notation software.

t's been a long time coming, but a new crop of high-end music software for Microsoft Windows has started to flourish. Encore 2.5 for Windows, an IBM-based notation/publishing program from Passport Designs, is among the first of these programs to take advantage of Windows' excellent graphics capabilities. It's a full-featured music-production





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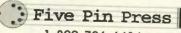


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#### • ENCORE

tool that gives new meaning to the term "ease of use."

Encore, which has been around in an MS-DOS-only version since 1990, has always been considered quirky. (An early Mac version of the program was reviewed in EM's May 1990 issue.) A sometimes awkward interface combined with occasional printing problems plagued early versions.

With the release of version 2.5 for Windows, however, those problems are history. Instead, you'll find a program that's clearly designed, easy to use, and highly capable for many musical settings. Although it comes up short in one key area—playback of dynamic and articulation markings—its automatic spacing of notes, scrolling playback, huge symbol library, automatic partextraction, and flexible page-layout options make it an exceptional tool for the composer or songwriter.

Like most new Windows software, Encore works best on an 80386 (or better) IBM-compatible PC with DOS 3.1 or higher. You'll need at least two MB of RAM and a Microsoft or compatible mouse. A color monitor is optional, but recommended. Printing tasks are handled directly by Windows, so almost any Windows-supported printer works. Beçause Encore is Multimedia Extensionscompliant, you can use any MMF-supported MIDI interface, including the MPU-401, Creative Labs Sound Blaster, and Turtle Beach MultiSound. Encore also has drivers for the Software Toolworks Miracle Piano Teaching System. The program is not copy-protected and lists for under \$600. Educational discounts are available for qualified users.

the main screen.

Just below the main menu line is another set of icons (the Control Bar) that manage various functions, such as navigating around your score, setting the current score voice, choosing the current edit mode, and playing back and recording. The main portion of the screen, of course, contains the score. Encore offers numerous ways to choose how much music is displayed at once. On a Super VGA monitor, at a resolution of 800 × 600, the program defaults to seven staves per screen. But by dragging the staves closer together, I could easily display twelve readable staves. On startup, the program also displays the Notes palette, one of several movable mini-windows that contain the characters from which you'll create your score.

Encore's well-written manual contains both a good beginning tutorial and an extensive index. It's full of graphic examples, though it might have included additional material on the basics of notation (or at least a few references). Included with the manual is a handy introduction to the vagaries of using MIDI with Windows that most users will appreciate. Surprisingly, there's no online help.

#### **ENTERING DATA**

The simplest way to enter data is the click-and-drag method. *Encore* provides seven palettes of symbols that, for the most part, are logically grouped by function. The Notes palette, for example, contains all note and rest durations from a whole note to a 128th note, standard accidental symbols, dottednote characters, and a user-definable

#### **GETTING STARTED**

If you've worked with Windows software before, you'll feel right at home with Encore's layout. If you're a firsttime Windows user, get ready for a friendly interface. At the top of every screen is a menu line that provides access to many of the program's main features (see Fig. 1). Many of the options under these menus contain additional sub-menus, but you're never more than a keystroke or two from



FIG. 1: Encore 's main screen displays the score, and the Notes palette offers quick access to the most important music symbols.

tuplets indicator. Clicking on any symbol turns your cursor into that symbol; to enter it on your score, simply position the cursor and click the mouse. To delete the note, choose the eraser icon and click on the notehead.

Keyboard shortcuts are available for many options. For example, you can use the numeric keypad to select note durations, or toggle between a note and a rest simply by hitting the R key. Though you can't customize the palettes by creating your own groups of symbols, you can select which palettes appear onscreen when you first start the program. Unfortunately, the program lacks the user-designed symbols of Coda's *Finale* and thoughtprocessors' *The Note Processor*.

One of the true tests of a notation program is its ability to manage symbols that stretch across the page, such as slurs and crescendo marks. Encore handles these as well as any program I've seen. To create a slur, select that symbol from the Graphics palette, then click on a beginning, middle, and end point. If you have the Show Control Points option enabled, you'll see three small points on the slur that you can move independently to alter its shape or contour. With this level of control, it's easy to phrase groups of notes that extend across two staves, or that span an entire page. It's just as simple to create a crescendo: Once vou've entered the symbol, you can change its size or position by dragging it into place.

Encore supports four distinct voice parts per stave. To designate a voice as current, select one of the four choices shown along the control bar. If you forget to select a voice before entering data, simply highlight the notes you want to assign to that voice and choose the Set to Voice option from the Notes menu. Like most editing operations, you can highlight single notes, entire measures, an entire page, discontiguous measures, or even the whole score by using simple key combinations.

