AND RECORDING WORLD

GOWEST
West Side Story

STANLEY JORDAN CLEM BURKE STUMP FRANKIE HUMAN LEAGUE JACKIE WILSON HUGH PADGHAM

TESTS:

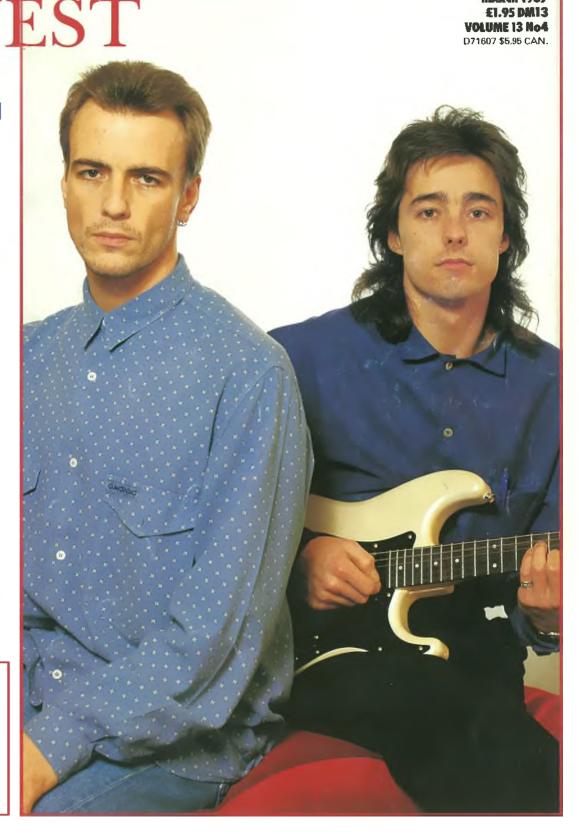
EMAX SAMPLING KEYBOARD TC DELAY/SAMPLER ART PROVERB STATUS SERIES II BASS TRACE ELLIOT AMP & CABS RSF SAMPLING DRUMBOX NADINE GUITAR REMO ENCORE DRUMS AKG HEADSET MIKE

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

A guide to home recording

PROJECT: Separate outs for the Roland 505





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Percussion
featuring
Six Digital
Sound Sources

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3	Tambourine	E Tom	Timbale
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INTERNATIONA AND RECORDING WORL



March 1987 Vol. 13 No. 4

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CLEM BURKE 26 Since leaving Blondie, Clem has spent quite a while hanging on the telephone, fixing up sessions with Dylan, Pete Townshend and, lately, The Eurythmics. Bob Henrit makes pals with the peripatetic percussionist, and finds out what



Burke plays blind

keeps him playing

STANLEY JORDAN...... 36

The man whose two-handed fretboard tapping has revolutionised the world of guitar technique talks turkey with Paul Trynka, a man who once staged a minor putsch in Stockwell

GO WEST 42

'The future of Pop... is small, highly mobile units.' Malcolm McClaren said it, and Go West did it, a duo who found success, and then got a band together. Tony Horkins reporting

STUMP 57

What happens when you play something that's too hard for you to play? You become an Indie success. Chris Maillard quirks out with the exceedingly weird Stump

In the third of our guitar technique series, ex-Only Ones axeman John Perry looks at minor chords in fivestring tunings

WORKBENCH 30 Phil 'Wash 'n' D.J.Y.' Walsh comes clean about a separate output mod for the popular TR505 drum machine

MUSICAL MICRO...... 33 Micro Mole Tony Mills digs out the latest in budget music software for the Atari 520ST

PA COLUMN: HUMAN LEAGUE 40

The Human League home in on Hammersmith Odeon – Anthropologists report: David Anthony

THE FAMOUS FIVE 50 Amplifiers: to you, they're just black boxes. To Paul Trynka, five very special ones are old friends to be greeted, to be cherished and loved

BEATROUTE: FRANKIE .. 55 Paul Henderson goes to Hollywood

DECILIADIT

FEEDBACK 6 To Have Your Say, Just Write Away! (© Silly Slogans Ltd 1987)

BUZZ 11 Honey from the music biz melting

pot... NEWS 107 More despatches from the music wars



The Emax emerges

N T S

TESTS

KEYBOARDCHECK EMAX SAMPLING KEYBOARD.....

A half-price Emulator II? Well, almost. Tony Mills watches E-mu's latest birdie

DRUMCHECK REMO ENCORE KIT...... 64

Bob Henrit pays a return visit to Remos 'cardboard' kit, and finds that it's better than ever

BASSCHECK STATUS SERIES II...... 66

How do you improve on perfection? Dave Burrluck ponders the philosophical dilemmas posed by the ultimate Status symbol



Remo: Chrome 'n' cardboard in perfect harmony

AMPCHECK TRACE ELLIOT AH-250 AMP & 1048/1518 CABS....... 70

More bass business, with Bill Martin checking out Probably The Best Bass Amp In The World...

GUITARCHECK NADINE STANDARD + WILKINSON TREM 73

Dave Burrluck sighs at the sight of another Japanese Strat copy and finds that with the Wilkinson trem, it's a surprisingly sharp combination

RHYTHMCHECK RSF SAMPLING DRUM MACHINE......76

Will this new machine give the Korg DDD-1 a run for its money? Tony Reed samples the cross-Channel challenger

MIKECHECK

AKG C41081

Tony Horkins hails a headset mike

EDITORIAL

Don't Touch That Dial! Aaagh, too late. You've just wiped the whole track! A week's work down the drain in one go...

Is this the kind of nightmare you have about home recording? It's an understandable one. Every year there's another Frankfurt, another NAMM, another AES. Every month, it seems, there's another keyboard, another reverb, another four-track. The technology of the home studio is ever more sophisticated, available, and maybe just a bit daunting. Don't you sometimes wonder if some people are running so fast after the Newest! Best! and Cheapest! that they never actually find the time to record anything? And then, if they do find the time, why is it that the resulting mess sounds like it was mixed on a Kenwood and mastered on a wax cylinder?

Simple owning your own gear is no longer the best guarantee of giving your music the best chance you can. (If indeed it ever was). You have to know how to use it as well.

And so, to make sure you get the best out of your home set-up, we've come up with a new series designed to take the technofear out of DIY taping. This month we look at level settings and miking, and in future weeks we'll be considering such knotty problems as eq, instrumentation, and mixing. Be smart: a little knowledge can be a helpful thing. Go ahead, and touch that dial with confidence...

that doesn't play hell with your hairstyle (and works pretty well, too)

DECORDING WORLD

COVER/CONTENTS...... 83
A roundup of this month's

Recording World section
STUDIO DIARY.......85
Who's been in who's been out

Who's been in, who's been out, who's being shaking it all about...
THE PRODUCERS......86

Chas de Whalley chats to Hugh Padgham, producer to the better class of artist. (Ask Phil Collins, David Bowie, Genesis, The Police, Paul McCartney...)

TRACK RECORD: JACKIE WILSON...... 88

Doing a 12" mix, without a master, of a track recorded 30 years ago poses some unique problems as Jim Betteridge found out when he unearthed the story behind the rereleased dance smash, Reet Petite

John Slater meets Russell, a singer/ songwriter who's turned home taping into a real Adventure

STUDIOTEST ART PROVERB 94

The people behind MXR back again with a new company and a new machine, the very wonderful Proverb. Jim Betteridge extends a warm welcome to both

STUDIO OF THE MONTH 96

David Bouker went to Ebony, but came back as white as a sheet.
Anyone would think he'd seen a ghost...



Go West shot got by Bodnar

STUDIOTEST TC 2290 DELAY/ SAMPLER

Jim Betteridge checks out the device that's threatening to be the new Top Cat in high quality studio effects

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL 102

Chris Vee commences a mini-series on how to get the best results from home recording equipment. This month, putting the tracks down on tape

LISTINGS	
CLASSIFIEDS	110
GUITAR GUIDE	111
DEALER GUIDE	
STUDIO GUIDE	
HIREGUIDE	128
REHEARSALROOM	
GUIDE	129
AD INDEX	130

EEDBACK

Letters should be sent to: International Musician & Recording World, The Northern & Shell Building, PO Box 3B1 Mill Harbour London E1 4 9TW

Got You Covered

I am a destitute gigging drummer who is anxious to have his ageing 1966 Rogers kit revamped, and possibly a couple of new toms built to match. Any ideas?

Martin Black, Worthing, W. Sussex

Tony Reed replies: Lassume when you say 're-vamped' you mean at least recovered, perhaps with new fittings being added to take the toms. Since you don't say how many drums the kit comprises, or precisely what you want doing, I can only give some very general guidelines. If you do have toms built, remember that it is unlikely that you will find them constructed exactly as the original Rogers drums were, though of course they may well sound just as good. Techniques change...

Many drum stores will undertake recovering and building, with the process of recovering usually taking in checking and replacing lugs, tilling in any holes as required, and generally 'servicing' the kit or drums being worked on. As to specific places to go, I had some very good work done in your own part of the world, at Jims Drum Shop, in Eastbourne Tel: (0323)

37445. You mention Eddie Ryan in your original letter, and he is still alive and well and operating out of his workshop in Covent Garden: reach him on 01-836 4941. It's his proud boast that a 'serviced' kit leaving his shop looks as good as new — and he still has a few original Rogers fittings too.

Finally, a friend of mine had a mega double bass drum, extra-deep, chrome finished kit built for him by Supreme Drums in Walthamstow, on 01-520 3873, and seemed very satisfied with it; my advice is simply shop around for quotes, express quite clearly what it is you want done—and go for it!

Double Trouble

This one's for Bob Henrit: Could you give me a list of manufacturers of double bass drum pedals for use with single bass drum setups, with approximate prices?

> Philip Ellis, Pontypridd, Mid-Glamorgan

Bob Henrit replies: Using two beaters on a single head isn't as ideal as using two separate bass drums, of course, since the strike of the second beater tends to cancel out the resonance of the first — not so good for quick flurries. But it's certainly cheaper, and Steve Gadd to name but one doesn't seem to have suffered unduly through the use of it!

I can think of four double beater units available at the moment, though one of them, the Premier, a conversion for the popular 252 single pedal has been discontinued, so it'll be a matter of hunting for remaining stocks in the shops. No price on that one, but be warned — the major reason for discontinuation was its 'uneconomic price'.

Pearl do two units, the P850 TW, an adaptor unit designed to work with existing chain-driven pedals, which currently costs £145.60, and the 880, which consists of a pedal, an extension arm, and an adaptor. The 880, which is also available in a 'left-

footed' version, costs £153.97 inc VAT. More info from Pearl on: (0908) 564956.

Tama, distributed in this country by FCN, currently do two double bass drum pedals, the model 6935, available in left or right footed versions for £286, and the beefier model 6945 which in addition can be used as two independent pedals — a price has yet to be set for this unit. More info from FCN on: (0732) 366421.

Finally, there's an American company, Drum Workshop, imported by Allbang & Strummit, who you can reach on 01-379 5142. Drum Workshop claim to have invented the universal joint which makes double-beater pedals possible, and manufacture two versions of their design. The DW 5002 consists of one pedal, an extension arm and a footplate, for connection to almost any existing pedal, and costs £195 (an additional £86 for a suitable pedal if you don't already own one.) Their DW 5002 DC, meanwhile, is essentially the same unit in a chunkier design complete with boom arms made to grip the edges of electronic drum pads. Remember to check when shopping around whether your existing pedal can be used with the new gadget, and (if relevant) whether it is right, left, or ambidextrously (ambipedally?) designed.



Old drummers recovered

Casio Crisis

Help! Would it be possible for you to printing your mag a set of figures to programme the Casio CZ5000 with a halfdecent Grand Piano sound? Would a weighted MIDI mother keyboard give me Aftertouch and Velocity
Sensitivity Do Gasio have
plans to bring out ROM
packs of voices for the 5000?
Does anyone else do them?
David Bennie, Chesterfield,
Derbyshire

To your first point, David, we've rustled up a Grand Piano patch for you. Coming to that, though, are there readers sitting out thece on brill patches for the DX, Sequential, Roland, blah blah blah synths? Send'em in, and maybe we can sort out a free subscription for the best of 'em. It's up to you now...

As to your other points: weight of the mother

keyboard doesn't count—
the important points are
whether it can transmit
Velocity and After touch—
and much more importantly,
whether the CZ5000 can
receive it, It can't, though the
top-of-the-range CZ-1 can.
Similarly, the CZ-1 is
currently the only CZ synth
to have ROM voice packs
available for it, though of
course user RAM packs are
available for all CZ synths.

On The Books

Having been a 'play by ear' guitarist and keyboard dabbler for quite a few years now, I've been tempted to try and find out how to road the dots and do this music thing properly. Every time I've gone through what's available, though, I'm always put off by the dull schoolbook look of the various tutor and rudiment books I've seen. Can you recommend anything better?

Roger Capstick, Taunton, Somerset

Your first stop in any quest for books should be a reputable bookshop. They are better equipped and more aware than most music shops, and should have the resources (microfiche, book catalogues, etcetera) to suggest the right kind of book even if they haven't got them in stock at the time of your visit. Speaking from personal experience, the Pelican series paperback 'An Introduction To Music' by Otto Karolyi (ISBN 0 14 02.06590) is a handy way into the concepts behind composition, though it is intended to broaden a listener's appreciation of Classical music, not Rock! The best practical guide to learning how to read music that I've come across is the Omnibus Press paperback 'How To Read Music' by Helen Cooper (ISBN 0.7119.0095.7).

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TEAST 33 80 P.						

A very slight alteration to the standard Casio patch brightens up the sound no end, but are just know you can do better

Remember — keep those letters coming in. There's free subscriptions up for grabs if you send in a really brilliant synth patch, or, come to that, an ace letter on any subject — hints and tips particularly wanted. It's your page, so make the best of it...



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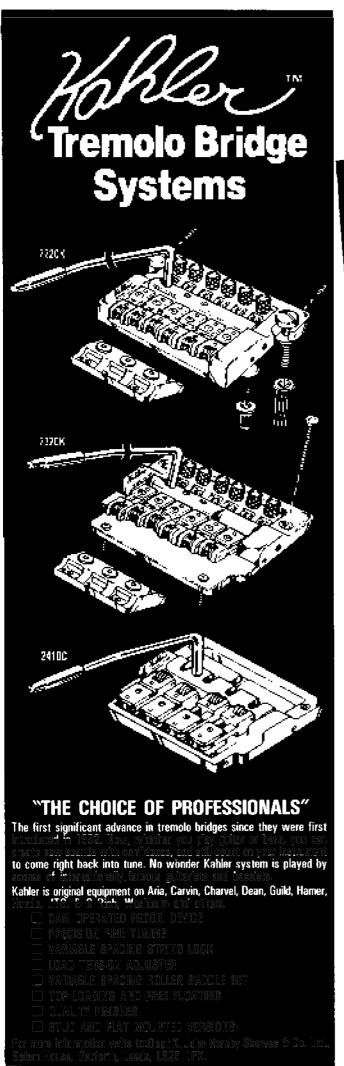
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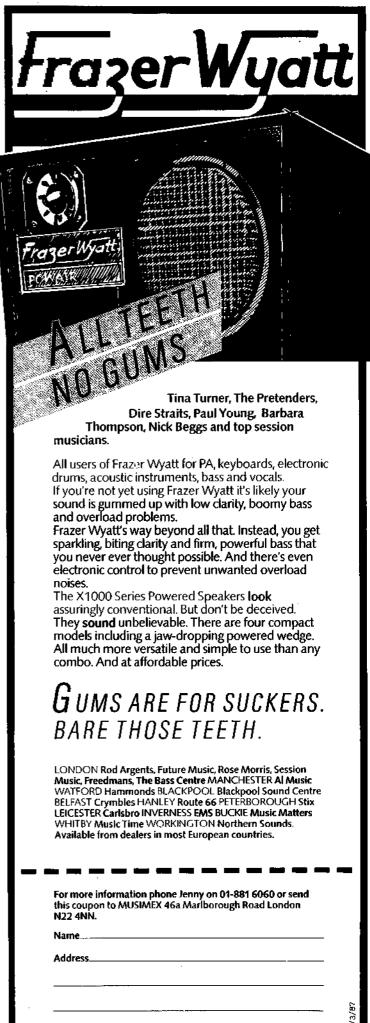
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The Studio Man

In the wake of the Rock comes the Studioman, a smaller-than-Walkman device distributed in the UK by Turnkey which allows one or two microphone inputs to be mixed against prerecorded tapes or musical instruments, and amplified through PAs or home hi-fis, complete with echo. Each unit is supplied with a cheap but serviceable headphone/ mike set, featuring stereo padded headphones on an adjustable band, and a single condenser mike on a flexible boom arm — very Captain Scarlet. Two stereo headphone mini-jacks allow two people to use the unit simultaneously—the illustrations on the unit's box suggest that this application might be used to allow intercom-style communication by a motorcyclist and passenger, though personally I wouldn't like to try it.

In fact, the unit, powered by a single 9V battery and worn clipped to your belt, lends itself to a number of applications. In Japan, where it originated, it was conceived as a mini-Karaoke — connecting it up to a tape player and the headset mike allows you to sing along with your favourite tapes, and monitor the results in the phones. The rather crude, non-adjustable bath-tub echo helps disguise untutored voices, and is great for Elvis Presley impersonations — if little else. It's a pity that you can't switch the effect out, because it is a mite unsubtle.

Connecting up a further, recording deck allows you to keep a permanent reminder of your finest moments, or the internal mini amp can be used to boost levels for outputting through a hi fi or PA, or direct to a portastudio. Battery status is indicated by a small LED in the centre of the front panel, and power is turned on simply by



Another product from the faceless Orientals...

inserting a mini-jack into one of the earphone sockets. And that's it. No fuss, no fiddling about, a simple take-it-or-leave-it gadget which at £40 is worth checking out for a

variety of home recording applications. But do listen to that echo effect first...

More on the Studioman from Turnkey on: 01-202 4155.

Roland Sample Library

As good as their word, Roland have launched an

extensive Forary of samples for the Sidsampling keyboard. The choice of

format for the \$10 was an

of reasons. They have a very mited capacity, resulting it he need for as many as four

sides (two disks) to be

voice. In the case of less complex sounds, you might get a voice per side, or a voice per pair of sides, in which case up to four voices

can be loaded at one time

and selected individually or combined in theirs. Each side of a disk only takes about six seconds to load, but even so it's a bit much halfway through a parformance to have to find and insert four disks to bring up a serve up disks at a fairly alarming

is disturbing in that the disks are manufactured by Sharp for a now outmoded range of computers, and so who knows how much longer they'll be in plantiful supply?

QDs have obviously been

chosen with cost in mind

more standard 3 1/2" disks favoured by most other

little churlish to knock the

The new library consists of boxed sets, numbered

. It is 111, each containing Tive pairs of disks. Each pair of disks is housed in a cardboard walls) and as the disks have very limited physical protection, it is

handled with considerable

care — perhaps a little fussy for on the road use. Anyway,

here's a brief outline of the sounds.

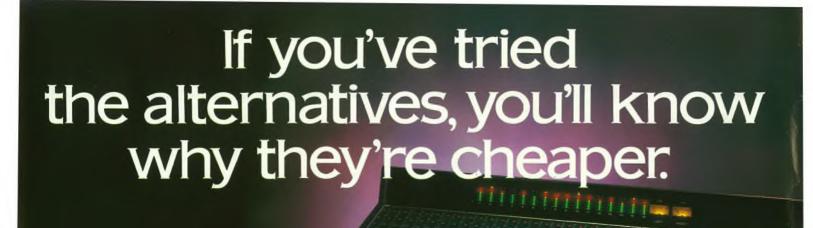
_= IV I Flanc and Keyboard Vol 1 - Acoustic Piano 1; Electric Piano 1, 2; Clav 1; Harpsichord 1; Pibe Organ ACquite usesbie voices,

though none stunning and the planos and Clav are slightly ladding in touch response.

L-102 Brass and Wind

Trumpst 1, 2, 3; Trombond 1, 2; Flute 1; Alto Sax; Bsritone Sax, A range of Kraight voicings plus arpegs los and slidss.

L-103 M@llets Vibrephone 1, 2; Vibe 3 & Glocken 1; Marimbe 1; 2. Warimba 1 & Xylo 1; T. Bell: 2. Jw/8eji



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Electric Bass 4; Wood Bass 1.

L-105 Effects

mixture of the interesting cocks, cows, and Dozillas

doing what they do best and making fots of noise about it. Very interesting, but

L-106 Drum Set

Strangely poor acoustic arer: and bass drums, but come nice cymbals and percussive sounds, together with classically powerful

Variation 1, 2; Violin 1; Cello 1; Chair 1. A good strong string section and Choir, but rather weak individual cello and violin voicings. There's

also a whole string section playing pizzicato in unis which could be usefui.

Useful as lead or melody line

L-109 Synth and

Organ 3, 4; JP-8 Brass and

L-110 Orchestra (Hits)

different inversions and

with soft and hard beaters

and a truly wonderful harp.

L-111 Brass and Wind

A reasonable collection with

expander form as the MKS-

100) is not an expensive

and also very much more

At Your Service

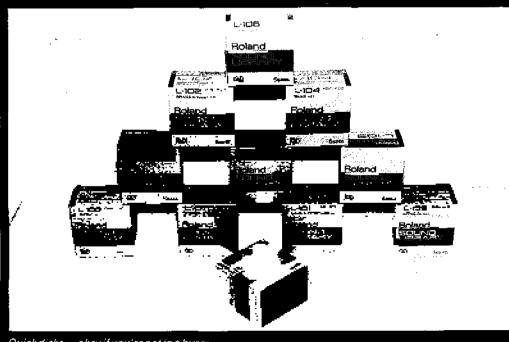
If your Rogue's gone rogue, if your ARP's gone sharp, or even if your Sequential's gone mental, then you'll be delighted to know that there is hope...

The Synthesiser Service Centre, in London's Primrose Hill ministers to synths new and old, undertaking modification and servicing of just about anything that bleeps, squawks and squeals in an electronic fashion. Opened in April last year the Centre is the brainchild of two experienced engineers, Dave Cross and Ron Lebar. and has established itself quickly - currently, the Centre is an accredited

servicing agent for, amongst others, Akai, Ensoniq, Sequential, Oberheim and **Fmulator products,** (including the new Emax). Dave and Ron will, of course, also undertake work on anv brand of synth.

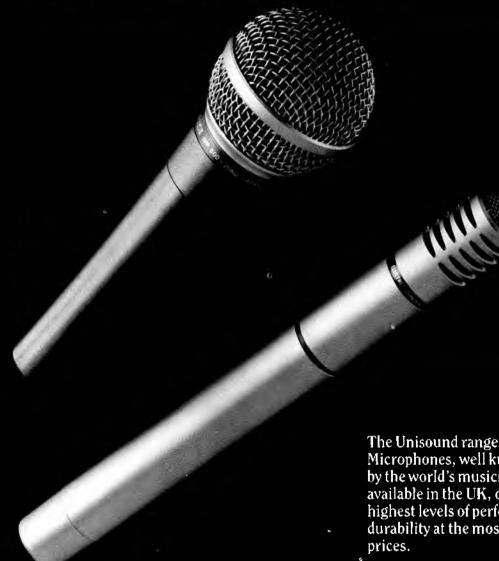
Unlike many small workshops, the Centre specialises only in the care and repair of synths - you won't find any second-hand gear in here unless it's being repaired! Charges are reasonable -£19.50 per hour plus parts, with a minimum charge of one hour's labour. After that, Dave assured me, work is charged by the minute at the same rate, so you won't find a tricky repair job costing more by leaps and bounds. There is, of course, a free estimate of likely costs before any work is undertaken, and Ron points out that they try to keep in mind the worth of the instrument when calculating costs, so you won't be asked to pay more than your synth is worth in repair charges without at least a warning.

The two partners pride themselves on being able to repair almost anything - a recent case involved an ARP Quaddra which had been treated to liberal amounts of a fruity cocktail, and was in consequence 'suffering from one hell of an electronic hangover'. Should you be thinking of pouring booze down the back of your keyboard, you might be interested to know that



Quick disks - okay if you'renot in a hurry

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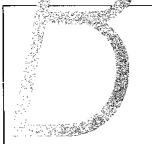
DM-1500 D II dual impedance dual impedance DM-31 I DM-31 D II dual impedance DM-1500 D dual impedance DM-1000 D II dual impedance

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cocktails are worse than

because the fruit juice and

alcohol react to produce

acetic acid, which in turn

reacts with plastic to turn

sockets etcetera into semi-

conductors. Not good, but

Ron and Dave pulled the ARP

hungover or otherwise, you could do a lot worse than

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trust it to the care of the

If you have an ailing synth,

your synth's wiring, IC

through.

straight spirits or beer

the future

Simmons' latest drum set

las usi recently been in evidence although still shrouded in secresy at their much deliberation and one niccupit's to be called SDX. It's a disk-based, digital num kit with 1.5-bit which row of entry, dynamic two gramming key/pads; its evo integral VDU (which gives a detailed graphic viet waveforms, levels etc); and a unique 'I racker Ball' trentro menu-cirven

believe, offer an enormous

Naturally it boasts a fully

nd there's to be a omprehensive library of Irum disks available creater by drummers and record producers. SDM's memory

this year we'll be seeing a digital recording package for

screen editing with SMPTE cheseAnck

The actual playing surface of Simmons pads have been changed too. They are now

intelligent' and will detect not only the dynamic of each stroke, but also the exact point of its impact. This will, of course, provide SDX with a great designant mayor

control than ever before

The Simmons company

that this set will become the osnen-markfor all future sectionic drum developments. Simon Devidmenn and his augmented 'S and D' team

astonishing total of 20 man

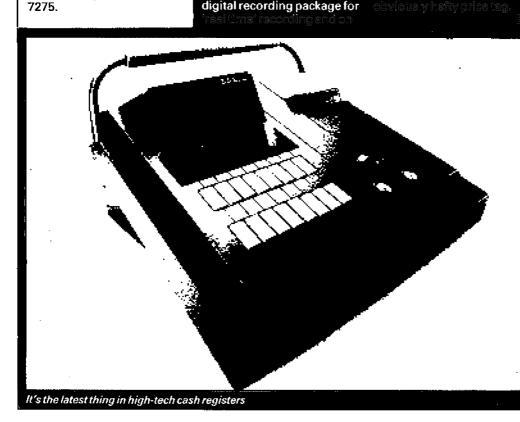
year and mapper total at product, so lean't imagine that it's going to be aimed anywhere other than at the very top of the pile; the truly professional fairlight marks where players can afford its as yet unannounced, but obvious y hafty prize tag.