#### RECORDING

Recording directly into the program from a MIDI controller can be done in real time or step time. To set up a real-time recording, choose a quantization level (half-note to 64th note) from the Goodies menu, then choose Record Options to filter out unneeded MIDI data. If you need to split notes

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#### ENCORE

to different staves—to create a piano part, for example—set the boundary note here, too. Then click the Record icon, wait for the one-measure lead-in, and start to play. At first, you'll only see note heads on the screen. But when you've finished, the program guesses the proper durations for each pitch and spaces them according to your time signature. In general, Encore transcribed my performances accurately. But I could get even more usable transcriptions if I tweaked the quantization value.

During recording, Encore retains certain types of data that are not displayed on your screen. For example, Velocity values are recorded but are not converted into dynamic markings in your score. If you're planning to export your score to a sequencer, you'll find it useful to keep all the MIDI data on hand. But if you're just creating notated music, you can save disk space and memory by using the filter option.

#### **KEEP IN STEP**

Step-time recording involves picking a note duration from the Notes palette, then playing pitches on your keyboard. Keeping one hand on the mouse for changing duration and the other on my synth, I found step-time entry a quick and useful method for many situations. There was a small problem though: In Step mode, the program allows you to enter the wrong number of notes in a measure, i.e., you don't get the automatic note-spacing that real-time recording provides. (According to Passport, this bug has been corrected.) Also, Encore cannot split pitches into two staves in Step mode. If your

kevboard skills are poor, you might try real-time recording at a slow tempo to take advantage of these features.

A final method for entering data is to import Type 1 Standard MIDI Files or sequences created by Passport's Master Tracks Pro or Trax. You also can load MusicTime files with no problem (see sidebar), or cut-and-paste among any of the fifteen files Encore lets you open at once. Speaking of MIDI, Encore can be configured to send and receive over two output ports, allowing you 32 channels of output if you have two MIDI cards or a dual-port card such as the Music Quest MQX-32M. You also could use the two ports to route MIDI to an MPU-401-compatible interface and a sound card, such as the Sound Blaster or Audio Spectrum.

#### **EDITING**

Encore has an enormous range of editing options for refining your score. While it's not optimized for some of the more modern notation conventions, such as beaming across staves, its extensive toolkit can handle most situations. Certain options, such as changing the height or angle of a beam, are done directly on the screen: Just click-and-drag the beam to a new position. Altering the pitch of individual notes is also easiest to do directly on the staff lines.

Accessing edit functions is straightforward. First highlight the note or range you want to work on, then pull down the Change menu and make your selection. You can alter note attributes such as duration, note-head type, and accidentals; transpose large groups of notes; and change the time signature

#### MUSICTIME

If you're mainly interested in creating lead sheets or music for small ensembles, you might find Passport's MusicTime suits your needs. It uses an interface that's identical to Encore's but omits several features of the full-blown package. For example, in place of Encore's 64-stavesper-system limit, you only have six staves available in MusicTime, and it only allows you to open one file at a time.

In the area of page layout,

you won't find the automatic header and footer feature of Encore, though you easily can create your own using the standard text-entry tool.

Don't think this scaled-down version can't create complex music. Its seven palettes of musical characters match those found in Encore, and all of the options in the Change and Edit menus also are the same. At a list price of \$249 (even less at the educational price), MusicTime looks like an excellent bargain.

for one or more measures. Unfortunately, the Set Meter feature won't reformat note values already entered into your score. Passport claims this feature will appear in a future release.

In the Edit menu, you'll find flexible tools for cutting, copying, pasting, and the like. Once a block has been cut or copied, it can be pasted into your score, or overlaid onto existing notes using the Mix Data command. Another set of options are available to alter the playback of your score-for example, changing the velocity or tempo of a selected region—but these are preview capabilities that won't change the appearance of your music.

#### LEAD ON

For many musicians, creating lead sheets is the main reason for using a notation program, and Encore is wellsuited to the task. To enter lyrics, switch to the Graphics palette and click on the L symbol. An arrow appears at the beginning of the current stave indicating the vertical position of the text. Click the note where you want the first word to appear, then begin to type, using the Tab key to move from note to note. Each word becomes associated

#### **Product Summary** PRODUCT:

Encore 2.5 for Windows notation software

#### SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

IBM AT-compatible computer (80386 or better recommended) with Microsoft Windows 3.0 or 3.1; 2 MB RAM; Microsoftcompatible mouse; Windows-compatible printer; MPU-401compatible or Windows Multimedia Extensionscompliant MIDI interface PRICE:

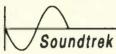
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#### MANUFACTURER:

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EM METERS	RATII	NG PROD	UCTS FR	OM 1 T	0 5
FEATURES	•	•			
EASE OF USE	•	•	•	•	4
DOCUMENTATION	•	•	•	•	
VALUE	•	•	•	•	





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#### ENCORE

with a specific note, so text will stay in place if you move pitches around, even when cutting and pasting large areas. An entire line of text can be moved up or down by dragging the arrow at the beginning of the stave, or a single word can be moved left or right by clicking and dragging it to a new position.