The Guitar Studio

The Guitar Studio is not a 24-track exclusive to guitars, but a teaching establishment founded by Mel Reeves in 1985. With his present partner, Peter Lincoln, Mel Reeves has put together quite a unique series of guitar tutors available on a mail order basis. The tutors come in a combined book and cassette format and the current ranges include the following titles; Rock 1-3, Flash Rock 1-2, Riffs & Rhythms, Jazz 1-3 plus Rock Trax 1-2 & Jazz Trax 1. The tutors are priced at £9.95 with the exception of Riffs & Rhythms —£10.95 and the Trax tapes at £7.95.

Each course features techniques played at practise and performance speed on cassette with accurate musical notation and tablature written out in the accompanying book. Each tape also has some recorded backing tracks to practice and performance while the Trax tapes are just backing tracks on their own. However, these tapes are not just a series of licks - each is a graduated course which, if studied properly, will not only improve your technique but also your musical knowledge, reading skills and general musicianship.

For example, Rock 1 is aimed at the beginner and in short is brilliant! Both the book and cassette are clear and concise explaining the first steps and the painful first Minor Pentatonic scale. However, no sooner have you mastered that than you're given a nicely recorded backing track to improvise your new scale over. Explaining that simply playing a scale won't turn you into the next guitar slinger it puts forward the concept of melodic patterns to form a basis for your soloing. Then we have a solo





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For more information and specifications send large S.A.E. to Dept. AT, John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd., Salem House, Garforth, Leeds LS25 1PX to learn by heart which is good not only for your playing but also your reading and ear training skills. After another backing track to practise with slides is covered, there are position shifting and alternative keys. In fact all you need to begin soloing. Definitely recommended for the beginner or serious student, it will save you months of isolated learning.

My knowledge of Jazz could be accommodated on my little fingernail. The Guitar Studio's expertise, however, covers three courses and a backing tracks tape. Jazz 1, like Rock 1, is a finely produced package dealing with the allimportant basics of Jazz playing. The first few pages of the booklet covers scales and their relevant harmonised chords written out in all keys. This is a valuable reference for all musicians, not just Jazz students. The Guitar Studio's trump card is the understanding of the learner. They provide solid technique and musicianship right from the beginning without being unnecessarily technical, and before you know it you're improvising over a Jazz track and have learnt new scales plus the all important understanding of chords and harmony. The more difficult concepts of tonal centres and modulation analysis is dealt with in a straighforward manner, and I must stay I learnt a lot from this tape.

Riffs & Rhythms is one of the Guitar Studio's biggest sellers and it isn't difficult to see why. The tape gets to the heart of rhythm playing and illustrates not only techniques but also famous riffs and rhythm patterns covering virtually all contemporary styles from Pop through Rock and HM to Funk. It also shows you how to play many cliched riffs like the intro to Ziggy, Message in a Bottle, Argent's Hold your Head Up(!) and many more. Plus there's a very useful and concise chord dictionary with many shapes beyond the usual major, minor and sevenths.

One thing self-taught musicians often lack is discipline and order. Judging by what I've seen of these tapes and books they'll certainly help structure and analyse what you may or may not already know and put that knowledge in a clear and precise perspective. While many tutors available today concern themselves with flash licks alone, the Guitar Studio provides basic grounding as well as all the flash you'll need in a manner that is refreshing in its enthusiasm and sensible content.

Further information contact: The Guitar Studio, 567 Reading Rd., Winnersh, Nr Reading, Berks, RG11 5HJ Tel: (0734) 784618.

DB



Harharhar! have a surreal porkpie. No thanks I'm trying to eat my wellington's! My name's Max Normal, I'm vour host tonight, and I'd like to welcome you all, ladies and gentlemen to the one and only IM&RW Alternative Cabaret, How do you know it's alternative? Coz none of the jokes are funny harharhar! No wait, Ohh listen, settle down now missus... What do you call Alexai Sayle — a fat git! Right? Wow, radical or what? Don't mess with me, this is one comedian who isn't fooling, I mean, this joke kills fascists, (Alright, alright it doesn't, but at least I've established my political credibility). So — just TAKE THAT Mrs Thatcher!... har

And first up tonight, Laydeez an' Gennelman, they've travelled all the way from Banstead in Surrey to be with us now so I'd like to give you a great big IM&RW welcome to - The Dubious Brothers, aka Monty, Mr Birdman and Mr Matthews. Yay! With names like that, they've got to be alternative, right? Wrong! In fact, what we've got here basically are four cleverly constructed, expensive and electronically backed (DX7, Mirage, 707 etcetera) backdrops for the mildly ironic musings of that most Dubious Brother Monty, delivered with all the pastiche drama of ABC's Martin Fry. With one essential difference. ABC had some good, kitschy songs. The Dubious Brothers don't. They have good arrangements, by and large. I quite like Monty's phrasing. Some of the lines are funny 'This is a protest song, but I really don't know what's wrong'. (Protest Song). Leven quite like one track, Bible Stories, a meaty,

Oda To Gaffa Tape

A wonderfül thing is Gaffa Tape, I bought a big roll vesterday. It's incredibly sticky, but useful, That's what the assistant did say.

For sticking stray leads to the stage floor, There's nothing that even compares For repairing squashed jack plugs and cables, Or fixing new carpet to stairs.

It holds my old Transit together The camshaft, the pistons, and tyres, When mechanics tell me it's useless I turn round and call them all liars!

My microphone stands could not function, Without its adhesive embrace; My guitar would reside in a carrier, Had Gaffa not restored the old case.

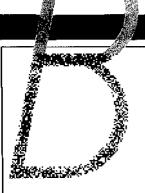
Amplifier, mixers and speakers, The benefit to each one is great: Without Gaffa Tape to repair them, They'd be in a terrible state.

Each circuit board makes its connection
With a lump of tape holding it firm.
Even if my ampigets overheated,
The stuff seems impossible to burn.

There's just one thing wrong with the wonderful stuff, It's incredibly easy to nick. When other bands' guardians are seven feet tall, Taking theirs is a dangerous trick!

Beware all ye seekers of 'hot' Gaffa Tape, Don't get caught with the stuff in your palms. The one consolation that Gaffa provides? You can bandage your two broken arms!





beaty anti-ecclesiastical (you heard me) swing number not a million miles away from Matt Bianco, and featuring a truly wonderful brass ensemble (presumably sampled). But, somehow, I tend to think it's not enough. and I see that the audience agrees with me.. Ah yes, and there's the gong. Sorry boys, vacate the stage please, you've had your five minutes of show, with an old favourite you all know and love - Bob Hope (The Band). Bob Hope (All three of him) hail from a golfcourse near Swindon Old Town and live up to their namesake's reputation for stealing ancient material by lifting the melody of George Harrison's Here Comes The Sun for their first track, / Hope The Sky Falls On Her Head, giving it a lick of Julian Cope-style lyrical modernity in the process.

Unremarkable, Track two, Blue Town, extends the Sixties-pop thesis with a tad more conviction, a whimsical, soulful number chronicling Eighties urban Blues coming on like a downbeat Ferry Across The Mersey. Words like Pete Wylie and Matt Johnson keep popping in my head while I listen to it. Don't ask me why, they just do, harharhar! Despite intercranial interlocution, though, the notion slowly dawns that this is actually a good song embedded in a just-better-than-average arrangement. Track three, The Weather, is about as interesting as talking about it, a candy-floss light Cherry-Redish acoustic foible complete with poorlyperformed Jazzy 'babababa'scat singing which throws away the mood the previous number had started to build. Bob Hope, ladies and gentlemen. But not of greater things.

And finally, ladies and gentlemen, a truly inspired piece of alternative comedy from Indecent Exposure, a Hemel Hempstead based 4-piece who've managed to take the piss out of the umpteen thousand speedmetal bands which infest this fair land by copying them exactly. It's all there - the ludicrously crude 'political' lyrics, the migraine-inducing ramalamadingcrash drums, the earsplitting guitar solo (as in 'plays like there's no one else in the band to back him up' solo), the shouted lads' choruses 'He's a backstreet maniac gone in the head'—this is just perfect pastiche, it had me rolling in the aisles, I can tell you... What do mean, they weren't joking? Of course they were, which is why I'll ask you now to put your hands together and give Indecent Exposure the clap they so richly deserve... fame.... and Mr. Matthews... Or may I call you Bernard? Thanks for the turkey.

And now — a performing dog, harharhar! No, really! It's Robert Donavan's Dog, in fact who's travelled all the way from Abergavenny just to show us just what he can

do. Robert Donavan's Dog lists his hobbies as music, swimming, stick fetching, and biting people in uniform, so at least we know he's an idealogically-sound dog, right animal-lovers?

His taste in music, judging from the four songs he's performing for us tonight, though, is a bit naff. The first track, A Simple Way Of Life (A Dog's Life?) is sort of limp white Soul with overtones of **Big Country guitar** aspiration, nicely-produced real instruments recorded on cheap recording gear, a good 'blossoming' effect achieved on the chordal background, keyboards guitar or both, I couldn't tell, but never really catching fire, or going anywhere in particular. And if you thought that was laid back. wait till you get to the aptlynamed Waiting Love - you could make a cup of tea in the pauses between the phrases of this melancholic little guitar ballad. Down In The City is a bit more upbeat, an attempt at chuggachugga tension which doesn't quite come off, whilst the final track, asks a very silly question in a dubbed-up, sub-Sting way - Is there

anybody there? --- yes, and the one who's still awake is reaching for that gong... Nice try, doggie, but let's face itit was ruff. But before you go - remember folks this is live and dangerous political theatre we're talking herelet's have your hard-hitting. no-nonsense critique of the human/animal power divide. Tell it like it is — Animal Liberation Now! A lemming's right to choose! End police oppression of Alsatians! Kill the pigs! Er... Oh Christ, THE DOG'S DONE A DO-DO ON THE STAGE! Whaddyamean, it's a political act, you mutt? That's a load of s**t and you know it. Get out of here. Out, damned Spot...

Er... harharhar! Sorry about that, Ladies and Gentlemen, you know how it is, new performers, I HOPE YOU GET RABIES YOU CANINE CRETIN, first night nerves — has anybody got a tissue, I seem to have stepped in something.. Anyway, on with the...

...Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou, har har har! Now let me tell you the one about Norman Tebbit and the folding bicycle... (GONG)

TR



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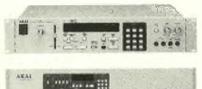


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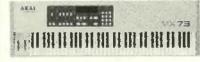
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ON Derry's. FRETWORK

n the previous articles we've looked at Open G tuning concentrating on the Major Chords. This month we'll look at some of the other possibilities—despite the fact that it's a major tuning, minor chords can be played—and we'll look at some scales which can be used. For those who missed previous articles, tune the guitar G D G B D starting at the 5th string (previously A) and take the 6th string right off the guitar.

Open tuning achieves its distinctive sound because of the 'sympathetic' strings. Since all the strings are tuned to the Root, Third, or Flith note of the scale they produce the basic triad which all chords are built from. Even if you do not sound all the strings they will be producing harmonics and overtones which affect the sound. This is especially noticeable with the minor chords which we're now going to look at.

All the chord shapes we've used so far have been variations on one finger

bar chords. A minor and B minor shown in Fig I and Fig 2 are different. They are played with a shape similar to that of A minor in Standard tuning. As you move from A to B minor the 1st and 3rd strings remain open, be sure to let them sound as they give much of the chords' characteristic sound. Depending on the size of your fingers the 5th and 4th strings may be covered with just the 2nd finger.

Fig 3 shows the Stones song Wild Horses which gains much of its distinctive sound from these two minor chords. Try playing the same sequence in Standard tuning and you'll hear just how different it sounds—all the overtones disappear.

The chord of F Major which appears in the chorus may be played in two ways. Either bar the 10th fret and add the Plus One chord shape, or play it at the bottom of the neck as shown in Fig 4.

Fig 5 shows a shape which may be played as a passing note — add it to the G chord in the second bar, it's only a small addition but it adds a lot to the overall sound. This is the beauty of open tuning as all the fingering is very simple yet the results are dramatic. If you listen to the record you'll hear that the treble strings sound especially emphasised. This is because Richards used something called Nashville tuning. If you have a 12-string guitar try the following. Remove the 6th strings, take off the doubled strings from the 5th and 4th positions and tune the remaining strings to open G. You will then have a plain 5th and 4th and doubled 3rd, 2nd and 1st strings. This is in effect an 8-string guitar — what was used on the record.

We've already noted that Open G is similar to Banjo and Mandolin tunings; now we'll look at a scale which comes from Country music and is useful when playing Rock with a slight Country feel.

Fig 6 shows the positions for this scale in the key of G. Note that it's played from top to bottom, from the high notes to the low, and that when you get to the bottom of the 1st string there is a little jump, over to the 3rd string (fretted at the 3rd fret) and back to the open 2nd string. The same thing is repeated an octave down when you reach the 5th string --- you play the 3rd fret before the 4th. So the notes in the scale are (descending) GFEDB flatBG FEDB flat BG. This scale is used on Country Honk, the laid back version of Honky Tonk Women which appears on Let It Bleed, it can also be heard throughout the field of Country Rock.

Finally this month we'll look at something called the Memphis Scale. Its most distinguished exponent is the great Steve Cropper who was the guitarist in Booker T and the MGs. In this capacity he played guitar on most

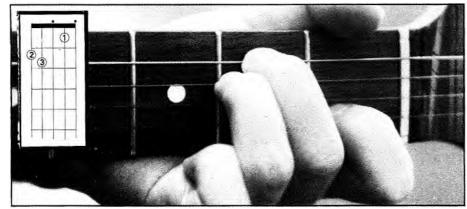


Fig 1; A minor

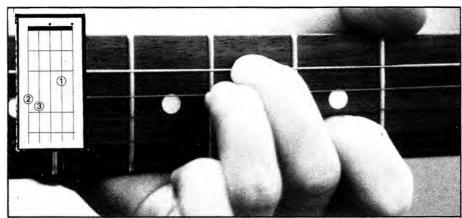
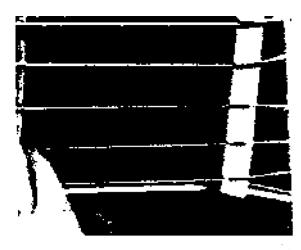


Fig 2; B minor

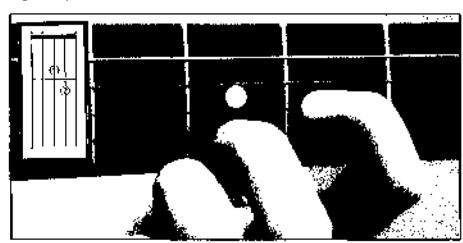


of the Soul classics of the Sixties working with Otis Redoing, Wilson Pickett, Sam and Dave and many others. He evolved a very sparse style, never overplaying as the arrangements were always so tight, and you can recognise his playing immediately on any of the Atlantic/Stax records. He used the Memphis Scale on standard tuning, so here we'll adapt it to Open G (Fig 7).

The scale runs up and down the neck from the nut to the octave and is distinct from other scales in that two notes are always sounded at once. You can simply strum the strings as you run up the scale, though the best effect is



Fig 4; Emayor



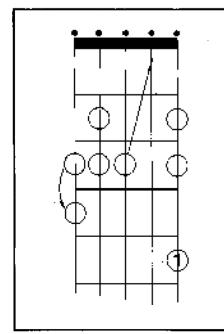


Fig 5; passing notes from Wild Horses

➡ Fig 6; Country scale in G start at 1,
break sequence where shown

Fig 8; Waiting for my Man chord sequence

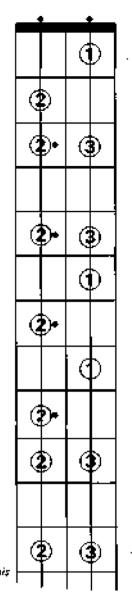
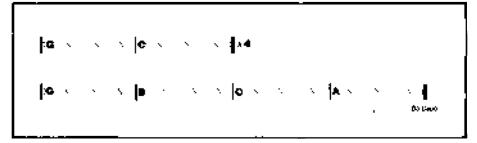


Fig 7; Memphis Scale

obtained by picking out the 2nd and 4th strings where the changes are occurring and letting the others ring.

This scale is used so much in all styles of guitar music you will recognise it no matter who you listen to, but to demonstrate its versatility we'll move a long way from Soul music and take an example of its use from the Velvet Underground. Fig 8 shows the chords to I'm Waiting for my Man. Over each G chord play the Memphis scale at the 5th and 3rd fret then bar C at the 5th fret. In this way you set a sort of running riff which the lead guitar plays on the record. By using open G you can play the lead and rhythm guitar parts together.

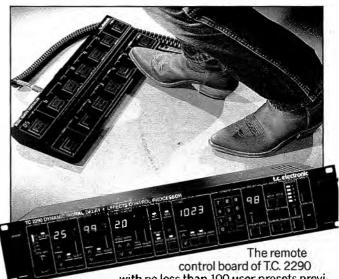
Next month we'll look at Drones and how to play some lead guitar parts around the open strings.





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CURRENTLY WORKING WITH THE EURHYTHMICS, CLEM BURKE HAS NOT BEEN IDLE SINCE THE DEMISE



took a relaxing cup of tea with Clem Burke at his London hotel the day after the Eurythmics' final Wembley gig last December. The band were just flying off to Germany for a couple more pre-Christmas gigs and he would then be flying to his New York home for the festive season prior to nipping down to Mexico to get acclimatised before the Australian leg of their world tour. (And you thought it was easy being a high-profile drummer.)

No doubt most of you are aware that Clem Burke sprang to prominence whilst playing drums in Blondie with Debbie Harry, but what you may not know is that he was, like many other American drummers, introduced to the instrument through a marching band.

"My Dad was a drummer actually, so there were always drums around the house, but I was in the Drum and Bugle Corps by the time I was 15 or so. I had lessons in the band but not too many private ones. I played snare at first but later switched to rudimental bass drum."

Because of its response, sound and role within the band, a marching bass drum calls for a much sparser playing technique. I asked if this was a help to him relative to the equally sparse (compared with Blondie) style of playing demanded by the Eurythmics.

"I think my style developed from that, although I have been known to play a lot of fast rolls, as many as possible, as quickly as possible - but not any more. When I was playing with Iggy Pop his only advice before the show was to play as loud and as fast as possible! That left all the options open. Getting back to the question, though, rudimental bass drum really helped with my chops and endurance.

Clem's dad's set was an old Ludwig which he inherited but subsequently got

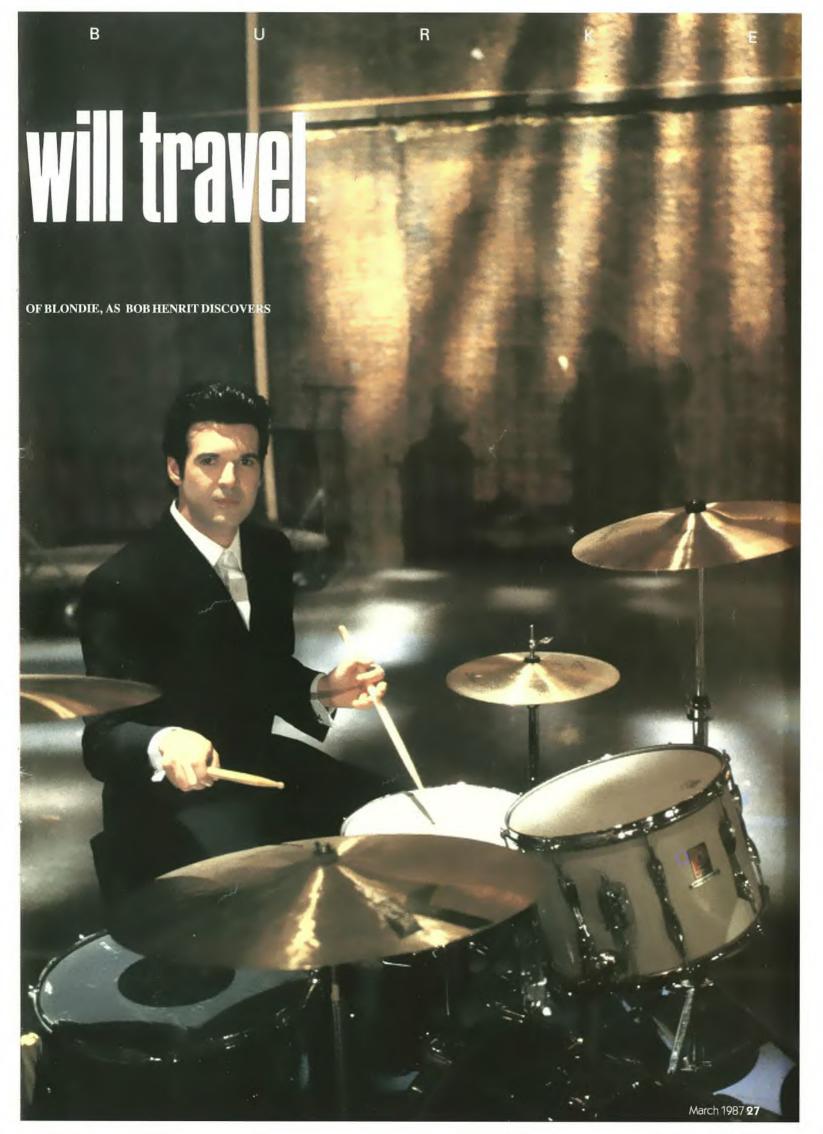
"I traded it for a Japanese red sparkle set and then I got a Rogers. I suppose you could say I collect Ludwig sets. I've got something like 15 kits from the Sixties. Whenever I see one which looks like the kit Ringo used on the Ed Sullivan TV show I buy it. Recently I bought a 5-piece set with a red and green psychedelic finish for \$200. I've got a couple of sets here and some in LA which I sometimes use in the studio. Hike to have a kit that I'm comfortable with. I've got a red sparkle WFL which looks like something from Buddy Holly-the hardware's really low-tech - and also a Classic Carmine Appice/John Bonham oversized set with a 26" bass drum. There are a lot of old snare drums too: Ludwigs, WFLs and Ludwigs and Ludwigs. I'm looking for an old Gretsch with an 18" bass drum."

His early influences were pretty much who you'd expect from someone

learning drums in New York at the tail end of the Sixties. "Ringo, Keith Moon, Carmine Appice, Dino Danelli and many, many others. I was only interested in Rock then, but nowadays I'm into Jazz too. I'm listening to people like Elvin Jones and Miles Davis, not really Jazz/Rock or Fusion. As far as contemporary Rock drummers are concerned, I like the drum box in Sigue Sputnik. I can't figure out why they have two drummers and sound the way they do. Otherwise Histen to Omar Hakim, Steve Gadd and so on."

In the beginning he was involved with cover bands doing Top 40 tunes until he was caught up in the mid-Seventies New York club scene.

"I'd hang out at Max's, Club 82, CBGB's, and the Bottom Line which was more legitimate. Blondie began mid '75 and I met Debbie and Chris from hanging around those clubs. They were a bit older and had a few connections with music business people and they got me in the original band. We did two gigs and broke up. I feel I was a catalyst in the re-grouping and got my mate in to play bass guitar - he'd never played before. Then we added a keyboard player and that was the nucleus of Blondie. Heft college once we had a record deal. Blondie lasted for eight years although we



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E were only really successful for two and

a half of them.' After Blondie he didn't just sit on his

hands but got on with music and drumming.

"I started a band with Steve Jones from the Pistols in California called Checkered Past. We did one record for EMI and the band fell apart. It's something I'm glad I did because with Blondie I had a charmed life. We were suffering and didn't know it. So I feel I missed out on some of the things one goes through in forming a band and trying to get it off the ground. So with Checkered Past we had to back-track and deal with record companies and we did a lot of miserable gigs.

The Eurythmics gig came up in the time honoured music business way. Through the old pals act.

'Dave and Annie were friends who I met in 1981 at the Embassy after The Tourists had broken up and they invited me round for Sunday lunch. The result of this was that I did the first Eurythmics album with them, called In The Garden, in Germany while I was still in Blondie. After that Dave would stay with me in New York and they were always asking me to join them. Actually, I'm sure my biggest career mistake was forming Checkered Post instead of joining the Eurythmics. But, after Blondie I felt I wanted to start my own group - which I'm sort of getting ready to do again. So, the Eurythmics thing was sort of on and off and Dave was producing Bob Dylan's videos and I got involved in that. (Actually I had a year when I did more videos than actual playing.)

"Through that I got to do a lot of playing with Dylan. The Great Basement Tapes, part 2 is the result of this. No one was sure if Dylan was really going to come and I was also making an album with Kiki Dee at the time. I got on well with him musically and we had a few Indian meals. My favourite thing to do is to play with people Hike: Townshend, Dylan. (Clemplayed on Pete Townshend's White City album.) I'd like to do something with George Harrison or any of The Beatles, I gave Zak (Starkey) a couple of drum lessons a long time ago on Mooney's white and bronze set. (The one he wanted everything metal to be made out of gold but had to settle for bronze because gold is not malleable enough.) McCartney would be different unless he wanted to do a Rock thing. But, nobody really seems to want to Rock out anymore. Actually Springsteen's brought it back a bit."

Do you think that would be a good

Oh yeah. (Laughs) Don't you? It's a perfect gig for a Rock drummer. I've never played a show for four hours except in the clubs years ago. I'd be curious to see what it would be like, it seems like it would be a lot of wear and tear on yourself. I know Max (Weinberg) has had a lot of problems with his hands and had to change his technique. I wonder if that's just his body wearing down - being on top for

years and playing four hours a night, five nights a week?"

This brings us neatly to staying in shape. I wasn't at all surprised to hear that he works really hard at it.

"When we're on tour I run a lot and work out in a gym-although I might not look it. I believe it's an important part of playing drums and helps with control when your body's able to do it. I'm interested in getting to where playing doesn't make me tired and I can play with complete control. I never want it to be hard to play, I've never really experienced pain too much and I know this is from lifting weights and runnina.