Chord symbols are handled just as easily. Select the Chord option from the Graphics palette, click anywhere on the screen, and choose from the huge list of chord types displayed in the pop-up menu (see Fig. 2). Like lyrics, chord symbols can be moved at any time.

Working with other types of text is similar. Choose the T symbol in the Graphics palette, then create a text entry box by clicking anywhere and dragging down and to the right with the mouse. In several cases where I chose to use an extra-large font, the original box was too small to display all my text. Resizing the box and dragging a few staves down and out of the way solved the problem in an instant. You also can move a text box anywhere on the page, even after you've entered all your text.

#### PLAYING THE SCORE

Encore allows you to orchestrate your score by assigning a single voice or an entire staff to a different MIDI channel when playing back. Encore's Staff Sheet screen resembles the main display of many sequencers (see Fig. 3).

Within it, you can name staves, change their size (using one of the four default options), and set various playback options, including MIDI channel and Program Change. There also are options to transpose a staff or change its default volume. But keep in mind these are playback settings only; like certain Change commands, they have no effect on your printed score.

One thing I'd like to see added is a way to embed a Program Change directly within a measure. As it stands, you only can change programs when first starting playback, unless a change was recorded with the rest of your data. In addition, except for Velocity, duration, and tempo, the program does not let you edit the underlying MIDI data in your recordings (or in an imported Standard MIDI File).

#### LAY IT OUT AND PRINT IT

Like a good desktop publishing program, Encore offers a wide range of page-layout features. There are simple functions to increase staff and note size, add or delete entire staffs or measures, insert or delete entire pages, etc. Using drop-down menus or simple key combinations, you can change just about any attribute of your score. For example, to change the size of a measure, just click on its barline and drag it to the left or right. Everything in the measure (and aligned measures in all other staves of a score) will be respaced accordingly. Best of all, most changes can affect only a single measure in a single staff, so you have the capability to create highly customized scores.

When it's time to print, there are still more options to create just the type of output you want. Using the Score Settings option, scores can be reduced or enlarged from 10 to 400%. Headers, footers, and page numbers can be added easily, and if your printer supports it, you can specify Portrait- or Landscape-mode printouts. Encore is bundled with Adobe's Sonata PostScript

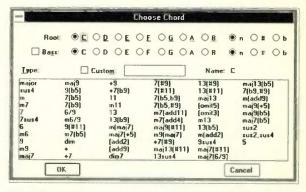


FIG. 2: Encore offers easy access to a multitude of different chord types.

-			Sta	ff SI	heet		THE REAL PROPERTY.
State	Play S	do Nime	like	Geg.	Chis	Program Name	- Itelatie -
1	<b>P</b>	Frottim Cutor	3	-	AL	MEI Rectlement	
2	D.	Dads	3		A2	MEI DWCBWIDTCH	
3	•	Organ	3		A3	MICK Harring Cirgue	
4	-	L ad Gurter	3		Д4	MIDI OverdriveGur	
5	•	Doubled Bass	3		A5	MIDI Acou Bess	
6	b	Drumii	3			None	

FIG. 3: The Staff Sheet offers a sequencer-like overview of all the staves.

music font and Adobe Type Manager utility, so onscreen and printed resolution is as high as the connected monitor and printer permit, even when enlarged.

Encore offers another special printing option I found particularly useful. As someone who writes for large ensembles that often contain twenty or more staves, I was happy to see that Encore allows a system to contain up to 64 staves. In one score, I used 23 staves of eight measures each. When I was ready to print, I determined exactly where page breaks would occur, then used the program's tile-printing feature to print a single score page on several sheets of paper. The results were especially useful when I printed in Landscape mode: My entire score came together in a highly readable size on only two printed pages.

#### SUMMARY

Encore provides an excellent example of the new generation of Windows music software long awaited by IBM users. It takes advantage of all Windows has to offer and, as a result, is a fast and flexible tool for creating many types of music. While playable dynamics and articulation markings would greatly increase its value as a composition tool, Encore is so full of features and easy to use, there's no reason not to give it a try. This is one program I hope to have around for a long time.

Dennis Miller is associate professor of music at Northeastern University in Boston, where he teaches courses on music and technology.