'A few years ago lused to stay up all night and my wife enrolled me in a health club where I had an individual trainer. The type of place where they put you through a lot of tests designed for New York businessmen in a hurry. Fifteen minutes warm-up, 15 minutes cool down - a half hour exercise and back to the office. Anyway I did all the tests and even though at the time I smoked cigarettes, they were amazed at the way I tested aerobically. I could only put it down to being a drummer and the way I played. They found it difficult to understand how just being a musician and playing the drums could possibly keep me in shape."

Clem doesn't have any hand problems at the moment either because the Eurythmics have been working so consistently.

"I've got a great set of callouses now but it takes a while to build them up. I never use gloves. I've gone six months without touching a kit - then I really get blisters."

it may surprise you to learn that CB doesn't do any formal drum practice before the gig.

"I warm up physically for the gig. I

"I have been known to play a lot of fast rolls, as many as possible, as quickly as

possible"

jog at 4 or 5 pm then I do push-ups and sit-ups. Of course I have a practice pad and sticks in the dressing room but I get to the point where I'm playing so much that it's not necessary. I prefer to listen to inspiring music just before the gig too. Nowadays it's James Brown and Bob Marley - but before I'd listen to Keith Moon. Annie says whatever you do don't play a Who tape before the show. Histened to Live at Leeds once and went out onto the stage in a totally different kind of mood!"

He's playing as hard with the Eurythmics as he did with Blondie, but says that now modern technology has allowed him to have much better quality and more stimulating sounds in his monitors with reverb and other effects.

"Hike to use effects on my pads like hand-claps. I have a great Simmons digital clap chip. Between the Simmons bass and the clap and snare you can do hip-hop type things really easily."

Unlike Mark Brzezicki, interviewed in the last issue, the one thing that Clem-Burke hates about drumming is setting up his own drums.

"I don't mind folding a stand now and then but carrying them around I don't do too much anymore fortunately! I don't think I ever had any great joy about setting them up except in the beginning when it was like unpacking the toys.

The Eurythmics don't use clicktracks any more on stage or sequencers even though Clem doesn't mind playing with them at all.

"With Dylan we did all kinds of tricks from no click at all, to me with one and the rest without, to everyone hearing a click. I suppose the neatest way to do it is to lay down the real drums last once the track is finished. Usually there's a hip drum programme by that time. With The Eurythmics we have mostly done demos first, but with Dylan we'd sometimes have one chord which we'd play and turn into something in the traditional way. Today the drummer's role is a bit more back-seat."

Clem intimated that his style had become more economic since Blondie but this was for several reasons.

'When you're dealing with triggers they're not designed to cope properly with a lot of fast beats. So that's one thing but the Eurythmics' music dictates that I be more concise although there is still room for more Rocky things. It's the way music is and being more adult about what you play, and realising that you're a member of a group."

I mentioned to Clem that our esteemed editor had been to see The Eurythmics at Wembley and described him as: visual, compact, powerful, simple, controlled with good timing and handsome! He laughed:

'I'm flattered because I'm trying to be all of those things - but I'm pleased he mentioned handsome!"

Bob Henrit

ORKBENCH

SEPARATE OUTS FOR THE 505

Ever since I did a Workbench on modifying the Roland Drumatix 606 to give separate outputs to the different voices, there has been a distant rumbling (not my stomach, I hasten to add) which can be boiled down to 'What about the TR-505?' As the last of these rumblings was written on a £10 note, I thought I would look into it and see what could be done.

The outcome of Sherlock Walsh's investigations was rather like the old good news – bad news jokes. The good news is that it is possible to modify the TR-505 – the bad news is that there are a few problems, due to the original design of the beastie, which impose limitations. I think it would be wise to outline what can and can't be done:-

YOU CAN:

Take out eight individual outputs Feed these into a mixer for independent gain and equalisation Have simultaneous mix and independent outputs Make a pretty smart job of it

YOU CAN'T:

Separate all the outputs. The eight groups available are:



The jack sockets you've all been waiting for

- 1. Bass Drum
- 2. Snare Drum
- 3 Handelap and Rim Shot
- 4. Low and Hi Cowbell
- 5. Low and High Conga
- 6. Closed and Open Hi-hat
- 7. Crash and Ride Cymbal
- 8. Low, Middle and High Tom and Timbale

Expect the decay rates of the voices to be identical to those of the mixed output. In practice some of the voices have longer decay times due to the point in the circuit where the signal is tapped—the decay can be shaped, if required, by feeding the signal through a gate.

Get as much output gain as with the mixed output since the tap-off point is before a couple of amplifier stages.

So now we appreciate the limitations of what we're going to do let's have a look at the modification, bearing in mind that it will invalidate the Roland guarantee.

Parts List

You will need very few bits for the job, just:

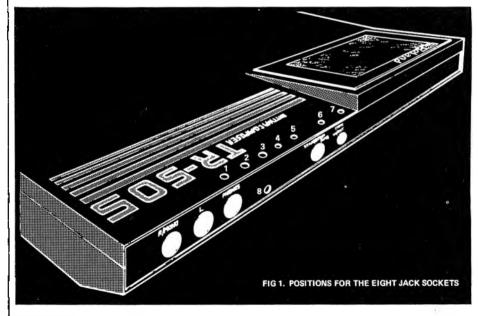
8 off 3 5mm metal mono jack socket 8 off 3.5mm jack plug

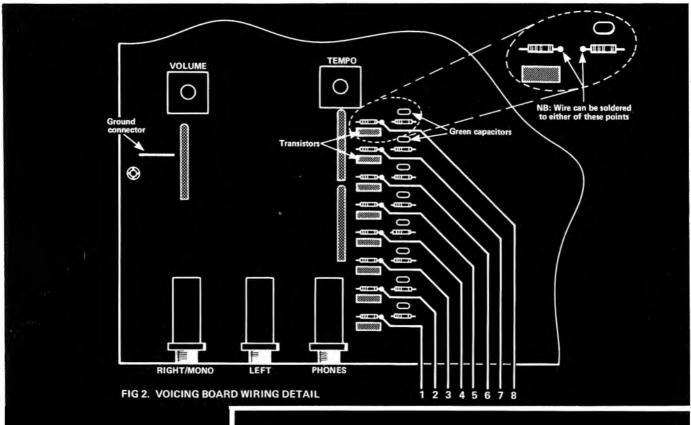
The Mechanics

Turn the TR-505 onto its front and remove the three cross-head screws that hold the case together. Turn the machine onto its back and pull off the volume and tempo control knobs. Lift the right hand side of the case front and hinge it over (just like opening a book). The 'hinge' is three bundles of wire coming from the main circuit board, connecting to the display board by means of three push fit connector blocks. Gently pull the blocks off the retaining pin blocks-there is a small plastic lip which holds them in place so levering the block to one side as you pull helps to separate the connectors.

Turn the case front over and look at the top edge (below the legend Rhythm Composer) and mark drilling positions for seven of the eight jack sockets. Care must be taken to position these so as to avoid fouling the edge of the case or the board mounted sockets. It is possible to fit five sockets between the Phones and Start/Stop sockets, one between the Start/Stop and Tape In/ Out sockets and another between the Tape In/Out socket and the display. The eighth socket is fitted to the grey back panel, about three quarters of the way down midway between the Phones and Start/Stop sockets. It is important to mount this socket as low as possible without fouling the circuit board as it is directly below the centre socket of the bank of five. (See Figure One).

Drill suitable holes (about 1/4" depending on the make of socket) and fit the sockets; due to the thickness of the plastic panel you will almost certainly have to abandon the metal socket washers.





The Electronics

Actually this bit should be titled 'The Electrics' as there's no electronics in sight, just a few bits of wire. Carefully study figure two and tie it in with the circuit board in the base of the TR-505. The bit of the board that we're interested in is the section between the back and the Tempo control. You should be able to identify the eight transistors in a row (small black rectangles) with eight capacitors (green) to the left, as viewed from the front. Between the transistors are a row of 2200ohm resistors (red-redred), the eighth resistor being below the transistor nearest the Tempo pot. Using a small soldering iron and a lot of care, solder about 6" of wire to the left hand end of each of the eight resistors - use of different coloured wire for each resistor makes life easier a little later on.

Locate the horizontally running wire link which is situated about one o'clock, 1½cm from the Volume pot and solder a length of wire to this. Lay the ends of the wire over the back edge of the case.

With reference to figure three, solder a wire link between all the ground (barrel) contacts on the sockets.

Reconnect the three sets of plugged

Shorting contact (not used)

Tip contact

NB: Layout may be different between different manufacturers

FIG 3. 3.5mm JACK SOCKET CONNECTIONS

wires to the top circuit board and then lay the case on its front. Slide the back of the case so that you can get to the sockets on the front panel. Cut the wires back to size and solder the wire from the link to the ground rail of the sockets. Solder each of the eight wires from the resistors to its own socket tip contact being very careful to use the unswitched contact. Try to keep the wiring as short as possible as this reduces the possibility of stray hum pick-up.

So that you can arrange the outputs to suit your own tastes, figure two shows each of the 22000hm resistors labelled with a number (my numbering system – not Roland's so ignore the numbers printed on the circuit board). The numbers link up with the listing of outputs above so you can arrange the sockets in an order which seems logical to you.

To finish off all you have to do is replace the three case screws and test

As I said at the start, the output is considerably lower than the mix output and you may need to add an extra stage of amplification between the TR-505 and the mixer/amplifier. See next month's issue for this extra mod ...

Phil Walsh

ERRATA; A couple of errors crept through in the February ish which might stop you tremolo'ing. To remedy; R13 is 10KOhms. Delete R2; setting up is easier if VR1 is replaced by a multiturn preset of similar value

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PERCUSSION B1 (Latin kit w/casta/claves/ tambo/great wind chimes!)
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TYMPANI/GONGS (this is why they are at the back of the orchestra!) ELECTRIC PIANO (SynRhodes/Digi Piano/

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THE **Musical** Micro

It's amazing how much money some people have to spend these days. I've seen sixteen-year-olds with their own 8-track studios, Apple and IBM computers, modems and all sorts of wallet-busting paraphernalia. So don't tell me that it's daft to put out a £59.95 beginner's MIDI package for the Atari 520ST, which is itself selling for about £500.

The package in question is EZ-Track ST, a 20-track polyphonic MIDI composer from Hybrid Arts. It's available now through Syndromic Music, and is a basic composer which has only one screen and is always ready to record. That means you don't have very many options in terms of arranging and editing your music, but equally, there's very little mucking about with going into and out of record mode and so on.

Down the left of the EZ-Track screen you'll find the twenty tracks each listed as follows;

> 01 Soprano ↑ E! C1 p 14%

These symbols represent the following functions;

- : The cursor which shows the current track being used;
 - 01: The track number;
 - Soprano: The track name;
- † : On/off status (the arrow is inverted for Off);
- E: The End Of Track symbol which appears when a track finishes, playback;
- !: The Activity indicator which shows how many notes are playing on the track, using a variety of symbols (eg,! = one note);
- C: The 'changed since last save' indicator which indicates unsaved alterations to the track;
 - 1: The MIDI channel;
- p: The Track Protected symbol; 14%: the amount of memory used by this track.

That's a pretty comprehensive display to fit onto a single line, and most of these parameters are changed using the top-of-the-screen menus which are Desk, File, Track, Edit, MIDI and Safety. The options for these menus are 'pulled down' using the Atari's mouse controller; File, for instance, has a further set of options: Load, Save As... Update, Delete, Format Disk, Drive Number and Quit, while Track has the options Name, Protect/Unprotect and Delete.

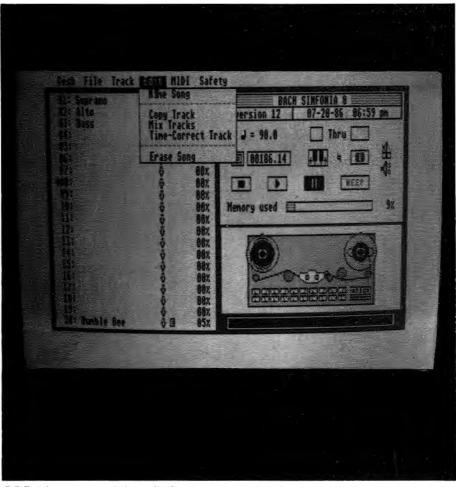
If you select the first track and get it to MIDI Channel 1 you'll be ready to record simply by starting the metronome and playing the connected synthesizer. All data including notes, velocity, wheel, pedal and patch changes are recorded, and if you want to keep the results of your performance you go over to the right hand side of the screen and click on keep. Name the



Tony Mills helps Atari owners get into MIDI track if you like, then select and overdub another track and name the resulting Song. You can then Save to disk using Save As... with a name up to 12 letter's long.

Looking at the right-hand control section of the screen we see a display for *Tempo*, a *Song Version* number which is incremented each time you save the song, the date and time it was saved (provided you set up the micro's software 'control panel' at the start of the session), plus *Play/Record*, which can also be controlled by the space bar.

EZ-Track's twenty channels remain in Record mode at all times; the metronome symbol moves during playback and recording and the Pause and Stop icons (as if you didn't guess from the huge and non-functional painting of a multitrack tape machine at the bottom of the screen) are pretty self-explanatory. The Tempo can be adjusted from 0.5 to 480 beats per minute in small or large increments using the arrow/shift keys or the mouse buttons, the latter having to be clicked repeatedly (which is a bit tedious). The Counter icon shows elapsed time in beats and clocks, with 96 clocks per beat and each beat equal to a quarter note. Single Step mode can be achieved by clicking on different



E Z-Track, a composed piece of software

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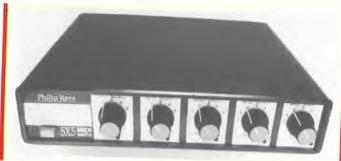
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If you switch on the MIDI Thru function, any notes played on the connected synth will be combined with EZ-Track's output, and you can choose to convert all such notes to any one MIDI channel. It's also possible to Transpose a song four octaves up or down using the keyboard icon, which gives transposition values in semitones; you can exempt one track from such transposition (which is useful if it contains drum data rather than notes) by clicking on the adjacent

EZ-Track's capacity is approximately 27,000 notes on a 520ST and 63,000 on a 1040ST, and the amount of memory used is shown as a percentage. While you're recording or playing back you can mute or solo any track, and the symbols which flash in the Activity column show how many notes are playing on a track at any one time.

Any track can be copied to another without altering the original, either to arrange the tracks in a more logical order or to double up parts. This is easily done with the mouse, and it's equally easy to mix tracks together. If you select Time Correct from the edit menu you can correct performances,

while copying, to the nearest 1/2 note, 1/4 note, and so on up to 1/32 triplets, and since the original isn't lost it doesn't matter if you overdo it a little first time.

Various MIDI commands to change the mode of connected instruments can be sent on any or all channels (All Channels Omni On/Poly is good for emergencies!) and it's also possible to turn on and off the MIDI clock output (EZ-Track can drive a MIDI drum machine but can't be driven by one). Features in the 'Safety' section can stop you from halting the song by accidentally putting the mouse near the menu boxes; insert warnings before deleting or replacing data; and can create backup files of existing songs (suffixed 'SNG') each time you update - which is handy if you realise that you've just saved something with a dreadful mistake in it.

On the subject of drum machines, you can record note values from a connected machine onto a track, and so save your drum beats along with your song rather than separately on the drum machine, which is handy. There are no real limitations as to how many synths you can use with EZ-Track; the Atari has no MIDI Thru socket although EZ-Track implements a Thru function in software, but in most cases you'll get away without as much as an additional Thru box.

The big limitation of EZ-Track though, lies in the lack of editing options. Once you've recorded a track you can either keep it or do it again; you can't alter a couple of notes, nor can you append anything to it or select a section and copy it to form a repeating bass line. You can't even define one section of music to act as a chorus and store it away while you work on a verse, which shouldn't have been too difficult to implement.

But Hybrid Arts do have more powerful programmes on the way for the ST, and Syndromic hope to offer good incentives to upgrade (as well as inexpensive software updates for any registered user).

EZ-Track is a very easy way in to the control of MIDI synths, and will be enough to get you hooked if you've found computer-controlled music a little intimidating until now. After that stage you'll probably want to move on to Steinberg's Pro 24 or Hybrid's own MIDI1 rack pretty rapidly.

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If there's an archetypal American musician, Stanley Jordan is pretty close to it, with a single-minded dedication to improving his technical skills which would probably be foreign to a lot of British bands. But for an archetypal guitarist, Jordan is pretty unusual in that he dispenses with most of the conventional quitar technique.

This was most effectively demonstrated to the British public last year in his performance on The Tube, with a rendition of Eleanor Rigby which had many people in the audience looking around to see a non-existent second guitarist. His technique of tapping the guitar fretboard with both hands provides a way of simultaneously playing melody and accompaniment similar to that obtainable on the piano, and indeed, much of the inspiration for developing this style sprang from a piano keyboard:

"I was playing piano originally, then I started playing guitar at 11 because I liked the instrument so much, but I decided that I really liked the textural possibilities of the piano - the way in which you could maintain a melody and a bass line or counterpoint melody something you just couldn't do on. guitar. But there were a lot of things I preferred about the guitar; the sound, the articulation and expression, the phrasing that you can get. And I feel it's more of a personal instrument. So I wanted to play the guitar, but I wanted the textural possibilities of the piano.

"So I was kind of frustrated for a while, and because of the frustration ! really sat down and focussed my attention on the problem, I figured 'there's gotta be a way to do this, and if there is, I'm gonna figure it out'. And as far as I can tell, what I'm doing now is about the best way of doing it."

It appears that in a way, Stanley Jordan's technique was born fully grown, as the most straightforward solution to a given problem. But although this style goes some way towards emulating the textural possibilities of the piano, the approaches required for the fretboard and keyboard are still not too similar:

"It's still different, because there's other things that the piano can't do that the guitar can, that you discover when you take this approach, so it's not just like playing the piano. There are a lot of things not just about the physical techniques you can use but also the way that the shape of the neck makes you look at music — that can really suggest new possibilities."

Initially, though, the way that the guitar operates across two dimensions was confusing, Jordan explained, as the octaves on a guitar aren't arranged in such a regular way as those on the piano, particularly when moving across the strings. For this reason he tunes the highest two strings of his guitar to C and F, thus maintaining a constant relationship, of a fourth interval, between the strings.

"It is simpler when you play piano as on a keyboard the location of pitches and pitch classes are simpler to visualise. What's more difficult on a piano is when you get to transposing from one key to another. But tuning the top two strings to C and F does give the neck more symmetry, more

ropoatability.

"But making the move to using two hands on the fretboard otherwise was pretty easy — it all came overnight in some ways. My co-ordination between the right and left hand was already pretty good, and my right hand technique, moving from strumming to tapping was pretty good too, from playing the piano. So basically it was just a question of applying a combination of the things lalready had hecause Loculd visualise the neck all the way up and down — so it all came together instantly.

The requirements on the guitars that Stanley uses aren't too different from those of a standard electric - a lowish action is best. The dynamic range obtainable is pretty wide too, although at average volume within a song he tends to tap the strings fairly lightly.

"There's a lot of range, in terms of dynamics, that you can get using this technique. But actually, with this album, the Standards album, a lot of what I was hitching into was figuring out what to do with the dynamics, because there was so much range that it was difficult to record the guitar quietly all the way through. It's the kind of thing where if you're there in a room with a guitar you can hear everything, but then when it's squeezed through a microphone you lose a lot of that perspective, and the dynamics really get lost. There is quite a lot of range, specially because I'm combining different techniques. Like sometimes I'll slap the strings for some kind of rhythm effect, sometimes I'll scrape them with the palm of my hand or whatever -- there's so many different levels of sound that I'm working with. So you hit the difficulty that there's too much dynamic range.

"We spent a lot of time trying to

figure out how we could cope with this when we were recording the album, and what the engineer came up with was a kind of frequency selective compression which preserved the dynamic that I was playing, but stopped it from running away and sounding wrong on tape. The frequencies you compress depend on the instrument, but they tended to be in the high range, so that when the high notes would come the compressor would be activated."

The Standards album is, surprisingly enough, a selection of standards ranging from Paul Simon's Sounds of Silence to a version of My Favourite Things via John Coltrane, all of which are pretty distinctive versions, albeit of

wide variety.

"I started out with a much bigger list of what might go on an album, then I just went through and gradually eliminated things off the list - then I got to a point where I thought 'hey, if I keep this up I won't have any left, I'd better go and do the album now, so that's when I did it.

"For a lot of them it happens that I'll be at a gig and I'll be performing, and it'll dawn on me while I'm improvising that I'll play something that reminds me of a certain song. Then I'll think that actually I kind of know that song, and that if I just try it I could probably play it. Then whatever comes out, my version might be based on that ...

'Or sometimes I'll hear someone else's version that I really like, like John Coltrane's version of My Favourite Things. I think that that version is every bit as classic and memorable as the song itself - his approach to that song is a standard in its own right."

So usually, your version of a song is based on memory, so you take a remembered melody and go from there?

"Right. Sometimes it'll be a problem if I go back to the song later, and I'll realise that I wasn't quite on. Sometimes, though, when I sit down and try to play a song I'll find that the way that I play it is like my memory version that's been kind of filtered through the years. Hike to base my version on that, because if I go back to the sheet music or the original recording I might get too caught up in trying to imitate it."

But isn't it quite intimidating to actually come up with a definitive interpretation of a song that's a classic

in its own right?

"Yeah, it is a real challenge, especially when you consider that you can always throw in a lot of amazing



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chops and fast runs and chord changes, but that doesn't always help the song. So even though it may show your musicianship or your ability to play it doesn't really enhance the song that much, whereas to be able to come up with more of the song itself is much harder. Let's take a song like Moon River - let's say that there were more parts to the song that Henry Mancini never really told us about --- what would all those other parts sound like if you were to continue to elaborate on them? So it's a kind of subtle thing that I'm saying — sure you can always come up with more music that fits, but does it really sound like you're elaborating on that song, or are you just using the song as an excuse for playing your own licks. I find that if that's my goal, usually I'm better off playing my own song.

"So the real challenge with this album was to feel that I was still maintaining something of the real essence of the song, but yet still doing it my way, using my own style to bring out more of the song."

In common with a lot of other renowned American guitarists, Stanley Jordan has lent his name to a particular guitar, in this case made by Ibanez — although his doesn't require much different in the way of construction.

"I didn't use the Ibanez on this album, I actually used a Travis Bean, along with a Sunndown amp. The amp isn't too critical as long as it's clear and has a good response. I might use an ENGL or JC120. Basically, for the lbanez we were experimenting with different material for the neck, different kinds of pickups and different string dampers."

The fact that Ibanez are producing this guitar as a commercial venture would seem to indicate that they envisage a considerable number of guitarists embracing your kind of style?

"I think it's happening already, not that anybody's using tapping exclusively, but I think that a lot of keep my hands relaxed, so that I'm not building up more tension as I play. I was getting into problems with that when I was recording the album — it's kind of difficult because it's like piano but there's more fine motor coordination because you've got to have a lot of accuracy in your finger movement. A lot of the time the gestures aren't as wide, when you play something on the piano you lean over to the side, sweep your hands across ... whereas on guitar when you play the same phrase you might just move your fore-arm a little.

"But the fact that you can have the

"Making the move to using two hands on the front

fretboard was pretty easy"

people are going to incorporate it into their style—like in Rock music what Eddie Van Halen is doing is pretty similar, when he taps on the fretboard. So I think it will be regarded as a kind of addition to the techniques that are available for guitarists."

But if this technique can be regarded as another element in the guitarist's armoury, are there any associated difficulties or problems?

"The main thing I find is that I have to

guitar on a strap, and you can position it wherever you want, gives you more freedom all round. So I think you'll find more people using that kind of style in the future."

And British audiences will be able to see more of that kind of style in the middle of the year, when he's planning to tour Europe, just one man and his guitar: Look out Billy Bragg...

Paul Trynka

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How many DX7's have *you* got? One often sounds too thin and harsh even with outboard effects to fatten it up. The DX7 is a sixteen note polyphonic synthesizer, you only have 10 fingers! Ever wondered what happens to all those extra voices. The DX-MAX gives three new polyphonic modes allowing 16 note*

1 voice, 8*2 and 4* 4 voice assign. You can create chords or subtle chorus by detuning the stacked voices, chromatic and fine detune +/- two octaves. As well as 256 sound memories, 256 function memories, full MID1 spec update, upper and lower key limit, volume parameter, and all can be loaded on to standard RAM Cartridges.

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How do you like it, Sir? Your Pop music? How do you like your Pop, Madam?? Straight down the line A-ha? Maybe done to a Heavy Rock? or Five Star à la Rowntree Mackintosh? Perhaps a classic jeans advert touch would be more to your taste? Or the Human League — a dash more High Street C&A?

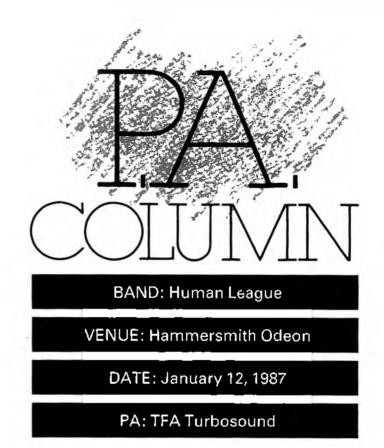
There are an awful lot of rumours concerning the Human League, some of which are to do with, well, um... whether the band can actually do what they -- apparently -- do; that is to say, can they actually sing? It does make a gig more intriguing, this element of doubt, but what does it matter generally when you're firmly lodged in the public ear? What does it mater that you can sing like a virtuoso from the roof tops, or alternatively that you need the assistance of vast heaps of technology and demonic producers, when you've been churning out Human League hits for getting on 10

I was undoubtedly curious, though. After being holed-up in a studio in below-freezing Minneapolis with his week's favourite producers, and a rather unfortunate live appearance on 'The Tube', the Human League emerge to try for true chart veteranship with an album which, I have to say, will take a very long time to grow on me, and a single which I don't feel rates among their finest. And now here they are, after four years of absence from live performance, holed-up in an Odeon in below-freezing Hammersmith with this weeks favourite punters.

The curtain rose to reveal a large elevated walkway with steps either end, which was used to maximum effect by the band throughout the set, and also to conceal an array of amps and monitors. The slide projectors of old are long gone, replaced by the two non-stop girls. Gone too is the faithful drum machine, replaced by a mighty Roland electronic kit; vast columns of air shifted in a colossal drum sound with the drummer casual sitting behind the pads, barely working up a sweat! All was not well with the sound balance, however, and it soon became apparent, after all eight band members had emerged through the fog of dry ice, that to hear more than just a vague vocals and keyboard over an impressive, though not entirely satisfying, in-depth study of said drum kit, would not be on the cards for a while. The two more natural sound of guitar and bass would have been very welcome, but were to fail to grace the PA for virtually the whole concert. It was when the extraordinary sound balance brought forth a slightly too original 'drum and vocal only' version of Seconds (my own favourite) that I found my eyes turning imploringly mixerward.

The Hammersmith Bass Bin It was Colin Lyon who was wrestling

with the faders and who finally got the mix more together in the second half of





the set. I asked him afterwards about the sound and discovered that it was a combination of start-of-tour equipment problems and the lovable idiosyncrasies of the venue --- the designated mixing position being positioned at the back of the rear stalls under the balcony which acts like a huge bass bin. The desk was a Soundcraft 800B 32:8:2, and the groups were configured thus: 1&2: Drums

3: Bass guitar and bass synth Guitar and synth guitar 5&6: First set of keyboard 7&8: Second set of keyboards and the

returns from a Quantec QRS stereo reverb (actually the personal property of Phil Oakey)

The vocals were all compressed dbx 160-wise, and Drawmer noise gates were applied variously to an occasionally used backing vocal mike, the two Yamaha DX5 synths and the guitar amp mike. As Colin himself said, the two girls are not the finest singers in the world, but they do their best and certainly add to the band, so he shows his appreciation by harmonising their vocals using the ubiquitous Yamaha SPX90, and giving them a fair amount of Yamaha REV7 digital reverb. Another SPX90 was used on the various snare and percussion sounds

giving them straight reverb. Together with a pair of Klark Teknik DN27 graphics over the overall mix, there was a KT DN60 spectrum analyser in the rack, which Colin said he rarely used, preferring to equalise by ear. Apart from the main cues for specific effects in songs and general balancing, his job is to check for buzzes and crackles as so much of the equipment is electronic and DI'd. The crossovers used were BSS made, specifically for Turbosound with the fine phase adjustment facilities, rather than just a simple 180° switch, for that final tweak to get the most out of the PA.

On the stage and above it, looking strangely hi fi like from a distance, was a Turbosound TMS 'Blue Box' system with 10 cabs per side (six on the stage and four-flown). These, together with C Audio amplification, gave out about 18kW of power, SR202s drove the HF, SR60s for mid frequencies and bass; two cabs per amp. Each cab contained 2X15", 2X10" and a JBL 60° HF horn.

John Shearman was doing the on stage sound from a TAC Scorpion 30:12 desk pulling out 11 mixes through nine Yamaha 27-band graphics and one dual channel Court Acoustic graphic. The wedges were powered by Carver amps with BSS two-way crossovers, six of them low

profile Turbosound 2X15s, six others TFA 2X15s. The three sidefills were made up of two TMS3 cabs and were TMA23 powered with BSS three-way crossovers. Up on the catwalk were two TMS4 monitors for the easy listening of those wishing to catwalk. I must admit these low profile monitors certainly are what they say. From where I was in the stalls you really could not see very much in the way of on-stage foldback equipment anywhere.

On The Wire

The band are keen users of NADY transmitter/receiver systems (that's mikes without leads to you), using 701 models on guitar and bass and 700s on main vocals which have Shure SM58 capsules. I don't know about these tricky wireless jobs; apparently it was one of these which went down and started the League's Tube appearance on the wrong foot. I mean at least with the traditional lump of wire type, you know it's not working because you've gone and trodden on it and pulled it out again, you great oaf! Anyway, the only other mikes used were two Beyer M88s, on the backing vocals and AKG 451s on the drum overheads and hi hat. There was a vast array of synths at the various keyboard players' commands. Two DX5s, a Roland JX8P, an Oberheim expander, Akai and Mirage samplers amongst others nestled in next to the Roland DD30 drums, and were occasionally operated via Casio MIDI controllers when the need to pose guitaristically overcame the players.

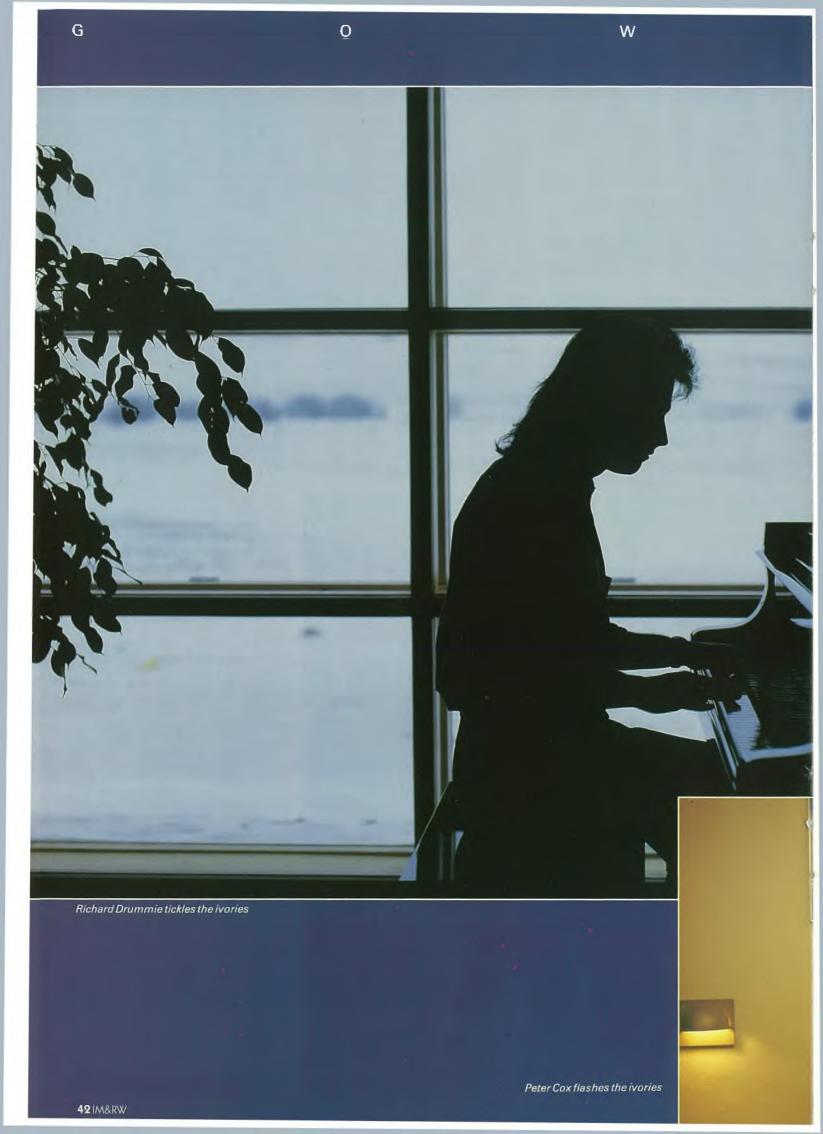
Happily, the sound did improve as the set moved on, and as they bowled out more and more hits, the audience became more and more appreciative. It's to their credit that with the list of successful singles as long as theirs, they've generally managed to avoid lapsing into deperate blandness like some others, and usually have a certain edge to their writing. Playing live, though, they're like a band who've hardly done any gigs, which is the case recently, and just happen to have a bunch of cracking songs. It was good to hear the downright Funk of a song that had once played in the background of mid-morning kitchen scenes from early Brookside. Just a shame about the sound problems.

Finally ending up with Gary Glitter's Rock 'n' Roll Parts I&II and a quick costume change and encore, they managed to salvage what had started out as something like a syndrum demonstration. Their general contact with the audience seemed a bit awkward and a lot of the time they seemd to just run through their 'programmed' production ideas without too much panache — just the kind of problem that a medium sized world tour is designed to iron out. Somehow or other, though, by their

almost shy moves about the stage they achieve an endearing quality.



David Anthony



"We didn't have any kind of masterplan - we were just messing around writing songs together. Fortunately for us we'd met Gary (Stevenson) who's now producing us, and who produced the last album, and he had an 8-track. We had a portastudio ourselves and we'd messed around with a Drumatix making less than stunning sounding demos, and he just heard one of the tunes we'd been doing and thought it might be fun to do it in his 8-track and produce us."

The impressive sounding demodone Gary's 8track was impressive enough to attract the attention of publishers ATV, who'd got the tapes via the old 'friends of friends' route. However it took a long time between signing as Cox and Drummie and success as Go West. Three years to be precise.

"They were really good with us, ATV. They'd put us in touch with The Quick, the duo that had originally inspired us to have a go, and we did two songs, that were supposed to be masters, with them. ATV thought they'd be able to get us signed just like that, but it didn't quite work out that way so over that three year period we were basically trying to write a single that would convince a record company to sign us.

"They'd keep going to the companies and they'd say 'It's nearly right, but not quite the single we're looking for...' so off we'd go again. Over that three years we wrote all the tunes that went on the first album, which is how so many singles came to be on that album."



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At the end of those three years Peter took the tapes to another old friend, John Glover — now their manager. The plan at that stage was to record a single and release it independently on Glover's own label, so they went into Chipping Norton and Air and recorded two new songs — Call Me and We Close Our Eyes. Guitarist Richard Drummie tells what happened next.

"John went off with those and said to us 'I can't go in with another Cox and Drummie tape — they'II just look at it and throw it away because they've heard you over and over again we literally sat there one night, came up with the name Go West, and he went in the next day and people then listened to it.

"How it happened in the end was that Ron Fair from the Chrysalis LA office came over to see Sally Perryman from ATV music. She played him Go West with Close Our Eyes and Call Me and he loved it. He said he must take it away with him and think about it, but then he said 'The other thing I want to ask you about is Cox and Drummie—are they still around?' Sally said 'Well, that is Cox and Drummie' and of course the two things together pushed him over the edge and he got really excited. Within a month he'd signed us."

So it came to be that Go West , became another hopeful band on the Chrysalis label, signed directly to the US office. Obviously Chrysalis had big things in mind Stateside.

"Just before we started the album they flew us over to the States for five days and we took in a lot of American music. We thought our main market was going to be America—we didn't think we'd get anywhere in England—so we thought great, we can use lots of guitar. So we put Al (Murphy, guitar) all over the place, Pete played guitar on the album, Gary as well—guitars everywhere."

Peter: "This was just after Beat It, where every dance record had a big guitar solo on it, so it wasn't really tailoring what we did to suit America, it was kind of putting in what we'd already wanted."

Richard: "Then of course we only had minor success in America and major success over here. I think it's a case of we were sitting around for so long doing the same thing that in the end we sort of came into fashion.

Because when Punk came out we were writing Michael MacDonald stuff. Can you imagine? What could be worse than two white Englishmen doing sort of slightly soul Michael MacDonald-type music when everyone else was listening to the Pistols and The Police?"

When it came to recording the first album they augmented the team they'd already been working with on their three years of demoing for ATV. They already had their producer — Gary Stevenson — and on the first recording done with The Quick they'd used Alan Murphy.

"That's how we met him and we saw obviously that he was the business.

But we couldn't afford him at the time and he was off doing other things, but we got him in later after we got signed. And our keyboard player, Dave West, had previously been playing in Gary's own band. We use a lot of sequencers and stuff on the albums, but the manual stuff Dave's played most of.

"The problem now is that these days we feel the others sometimes get forgotten about."

Peter: "Obviously it's a difficult compromise to make, but we've been marketed in such a way that our boats are on the front of the album cover and we are the public face of Go West — for what that's worth. When we do a video it can be embarrassing the way they favour us two when the whole band is miming to the tune. I feel the representation of the other players is very token sometimes. But really it's out of our hands."

Richard: "Really it's difficult because

should change' and you go 'no, I like the way the verse goes into the chorus, I like the middle eight' and you end up having an argument. You're just saying 'here's a song, it's done'. And that doesn't leave any scope for the other person."

So every aspect of the songwriting is shared — even the lyrics.

"For example, on Goodbye Girl we were doing the demo the day after writing the basic song, and we just went round my flat, locked the door and said 'right, what are the lyrics going to be?' Sometimes you'd write literally half a line each."

Now they've both got Steinberg systems they don't intend to let it totally monopolise their songwriting methods. They'll both still use the basics when it comes to getting a tune out of their heads.

"I write in all sorts of different ways. Sometimes I like to write just singing



A big-ish control room, what?

from a sales point of view you have to present a front and we started it off on our own and it's kind of stuck through. When the album cover was done Alan had played on a few tracks but that was it at that stage. We started selling as a duo and gradually got closer and closer to Al, and now he's co-written three of the songs on this album."

Most of the songs, however, are still written by Drummie and Cox. Demos these days are recorded with the useful assistance of the Steinberg Pro 16.

"We had a lot of gear this time, and Al was with us when we were writing, engineering the demos and playing the guitar. But that was just for the main demoing — for writing I still like to keep things simple and I still did a lot on the portastudio. I've got a 246 and Peter's got a 244, plus I've got a couple of D1500s, an SPX90...not much, someone was just telling me about the new to stuff that's supposed to be the business." (See review this issue.)

Most of the material to date has been written side by side, but more recently they've been getting together with ideas started on their own and finishing them together.

"It might happen that one of us gets a chorus, and that's it. I might work out a way of getting in and out of it just as a suggestion, but I normally leave it. On the times when I've written the whole thing you play it to someone and they go 'yes, but this and this with a bass guitar to start off an idea, and then another day you feel like writing a dance song and you can put the impossible into the machine and do it. At first when you're getting original ideas you don't sit there with the Steinberg, you play it manually.

"Even when we went away to the Isle of Man to write with Al's Steinberg we didn't start from scratch on it, one of us would start with an idea first. Like I've got a portable Yamaha I like to write on, and we got a song out of that. It was just using their chord and bass thing using just one chord with your thumb as the bass note and just playing round. Of course it doesn't sound anything like it now, but it was convenient because neither of us are virtuoso keyboard players."

Virtuosi or not, with the technology currently available to them at home and in the studio, there's not a lot of need for a great deal of manual dexterity. The new album features an awful lot of Fairlight III, which has been responsible for nearly all the drums. Except on *The King Is Dead*, a slower Jazzy-type of number, where Richard's legs played an even more important part.

"We wanted some brushes and I was just messing around trying to get brush noises on my legs. They put me in a broom cupboard, played the track and I just scraped my legs for the whole song. It stayed on right through to the

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end, though at the very end I think it became a sample and was sequenced...I'm really not sure".

Peter: "We got Graham (Broad, drummer) over to play brushes on it but he couldn't get happy with the brushes so we stuck with Rick's leas,"

Drums have played an important part in the Go West sound and the first album was practically all drum machine, with a few tom overdubs, courtesy of Graham Broad and hi hat by Peter Cox himself. The use of samples opened up ultimate flexibility for them, plus they throw in a fair share of 'gadget sounds' just for the hell of it. Like those very metallic sounding rolls in We Close Our Eyes.

Richard: "It was an old Oberheim drum machine put through an old Master Room reverb and really distorted.

Peter: "Gary had actually recorded that sound at his mum's flat onto 1/4" inch, and we ran it into the track in the studio. It's funny, because We Close Our Eyes and Call Me were recorded before we actually had loads of gear, yet everyone keeps asking us about the sounds on those two."

Richard: "People at the time were asking us how we were getting the bass sounds, and it was only an SH101. Actually we thought it was a bit thin in the end, so I think we ended up using two. Our track sheets used to be all over the place in those days because we'd have loads of sounds all on one track, with different egs flying in and out. Now, of course, Gary just spreads them out more. At one point on this album we were almost on 72-track. This album, called Dancing On The Couch, was recorded in Denmark and features more 'real' playing than the first, though the drums still remain almost totally programmed via the Fairlight. It also features the Stepp guitar synth.

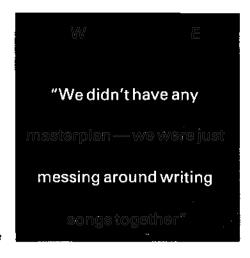
'We knew about the Stepp the whole time we were recording because we'd met Stephen Randell (the designer) in Frankfurt and we were very excited about the whole idea. We kept trying to get one over and eventually one arrived but we were really on the last knockings of the album.

Alan really loves it — the tracking on it is excellent. I couldn't play the Roland because of the delay but the tracking on this is superb... fast runs,

Peter: "Alan's very adaptable, he's not precious — he'll play anything. I must say that as a non-guitarist the Stepp feels kind of weird to me. Don't you?"

Richard: "It does...the main weird thing on the Stepp is the fact that the strings you're plucking aren't the strings you're holding. But I didn't have a big problem with that. I like the Stepp...I had a great time with it while it was there, and it's got its own internal sounds as well. We used it on Let's Build A Boat where it sounds quite like a flute, and it really gives the song its character.

"I think we MIDI'd it up to other



things, but that's not to knock the internal sounds. But when you've got eight synths sitting behind you, you might as well poke it through a few and see what it sounds like.

Spoken like a true gadget freak...which neither of them would deny being for a second.

"You've got to be because we're trying to stay one step ahead of everyone. I've been waiting for the Ensonig ESQ and I can't wait to get my hands on it. I saw the review you did a little while ago and that's what made me want to check it out. I also want to get a Yamaha FB01 — I've been trying to get one of those for the last couple of weeks and I haven't been able to. Peter's just got a Roland IX10P - we both loved the JX8P so the 10 can only be better.

"Hike Roland stuff — I just find it easier to get on with. I find some other synths just a little bit awkward."

But that's not to say he doesn't also use Yamaha's FM sounds too,

"I think they're two different things and that you should use both. If you use all FM technology then you get a certain sound that has a transparency to it. I think you need analogue sounds in there with it to fill it out. There's just something about a whole record done on DX7 that's not quite right."

Of course when you've also got access to a Wave, the DX7 will begin to sound pretty ordinary...

'The Wave's pretty underrated, I think, I don't know how many people use them, but I haven't seen them around much."

Peter: "We use them a lot and we seldom use anything but the pre-sets. That's simply because we haven't got the time to organise finding out how it works '

Richard: "There's been so much to take in over the last couple of years that Thaven't even discovered the DX7 properly yet — I still use the pre-sets. I can alter some of the parameters but I certainly wouldn't be able to go into one where all the memories have been erased. I wouldn't know where to start to get a brass sound up. I spoke to Bob Carter, the producer, a couple of years ago and he said he spent six months getting to know the DX7, and he's got a degree in physics! That day was the day I decided I wasn't really going to bother to explore it too deeply.

One instrument you don't even get a manual for is, of course, the voicebut Peter Cox hasn't done too badly learning the most about his. And he didn't even join the users club...

Т

'I didn't have any training, but I went to a school that had a connection with a church and I was in the church choir. Mind you, I did have four lessons with Helena Chanel — apparently she coaches Paul Young amongst others. I literally just didn't have time to keep on going, but I'd have loved to.

I was just talking recently to Tony Hadley from Spandau Ballet, and he told me he can do six consecutive nights—there's no way I could do that. On the last tour we did three consecutive nights and the last tune in the show was We Close Our Eyes and it gets to the last chorus where there's a little yodel thing and my voice completely went. So now we do just two nights with one night off, which unfortunately makes it very expensive for us.

Not that the tuition would have made that much difference.

"The first thing Helena teaches you is that you have to stand a certain way, and of course if you're running up and down the stage giving it all that, there's no way that whole concept is going to happen. So I must say that I don't really think that much about technique — it's all shouting really.

On the other hand, he's got his own technique together when recording.

'l like it with the lights down, and the less reverbilean have and that I can stand and still keep the vibe, the more in tune I sing. A long reverb that makes you sound wonderful makes me sing about three tones flat. I also remember reading an article in your magazine — I think it was Marc Almond's producer talkina saying that if you have your voice louder in your cans then you sing flatter, and the quieter you have it the more nervous you get cos you can't hear what you're doing, so you try harder and sing sharper."

The songs are written, the musicians chosen and the recording completed. Next comes the tour, taking in all the European countries you'd expect, plus another big go at the US.

Richard: "Apart from the financial rewards of America I find it's much less fickle. England is so fickle that you can't guarantee you're going to be around for any length of time. There's so much weird stuff flying in and out of the charts, like soap opera stars making records...I was talking to an American a couple of days ago about this, and I asked what would happen if Johnny Carson made a record in America. She said they'd just piss themselves they'd think it was a joke.

Every time I see a Wicksey or whatever in the charts, it makes me think there's someone out there that's been struggling as a musician for 10 years who's being pushed back one step because of them. Maybe that's sour grapes but surely the music charts should be full of musicians."

And in particular, Cox and Drummie...

Tony Horkins

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play complicated songs.

You may have seen Stump a few months ago when The Tube videoed them performing their song Buffalo. You'll probably remember it for the line 'How much is the fish?!?!', yelped repeatedly by wild-eyed frontman Mike Lynch from beneath his skeletal Psychobilly quiff while the rest of the band constructed, or more accurately destructed, a sort of seasick Captain Beefheart arrangement in several time signatures at once.

Some idea of the overall effect can be gauged from Editor Horkins' reaction to the idea of a Stump interview. "Stump?" he mused. "Stump..? Oh yes, them. They're

bonkers, aren't they?"

Possibly. However, loopy or not, the 4-piece are attracting a lot of interest. Their first EP, Mud On A Colon, and a slot on the C86 tape and LP announced them, but the Tube appearance, aided by almost constant gigging, has pushed their present 6-track minialbum Quirk Out on to the top of the independent charts.

Their sound is rooted, says bassist and unofficial band muso Key Hopper, in not allowing themselves to get lazy. "When we're writing songs we stretch ourselves to the limits of what we can play. It's boring otherwise, isn't it?"

"Absolutely anyone can play formula Pop," breaks in drummer and chief motormouth Rob McKahey, "For a drummer to sit there going boomcrack, boom-crack all night is bloody murder. It's worse than digging ditches. Stump music sounds like it does because we all think carefully about what we're doing and try to make it original and interesting to play.

"I mean, we're not geniuses. Kev's probably the best musician, but none of us could play Jazz, for instance, brilliantly. When we write a song we write patterns or riffs that are at the very limit of what we can do, stuff we probably shouldn't even attempt because we're not technically good enough."

Equipment-wise they are basic to the point of minimalism. Rob plays a standard Sonor 5-drum kit ("I'm interested in finding out what can be done on a normal kit. I want to avoid that 'oh, I've run out of ideas, I'll get another bit of percussion' syndrome"). Key plays a fretless Wal through an HH Bass Baby ("the compressor makes a

hell of a noise but I like it on full all the time") and guitarist Chris Salmon plays his offbeat, wobbly lines on a standard Strat ("the tremolo is costing me a fortune — I get through a set of strings every gig. I know they'll go the next night if I don't replace them") through an old Selmer Treble 'n' Bass amp and a Marshall cab, with no effects.

And Mike Lynch writes the bizarrely witty words. In case you were wondering, Buffalo does make sense. Sort of, It's mostly made up of snippets of conversation overheard from

American tourists, hence lines like 'How much is the fish? Does the fish have chips?' and 'The weather is perfect except for the rain'. Other songs deal with anatomy, the plight of the bit part actor, and male strippers at Tupperware parties. Needless to say, the word 'Baby' doesn't crop up all that

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introduced in 1970, although the sound wasn't really improved by this move, as the classic Fender sound didn't really use pre amp overdrive. Much later versions of the Twin, redesigned by Paul Riviera and featuring channel switching, are excellent, however. The revered Mesa Boogie can be seen as a

descendant of this line, as well.

Over in England, Tom Jennings was a pioneer in terms of guitar amplification. He started out producing organs, notably the notorious Vox Continental, as heard on House Of The Rising Sun and many DX7 presets, but the company's first model of amplifier, the AC-15, was immediately popular upon its introduction in the late 50s. The AC30, like its predecessor designed by Dick Denny - Vox's chief designer - was introduced a couple of years later. Its introduction coincided with the formation of a lot of British bands influenced by American R&B, and the reputation and sales of Vox similarly followed in the wake of their allconquering success. Every major British band-the Beatles, Stones, Animals – was seen with a highly visible Vox backline, and this enabled Jennings Musical Industries to find a lucrative export market in the States.

Early Voxes had a beige finish, then in around 1962 the covering changed to black leathercloth, but retaining the brown speaker grille with the distinctive diamond decoration. Up to 1966 Vox used Celestion G12 speakers with blue chassis, post '66 models have the silver chassis, and the speakercloth changed to the presentday black finish around 1968. Around this time Vox were diversifying into many markets with a huge range of guitars and amps, and they suffered accordingly. However, Rose-Morris acquired the line in the late 70s and the faithful AC30 is still available, although quite pricey for a 30W amplifier due to its traditional construction. AC30s are always good value second-hand, at around £150 although prices are rising steadily and a lot of old models are being exported to the States. Look for a top-boost model when buying as these have more treble response.

The American Ampeg company are probably best-known for their heavyweight bass amps like the SVT. They were one of the first companies to introduce amplification specifically for bass guitars, and one example of this is the charming Portaflex series, introduced in the mid '50s. They utilised a ported cabinet, which was fairly unusual at the time, and the amplifier was attached to the top of the cabinet; it's folded inside for transportation, and is flipped over and latched on top of the cab for playing, to enable more ventilation, and less susceptibility to speaker vibrations. There were two models, the 30W B15, and the 60W B15S. These both utilised the same speaker, which consequently had a tendency to blow quite frequently in the 60W model. It's only in the past 10 years or so that speaker

technology has been capable of producing affordable speakers that can take more than 50W each — but then much of that characteristic sound is produced by speaker overload, as in the case of Vox models, and our next classic, the Marshall 50W stack.