#### Gulbransen KS20 MIDI Retrofit for Piano

By Michael Krewitsky

Don't shoot, I'm only the MIDIfied, digitally enhanced piano player.

hen I was young, they gave me a mondo piano. I practiced like I was told, and somewhere along the line I came to believe that this was the best and most expressive







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#### K S 2 0

way to make my music. There was something about the way I hit the keys; all that wood, ivory, felt, and metal jumped around, and the music vibrated up my arms and hit me in the face. And that was exactly the way it was supposed to be.

A few years later, I heard and saw my first synthesizer. My head nearly exploded from imagining the possibilities. Somehow, though, no matter how many amps, speakers, and effects I plugged it into, it never quite hit me the same as a good old piano. No combination of synths and electronics ever seemed to let me play the music in my head with the same degree of nuance I found in that antique, mechanical, bone-shaking, musical appliance.

Then came the Gulbransen KS20 MIDI retrofit for piano. At last.

#### **OVERVIEW**

The KS20 consists of a keyboard sensor strip, a pedal sensor strip, and a control panel/brain that mounts under the left side of the piano keyboard and slides in and out (see Fig. 1). The keyboard sensor strip is available in 88-, 73-, or 61-key configurations. The sensors use optical scanning technology to track the key travel, generating MIDI note, Velocity, and Aftertouch data.

Pieces of plastic—called "Nessies" because they resemble a famous serpent-headed, Scottish monster (see Fig. 2)—open and close between a light source and the light sensors, producing



FIG. 2: The KS20 sensors (foreground) use optical scanning technology to track the key travel. Pieces of black plastic-called "Nessies" because they resemble a famous photo of the Loch Ness monster-open and close between the light source and light sensors.



FIG. 1: The Gulbransen KS20's control panel/brain mounts under the left side of the piano keyboard and slides in and out.

accurate Velocity tracking. The optical scanning system is based on infrared rather than visible light, so it's unaffected by ambient light.

Because a piano typically doesn't make sound until a key bottoms out, and the sensors close before the key bottom is reached, it is possible to adjust the MIDI "speaking" time slightly ahead of the acoustic sound. Each key has its own Nessie, so the product is capable of either Channel or Polyphonic Aftertouch. The control box has twenty buttons with LEDs, four programmable sliders, and two assignable pedal inputs.

The manual provides the information necessary to rapidly program simple setups in minutes. As it turns out, the information given in the "Quick Start" section of the manual supplies most of the instruction needed to get more than your money's worth from the device.

#### THE TOUCH

When people look for the ideal MIDI master controller, the most important feature is the touch. If you have an acoustic piano or a Fender Rhodes with a touch you love, and you want a MIDI

> controller for studio or live use, the Gulbransen KS20 may be just the ticket.

> The KS20 passed the all-critical "doesthis-change-the-pianoaction" test with flying colors. I couldn't feel the difference. According to Gulbransen, the Nessies only add about two grams of force to the 60 grams of force that are required to depress the typical piano key. Normal playing force is in

the neighborhood of 100 to 500 grams.

Even at its simplest level, the device does an absolutely wonderful job of translating pianistic nuance into MIDI messages. In this regard, I found it superior to regular MIDI keyboard controllers. Although you can adjust the attack velocity sensitivity, the factory default turned out to be quite good and matched the standard velocity curves available in most of my samplers and synths. The KS20 also provides adjustable Release Velocity sensitivity.

#### IN THE BANK

Gulbransen organized the KS20's programming assignments a bit differently from other MIDI controllers. At the top of the hierarchy are four Banks, each of which has a preprogrammed split/layer Zone setup. Banks 1 and 2 provide either two layers or an assignable two-Zone split. Banks 3 and 4 provide four Zones, similarly programmed. Zones can be configured as hard splits or they can overlap; they are mapped to specific areas by pressing the Range button followed by two notes on the keyboard.

Each Zone contains eight Presets. Each Preset can send separate Volume and Program Change messages over any or all of the sixteen MIDI channels. In addition, the KS20 can trans pose the MIDI notes on all sixteen channels in the Preset. Thus, you could set up four Zones, with eight Presets each, sending data over sixteen MIDI channels per Preset.

#### MIDI

On power-up, the K\$20 transmits note and pedal commands on MIDI channel

#### Product Summary PRODUCT:

Gulbransen KS20 piano/MIDI retrofit

PRICE:

\$1,990

#### MANUFACTURER:

Gulbransen, Inc. PO Box 82838 San Diego, CA 92138 tel. (619) 296-5760

EM METERS	RATING	PROD	UCTS FR	OM 1 TO	5
FEATURES	•	•	•		
EASE OF USE	•	•	•	•	
DOCUMENTATION		•	•	•	4
VALUE	•	•	•	•	

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1, along with MIDI Volume from slider 1 and Mod Wheel from slider 2.