Marshall amplifiers are usually associated with EL34 output valves, although the very first model of JTM45, designed by Ken Bran in 1962, used two American 5880s. Very early models were quite reminiscent of the Fender Bassman amp, although the design stabilised to the one we all know and love fairly soon. In 1964 the control panel was the familiar gold, but with silver control knobs, and output valves were KT66s, a close relative of the EL34. By 1966 the GZ34 valve rectifier was replaced by a solid state version, output valves were EL34s, and the characteristic Marshall sound was well established. The matching 4×12 cabinets used Celestion G12/15 speakers, the same as those fitted to the AC30, but with a silver chassis. Being British made, Marshall amps were never overpriced, and old 50W heads fetch around £70-150. Americans would gladly pay several times that price. Also look out for Park versions, which were actually made by Marshall.

Lastly in this paean to the valve we have, horror of horrors, a transistor amplifier. In justification, there's nothing wrong with a transistor amplifier as long as it's not trying to pretend that there's valves inside it, and the HHIC100 Combo was certainly proud of its totally transistor circuitry, an unashamed tranny amp.

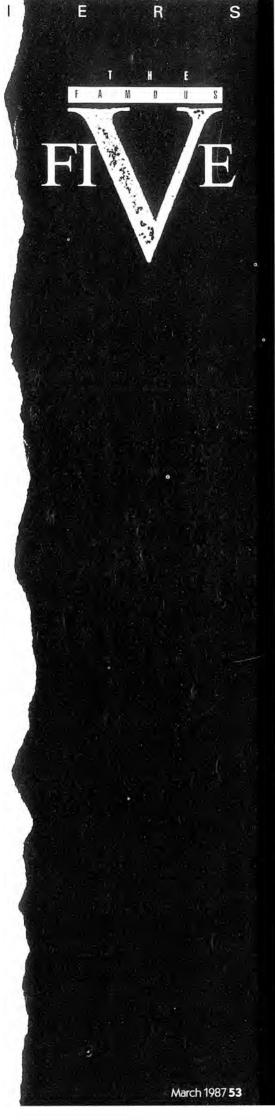
Not without due cause too, because it was light and powerful for its size, and gave a good noise-free performance, largely a legacy of HH's experience in producing studio power amps under the SPA name. It featured a studio switch, an unsophisticated footswitchable fuzz, and a clean reverb. And a unique cutting sound, exploited most noticeably by Wilko Johnson, and thousands of chainsaw-soundalike Punk guitarists. And if it fell down a flight of stairs, like Stuart Adamson's in his Skids days, it just ended up sounding better.

Unfortunately subsequent HH designs started to have more pretensions to being valve like. Lot's face it, that's something of a diversion, because no tranny amp could possibly be more valve-like than a valve amp. Remember the Redmere Soloist? No? Exactly. Meanwhile those loveable toobs continue warming-up rehearsal rooms the world over.

Finally, a more profound advantage. Well, do you know why the Russians use valves in their Mig 23 interceptor? Because they're resistant to the electromagnetic pulse produced by nuclear explosions, which will fry all transistor circuitry.

So it's only musicians with valve amps who will still be playing, post-holocaust...

Paul Trynka



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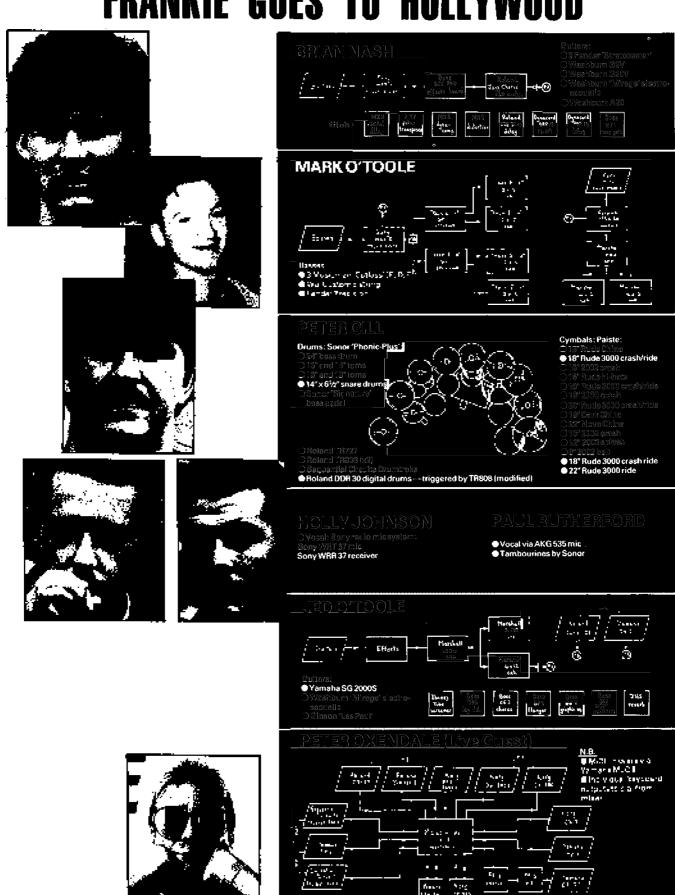
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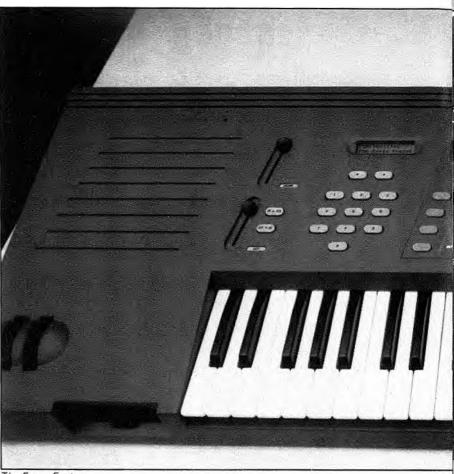
It's becoming harder and harder to find headings for these hightech reviews. The Emax could have gone under Synthcheck, Samplercheck or even Integratedminiaturerecordingstudiocheck (which probably wouldn't fit across the top of the page). But as it is, let's just keep in mind that the Emax is a sampler with an upsettingly large number of synthesizer and sequencer options.

So where does it fit in the current highly active keyboard market? Well, at £2,595 it's a little more expensive than the Prophet 2000, around £1,000 more than the keyboardless Akai \$900, and about twice the price of the Korg DSS-1, which is the only one of the trio to offer anything like the synthesizer facilities available to the Emax user. None of the above has an onboard sequencer, although the Ensoniq Mirage Mk II (still happily holding its own in the £1,300 price range) does have a real-time recorder expandable to 1,333 notes.

Some basic specification on the Emax. The machine has a 5octave velocity and pressure sensitive keyboard, sample times up to 52 seconds at low bandwidth, and comes with 10 sample disks with around 15 samples per disk. These are standard 3.5" disks as used by the S900, Prophet 2000 and so on, and the Emax 'formats' them for its own use quite rapidly. Loading a disk takes 35 seconds if it's full (less if it's not), which although it can be a long time on stage is good compared to the direct opposition.

The Emax sound library is similar to that available on the Emulator II (potentially huge). The two machines aren't actually inter-compatible, and the Emulator II retains a few advantages - a Hard Disk option, expandable memory, much more powerful sequencer and SMPTE timecode reading being the obvious ones. But some Emulator II sounds, such as the much-copied Arco strings, are available for the Emax, and each disk stores a sequence and various keyboard setups as well as sounds

Some of the demo sequences are very impressive, particularly the Rock band on the Rock Kit disk, and the other disks included are Big Brass/Cymbal Crash, Mixed Chorus/Synth String, French Horn, Grand Piano,



The Emax Factor

Saxophones, Synth Collage, Lead and Rhythm Guitars and Rock Organ.

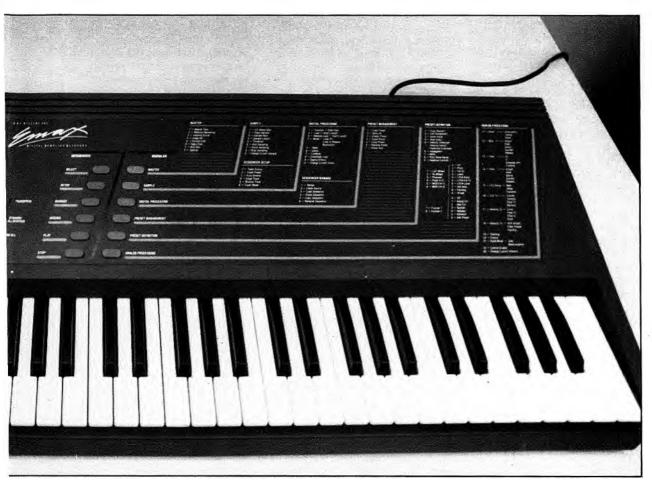
Emax has a 5-octave plastic keyboard which isn't weighted but which is both velocity and pressure sensitive. Parameters which can be controlled by the keyboard sensitivity include volume, filter opening, attack and so on—all of which make Emax sound a bit like a conventional synth. In many ways it can be, since it has analogue filters and amplifiers which allow you to apply all the classic synth swooshes and twangs to the original samples.

Emax is 8-voice polyphonic, but you can play in various Dual Modes (split or layered) without halving this figure. The sequencer is capable of recording polyphonic information on all 16 channels, which as we'll see can be used to exceed Emax's on-board capability, and can be locked from an external MIDI source or from a 24, 48 or 96 pulse per quarter note drum machine click.

One other great advantage of Emax is that like the Emulator II (and the much cheaper Akai S900) it has eight individual audio outputs, which aren't vital for day-to-day use but which are invaluable if you're using Emax to replace the voices of a drum machine. In addition there are a pair of stereo outputs and each voice has programmable panning between these; one output doubles as a stereo headphone jack (a bit cheapskate, but economies have to be made somewhere).

Emax thrives on 12-bit samples, as does the Akai S900, and a full bandwidth sample can be up to 12 seconds long. If you're prepared to go down to 10kHz response (OK for some drums and pad sounds) you've got up to 52 seconds to play with, which of course can be divided between many shorter samples.

The first aspect of the Emax which you'll need to come to terms with is the styling. This is probably the oddest-looking synth ever built, more like a sports car with a rakish diagonal angle imposed on all the controls and panel markings. Whether this is done for ergonomic reasons is unclear, but it certainly doesn't make the synth difficult to use. The main complaint lies with the distance of the stylishly



recessed pitch bend and modulation wheels from the keyboard itself — as on the Prophet 2000 they're located on the far side of the disk drive. But overall, the crazy grey/blue/purple/green/pink colour scheme is quite eye-catching — the only thing it hasn't got is a racing stripe.

Diagonal lines separate Emax's front panel into eight main modules; Master, Sample, Preset Management and Definition, Sequencer Management and Setup, Analogue and Digital Processing. The Modules are accessed from rubbery blue buttons with associated LEDs, while the Sequencer functions are accessed from a parallel set of geen buttons. Apart from these controls there are just the blue Transpose/Dynamic Allocation/ Load All/Enter buttons, a 10-key pad in blue with pink left/right cursors, a Volume slider and Data Entry slider which look like Liquorice Allsorts on sticks, and a pair of pink + Yes/- No buttons to consider.

The 32-character LCD display is backlit but not terribly easy to read from all angles; the top line

usually shows the current function and the bottom line the options with advice on how to select them (for example, 'Use Cursor Keys'). In some cases you can use either the Cursor keys, or the Data Entry Slider, or the Keypad, depending on how quickly and accurately you need to set the parameter in question.

Is the LCD display helpful?
Well, not as much as that on the Akai S900, which even has a resume of the operating handbook available, but there are a lot of warning signs when you're about to permanently change important data, and in any case you have to press Enter before carrying out any function, which is a slower but safer way of going about things.

In Use

Let's start from the beginning. In the Master Module you'll find Format Disk options for setting up a blank disk, and as the Emax operating system also goes onto the disk it's easy to implement a software update. There's even a Copy Software function so you can copy the latest software revision onto all your disks.

When you've loaded a disk you'll find the first preset name and number shown in the LCD display. A preset is a group of voices with one or two sounds per key and you can store 100 presets in the (memory) Bank. So a 2-digit number serves to identify each sound, and you're also shown the note at which it was originally sampled. Play up the keyboard and the displays change, so it's very easy to locate the position of split points in complex samples such as the grand piano; however, if you're going on to edit some of these sounds, remember that they're also capable of overlapping, so you have to be careful not to make undesired changes.

Editing can be as easy or as difficult as you like, since there are two main processing sections — Analogue and Digital — each with many facilities.

Analogue processing includes an 'Attenuation' function which allows you to balance relative volumes of multisplit samples, plus Fine Tune, a VCA and VCF with 5-stage envelopes, and an LFO for various modulation effects. The envelope controls aren't the most complex around,

but that fifth parameter — 'Hold' — is useful. Reminiscent of old Korg synths, it maintains the envelope at the Sustain level for a set time even after you release the key.

The Filter is dynamic, like those on the Prophet 2000 and Mirage and unlike the fixed digital filters of the Roland S10 and Akai S900 - twangy synthesizer fans take note. The resonance of the filter is variable as is the amount of keyboard tracking (so that higher sounds are brighter) and the positive and negative envelope modulation. Each voice has an independent VCA and VCF, and the LFOs are similarly independent, so Emax offers true polyphonic modulation for vibrato (on the pitch of the sample waveforms), tremolo (on the VCA), wow (on the filters) and panning (on the stereo outputs), with delayed modulation available and full control over the variation between LFOs for added realism.

Once you've filtered, enveloped and vibratoed a sample you can choose in which mode you want to play it back. For a start you can Chorus a sound - this isn't a hardware chorus as on the Roland Juno synths but simply a fixed detune between samples, which isn't variable and so works better on some effects than on others. It's also possible to set up a split. layer or multisplit in Dual mode, which still allows 8-note polyphonic playing provided you have similar envelope effects in operation on each part of the split. There's a Mono mode which has single trigger operation like the MiniMoog, and a Non Transpose mode which allows several keys to play the same note for drum roll programming and the like. Control Enable can disable the analogue processing functions in any area of the keyboard to make (for example) an upper keyboard solo sound independent of any effects applied to lower keyboard chordal sounds. And, as on most samplers from the Mirage up, you can pair two samples together and select between them by velocity, and on the Emax by pressure, footswitch, modulation wheel or key position as well.

This takes a little explaining. The most obvious example is on something like a pair of bass guitar samples of plucked and snapped sounds -- hit the key gently and you hear one sound, harder and you hear the other. But an alternative is to program a string sound for gentle playing and a brass sound for sharp stabs, or two string sounds which blend from one to the other as you change the keyboard pressure, or two completely different sounds which can be mixed together with the modulation wheel or swapped with a press on a footswitch. In other words, Emax offers both Crossfade (gradual swapping) and Cross Switch (instant changeover) with several possible methods of control. As previously mentioned, the most useful application of Keyboard Crossfade is to gradually merge multisplit sounds from one to the next along the keyboard so that the joins are inaudible.

All these options can be stored to disk as part of a programme, as can the pan positions of each voice and even the MIDI channels to which they respond. This means that Emax can come out of Load mode ready with some amazing effects—eight different sounds, controlled from the keyboard or different external MIDI channels, with different stereo positions and degrees of

samples? Well, it's not difficult; the system is similar to that on the Emulator II, but it's now possible to choose the sampling rate, although not to hear the sound going in without some kind of external monitoring system. The LCD display acts as a bargraph VU meter and manual or threshold sampling start is available; the first sample is automatically assigned to the bottom octave, subsequent ones to the other four octaves. In fact it's possible to take a different sample for every key, but if you need real fidelity (say for piano sounds) it's only really necessary to take ten samples across the whole keyboard, each one doing duty for half an octave.

The digital processing module is used to change the sample length. Enter the voice name (being very careful not to damage different presets based on the same basic sample) and use Truncate to specify new start and end points, and Taper to give fade ins and long fade outs. The data slider is used to move through long sections of the sample and the Yes/No buttons for the fine work, and of course if you cut a section off a sample you'll save that much memory, in the normal way you can copy, rename and erase presets.



Buck Rogers Control Panel auto pan controlled from the LFO or keyboard velocity. Stunning.

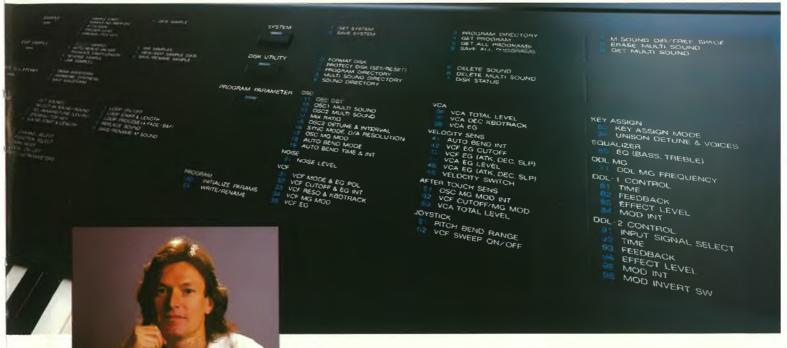
The keyboard velocity control in fact has 14 alternative response curves (as if to make up for the lack of a weighted keyboard) and velocity can also control filter and VCA attack time. In addition there are two footswitch inputs and two footpedal inputs with programmable functions, and the assignment of the pitch bend and modulation wheels is programmable.

How to make your own

As on the Prophet 2000 you can program two different loops, a Sustain loop and a Release loop, and then program a fade over the release loop. Loops are defined in relation to their distance from the start point in seconds, so you don't have to count in hexadecimal (as on the Mirage) or in individual samples (as on the Akai X7000).

The Emax autolooping function is similar to that on the Emulator II, and will find a glitch-free loop point even under difficult circumstances. But for

Why combine a sampler and a synthesiser?



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ing — let you control the oscillators directly. Use each technique independently, or combine them in richly textured multisamples and wavetables. You edit samples and waveforms with powerful functions like Truncate, Mix, Link and Reverse, plus auto, back and forth or crossfade looping modes. Then apply a full set of synthesis parameters, including two-pole or fourpole filters and Korg's six-stage envelopes.

Exact Control Choose from four sampling rates between 16 and 48 KHz, with up to 16 seconds of sampling time. Configure the keyboard with 16 splits assignable over the full 127 note MIDI range. Layer or detune the two oscillators on each of eight voices. Then process your sounds with a complete synthesizer architecture and two programmable DDLs.

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Expression The DSS-I's five octave keyboard is velocity- and pressure-sensitive,

for precise touch control of Autobend, VCF, VCA, envelope rates and other parameters. Velocity Switch lets you play completely different sounds as you change your attack.

Unlike other samplers, the DSS-1 lets you access 128 sounds without changing a disk. Each disk stores four Systems of 32 sounds. Within each System, your programs combine up to 16 sample groups and/or waveforms with complete sets of synthesis parameters and keyboard setups. In effect, the DSS-1 becomes a new instrument every time you call up a System. The library of easily available 3½" disks is already substantial and growing fast. Four disks — each with 128 sounds — are supplied with the DSS-1 to start your comprehensive Korg sampling library. By combining the best of digital sam-

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the most difficult material -such as two completely unrelated sounds --- you can use Crossfade Looping which actually alters the data comprising each sound to make it more compatible, provided that you carefully save the originals in case of problems. We didn't go into this technique in detail but it sounds formidable. The Splice function can join two sounds together and put a tiny fade-in/fade-out between them to avoid glitches, and you can also combine sounds permanently.

On to the Emax sequencer, which records in real time and has no significant editing features. If you make a mistake you have to play the track again,

sequencer, save it to disk, and replay it in every detail, live or in the studio, without the original sequencer even being present.

Combined with the fact that the on-board Emax sounds can respond to any MIDI channel, the potential of the sequencer for controlling internal and external sounds can be enormous, and it's always possible that its capabilities will be extended with a software update. If you want additional voices, Emax has MIDI Overflow Mode which means that keyboard notes which can't be handled by the eight onboard voices can be passed to MIDI Out to play another Emax or any suitable MIDI keyboard. The ideal candidate here (as far as E-Mu are concerned) would be the

(not available at the time of writing, but the Emulator II version is already popular so it shouldn't be long).

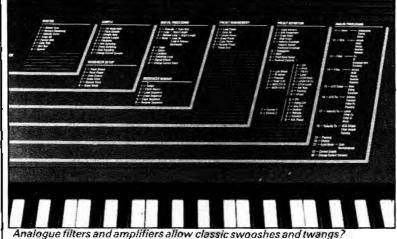
You'll guess from this comprehensive approach that the Emax is very much a professional's instrument, and with the Emulator II and SP-12 Sampling Percussion joining it in the current E-Mu catalogue, you'd be right. But thanks to the latest technology, Emax is affordable, if only because anyone who can get a loan big enough for a Prophet 2000 should be able to get a loan big enough for an Emax. So does Emax come out on top?

The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. The sound quality of the Emax is very impressive, and its ease of use and interfacing capabilities are excellent. The fact that its software is easily updateable is handy—I'll look forward to seeing what the first update can add—and the construction and styling are practical as well as fun.

But we are talking about a lot of money and a lot of facilities that many people won't want to use. Perhaps that's because of a lack of imagination on the part of some keyboardists, but in my experience the search for the ultimate bass guitar sample or choir sound is seen as being more important than the possibilities offered by the synthesizer sections of a sampler. Not many people take advantage of the synth facilities of a Mirage or Prophet 2000, let alone all the goodies available on an Emax, so is there any point in marketing such a keyboard to this section of the market?

Let's hope the answer is 'yes'. because as samplers become increasingly inter-compatible. with file copying programs making the same 'Arco Strings' available on the Emax, Emulator II, Mirage, Prophet 2000, Akai, Roland S50 and Korg DSS-1, we're going to get heartily sick of factory standard, unprocessed, beginner's sampled noises. That's where the Emax will score beyond the basic sampling facilities, it'll offer you a world of processing, editing and sequencing facilities, all presented with an unfailingly professional approach.

Tony Mills More information; E-Mu, PO Box 1, Prestonpans, East Lothian, EH32 0TT. Tel: (0875) 813330.



and there isn't even a metronome to help, although E-Mu do intend to put a metronome click on one of the packaged disks.

The Sequencer controls -Select, Setup, Manage, Record, Play, Stop -- allow you to overdub on different MIDI channels, bounce tracks together (although this wipes the source track), and recognise external clocks, MIDI clocks and MIDI Song Pointers. But wait a sec surely you don't need to recognise Song Pointers when you have such limited recording capacity? The answer to this one lies in the Emax sequencer's Super Mode, which allows you to dump all kinds of MIDI data on all 16 MIDI channels simultaneously to like-numbered tracks. This means that you can prepare a very complex multitrack sequence on an MSQ-700, Korg SQD-1, MC-500 or similar sequencer, or a micro package such as Steinberg's Pro-24, and then dump it to the Emax

rack-mounting Emax Expander which will be available shortly.

If you're not into sequencing, there's a very powerful arpeggiator which has unusual functions such as playing as many notes as you hold down within a given note value, or adding a selectable interval between each note. You can select Local Control Off to use the Emax keyboard as a Mother keyboard while its internal voices remain available to be played from external synths or sequencers, and switch on and off the MIDI velocity, program change, pitch bender, song pointer and aftertouch assignments.

The Emax's interfaces to the outside world are many and varied. Apart from the separate audio outputs and stereo outputs there's a MIDI In, MIDI Out/Thru selectable in software (another budgetary measure), and an RS422 computer interface to use editing packages such as Sound Designer on the Apple MacIntosh

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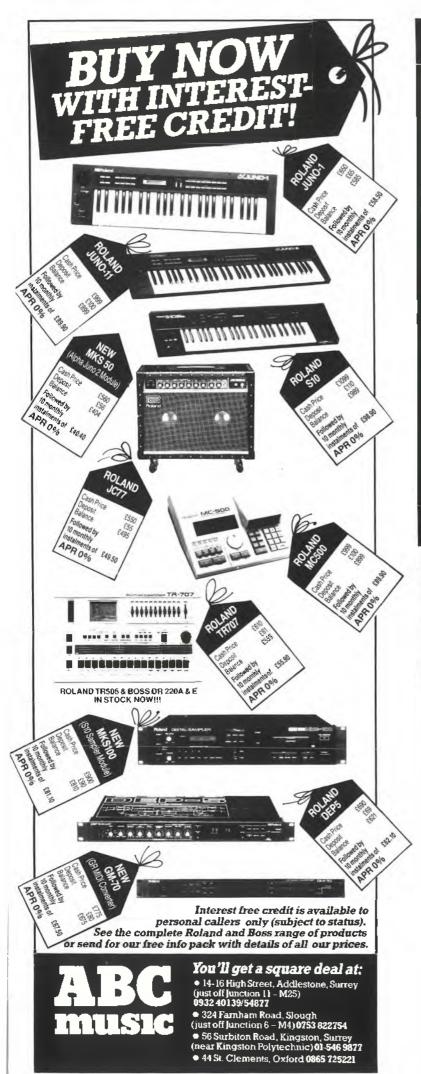
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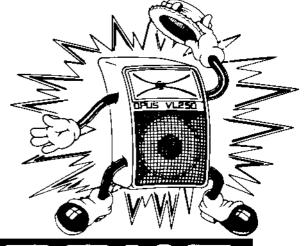


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DRUMCHECK

At a time when the majority of American drum manufacturers are having it hard, the newest of them is in ascendancy. Of course the Remo company is not exactly new to the drum world. They've only been making actual drums for two or three years, but at the NAMM trade show of Summer '86 Remo came up with a complete set of new and highly professional ancillaries to support their revolutionary cardboard shells. It took a while for the new stuff to get here, but arrive it did, just before Christmas. The shells, called Acousticon SE and built in America, are made from a laminated wood fibre about 1/4" thick which is impregnated with a resin. This process, of course, hardens the material and gives it resonance.

Encore sets are fitted with hinged nut-boxes called PowerSnaps which are articulated to allow the head to be changed without having to remove the tension screws, and are fitted with a simple but effective locking system.

The set I saw comprised five drums with all the necessary stands, but of course a complete range of sizes are available.