The KS20 has four sliders and two inputs, each of which can accommodate either a momentary pedal (normally-open or normally-closed) or a linear-taper CV pedal or similar device. Each controller is programmable in each Zone as any MIDI controller. All four sliders, as well as the two pedal controllers, can be used simultaneously in the active Zones.

Unfortunately, the sliders are somewhat small and not particularly well-positioned for on-the-fly MIDI performance control. However, they are completely usable. Any of these or other functions can be optionally controlled by a pedal plugged into either of the auxiliary pedal inputs. Overall, the KS20 is a well-endowed MIDI controller, and as such, it takes some time and effort to grasp all of its capabilities.

Rest assured, there's plenty of MIDI power. Without going into great detail (the manual does a good job of that), the MIDI channels of Presets can be changed, and it has a friendly Panic button.

As mentioned earlier, one significant feature is the ability to send either Channel or Polyphonic Aftertouch data. The relative smoothness of the Aftertouch function seems tied to the pliability of the felt cushioning at the bottom of the particular piano's key dip. Aftertouch is generated during the compression of this felt after the key hits bottom, and according to my measurements (using MIDIScope), seems to vary from key to key. Nonetheless, these variations subjectively fell into a musically useful range.

The KS20 can be used in conjunction with other MIDI controllers to enhance their capabilities. To do this, just feed data from the other instrument's MIDI Out to the Gulbransen's MIDI In; the KS20 filters the data it receives and passes modified and rechannelized data to its MIDI Out.

Other nifty features include the ability to adjust the velocity curve to taste and adjust the MIDI "speaking time" in advance of the moment the key bottoms out. The contents of memory can be saved and retrieved with a System Exclusive dump to an external storage device. All in all, there is more MIDI functionality here than most of us will ever get around to using.

Notable in their absence are the traditional pitch bend and modulation wheels. The sliders can be programmed for these functions, but aren't spring loaded, lack a center detent, and are uncomfortable as performance controllers.

The KS20 has just enough non-volatile memory to save the Program Change and Volume settings for one channel (called the Save channel) of each Preset. Otherwise, your programs go away when you power down. This regrettable design makes it necessary to dump the memory (via SysEx) to an external storage device, or lose your programs. It's a pain to do and a big limitation if you want to do serious synth layering.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

I started out wanting to write a completely balanced review of this product. But after living with the KS20 for two months, I found more to gush about than tear apart. At first, I believed it would be nice to have an LCD to help give feedback in programming. But with a bit of mental application, this slight shortcoming soon was forgotten. As mentioned earlier, the unit would benefit from a well-designed pitch bend controller.

There are only a few notable limitations and omissions, but one stands out: Many of the MIDI features are wasted because the unit lacks a batterybacked memory. Gulbransen really goofed here; I suggest you forget the KS20's fancy MIDI functions, stick with the Presets, and use external MIDI processing (software or hardware). Otherwise, keep your synth keyboard online for the bulk of the electronic parts, and use the KS20-fitted piano for its strengths; recording piano performances and selected overdubs where a piano touch is useful, and music notation.

One of the obvious problems with using a piano as a MIDI controller is that you hear the piano's natural sound along with the MIDI-triggered sound. Unless you are trying to layer piano and MIDI tracks in a single pass, this could be quite disconcerting. Therefore, when using the KS20 for programming non-keyboard sounds, the folks at Gulbransen suggest Quiet Keys (\$84.95, including shipping; available from Quiet Keys, R3 Box 179, Austin, MN 55912; tel. [507] 433-4835), a string-dampening device that is said to eliminate approximately 75 percent of the piano's acoustic sound. Quiet Keys is working on a version designed specifically for use with MIDI-enhanced pianos that is said to reduce the piano's sound by 90 percent.

#### **INSTALLING THE KS20**

The installation begins with the disassembly of the piano and the removal of the keys. Next, the sensor strip is mounted in the keybed, positioned with one Nessie under each key. Then, a few simple plug-in connections are made and the piano is reassembled. Nessies also install beneath the pedals. Finally, the electronics unit is mounted beneath the lower end of the keyboard (see **Fig. 2** in main text). No soldering or complex electronic work is necessary.

The entire installation takes about 11/2 hours and is a straightforward task for any reasonably handy person. However, I strongly advise you to have it done by a piano technician who doesn't fear electronics, unless you are completely comfortable working with the innards of your piano and a bit of electronics.

I found the instructions for installation to be clear, concise, and to the point. Gulbransen offers an installation video tape, but things can be different from piano to piano. Some instruments may require a bit of woodworking (such as routing) in order to allow the Nessies to lie correctly beneath the keybed.

An Advanced Function menu lets you customize and modify the control unit's functions. This menu includes parameters for reinitialization and recalibration of the keyboard and pedal settings. These calibrations must be done at the time of the installation and whenever the instrument is moved or dropped, or if the temperature and humidity change significantly. The adjustment procedure only takes a minute or two, thanks to clear documentation.

This product is unique. Nothing else allows you to bring your favorite piano or Rhodes into the MIDI age. The KS20 is ideal for people used to playing piano, as opposed to plastic keyboards. Its overall touch response is so good that its shortcomings are easily forgiven. You still might prefer a plastic keyboard for certain synth parts, but if you spent a lot of time practicing to develop chops, this is the piano device that will let you use them.

Michael Krewitsky is the owner of Professional Sound and Music/Musicians Repair Service, a MIDI, recording sales, and service boutique in San Diego. He has spent entirely too much time searching for the ideal musical physical-to-virtual-reality converter.

#### Audio-Technica AT4033 Microphone

By Michael Molenda

A sonic socialist delivers pro sound to musicians on a budget.

mall project studios and home recordists usually can afford one good vocal microphone. Unfortunately, no microphone records all vocal styles equally well, and the models with the largest vocabularies often carry the biggest price tags. Obviously, the recordist on a budget craves an affordable microphone that reproduces myriad timbres without sacrificing quality for quantity.

Sound like the impossible dream? I used to think so myself until Audio-Technica's new AT4033 cardioid condenser microphone put its multi-lingual talents on the block for \$699.

Handsomely rendered in the style of classic broadcast models, the AT4033 utilizes a transformerless, direct-coupled signal path and a low-mass diaphragm to enhance reproduction and reduce distortion. Frequency response is rated at 30 Hz to 20 kHz, with a maximum sound-pressure level of 140 dB. Switches for a highpass filter and a 10 dB pad are included on the base of the mic. The manufacturer offers two

mounting options: a stand clamp or shock-mount. (I recommend the latter.) Power is derived from any 48V phantom source.

#### **GETTING VOCAL**

I started my test with an operatic baritone. Most affordable microphones record tenors quite well, but seldom do justice to rich, full-bodied voices. The singer stood six inches from the mic and was recorded without equalization or compression. No problem here. The lows were extremely lush and sensuous, even with the mic moved back to add room tone to the sound. When compression (2:1 ratio/-10 dB threshold) was employed to smooth out vocal performances, a slight muddiness appeared, but clarity was restored by cutting 3 dB at 100 Hz.

On tenors, the AT4033 exhibited an eerie, transparent quality. High voices seemed to float in mid-air, whether crooned, screamed, or whispered. This characteristic proved invaluable for recording rock 'n' roll vocals, where singers must cut through a cacophony of rampant instruments. But the AT4033 is not just a rock microphone. I recorded a folk singer with a single acoustic guitar as the backing track and achieved a sparkling vocal tone that was almost angelic in its purity. The AT4033, matched with a good singer, never failed to produce a clear, intimate sound.

Voice-over work was also a breeze. Regardless of the artist's timbre, the AT4033 recorded pristine, well-articulated speech with minimal processing. I recorded a few public-service announcements with only a slight cut at 100 Hz to avoid plosives (ugly pops often caused by "b," "p," or similar sounds). The AT4033's internal foam windscreen provided enough additional pop protection that further adjustments were unnecessary.

The trade-off for the AT4033's brilliant sonics is a propensity towards increased sibilance. In every vocal application (spoken word or singing voice), "s" sounds exhibited an uncomfortable shrillness. Close-miking intensified the problem. Audio-Technica is aware of this characteristic, and recommends an external pop filter to tame harsh s-s-s-s-s sounds. Even with a filter as a buffer, I found additional processing necessary to diminish sibilance, and employed a de-essing device



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A shock-mounted AT4033 in a classic vocal miking position.

in the signal chain. The toil and trouble of these adjustments is insignificant compared to the beautiful sound the AT4033 delivers when all timbral factors are optimized.

#### MOONLIGHTING

No one should use a vocal mic exclusively for vocals. (Don't tell me you're one of those musicians who actually reads directions, follows the rules, and worships the status quo?) Wringing the maximum from each piece of equipment is essential for the budget recordist's sonic survival. So what else can the AT4033 do?

Drums. Not surprisingly, the AT4033 worked beautifully as an overhead drum mic. The same characteristics

#### Product Summary

AT4033 Studio Condenser Microphone

PRICE:

\$699 (with shock-mount)
MANUFACTURER:

Audio-Technica U.S., Inc.