The Bass drum: Encore is power set, so has an extra-deep bass drum measuring $22'' \times 16''$. It has a total of 16 PowerSnap nutboxes. T-handled tensioners and pressed steel claws. Like all of Remo's bass drums it has pressed metal hoops which are inlaid with plastic. Both the tom holder receiver block and the spurs are brand new and set well forward. The holder block is large, cast, and designed to spread the weight load over a large area. It has a boss which is a couple of inches high to locate the down tube. A cast hinged jaw clamps around it and locks by way of a large Yamaha-looking screw and a memory clamp. (The base of the holder is unique in that it has a hole bored into it to safely store your drum key.)

The spurs are a great improvement on the originals. They consist of a block which is bolted securely to the shell itself and which is specially shaped to allow the spur to swivel and screw-lock in just two positions: the working mode and in line with the side of the shell for packing away. These spurs are telescopic with optional rubber or spiked ends. No felt strip damper was fitted to the bass



drum, simply one of Remo's own 'Muffls', which work really well.

Tom Toms: The company supply two mounted and one floor standing tom with this set. The two smaller ones have 12" and 13" diameters and are powerised which makes their shells respectively 11" and 12" deep while the large tom measures the usual $16'' \times 16''$. Both rack toms have six hinged nutboxes per head while the floor tom has 16. Remo fit their toms with the near-industry standard square-headed tension screws and pressed steel triple flange hoops.

The floor tom legs are the usual double-bent rod variety which fit into brand new (to Remo) cast blocks which have an eye-bolt inside to locate and lock them tightly (identical to Pearl's). The holder block for the mounted tom is also new—cast with a support for the holder's hexagonal L-shaped arm even after it leaves the main body of the block. A deceptively simple sprung jaw mechanism inside works via a single 'T' bolt fitted outside the block.

Snare Drum: The snare drum too is extra deep. The usual 14" in diameter, its shell measures 8" from head to head. The Acousticon shell sports 16 of the hinged nut-boxes and triple flange hoops. Like the bass drum and the toms, no internal dampers are fitted but you could invest in a set of Muffls.

All drums have air-holes positioned low down, favouring the sympathetic heads to allow the air to escape at the last possible moment. Remo fit a 20 strand metal snare which sits in a snare bed to allow even its centre to touch. The cast snare mechanism is reminiscent of Gretsch's, Pearl's or, Noble & Cooley's, It's articulated and releases the wires by moving away from the shell. It has a large on/off lever and fine adjustment of the snare tension is available by way of a large thumb-screw. The other end of the plastic strip attached to the snares locates into an adjustable jaw attachment.

Accessories: Two different versions of stand are available from Remo these days. The slightly more expensive ones, which used to be called Dynasty, are now designated 500 and have a Quick Release lever mechanism. The others, once called Dynamax but now known as 310, use a standard normal clamping method, resulting in a saving of 15%. (A five piece set of Dynasty/500 will cost you £230.) Both options have double braced tripod leg bases and wide bored

DRUMCHECK

tubes.

Tube heights on the dearer stands are adjustable via the 'QR' system, equivalent to the apparatus they use on a racing bike to adjust and lock saddle positions. Dynamax/310 has Tscrew or drumkey-adjustable nylon-sheathed jaw clamps. This particular set comes with two cymbal stands, one straight and one boom. Both stands have massive bases with the usual three stages for the regular stand and two verticals with a counterweighted arm for the boom. Both have sprung ratchet tilters, extra long support rod and the usual collection of felt and metal washers. The boom has the above features as well as a ratchet holding and locking system for its counter-weighted

The 500 snare drum stand itself is a hybrid boasting features from several others. It has a large tripod-base but uses a 'ball and socket' mechanism to hold the playing angle solid. A basket holder protrudes from the ball to grip the snare drum itself via large rubber sheathed rightangled arms. The stand is capable of going very low which is a necessity if you're to be mounting an eight inch deep drum like Encore's on it. I must say that this is a really sturdy, reasonably priced piece of equipment. The 310 snare drum stand also has an adjustable basket but it's nowhere near as substantial and uses a ratchet locking system for its playing angle adjustment.

The best hi hat stand has a footplate which matches the bass drum pedal's with a toe stop and a bike-type chain to link it to the centre-pull mechanism. It also has a tripod base, its legs are double braced, and the bottom framework has a couple of spurs tapped into it to stop the unit 'creeping'. The mechanism has two expansion springs fitted to the outside of the down-tube and adjustable in the normal way. Another Quick Release lever adjusts and locks the cymbal's playing height and there's a very Oriental looking top cymbal clutch and a serviceable bottom cymbal cup. The cheaper hi hat also boasts a centre-pull with a chain and small sharp spurs, but its action is not adjustable.

The dearer bass drum pedal has a single adjustable post with a cast 2-piece footplate, a toe stop and a bike-chain 'strap' which fits around a toothed cog attached to the beater axle. The pedal has a cam action which serves to 'throw' the beater at the bass drum head and this is adjustable to allow you to move the beater closer to the head should that be your desire. There's also the usual the expansion spring adjuster and the actual post of the pedal may be lifted to enable the beater to find the 'sweet spot' on any bass drum without changing the length of the beater and thus the 'feel' of the pedal. A single camlever locks the pedal's jaws to the bass drum hoop with a drum key operated screw to take care of fine adjustment when you fit it to the hoop for the first time.

The Dynamax bass pedal has twin posts, an expansion spring, a chain link without a cog, and a 2-piece sand-blasted footplate. It has a single adjustable expansion spring and jaws to attach it to the bass drum hoop. Both the 500 hi hat and bass drum pedals work very smoothly and for the price would make good replacements to be used on any set.

The obvious change since my last review of Encore is in the double formholder, it's now a massive unit and seems to have taken the concept of the double tom holder just about as far as it can go. In essence it consists of a 'T' bar set at the top of a substantial support tube, but this 'T' section is in two pieces and consequently adjustable. Should you wish to, you may actually move the arms of the 'T' closer together or further apart. At each end of the 'T' are substantial, hinged open-jawed clamps which locate the actual angle adjustment arms. These are, in a way, hybrids of almost every tom holder known to reasonably civilised man. They work on a ball and cage system, where a cast cage fitted with tiny claws smothers a synthetic ball which has an 'L-shaped' arm made from substantial hexagonal steel protruding from it; this ultimately locates into the aforementioned holder block affixed to the tom shell.

Having examined it at length, I can't imagine there's any angle you could possibly want for your tom which could not be quickly accommodated by it and then remembered by its memory clamps.

Even though this brand new holder has a plate behind it I

would still recommend that you did not remove the front head of the bass drum entirely to get a more controllable sound. It would be better and safer to cut a hole in the sympathetic head to still give the necessary support to the shell. This advice goes for any non-wooden shell since these are invariably thin and prone to flexing and there have been cases of them eventually collapsing when unsupported.

A by-product of the PowerSnap nut-boxes is that the player can very easily, if he so desires, remove one of the heads if he wants to nest some of the drums inside one another to transport them. (The 'Power' sizes of this five drum set would confuse the issue a little since you can't put both mounted toms inside the floor tom nor even the snare and the smallest).

The set I saw was a demonstration set, set up to grab maximum attention. It was finished in chrome and fitted almost entirely with chrome effect 'Starfire' heads—PinStripes for the batters and Ambassadors underneath. I must say that it both looked and sounded great with these heads.

Remo claim that it's impossible to crease their scratch-resistant Quadura plastic covering. Several different solid colours are available including black and white or you could invest in a customising kit which will allow you to self-fit contrasting stripes to your drums. (You can also buy these kits direct from the factory—they're called Designer Series.)

I have to say that the Remo drums are getting better and better. Their sounds are strong and thick with lots of balls and an equal amount of penetration and crispness, Remo's endorser roster is getting longer and people like Terry Bozzio and Louie Bellson do not tend to endorse things which aren't totally deserving of their attention. These drums are great value for money too; ideal to my mind for the electronic player who originally part-exchanged his acoustic drums to buy a synthesised set but who now realises he really needs both kinds of equipment.

The Remo company is beginning to get into its stride with these latest sets. They're reasonably priced and deliver the goods.

Bob Henrit

BASSCHECK

Nearly three years ago I reviewed one of the early Status basses when the manufacturer - GMT consisted of just one man. Since those early days as designer, maker and bottle washer Rob Green's company has not only grown in reputation but also in size and stature. GMT is now housed in Chelmsford. Essex and with a staff of five produces between five and six instruments a week. In that early review only 40 or so instruments had been produced - now the figure has reached nearly 500 including the all moulded 2000

The model on review here differs little from the '84 version but it is the minor improvements, and what is obviously a lot of experience, that makes the '87 version a far better bass. While many companies during expansion suffer from a loss of quality and attention to detail the opposite can be said of GMT.

The larger staff has two main advantages. Firstly it allows the waiting time for an instrument to be reduced to around six to eight weeks and secondly it allows Rob Green to devote more time to development. This should see a new bolt-on graphite necked bass available for Frankfurt '87 as new circuitry developments for the 2000 and new 'economy' models appear.

Construction

Immediately you pick up this bass you can't fail to be impressed by the faultless construction. The now famous pairing of carbon graphite and exotic timbers still, for my money, makes the Status the most attractive hi-tech bass available anywhere. Of course the furore over the headless design has been and gone but while many imitators have chosen to replace the headstock Rob Green has stuck to his guns and continued, unworried by current trends, to produce this headless instrument.

All the original problems with the complicated carbon graphite weave and moulding process have long since disappeared and the central spine of this sample seemed perfect in its construction with an immaculately even weave. Bonded to this synthetic spine are the wooden bits. In this case the wings have a front face of delicately flamed Maple while

the majority of the wings is American Black Walnut, although in reality it is a smokey brown colour. Sandwiched between these two timbers is a deep blue coloured Sycamore veneer which adds an unusual visual slant.

The shape of the Status hasn't changed since its original design and that stands as a testament to Mr Green's design capabilities. Not only is the angular off-set shape extremely comfortable, it still looks modern, current and original. In such a fast moving industry as this that is indeed a compliment. To match the design the contouring is angular too, with a small back contour and a larger right arm one on the face. As usual we have the chamfered edge shaping. The instrument is finished in a crystal clear lacquer which is almost too perfect giving the timber a rather unnatural appearance.

Since loriginally reviewed the Series II bass the neck has gone through some minor changes in dimensions. It would seem that the width of the neck has increased by 2mm (measured at the 12th fret) while the depth of the neck at the 12th fret is slightly reduced. It still has that characteristic full section with a flat bottomed curved shape comfortable but fuller than other carbon graphite necks I've tried The neck fills out as it flows into the body section but access to the top of the two octave fingerboard is easy and unhindered.

Black phenolic resin is employed for the board itself which is polished to a fine sheen. Medium gauge wire is used, each fret polished perfectly to a chrome-like finish. Only side markers are used on the Status, in this case they take the form of yellow dots which look as though they're fluorescent, although they're not!

One of the more obvious refinements is the change in design of the string anchor at the top of the neck. The previous design employed a semi-circular 'cap' which fitted over the end of the neck. This design fits on the front face of the neck behind the zero fret. It's still bolted to the neck with three Allen-keyed bolts and features the same anchorage facilities for double or single ball end strings. The latter is achieved via provided grub screws which locate into the string anchor and

clamp the ordinary string in place. GHS double ball end strings were fitted gauged from 0.040" to 0.102".

The tuning assembly and separate bridge are recessed into the central spine at the very base of the body. Little has changed here except the knurled tuning knobs seem much smoother to the touch. Certainly they work very well. The bridge remains the same, with the individual saddles and only height adjustment screws. Intonation is achieved by slackening the grub screws at the side of the bridge and moving each saddle by hand. I've said it before (and I'll say it again) actual intonation screws would improve this set-up. But there we go — numerous Status owners don't seem at all bothered! Incidentally the plating on the brass hardware now goes through a rigorous plating procedure. Firstly the brass is nickel plated then gold-plated and lastly baked in clear enamel resin which has an unpronouncable name. The result of this is that the golden bright appearance should last and last.

Standard strap pins are fitted (still no strap-locks) again from the same plated brass, two at the base of the instrument and one on the upper horn. This not only provides an optional strap position but a more secure standing position for the bass.

The pickups on the Status are the well tested Hyperactive IIs, one in mid and one in bridge position. They're made to GMT's spec by Kent Armstrong, although soon GMT themselves will be producing the units. The all-black units are recessed into the moulded spine with height and tilt adjustment via Allenkeyed bolts. Previous Status basses have featured slot head adjustment bolts so I'm pleased to see the inclusion of the far safer Allen-keyed ones.

The four knob active control system has undergone some minor changes also. Firstly the master volume control, placed to the right of the bridge pickups, now features a 20 detent pot. I've had a similar pot on my own guitar for some time now and while they make violin effects harder (although not impossible) the advantages of precise volume change and the fact that you can't accidentally knock your volume down make this choice



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Pictured: RGB Monitor/S-50 Sampler/DT-100 Digitizer Tablet The S-50 is a MIDIcompatible, sixteen-voice polyphonic digital sampler with a sixty-one key, velocity and pressure-sensitive keyboard. With a total of 512K-word memory, the S-50 provides 14.4 seconds of sampling time at a 30kHz sampling rate or 28.8 seconds at 15 kHz.

The S-50 can store up to sixteen sampled sounds and the area in memory used to store a sampled sound can be freely adjusted according to the length of a particular sample. Up to sixty split points can be located across the S-50's sixty-one keys, enabling you to assign all sixteen sampled sounds in memory to any split keyboard part or to individual keys. The built-in 3½ inch disk drive ensures durability of data with rapid saving and loading.

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of pot a valuable inclusion. Above this control is the pan pot, again with a centre detent for pickup mix and selection. Only these two controls function in the passive mode but switching in the active circuit via the small toggle switch illuminates a red LED (which will go out when battery power gets dangerously low) and makes the treble and bass controls functional. The bass control's cut and boost has been shifted up from low to lowmid to really tighten up the bottom end of the tone while the treble control seems quite wide. boosting or cutting from uppermid upwards. Each tone control has a quoted cut/boost of ± 15dB and has a centre detent for 'flat' position. The circuit is powered by two 9volt batteries wired in series. It is recommended that batteries should be changed every four to six months.

While the construction and speck of the Status is impressive, the feel and sound are truly stunning. Firstly I DI'd the bass in its passive mode and the sounds here are as good as ever. I still prefer the mixed pickup position on the pan control which combines the natural slightly 'hollow' top end of the bass with a nice warmth. Immediately obvious is that remarkable sustain and the clear and punchy low Estring. The passive mode produces a wide tonal range with just the pickup pan pot — the sounds are balanced and clear yet when you flick into the active mode the tone steps up another league. There is a slight increase in volume in this mode and, of course, we have all the added tonal tailoring that the two egs provide. Dl'd I found a little treble increase and a slight bass roll off all that was necessary - any more and the bass began to sound unnatural. However, plugging it through a bass amp and cab and the extreme amount of treble boost became handy, as did the bass roll off, to tighten the low end, especially at higher levels. The in-circuit hiss when the treble control is turned full on is noticeable when the bass is Dl'd, but through an amp it was hardly a problem.

Mind you, has this bass got too much sustain? You really have to be careful with your damping techniques otherwise the Status almost sounds as if it's playing itself! Dead spots? What are they? Throughout the test I gave this bass I couldn't find fault with either sound, performance or feel. I almost shed a tear in

frustration to think of the hours I've spent wrestling with the eq in an attempt to make a lesser bass sound like this. Anyone who says that a Status Series II sounds cold and clinical obviously hasn't tried one, but it is the range of excellent tone that really makes this bass sound so good. Couple that with the easy access to any sound and you can begin to see why musicians are prepared to pay the asking price on this bass.

Conclusions

As far as evolution goes the Series II bass seems to have reached an end point. There really doesn't seem any way of improving on what is (dare I say it?) a perfect design. Of course, individual preference may dictate a shaving off here and a tweak there but the Status, like the Steinberger, is an instrument on which people hear the advantages in the sound.

Of course it is quite impossible to justify the price of such an instrument to anyone who hasn't played it or can't appreciate the development that has gone into the beast. Certainly this experience is now paying off in the form of the new and cheaper bolt-on necked Status.

While Status can only cater for a very small percentage of the guitar playing public due to availability and price, the effect they have had on the industry is far reaching. Rob Green, along with Ned Steinberger, has proved the advantages of new materials and while Rob freely admits the headless design isn't the be all and end all he has provided a viable alternative. The equation of hi-tech plus high quality equals high price is never more apparent than here, but if you really want the best you have to pay for it!

Dave Burrluck

DIMENSIONS

(in mm unless stated)

III IIIII umess stateu/	- 1
Scale length	34"
Width of neck at nut	42.5
Width of neck at 12th fret	56
Depth of neck at 1st fret	21
Depth of neck at 12th fret	24
String spacing at nut	32
String spacing at bridge	53
Action as supplied at 12th fr	et
treble	1.5
Action as supplied at 12th fr	et
bass	1.8
Weight (approx)	9lbs

Further information: Soundwave, Unit 7, 4a Braintree Rd, Witham, Essex Tel: (0376) 517 237



Seven years on and still going strong: the Essex-based makers of Probably The Best Bass Amp In The World are up to their Mark V range to bass amplification. More pretty lights than ever, and a footswitch too! Yet there has obviously been a good bit of 'rationalisation' going on as well. Gone are all the GP7 models and the more weird and wonderful speaker cabinets, reducing the range of 11 items in total. Still, the AH 250 top with $4 \times 10''$ (1048) and $1 \times 15''$ (1518) cabinets under scrutiny here is thought likely to remain the most popular combination-if 'popular' is the right word at over £1300 all-in ...

Is this a Cover-Up?

The first obvious improvement is apparent before you play anything: all equipment now comes with hefty vinyl covers as standard. What's more, the covers have large zipped pockets in them for stashing the XLR speaker leads (provided) and other essential items.

Admittedly, the majority of users probably flight-case their cabs sooner or later, but the covers should prove a welcome addition to those who don't.

The cabinets themselves are essentially unchanged. Both have two jack and two XLR sockets, rubber feet on the bottom and plastic cups on the top for the next piece of gear to stand in. They're covered in very superior nylon-like cloth (Terion) with gunmetal corners, and have the entire front surface covered with black metal mesh. If you want to make a hole in this at the end of a gig, leave your Precision at home and bring your bolt cutters.

The 1048 cab is nearly cubeshaped, but the 1518 is noticeably deeper and has two circular ports in the front to let those funky frequencies flow (man). The slot port on the 1048 isn't quite as obvious to start with – it's between the two smart red strips. One other thing hasn't changed: both cabs weigh a ton, as the plywood from which they are assembled is a good bit heavier than chipboard.

Get your Head together

The main changes have been made to the GP 11 preamp. The Mark V version is coated with a tough plastic skin, making it easier for illuminated panels to be used. Now, the (simplified) Trace Elliot logo glows at you all

the time, though the ultra violet lighting is also retained. The tube for this has a lot less protection than before, but this does make the effect more even across the whole panel.

Most of the work seems to have been done on the input stage. The XLR socket has been dropped in favour of an additional 1/4" jack input, below which is a stereo jack socket for the footswitch lead. The input gain is still varied by that big click-stopped red knob, but instead of a single red overload LED, we have a clockwise green arrow, a yellow blob and an anticlockwise red arrow. The idea is that you increase the gain until the yellow 'OK' light is on most of the time, which gives you the highest level going into the graphic without distortion. If the red arrow comes on, you turn the knob in the direction in which it points. Don't be surprised if a passive bass needs to be turned up to around nine on the scale but some actives will start overdriving the stage by around

The 11-band graphic eq, now virtually an industry standard, is as before, but is now followed by a fader to balance the graphic 'in' level against the flat. You can still compare the flat and eq'd setting (to find out if you've done more harm than good) as before, but this is now done by a dinky green push/push button on the left of the fascia. The pre-shape function, which cuts the middle and boosts the bass and treble parts of the signal before it reaches the eq, is selected in a similar way, and in both cases an illuminated red 'IN' comes on next to the button. These two functions are duplicated by the footswitch, a sturdy metal affair with two large rubber pads on it.

The noise reduction and other facilities appear unchanged, though there is an extra socket for low-level signal out near the male XLR connector for Dl'ing. All these are on the front panel, leaving the back for the mains on/off, fuses for power and speaker outputs, the 2-speed fan switch and the on/off for the ultra violet.

Living with Tracey Elliot

This is without a doubt a set-up for professionals. It's an impressive sight when you hit the on switch: the fan whirrs into action, the ultra violet flickers into life and the faders sit there, glowing at you. It should impress

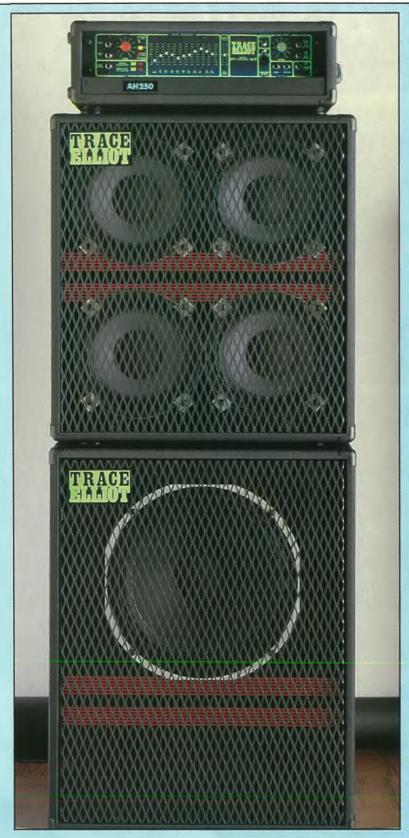
your audience too: I took the amp along to a gig for an electronics company and noticed a lot of eyes glued to the glowing powerhouse behind me.

But seriously ... the amp is as good as it ever was. Eleven faders give you so much control over the sound, you might never explore all the possibilities even if you owned the amp for years let alone if you've borrowed it for a couple of weeks. Okay, so there is something to be said for having simpler tone controls, in that you can make radical changes much more quickly, but for the player who really cares about his or her sound (and most good bassists seem to care a lot), a comprehensive graphic will be far more satisfying in the end.

However, don't think that it's just the graphic that gives a Trace Elliot its sound. The clarity and sustain are just as important, and are made possible by the hefty Mosfet power amp and its very favourable damping factor. You get the same sort of sensitivity and sustain that comes from a good valve amp, but without the distortion at high levels normally associated with valve designs (not that you can't make a good, high powered valve bass amp, as Mesa Boogie has proved).

To be honest, I'm not totally convinced by all the new features: the extra bits are handy, but seem a little cosmetic. However, the input gain's extra refinements are fairly useful and very colourful, and the graphic/ flat level fader is pretty much essential, given the fact that one now has a footswitch to play with. The pre-shape makes such a fundamental difference to the sound that most players would surely leave it on or turn it off all the time; and with the graphic off too, you only have the tone control(s) on your bass left with which to contour the signal. You can't switch between two different graphics settings - for that, you'll have to wait until Trace Elliot's programmable preamp makes it onto the market.

The one time I did find the footswitch very handy was when swapping between fretted and fretless basses mid-set. Fretless seems to sound better with a relatively flat setting, with the midrange boosted a little if anything, so knocking both preshape and graphic out at once leaves you with a nice woody, natural tone from the fretless.



However, I don't think there are that many professionals who actually swap between the two during gigs. The footswitch itself, while being suitably robust, takes a bit of getting used to, and would benefit from LED indicators to show what's on and what's not. As the whole top plate of the unit moves, I found

myself switching both functions at once without realising I was doing it.

One problem you wouldn't expect to have is that of not being able to hear yourself, but on a cramped stage this could be the case. This stack knocks out enough power to down a squadron of Spitfires three miles

away, but unless you get several yards in front of it, you don't hear the whole sound. I was convinced that I didn't have enough bass boost on, and wondered why cracks were appearing in the opposite wall ...

If you whack the bass boost up a great deal, you may find the 10" speakers protesting a bit; as this is not a biamped setup, both cabinets get the whole signal you set on the amp. For pro users who need high volume levels on stage, it would probably be worth the extra to get the AH500X head (retailing at £798) which also gives you the opportunity of adjusting the relative levels of the two cabinets. Then again, if you don't really need 250 watts, fan cooling or UV lighting, you could opt for the smaller AH150 head at £468. High treble boost is less of a problem, as the noise reduction removes what little hiss there is: it didn't help with the mains hum which reared its head a few times during testing, though this didn't seem to have its origin in the AH250.

Tracey Thorn?

At the end of the day, I only have one lasting gripe, and that's the weight and bulk of the stackthough I should add that such comments are not intended to be a criticism of the equipment, or of its maker's no-compromise approach to cabinet design and choice of materials. I can live with the amp, but the cabs are really very awkward. I would threfore advise any non-pro to think seriously about the day-to-day practicalities of top gear like this before investing in it. If in doubt, buy one of the combos as they are about 6" shallower - enough to make all the difference when getting through doorways.

Portrait of Tracey

Despite my aching limbs, I shall be sorry to see this stack go back. It provides the kind of high fidelity sound you may never have thought your bass capable of producing. For someone in my position, this particular setup would be an unjustifiable extravagance, but for a professional player, it might just be a necessity.

Bill Martin

Contact: Soundwave, 49 Braintree Road, Witham, Essex Tel: (0376 517237).

MESA/BOOGIE

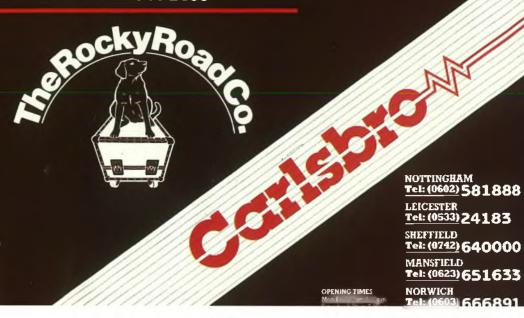
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GUITARCHECK

Regular Guitarcheck readers will be well aware of my feelings towards Strat copies. In a word (or two) not much. Yet what have we here? You've guessed it another! To be honest I wasn't at all interested in the guitar—it was the Wilkinson trem that really took my fancy—but a quick gander over the instrument quickly revealed it to be a rather fine example of the Strat-type.

Japanese, of course, the name 'Nadine' is the brain child of Dixie Kidd of Dixies Music fame who handles the Polytone, Tom Scholz, Pignose, E Bow and Dive Bomber lines to name a few. To cut a long story short, Dixie had the idea to market a cheap Strat and Tele line consisting of ready made Jap parts to be assembled in Japan by a certain Mr Sano. This method of quitar construction is becoming increasingly common in Japan and Dixie refers to it as an example of Japan's 'cottage industries'.