1221 Commerce Dr. Stow, OH 44224 tel. (216) 686-2600

EM METERS	RATING PRODUCTS FROM 1				TO 5		
AUDIO QUALITY	•	•	•	•	1		
VALUE	•	•	•				

that make vocals shimmer deliver the high-frequency goods on ride and crash cymbals. Tom miking produced mixed results: rack toms sounded a bit papery, but floor toms rumbled like King Kong's footsteps. I also employed the AT4033 as a mono room mic by positioning it ten feet in front of the kit, at the drummer's chest level. This mono track sounded so good, I considered using it as *the* drum track. (Here we go, back to the 1950s.)

Guitars. The AT4033 sounded great employed as a room mic when recording amplified guitars. Careful mic placement captured gentle decays that produced wonderful blends with close-miked sounds. At the final mix, this natural reverb often was the only element adorning the original source sound. I also used the AT4033 as an off-axis mic (placed four feet from the

speaker cone at a 45-degree angle) to elicit sharp, jewel-like tones. In a welcome example of infallibility, acoustic guitars sounded bright and well-defined no matter where the AT4033 was placed.

Brass. Few affordable microphones record horn sections as funky and punchy as the AT4033. I just put the mic up and let the players blow. Articulation between horns (baritone sax, tenor sax, trumpet, trombone, etc.) was marvelous.

Other instruments. I'll stop being long-winded. Just take my word for it that the AT4033 sounds great on grand pianos, harmonicas, timbales, hand-claps, flutes, and barking Golden Retrievers.

#### **POWER TO THE PEOPLE**

It's a miracle that the AT4033 sounds as good as it does for what it costs. An affordable mic that bestows truly professional quality brings us one step closer to destroying the concept that commercial master-tape production is the domain of big-shot technocrats housed in expensive recording studios. Along with the Alesis ADAT, recordable CD decks, and other sonic socialists, the AT4033 offers home recordists the opportunity to produce tracks that sound as good as anything gracing a major-label release. That's a lot of power for \$699.

#### PERFORMANCES (continued from p. 60)

comprehensive internal levels for each sound, so that patch changes don't jump up in volume and overdrive my keyboard mixer.

The worst technical thing that's happened to me was a stuck MIDI note. Fortunately, my Roland D-70 has a panic button that kills the stuck note and resets the MIDI controllers.

#### SEQUENCER WOES



Myke Reilly Programmer/Keyboardist, Voice Farm

ive performances seldom unfold as planned, so always have something to fall back on. Once, one of our dancers tripped over the main power cord during a show. Luckily, [guitarist] Ken Weller and [singer] Charly Brown knew a few acoustic numbers, so they entertained the crowd while I reloaded sequencer data. The acoustic numbers worked out so well that we made them a permanent part of our stage show.

#### FINAL ENCORE

he rare moments of shared bliss between audience and performer are indescribably beautiful and addictive. The more you protect yourself against technical (and emotional) sabotage, the easier it is to attain those moments. For me, that's what performing is all about. I certainly didn't relish getting beer bottles hurled at me, but the band managed to win over the crowd at that Texas gig. By set's end, the vahoos were cheering, stomping, and treating us like we were the forgotten offspring of Hank Williams. Let me tell you, it doesn't get much better than that.

EM associate editor Michael Molenda still courts calamity on Bay Area stages with his band, Soul Poets.

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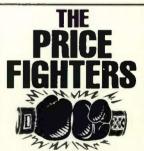


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book about the process of sculpting by Henry Moore. Moore, a sculptor himself, wrote eloquently about the artist's relationship with his or her tools and how mastery over them was the first step in developing creative technique. He lovingly showed his students how to sharpen a chisel so that its edge was an extension of their eyes and hands. He spoke at length about how one should purchase only a few basic cutting tools and spend years learning to use them before acquiring the more advanced and specialized edges.

Moore gave me many things to think about, but the most timely was his strict admonition to his students *never* to use power tools in their work. Power tools, he argued, removed the material too quickly. He felt that each cut should be made only after most careful consideration. As a result, power tools could not be mastered.

Do our "power tools"—computers, synthesizers, audio recorders and processors—allow us to work too quickly, without careful consideration? Are our power tools also unmasterable?

Humans continually invent better ways to extend our reach, sharpen our vision, strengthen our grip, and expand our hearing. We can move faster, sing louder, look farther, fly higher, and, sadly, kill quicker than ever before. Technology extends and expands our capability to create or destroy.

So why not use a power chisel or saw? After all, it's only the cutting that is hastened, not the consideration. Using power tools reduces the tedium and gives the artist more time to consider the work.