The Nadine range consists of the Standard models – either Strat or Tele designs in Red, White or Black – retailing at £230. The Nadine Special line has a Strat with humbucker and two single coils while the Tele Special features twin humbuckers. These retail at £245. Rosewood or Maple boards are offered as are standard fulcrum trems on the Strats. A Jazz bass, fretted only, completes the range at £265.

Construction

The body on this Nadine is made from Castor Arbia – a pale lightweight timber from the Alder family but of Far Eastern origin. It comes from the Matsumoku factory where Aria, some of the cheaper Ibanez and Vox instruments to name a few have been made. (Matsumoku will shortly cease guitar production and the Nadine bodies will then be built at the Terada factory.) Finished in flawless and characterless black dipped polyester finish the only thing to report about it is that all the usual curves are in the right places!

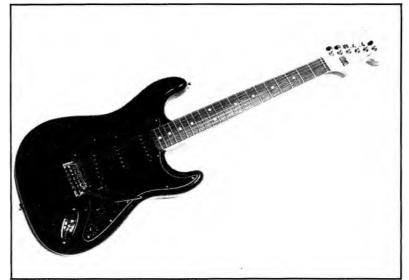
While many Japanese 'economy' priced guitars feature a Far Eastern equivalent of Maple for the neck construction, the neck on this sample features the real thing – Canadian Rock Maple with Rosewood board. This bit comes from the Fuji Gen-Gakki factory which, along with

Matsumoku and Morris, form the 'big three' guitar production plants. Fuji Gen-Gakki also take care of numerous other lines incuding Ibanez, Fender, B C Rich and the Japanese Martin models.

It is quite possible that a Japanologist could tell at a glance the origin of this neck. I certainly can't but the result is extremely fine whatever. With a shallowed curved section and flat cambered board it feels quite contemporary. The medium gauge fret wire has a low curved section and has been faultlessly installed lacking only a high lustre polish. The truss rod is adjustable in the usual manner at the body end of the neck and we have no contrasting back strip or nut fillet indicating that the rod was installed from the face of the neck. Typically we have the more pleasant pre-CBS small headstock with a Nadine transfer logo that apes the Fender one of that early period.

The bridge system has a front edge 'split blade' bearing which fits neatly over the six-hole screw line left when a Strat trem is removed. This front bearing is held in place with four screws which fit directly in the middle four holes. The actual bridge block is made from steel which is well shaped to provide density and comfort. Each saddle is adjustable for height in the usual manner. Intonation adjustments are taken care of by a small screw at the back of the bridge which sits in a knurled knob and looks like it should be a fine tuner. In fact, this knob locks the saddle in place allowing string spacing to

The strings are mounted with the ball end at the machine head and the straight end passes through the bridge and is locked at the base of the bridge with hefty individual slot head bolts. The normal springs and tension plate arrangement is used



Dixies kid — the 'nice' Nadine

In comparison to the bland but nonetheless high quality construction of the guitar itself, the Wilkinson trem system is an innovative improvement on the basic fulcrum trem without going to the extremes of a locking nut and fine tuning mechanism. The system comprises of the bridge trem unit (£145) plus a roller nut and roller string clamp (sold together for £23). Mr Wilkinson -Trev to his mates - hails from Rochdale, Lancs but moved to the sunnier climes of California USA in search of golden opportunities.

An important aspect of the system is that it requires virtually no modification of your guitar.

differing only in that the springs are clamped to the bridge block with an Allen-keyed bolt. A hefty 1/4" stainless steel bar is featured with a simple tension adjustment allowing you to regulate the swing of the bar or leave it locked and stationary.

By comparison, the roller nut and string retainer are simple but no less effective. The nut is slightly wider than a standard Strat nut and requires that the nut slot is enlarged on the front side to allow for this and to provide the correct string break position as the rollers themselves lie in the centre of the nut. Each roller is a different diameter and lies inside the



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THE K50 KEYBOARD COMBO

- Dual cone 12" loudspeaker for extra frequency response.
- Two separate channels.
- Two inputs per channel.
- Gain, Bass and Treble controls on each channel.
- Accutronics Reverb switchable to either channel. (Optional footswitch available.)
- · Master Reverb level control.
- · Master Volume control.
- Line Output and Headphones sockets.
- Size: 47cm wide, 54cm high, 31cm deep.
- · Weight: 18kg.

THE L50 GUITAR COMBO

- Twin channel. Channel 1—clean channel with pull bright. Channel 2—distortion/pull heavy; pull smooth; pre-set EQ.
- Footswitch channel selection socket.
- Accutronics Reverb with rotary/ pull on controls.
- Bass, Middle and Treble EQ controls.
- · Hi-gain and Lo-gain inputs.
- Gain and Master Volume controls.
- Line Output and Headphones sockets.
- Size: 47cm wide, 51cm high, 29cm deep.
- · Weight: 16kg.

'cage' of the nut, each pivoting on an individual neddle bearing. The string retainer clamps over the top three strings and once again it has these needle bearing rollers and fits in the hole provided by the normal 'E' and B' string retainer.

In practice the Wilkinson system as fitted here is very impressive, and in the company's own words provides a very viable 'alternative' to the more involved (and more expensive) locking systems. Firstly there is the ease of use both in stringing up and lack of locking nut. Restringing is simple -only a slot head screwdriver is required. Setting intonation is no more involved than a standard Strat-type bridge, Disadvantages seem to centre on two related points. Firstly, if really heavy trem use is required Wilkinson suggest you fit some locking machine heads, and secondly because no string retainer clamps down on the 'D' string, plus the fact it is higher than usual on the string post, this can cause a slight buzzing and lack of tone. A set of JB Self-locks would solve both problems as they have graduated string post

The remaining hardware and parts are Gotoh with the exception of the pickups, the origin of which was unknown. Without a locking nut it is very important that there is no movement or slackness in the machine heads. I tightened these Gotoh M6 lookalikes up to make sure I got the best from the trem

system.

heights.

Sounds and Playability

The flat, non-adjustable poled pickups have a very even response without tilting the treble sides up. The tone is as one would expect - very like a typical Strat! Of the three units fitted, the bridge position pickup had the least character to it while the neck and mid units sounded clean and crisp without being overtly sharp. A five-position switch is featured so all those 'inbetween' tones are possible. although the switch itself seemed a bit unpositive making it easy to slip positions.

The Nadine sustains well and the sound easily matches the price. Problems with squeal occur at high levels and there is the typical buzz from the unshielded pickups and electronics, but that's nothing new!

Initially the Wilkinson trem had three springs fitted which gave the unit a stiff action. Reducing the number to two improved things immensely and it must be said that tuning stability was remarkably good. I gave all the strings a good stretch, retuned the guitar and played and whammed for 30 minutes or so before any tuning adjustments were necessary. As it stands the system isn't as stable as a top Kahler or Floyd Rose, but then again it isn't supposed to be. On this sample it was fine to do average as opposed to excessive bending, with the occasional motorbike impression thrown in without the tuning going out. Even with any tuning instabilities it was invariably just a single string which could quickly and easily be corrected. The only flaw in the design relates to that 'D

be bothered with the likes of a Floyd Rose or Kahler, although without locking heads the system isn't up to continuous Steve Vai or Van Halen pyrotechnics. The other advantage to the system is that it's easy to fit and doesn't necessitate carving up your

precious axe.

Incidentally, another Nadine was supplied for review without the Wilkinson system, just a standard trem and the sound and performance, with the exception of the trem, was equal to the one described. While the Nadine offers nothing new it is at least nice to see a Strat copy that isn't a slave to vintage spec and consequently not a drag on the pocketf

Dave Burrluck



A sharp gadget — the Wilkinson trem, and (inset) ball-bearing string clamps(!)

behind the nut angle. The ball end is designed to go through the machine head to stop string slippage but you really need to wind the 'D' around the post a couple of times to sharpen the angle of the string break and lose that slight buzzing.

Conclusions

Whichever way you look at it, the Nadine and the Wilkinson system either combined or individually provide value for money and very good results. The guitar is above average in terms of materials and playability in relation to its price. The Trev Wilkinson system is an extremely well made and designed 'alternative' for anyone who either can't afford, or can't

Dimensions

(In mm unless stated) Scale length 251/2" Width of neck at nut 42 Width of neck at 12th fret 53. Depth of neck at 1st fret 21.5 Depth of neck at 12th fret 23 String spacing at nut 35 String spacing at bridge 50 Action as supplied at 12th fret 1.0 treb

Action as supplied at 12th fret bass 1.2

Weight (approx) 8lbs Further information: DIXIES MUSIC, 2 Stocks Walk, Almondbury, Huddersfield, Tel: (0484) 512601. JB Self-Locks as mentioned are available from: Real to Real, 79 Longton Grove, LONDON SE26 6QQ. Tel: 01-778 7147.

RHYTHMCHECK



Un sampleur, non? (Inset: the LEDs in 'meter' mode)

First there was programmability then there was digital voicing -and now there is user sampling. The SP12 brought it first to the world of drum machines, the Korg DDD-1 broke the 'Pro' price barrier, and now hard on its heels is this release from a French company perhaps best known to British audiences for their mega analogue synths. Thanks to a recently signed distribution deal, however, that's all set to change - both of the RSF digital drum machines will now be readily available over here. The cheaper of the two, the DD30, goes out at £650, features 30 high-quality preset voices, all the usual features, and is obvious competition for the TR707s and RX11s of this world.

The machine that'll be grabbing all the attention though is the one we've chosen to look at, the sampling SD 140. RSF are at pains to point out that their machine comes complete with sampling whereas its obvious rival, the Korg DDD-1, requires an upgrade to do the job at all, and has both a lower sampling rate and a shorter sample time. Still, that is the machine that the SD-140 has to beat — can it do it?

First Appearance

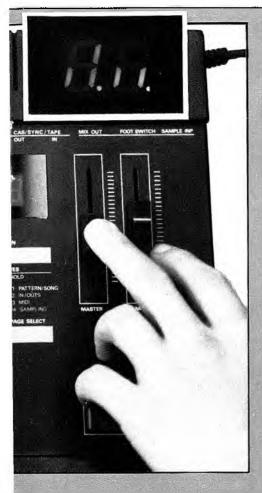
The SD140 comes in a weighty, wedge-profiled and workmanlike pressed steel box a little larger than an RX 11 which, with its pair of sliders and DX-style eggshelland-mauve membrane switches, it closely resembles. Front panel layout begins with a list of rearpanel functions (don't worry it's all repeated there as well!). Reading from left to right, we have Power On/Off (the unit has a tethered mains lead and an internal power supply), MiDI-In and Out, and Instrument Outs. There are separate sockets for most voices and the metronome Click, though there is some doubling up - Snare and Rim share a socket, as do Toms two and three, Open and Closed Hi hats, and the three percussion channels.

Moving right along we find the Trig Input—this allows one selected on-board voice to be dynamically triggered by a drum pad, sequencer, or even an audio signal. Next to this are the two sockets governing tape dumping and Sync facilities. The SD140

can save (Punch), Load and Verify all its memory contents, including samples, to ordinary cassettes. Since this process is digital, there is no degradation in the sound quality of samples saved and loaded in this way.

Using these sockets in Sync mode, we find that the 140 is pretty smart, generating its own sync code to tape and reading it back, responding to an external 24, 48 or 96 ppn clock, (ie, Roland, Korg and Linn) or via the MIDI sockets, acting as either a Master or Slave device. Unusually, the 140 has in addition to MIDI, Song Position Pointer info for 'smart' syncing' to MIDI sequencers, the ability to smart syncalso to tape machines fitted with Autolocate devices—so when your multitrack rolls to the right part of the song, so will the 140. Good idea, that.

Next, we find the Mix Out, which despite being usable in addition to the separate outs (thus giving you in conjunction with the machine's programmable Mute voice function the ability to derive two outs for each voice) is nevertheless something of a disappointment. It's in mono—



no quick bunging of a stereo drum part down here. This obviously also means that there is no fancy programmable stereo instrument positioning, à la Korg DDD-1, You want 180° tom rolls, you'll have to pan them yourself.

Unbelievably, the 140 doesn't even have stereo out for headphones, though the Mix Out has sufficient level to do a mono stand-in for one...

The penultimate socket is for a simple Start/Stop footswitch, and everything is rounded off by the final socket, for sample sound in. With the exception of MIDI In/Out all sockets are standard tack size.

Moving down the front panel we find an inlaid strip of black perspex bearing the RSF logo, and protecting the backlit 16-character LCD and 2-digit LED which between them let you know what the machine is up to. On the right-hand side of the unit are two vertical faders, for Master volume out, and Sample level in

Beneath the display section is the programming section. As is becoming standard on these machines, each button is multifunction, its current usage here indicated by which of four 'pages' have been selected on the LED. P1 (white legending), the default page when you switch on, is pattern/song mode. Here, you can select any one of 99 possible patterns, either by entering its number on the numerical keys, or by whizzing to it with the and keys; play it by hitting the double-size Play/Stop button, bottom right. Record Mode is entered simply by pressing the purple Record button—an associated LED lights up, and a 'blip' is heard to confirm your choice.

If you wish to erase the pattern and start afresh, pressing Erase gives you another 'blip', and the LCD window asks if you wish to erase the whole pattern (PT), all trace of one instrument (IS), or an accent (AC). Pressing Erase again deletes the lot-pressing either the relevant grey instrument or Accent button nixes them. In each case, the blip confirms your choice. Start now puts you into real-time record, entering any one of the voices the machine can hold each time you hit the relevant button - the 14 voices are accessed from the seven voice buttons by toggling the Upper/Lower button to their left a green LED shows you when the upper voice is on, All 14 voices can be used in a pattern, with up to eight sounding simultaneously if necessary Pressing Erase with the pattern running puts you into Real-Time Erase-just hit the voice you want out when you come to it. Each pattern can be anywhere from 1 to 64 beats long, and at a resolution ('Autocorrect') of anything from eights to 128th triplets, in High-Res mode! Most machines stop at 48ths, or 96ths: you should have no trouble capturing the finest nuances of 'feel'. To help make sure, there are five selectable offsets of 'Swing' (a subtle drifting around the otherwise mechanically precise beat) which can be programmed before you enter your pattern, or added afterward. Incidentally, you can mix 'n' match Auto corrects within a pattern - nice solid eight for bass and snare, a 'feel' 48 for hi hat, and so on.

The output Level and Accent for each instrument can be adjusted across the range 0-15 (Default: 10) though not, sadly, at each step; programming a crescendo involves chaining several short patterns together. (On the DDD-1, this can be achieved within patterns)

Step time programming on the 140 is, as on most of its competition, rudimentary but effective. Pressing Step displays the Pattern and Measure selected in the LCD window, with the current Step on the LED (defaults to 0). Scrolling through the pattern is via the o keys and entering a beat, via the relevant voice button. Previously programmed beats sound when you reach them. To wipe a beat, just hit Erase when you reach it. Be warned - scrolling through a 4-bar pattern at even low resolutions can be a long job! In addition to straight pattern programming you of course have all the usual Copy, Insert and delete pattern commands...

In Song Mode (indicated by a red LED above the relevant button) you can assemble songs of up 999 patterns, each with a separate Tempo, Instrument Level set-up, Auto correct and so on. A maximum of 30 songs can be held in the machine at one time, though obviously the fewer or shorter the individual patterns that make them up are, the greater capacity the machine can devote to song storage. Or to put it another way, its 4,000 event memory can be running just one incredibly complex Yes song, or 30 Sigue Sigue Sputnik singles...All samples, patterns, and songs are maintained when the mains supply is off by an internal trickle-feed battery.

The green-legended Page Two functions are concerned with the machine's communications with the outside world. Here you'll find control over all the various clock and triggering options previously discussed. Also green-legended, Page Three concerns itself with MIDI. The 140 can send or receive MIDI information on any one of the first nine MIDI channels (separately selectable for Transmit and Receive.) But what, I wonder, is so wrong with the other seven channels? Selection is achieved from the top-row number buttons, and since there are only nine of them, perhaps that's the reason...

Unlike the DDD-1, there is no Mono mode, so you won't be using the instrument buttons on this machine as independent MIDI triggers. You can of course set them to receive or transmit



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any specific MIDI Note Number (in the range 0-127) for playing of the 140's voices from MIDI drumpad or keyboard, or indeed, for having it trigger a slave MIDI unit. Incidentally, like the TR505, the 140's voices are velocity sensitive over MIDI.

If tape storage doesn't grab you, fast and reliable data dumps to appropriately interfaced computers are possible, thus allowing patterns and voices to be stored on disk. Uniquely, the 140 is also said to be able to dump sample information via MIDI, though whether this is true sample swapping according to the new standard currently being thrashed out - a very exciting idea indeed, just imagine loading the 140 up with your rich mate's best Fairlight voices — or just the transmission of voice characteristics (pitch, duration, volume etcetera) - which could then impose your preprogrammed dynamics on another sound-source, I was unable to ascertain.

Sampling

The purple-legended Page Four is where all the nitty-gritty is done. Uniquely, the 140 doesn't possess a single permanent (le ROM) voice. All of the 14 available positions, despite being labelled conventionally enough, can have anything from a cat-sneeze to a cornet put in them. Apparently shop-bought 140s will, in fact, come complete with a standard kit of 14 drum voices installed in the right slots Bass Drum, Snare, Rim, Hi Hat Open & Closed, Toms one to four, Percussion one to three, Claps, and Cymbal. A datacassette supplied with the machine will furnish roughly a further 60 instrument voices, and some demonstration patterns and songs to run them in. In fact, the demo machine I borrowed had a rag-bag of voices in it, so my first act on receiving it was to stick a few usable samples in. The process is straightforward, though not without its limitations...

Having selected the sampling page, you hit Record and, in response to the machine's prompt, select the location you want your sample to go in by pressing the relevant voice button. The LED now ingeniously splits into a two part, horizontal VU meter, with the strength of the incoming signal, set by the sample fader, reading across the

bottom four 'ladders', and the current Trigger Threshold indicated by a single dash above it. Peaks are shown as dots. You can also monitor the incoming signal through the 140's output, and hear if any distortion is occurring.

Pressing the play button now confirms your choice of location, and the machine will trip into Auto-sample as soon as a signal crosses the Threshold. (Although the LED can only display four positions of Threshold, from low to high, pressing the o buttons lets you set the actual threshold anywhere along that scale from 0 the 125, the display momentarily reverting to numbers to confirm this.)

Alternatively you can trigger the sample process manually. It sounds complicated. It isn't. It's very easy indeed to capture highquality samples. Which is good, because it's now that your troubles start. Being totally 'soft', the 140 has, not surprisingly, devoted more memory space to samples than the competing DDD-1. Total sample time is 12.8 seconds with the maximum sample time available for a single sound being 6.4 seconds, at a fixed bandwidth of 25kHz, as compared to the Korg Add-on's 1.8 seconds. This available time is divided up into 11 chunks, spread across the 14 instrument zones (11 because any sample entered into a Tom slot is automatically copied across into the remaining Tom slots, and read out at faster or slower rates to give four differently pitched Tom voices from one sample).

The length of a sample is determined by the slot you put it into, since each is tailored to an 'appropriate' voice - hence whatever sound you put into the bass drum slot - be it drum or not-lasts exactly 0.3 seconds. Now that's a fine length for a dry bass drum, but it doesn't leave a lot of room for reverb. I could of course put it in the hi hat slotabout two seconds' worth - but where do I put the hi hat? It seems a contradiction in terms to take a concept as flexible as sampling, and then restrict you to a conventional kit structure; four of the locations have additional parameters just to underline the point - Bass drum, Toms and Cymbals all have programmable VCFs (eq) appropriate to their tonal ranges, and the hi hat open has a 4-stage adjustable Decay.

Programmable eq is a good idea — why can't it be on all the voices?

Far better too, I'd have thought, to have a block of memory you could divide up between voices as you saw fit. In a world of reverbed bass drums and dry snares, there's no such thing as an 'appropriate' length for any sound.

It comes as something of a shock also to discover that with the exception of the hi hat, there's no possible way to edit a sample other than re-record it. Every time you hit the bass drum button, something's going to sound for precisely 0.3 seconds, even if 0.1 seconds of that is tape hiss after your sample is finished.

Tuning is another missed opportunity. Instead of independent tuning on every instrument, the ability to turn each tom into a whole kit, there is a single Tuning facility (+ 12–12) for the whole machine—take a snare down a notch or two, and everything else goes down with it! Having placed such a premium on sampling in the 140's design, it seems a pity that its potential has not been fully realised.

Summing Up

There is no doubt that the quality of sampling achievable on this machine is very good. However, having used it for some time, certain things niggled me - the way the LED flicks after five seconds from the function you're working on to the currently selected patternwhich often means that you start whizzing through the pattern memory by mistake, instead of altering an instrument level, or whatever lalso found myself missing those programming aids which enabled the DDD-1 to make so much of its sampled sounds - Sequence Parameter slider, Roll button, and so on.

The 140 is a solid, well-constructed machine. Its 'smart-sync' to autolocators is a good idea. If it was selling against the E595 Kawai, it'd stand a chance. But there are needless limitations on its user potential; it doesn't have on-board dynamics; it doesn't have the facility to 'plug in' extra voices; its MIDI, though good, could have been better — and it is £150 dearer than a fully upgraded version of Korg's markedly superior machine.

Tony Reed

Turn them on... Wait one minute... Standby!!



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KECHECK

If there's one naff thing about headband microphones, it's that they play absolute hell with your hairstyle. Forget low impedance, omnidirectional and phantom powering ... what does it do to your quiff? It's all very well having hi fidelity on your backing vox, but what's the point if it makes your mohican go flat?

Now this may not be of much concern to the Elton Johns of this world, but if you've got handfuls of the matted stuff to contend with we're talking serious problems. And I have. Loads of the stuff pouring out of my head like it's going out of fashion - and let's face it, it is. Now, as a drummer that guests on occasional backing vocals, this creates a couple of problems when using the conventional headband mike; 1) it makes you look more of a prat than you do anyway and, 2) because luse. new Silkience shampoo (for a longer lasting shine) the bleedin' thing keeps slipping off.

Which is where AKG's C410 comes in. Throwing convention to the wind, they've liberated your head and stuck it round the back of your neck. That's to say, the headband is now positioned to follow the curve of your neck, leaving the rest of the unit to rest on your ears. Once in position it's not totally dissimilar to wearing a pair of glasses the wrong way around. Not only does this have no effect on your barnet whatsoever, but it also allows you to wear it while wearing a pair of headphones, which makes it very useable as a home recording mike too.

Made of indestructible black polyamide, the first thing that impresses you is its light weight – a very respectable 130g. It comes with 11½' of balanced cable, an XLR connector, a fitted foam windscreen and a neat little black plastic (naff) pouch to put it all in. There's also a small clip supplied to lift the weight of the lead away from the headset to maintain its natural balance.

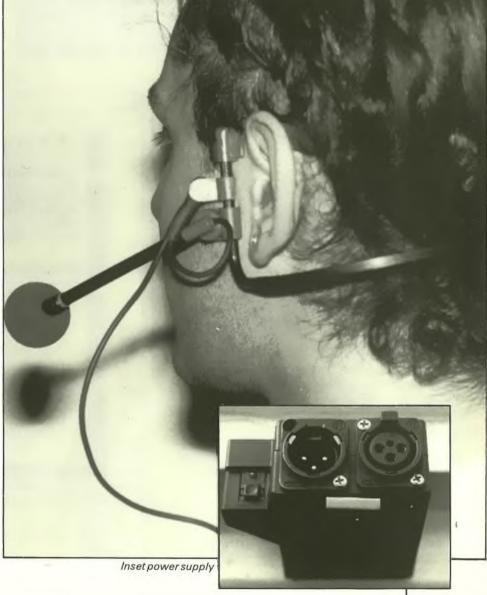
The cardioid mike capsule sits to the side of your mouth on a swinging arm made of black coated brass that is adjustable up and down and back to front, and it has a frequency range of 20-20,000 Hz. The AKG logo is printed along this swinging arm, but strangely appears on the inside so can't be viewed when in position. The back to front movement will be audible over the PA as it clicks through various

stop positions, but the up and down movement is completely silent. However, this up and down movement does tend to leave the mike either right in front of your eye or down by your throat, which makes for some very ... unusual ... vocal effects.

Of course there is one simple way around these problems - the inclusion of an on/off switch, sadly missing from this AKG. One of the biggest headaches when wearing a headphone mike is getting it away from your mouth when you're not using it. If you take it off it's not the sort of shape and design that can sit comfortably on the floor next to you, and if you don't it's going to pick up all those grunts and groans as you catch your breath between numbers, and those embarrassing questions you have to ask the bass player, like;

"How does the next song go?"
An on/off switch on the clip and you've saved the need for a separate clip to take the weight off the lead and been given maximum operational control.

However, once in position the AKG C410 really is very comfortable to wear. It's definitely the most secure headphone mike I've worn, and slipped only a very small amount during a three hour rehearsal with a band that thinks Anarchy In The UK is a ballad, I was disappointed to see a fault appear so soon though -- it wasn't long before it was crackling foudly when swinging the arm away from my mouth. I was told the fault wasn't a common one, and of course the one year guarantee would cover it. A replacement model sent at a later date developed no such fault.



MIKECHECK

Because the C410 is a condenser mike, it's going to need some phantom powering – 9-52v. If your mixer doesn't fulfill the necessary requirements you'll need a unit like AKG's B18, which comes in mains and battery format, I tried the battery version which needs two PP3-type batteries, has a battery-test green LED and will set you back

£39.50. Not a small amount when you consider it's actually a third of the price of the actual microphone.

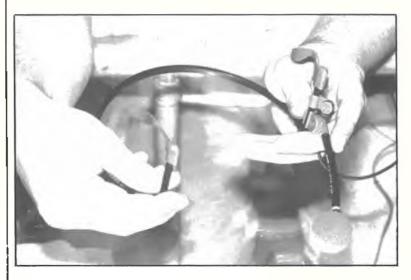
In use, the originality of its design does have some disadvantages as well as advantages over more conventional headband units. Although it feels more secure while playing, it is trickier to get

on and off. This is not only a problem during a gig where you may not want to wear it for every song, but also during a lengthy rehearsal where you'll definitely want to keep taking it on and off while making regular bee-lines to the pool table.