When I began composing, I used basic tools: some paper, a pencil, perhaps a piano. Perfecting my skill with these tools wasn't easy or quick, but I could look forward to the day when I would begin to master them. The tools served me. Today, I regularly confront new and better power tools that are designed, manufactured, and distributed at an unimaginable rate. Just when I think I have mastered one new tool, a newer tool takes its place. Sometimes it seems I serve the tools.

The explosion of electronic technology has affected our culture in many wonderful ways, however.

Recording technology makes it possible to study and experience music from distant lands and past times. For the cost of a CD, I can experience the intellectual probing of Toscanini interpreting Brahms or the emotional power of a West African Griot chanting his tribal lineage.

Advanced audio technology has made it possible to stretch our musical perceptions. Performers and composers can imagine and create new sounds, new structures, and new ways of thinking about music.

On the other hand, recording technology has all but replaced the necessity of learning to play an instrument. Families no longer gather around the piano to sing the hit of the day. The only instrument most people play is their stereo.

Computers and synthesizers often are used to generate sterile digital clones that pale in their attempt to replace the beauty and warmth of a human

bowing, plucking, striking, or blowing.

Live music is on the decline, too. Musicians on the radio, at the ballet, and in clubs are being replaced by "perfect" recorded renditions. Processed and overproduced recordings by musical superstars have become the yardstick by which we measure the artistic merit of all musical expressions.

Sonic wallpaper in elevators, shopping centers, and telephone hold systems obliterate silence. New venues for the solitary musician (hunched over a computer) have not materialized. Next week's hit was created by a Harvard Law School graduate.

In the past, it took many generations of artists and craftsmen before a single new tool found its place. Now, many generations of new tools are created within a single artist's lifetime.

As stressing as this dilemma may be, it can serve as a great challenge: How does one maintain mastery over the tools without stopping the tide of technological advancement?

I'll close with a few suggestions:

- Before acquiring a new tool, learn everything that can be done with the old one, and then learn some things that can't be done.
- Time saved using a power tool should be used to examine more possibilities, find better solutions, and create new techniques.
- Be aware that power tools make it faster and easier to create "bad" music.
- Master the tools, don't be mastered by them.
- Prepare for the day when there aren't any power tools left to use.

I'd like to think Henry Moore was wrong, after all.

Between wild swings of optimism and cynicism, Howard Sandroff composes, teaches, and consults on the design of music and audio hardware and software. He is director of the Computer Music Studio at the University of Chicago.

# Vocalist named Product of the Year!



The Vocalist from Digitech

The Vocalist"
has two new features for 1992. Most
Innovative Product
of the Year and Most
Innovative Effects
Device from The
Music & Sound
Retailer Magazine.
It's the only voice
processor that real-

ly sounds like human voices, not like chipmunks.

The Vocalist from Digitech delivers *real* voice harmony and pitch correction. It even remembers every song and



The Music & Sound Retailer Magizine, 1992 Most Innovative Product of the Year. 1992 Most Innovative Effects Device in the category of signal processor.

never gripes about rehearsal time.

The Vocalist is perfect when you need one or two harmonies for back-up, or when you need up to five harmonies to save time in the studio.

No other harmony processor can give you natural sounding, human voice harmony and can compensate for off-key voices.

If you want

award-winning harmony, check out the Vocalist from Digitech.

Send \$10 for the Vocalist Video Demo



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The 4200 Series. Designed For The Control Room,

Not The Living Room.

Today's recording studio has evolved into a multi-function facility which simultaneously addresses the specialized needs of music recording, film and video post, and radio production. In this environment, where the most critical listening often occurs in the final mix, close proximity monitors are often more important than the mains. The problem: most console top monitors, unfortunately, were designed for the living room not the control room. Until now.

With the 4200 Series we're taking our stand from where you sit: right where you work at the console. Designed, engineered and tested from this position, the 4200 Series is the first console mount monitor created specifically for the professional recording environment.

Both models give you pin-point imaging by delivering high and low frequency information to your ears at precisely the same instant. By virtue of their symmetrical design the 4200 Series monitors are mirror imaged.

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4200 Series: console top monitors designed in the studio, for the studio, with sonic performance rivaling much more expensive monitors. 4200 Series: the shape, and sound, of things to come. Available at your local authorized JBL Professional dealer.

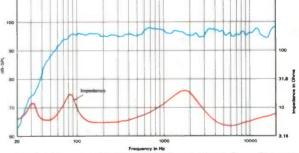




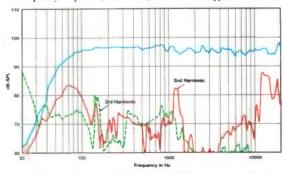
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Frequency Response (Model 4206): 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels



Distortion vs. Frequency (Model 4208) 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels (distortion raised 20 dB)