It can look kind of strange from the side, too. Unfortunately the band that follows the shape of your neck doesn't fit flush to it, but instead hovers a good inch or more away. Obviously if you have got hair over your collar you're not going to see this, but then it's also going to make it even more awkward to get on and off; remember, it does have to make an exit via the back of your neck.

All of this may sound rather negative, but really I'm just nit-picking (perhaps another problem of having long hair!). It's an excellent sounding unit, didn't suffer from popping and overall is a far more satisfactory way of wearing a microphone than any other I've tried.

Tony Horkins



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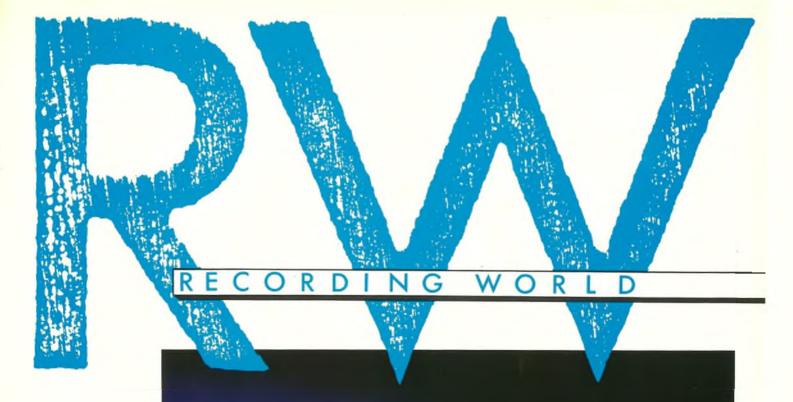
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TRA	ACK RECORD: JACKIE WILSON	88

CTUDIO DIADV

HOMETAPING 91

STUDIO TEST: PROVERB 94

STUDIO OF THE MONTH: EBONY 96

STUDIO TEST: TC DELAY/SAMPLER 98

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL! 102



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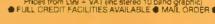
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Mike Read, Mike Read, 275 and 285...Remember? This particular Cliff Richard lookalike is recording an album at RAK, for projected release by RCA/Arista. Proper musicians Simply Red are also recording an album at the same venue, with Alex Sadkin producing. Ancient infant prodigy Mike Oldfield has been working on an unspecified project, as has the mysteriously titled Simon F, who apparently belongs to the roster of Warners America, and who is being produced by Phil Thornally.

Factory bands are spawning in profusion in salubrious Stockport, home of Strawberry and Yellow 2. Tony Wilson's protégés include the Durutti Column, the Railway Children, the Wake and Kalima. GBH, however, have no plans to join Factory in the immediate future. And if it ain't a Factory band it's a BBC session, what with Fiddler, Distant Cousins, The Christians, the Trees and Tony Christie. On asking who Tony Christie was, I was regaled with a version of 'Is This The Way To Amarillo?'. Ask a stupid question...More conventional bands engaged in recording around the Stockport area include the *lcicle* Works, for Beggars Banquet, and Ché, for Siren.

The self-effacing *Belouis Some* is recording an LP at the Roundhouse, with Gary Langan on respectful advice. *Fuji* are using up tape for Pacific Music, and *Danny Saxon* is recording under the watchful eye of Ken Golb.

The big shock of this month is that the Fine Young Cannibals appear to have written another song. This rare artefact is being recorded for a film soundtrack at the Power Plant, producer Mike Peeler. More people getting Power Planted include Terrence Trent-Derby, being produced by Phil Legg for CBS, and Julian Cope has been doing some remixing with Wayne Lissey. Ben Rogan is still working with When In Rome on their LP for 10 Records, and gaffer Robin Millar has been remixing a single for the Daintees.

There're rumours around that That Petrol Emotion are in a Jam, as are the Penguin Café Orchestra. The Impossible Dreamers have been coming down to earth with a bump at the same place.

The Blow Monkeys have been assaulting Battery with their own brand of simian antics—they've been mixing, presumably the tracks that they've been recording in every other studio. How far can you get on one Battery? Roughly a Miracle Mile.

Over at Britannia Row, the Armoury Show are continuing their recording career with new vigour — they're being produced by lan Broudie. On a more unusual note, the Mint Juleps are working on a 48-track mix with

STUDIO DIARY

Trevor Horne, so look forward to the first ever acapella Fairlight single since The Flying Pickets. Flood's also been working with *Erasure* again, on the tails of Sometime's success — they've been doing a 24-track mix, as have *Curiosity Killed The Cat*.

there.

Marc Almond is laying down some Milotrax, so have the Communards, both of whom seem to be taking up permanent residence in the place. They've had to take their sleeping bags out a couple of times though, for Annie Hogan and Steve Parsons. Master Rock Studio has been living up to its name lately, with the recent stay of American metal band, we mean it, Mannekin. Definite non-metaller Paul O'Duffy has doubtless been giving Helena Springs a more restrained production.

At the time of writing, the Mission had just been up to the Slaughterhouse in Driffield — mundanely enough, Slaughterhouse is actually a recording studio, while Driffield is a place you'll probably never hear of again as it's now buried under ten feet of snow. Anyway, these guys, Thin Lizzy-style, are engaged in



Fingerpicking Penguins

Those busy Armoury Show Boys have been in Odyssey, and that guy who's no longer in the Club, Roy Hay, seems to be working on an album — he's been there a month now, and his mum's starting to get worried. Roger Waters has been working on more walls of sound there, as well, and well known ex-public schoolgirls Bodeans have also dropped in. In Tua Nua are in Crescent — they've just recorded three tracks for an LP. It Bites are also working on an album, whilst Craggy Hugh Cornwell is already mixing his.

The latest Guerilla army include Laibach from Yugoslavia — there are no reports as to whether Michael Clarke was dancing in the studio along with them, though he might drop in at the overdub stage. William Orbit? William Orbit as always, is still in tarting up a live album. You know the kind of thing, drop in bum notes on the guitar tracks, turn down the audience noise so you can hear the band hetter...

There hasn't been time to breathe lately at Air, they've been so busy. Black (no, we didn't reform for the money, besides we ain't made much) Sabbath are still in. Deacon Blue has been recording for CBS, and Brian 'Stray Cat' Setzer is also doing some recording. Likewise Strangeways, Living In A Box, and other musicians. Then there's Nick Berry. Yes, more BBC 'personalities' putting musicians like you and me...er musicians like you out of business. It makes me so angry...

Next month — Steve Wright, Samantha Fox, Terry Wogan...

Paul Trynka

Hugh Pagdham

"If I do have any ambition left it is to work with an unknown group and have a Number One hit with them."

Ithink Hugh Padgham was on the defensive. Not that he had any reason to be. There had been neither malice nor criticism in my questioning. I had merely observed that, to date, his most successful work in both creative and commercial terms had been with well established acts who could justifiably claim to be 'household names' on both sides of the Atlantic. Like Paul McCartney. Like Phil Collins and Genesis. Like The Police, David Bowie, Howard Jones, Paul Young and The Human League, By comparison Padgham-produced projects by young hopefuls seemed to vanish without trace. I mean, can you name any records by Mummy Calls, The Waitresses or The Call?

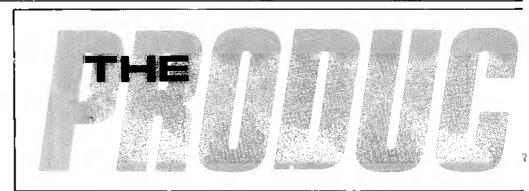
Exactly.

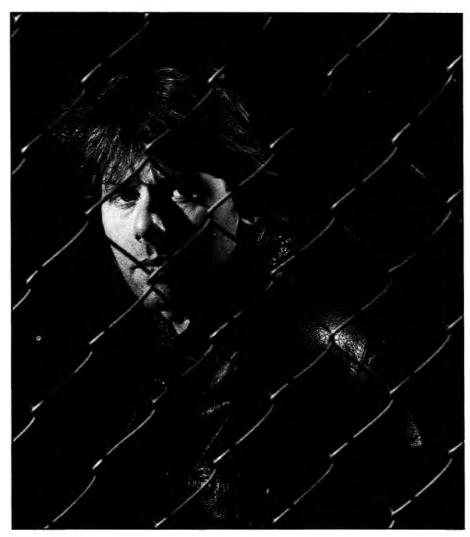
So, rather than point the finger of ridicule, initiating some loathsome music press trial-by-interview I was actually asking for Padgham's professional overview of this strange state of affairs. He gave it freely enough, but nevertheless I think he thought I was knocking him.

"The point is that I only ever do about three albums a year. Maybe four at the outside. A couple of those are always with my 'regulars' like Phil Collins and Genesis or Sting. That doesn't leave much time. And I defy anybody to say 'No' when somebody like David Bowie or Paul McCartney rings up and asks me to do an album with them.

"But that being said, I honestly do try to do one album a year with an unproven band. But even then there's only so much you can do. I get sent dozens and dozens of tapes from record companies and it's a job I don't particularly enjoy - sifting through them all. And then, when you've made your choice, you can sit in the studio for two or three months making the album but you haven't a clue what will happen to it afterwards. I mean, it's not my job to go out and make sure it's marketed and promoted properly. That's the record company's responsibility and sometimes I've been amazed at how little they're prepared to spend selling an album compared with the amount they put into making

I would venture a slightly different interpretation of Hugh Padgham's career in the six odd years since he left the cosy confines of a staffer's job at





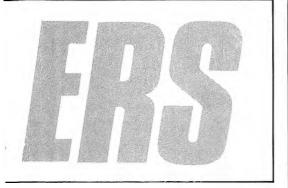
Cagey Hugh Padgham pic: Barry Marsden

Virgin Townhouse where his name had become synonymous with engineering of the Highest Quality. That he is one of the most successful UK producers of the decade is undeniable. A man doesn't win two Grammys (the US Record business' equivalent of an Oscar) in three years for nothing. He was awarded one for Producer Of The Year in 1983 for his work Synchronicity (The Police album which spawned Every Breath You Take) and the other for Album Of The Year in 1985 for Phil Collins' No Jacket Required collection. Both projects were co-productions with the artistes in question. And there lies the secret of Hugh Padgham's success. His forté is as engineer co-

producer, a trusted co-conspirator and a sounding board to the stars rather than an SSL Svengali who can turn a pig's ear into a crock of gold. Or a bunch of snotty-nosed kids with silly haircuts into international jetsetters.

"All I've ever wanted to do is make music with people and it helps to do it with people who can really play. I mean, once you've been exposed to Phil Collins' drumming, for instance, you've been exposed to the best and its very difficult to get anything less to be as exciting."

Hugh Padgham joined Townhouse in 1978, at a time when many of the better New Wave artists were growing a little frustrated at having to communicate



with both a producer and an engineer in order to put their production ideas across successfully. A generally good sort of chap, with a friendly manner which puts you at your ease, Padgham soon forged himself a reputation as a sympathetic and highly skilful coproducing engineer.

"At the time there weren't too many engineers like me who were both fairly young and also had the kind of background and been through the sort of schooling I have. I started off straight from school as a tape op, first at Advision and then at Lansdowne in Holland Park where we did everything from string quartets and Jazz to those Top Of The Pops cover albums you used to find in Woolworths. They were a hoot to do because you'd have three months worth of Top 20 hits to record and mix in three days flat. There'd be great players like Herbie Flowers and Terry Britten on the session and we'd put the rhythm sections, strings, horns, sometimes even the voices all down at the same time. Everybody was reading from dots so it was pretty quick. But all the same, good microphone technique was of paramount importance."

It was precisely Padgham's skill with microphones which gave him his first big break as a producer. He was a pillar at the Townhouse for three years, virtually on call for anybody who booked the studio and striking up good professional relationships with many of that era's best producers. Including Steve LillyWhite, with whom he worked on a couple of classic XTC albums --- Drums And Wires and Black Sea as well as the third Peter Gabriel solo LP. On that project he met Phil Collins who, says Padgham, was so impressed by the drum sounds he got on tracks like The Intruder that he asked the young engineer to help him produce his first solo album, Face Value. Not only did that album seriously launch both the Collins and Padgham team as international hitmakers par excellence, it also marked the first airing for the much acclaimed Phil Collins drum sound.

"Apart from the fact that it's Phil playing, and it wouldn't be the same if it were anybody else, I am totally responsible for his drum sound. People don't believe it when I tell them there's

HIT LIST

LPs

Phil Collins Face Value (Virgin) Hello I Must be Going (Virgin) No Jacket Required (Virgin)

David Bowie Tonight (EMI)

Genesis Genesis (Charisma) Invisible Touch (Charisma)

The Police Ghost in the Machine Synchronicity (A & M) Human League Hysteria (Virgin)

Paul Young Between Two Fires (CBS)
Paul McCartney Press to Play (EMI)

no artificial or digital reverb on any of his drums. It's all a question of a good room, natural ambience and different noise gates. One of the advantages of working in 32- or 48-track is that you can record all your different ambiences on different tracks and then treat them later. On *Through These Walls* on the second album, for example, the verse starts with dry drums, which then open up and get very ambient in the choruses and then go dry again. We did it manually by shutting off faders and then feeding them in again to suit the structure of the song."

The story goes that the drums on the single of In The Air Tonight were dubbed live onto a 2-track master mix of the album version after Atlantic Records boss Ahmet Ertegun suggested the song would be a hit if there was only a back beat on it for the people to dance to. I'd always assumed it was apocryphal, but Padgham insisted it was true.

"Ahmet was the big boss and he'd come down to hear Phil's album at the cut in New York and was convinced we'd missed out on a big hit by having the drums come in so late. He's got a good ear and has like 30 years of experience so when we got back to England we gave it a go. I don't know why we didn't go back to the multitrack but instead we took the 15 ips 1/4", set the kit up in the maintenance room at Strawberry in Dorking and Phil whacked out the part in about 10 minutes. We mixed it and then edited it back into the album version where the big drums begin. So if you listen to the single you're actually hearing two halves of a recording one generation apart!

It was Phil Collins' personal recommendation that got Padgham his next big gig: The Police. Summers and Copeland's particular brand of minimalism suited Padgham down to the ground.

"What you don't say is as important as what you do in my book. If a song

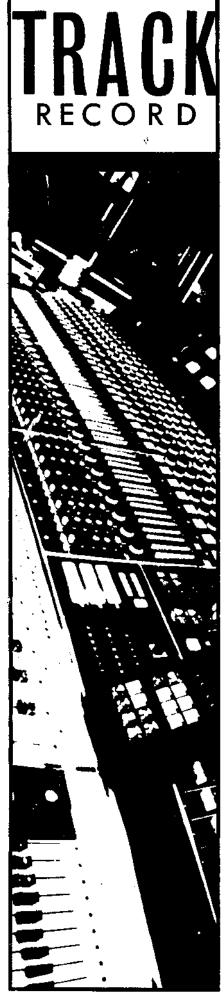
evokes atmosphere then it's easier to make it work with next to nothing in it. Which doesn't mean to say you don't put a lot more down than you use, it's just a question of having the courage of your convictions and being prepared to leave things out entirely on the mix. One of the things which kept the Police so simple and direct in their sound was that none of them was an accomplished keyboard player. Sting can bang out a few chords on a piano but that's about it. He's not at all hot on programming synthesisers and so he rarely uses them. The only reason there's a piano on Every Breath You Take is because after they'd laid down the basic backing track live they were stumped for an idea to make the middle eight happen. I remember Sting sitting in the studio as I was running the section past him again and again. He began hitting this note on the piano out of sheer frustration. I said 'That sounds really good, let's stick a little echo on it and put it down'. If I hadn't been there he'd probably never have taken his own idea seriously at all."

But that's all in the increasingly distant past. To bring us up to date Hugh Padgham was scheduled to spend the early part of 1987 on albums by The Fixx and Dream Academy. 1986 had been taken up by three albums: Paul Young's Between Two Fires, Paul McCartney's Press To Play and Genesis' Invisible Touch. This last one, with its heavyweight single Land of Confusion is already proving a world bestseller. The other two have been less successful, even by the artistes' own standards.

'In McCartney's case we were trying to make a raunchier album than he's done in a long time and I think his basic fan following prefer him doing ballads while, at the same time, we should have realised that we didn't have the killer single which would have drawn in those people who don't usually buy his records. And as for Paul Young. Well, he carries with him such a good band that he and they wanted to make an album with a basic group sound rather than go for the big productions. And I think we did a great job. But, to be candid, this was the first album where he decided to write all of the songs and I don't think you can turn into a great songwriter overnight. The material is good but it's maybe not classic.

"Wonderland made the Top 20, which was respectable enough. But it seems like times are hard in the charts right now for a lot of important artists who would normally expect to do a lot better than they are. But then I look at the Top 10 UK singles... I mean, I'm not knocking Five Star but... that's not my scene. Sometimes I think 'If that's the sort of record you've got to make to have a hit these days, then I'm glad I'm not making them'."

Chas de Whalley



PRODUCER/

EDITOR: Robin Sellers

ARTIST: Jackie Wilson

TRACK: Reet Petite

This Track Record is unusual in that we're not looking at the recording of a track, but rather its extension from a standard 7" single to a 12" extended version, some 30 years after its original release. But first, a little history.

The Prologue

There is a division of CBS called CBS Special Products, which specialises in the marketing of back catalogues. Over the years they have acquired hundreds of thousands of old titles from other labels and control one of the largest collections in the world. It's a rather unglamorous side of the industry, but apparently there is a steady stream of international business in providing such titles for low budget compilations, etc. Not surprisingly none of their ex-hits had ever made it into the current charts until the recent Fifties revival swept Jackie Wilson and Reet Petite to number one.

Wilson originally recorded the track in America on Brunswick Records in 1956. About three years ago, Scratch Music, a small English independent label, bought the rights to the Brunswick catalogue from CBS, and it was they who re-released Reet Petite as a single. They first put it out a few years ago, and although it had sold consistently, it had never done much in the charts. Then one of the Scratch directors, Les McCutcheon, happened to be watching the Omnibus History of the Video on the tele, which featured a video animation set to the very same track. Being shrewd and business-like, he acquired the rights to the video and initiated a new promotion campaign which finally resulted in the Christmas-time-success — thus unequivocally demonstrating the power of the video promo.

Being a classic dance track, there was an immediate demand for a 12° extended version. Given the flexibility of multitrack tape, this would have been a relatively simple matter usually involving the beefing-up of the rhythm section, the addition of various echoes and effects and the insertion of an instrumental groove section in which the remix engineer throws in all his or her favourite samples, noises and rhythmical devices. Unfortunately, in

the case of Reet Petite the multitrack was lost long ago, and so everything had to be taken directly from the original ¼" stereo mix.

Most Scratch Music productions are handled in the company's own 24track studio in Chertsey, and it fell to house engineer Robin Sellers to extend the basic 2 mins 40s version to a happening extended dance track.

No Multitrack

The main problem was not having the multitrack tape which meant 1 couldn't drop things in and out, or change the balance or sound of any individual track or instrument. So what I did was copy the original 15ips 1/4" stereo master onto a couple of tracks on our Otari 24-track at 30ips. Then I sampled various bits of the track into the Akai 900 sampler and played around with them in time to the track recording the new bits either on other tracks on the Otari, or straight to the stereo machine to be edited in later. I always tend to heavily compress samples from records to give them punch and consistency. I experimented with editing the fronts and backs of samples to get little bits of words or phrases that sounded good and that I could use.

"I couldn't really touch the verses, because they're just straightforward. But there are some good brass bits and the 'Oh, oh, oh' bits and I took them down an octave and then mixed them back in with the track just to make it different and add some depth. Then there's the rolling 'r's which I sampled a two beat section of and edited into a loop so that it was exactly in time with the track. Then I played it back through the auto-pan on the Yamaha SPX90, adjusting the pan rate to be in time with the track. The sample starts on a snare drum beat, and if you listen you can hear the snare repeat each time

the 'r's pan round.

'There are a couple of points where I just put the whole track through an effect, like there's a sudden wash of reverb and at another point the whole track is phased. But anything I wanted to put an effect on individually had to be kind of extracted from the mix so that the whole track wasn't effected like the brass stabs that I put a repeat on. I filtered out as much of the rest of



Jackie Wilson said... Remix?

the track as I could just using eq, put them into the Akai and topped and tailed them to leave just the phrase. Then I recorded them from the sampler back onto a spare track on the multitrack, in time with the stereo mix. so that I could then put the effect on when I mixed it all down to 1/2" generally tend to mix to 1/2" at 30ips which makes editing easier. It was actually quite a job finding the edit points in this case because the bass drum is quite laid back — in fact there's nothing really up front on it at all. But I like editing anyway, so it was a good challenge.

"The final mix is a mixture of straight copies from the $\frac{1}{4}$ " onto the $\frac{1}{2}$ ", samples from the $\frac{1}{4}$ " put straight back onto the $\frac{1}{2}$ " maybe with some effect added, and samples taken from the $\frac{1}{4}$ " onto the $\frac{1}{2}$ " and then laid back on the $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

"A lot of the purists hate it and say I've ruined it, but we've had great feedback from all the clubs, they really love it. I'll be doing the new one soon, the follow-up, which will be a double A side of Sweetest Feeling and Higher and Higher. I'll certainly be doing an extended version of Higher and Higher, and maybe Sweetest Feeling, although I'm not sure because it's a much slower track."

Add One Linn...

Robin's efforts have resulted in the track being played more or less twice through giving a total five minutes playing time — not particularly long for a dance mix, but he's done well to keep it interesting for that long considering the limitations imposed by having no multitrack. Also on the 12" is what is termed an 'Enhanced' mix, which is the original 7" plus a few additions, Robin explained:

"I just happened to have the Linn 9000 plugged up while I was listening through to the track and started playing along with it. I knew the song well because ever since they got it it's been one of my favourite tracks, and so I had a few ideas for it. I added some stereo tom fills, ride cymbal, cow bell, clap and crash cymbal overdubs and told Les if he liked it, it could be another track on the 12". The original mix was only two minutes and 40 seconds and without the multitrack it was obviously going to be quite difficult to keep it alive for more than about five minutes, so we thought the enhanced mix was an interesting option to add on.

If you like Jackie Wilson you'll be pleased to hear that Scratch Music are releasing a double compilation album, The Classic Jackie Wilson, and with the rest of the Brunswick catalogue at their finger tips, who knows what other classic oldies will soon be coming our way?

James Betteridge



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RECORDING WORLD



Once upon a time, there was an enterprising young man by the name of Russell. Nearly everyone who had anything to do with music in Manchester knew him and most of them had played on sessions with him at some time or other. After many

years and many bands, our hero landed a deal with a publishing company, named Chappell, who offered him an advance to make things a little easier so that, hopefully, he'd be able to continue his songwriting more comfortably (bless 'em).

Russ had two choices; he could squander it on the good life and live really well for a time, or he could put it to some more permanent use: ie, a home recording studio. He compromised. First came the minor binge, then the hunt was on for suitable premises in which to house his venture, Adventure.

After much hoofing and cycling around about 50 (his exaggeration not mine) houses all over Manchester, he finally settled on an old Victorian one in south Manchester which came complete with a roomy cellar.

Now, as we all know from our school English lessons, the best laid plans of blah blah blah, and Russ wildly miscalculated the expense involved. Months of singing telegrams and sessions for advertising jingles followed. Every penny he could earn went towards his project. The typical 'garret musician' syndrome. His dedication, plus the right sort of mates, paid off and Adventure began to take shape.

Russ started to purchase equipment thinking he could just chuck it in the cellar, with no thought to the cosmetic aspect, and get on with forging a

career for himself. The Seck 24.8.2 desk and Tascam 32 mastering machine were the first purchases, gleaned from the advertising section of various pertinent magazines. Once the gear was installed, he soon realised that the clinical environment was less than conducive to working. Recording studios are generally quite nice, airy places with gleaming walls and potted, plastic plants etc. So anyway, he pulled himself and some mates together and began renovating the studio areas.

"Every single wall, and every single ceiling has an infrastructure of 3" x,2" rough sawn planks stuffed with rockwool insulation fibreglass. That took weeks and weeks and must've knocked 10 γears off each of our lives. It was horrible."

He went on: "I managed to blag all the rockwool off a local insulation firm. The first time I went in there I thought 'right, I'll sneak in and ask one of the blokes on the tipper trucks.' I found my man and said, 'hey, listen mate, have you got any stuff that's fallen off the back of a lorry?' cause the place was Just full of rockwool. So he took me to this place where they obviously keep all the redundant stuff 'till they get rid of it and said I could have so much for a fiver.

"I gave him the fiver, brought my booty home and realised with horror that it was only going to do about a hundredth of the job. Back I went,



Russell's venture, Adventure

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RECORDING WORLD



Don't knock the rock wool

about three days later, but I couldn't find my supplier. This official looking chap came into the warehouse and saw me. I thought I'd been caught and tried to explain that I was after any scrap rockwool they couldn't sell. I told him what it was for and he said. 'come with me lad. Have you got a lorry? Come back with a van and you can have the lot.' He took me to the exact same spot as the other bloke who'd ripped me off for a fiver. I must have gone back about five times. It would've cost me a fortune dealing with the other fellow. I was lucky to get caught."

The next move was to decide which walls were to be reflective, and which were to be absorbent. The lads got together and studied the appropriate literature and basically learned as they went along. Russ, typical musician, had never built a thing in his life – in fact they were all complete novices when it came down to DIY and such.

The absorbent walls, after being stuffed with rockwool, were covered in ordinary cardboard which was pinned on with a staple gun. The reflective walls were covered with hardboard and the whole lot hidden by a tasteful layer of hessian. The doors are all about three times the thickness of a normal door, and packed with sand as a noise reducing agent.

There were many minor problems to be ironed out and corrected as they appeared. For instance, Russ had to buy a digital timer for the central heating boiler as the electric timer interfered with the recording. There were pipes all over the place which had to buried or conduited. They put the viewing window joining the two main recording areas together in too soon and had to rip it out again.

They started off with a three week time schedule and about a £200 budget for cosmetics. They really should have known better, poor, naive souls. The £200 became £1300 and the three weeks, three months.

There were earthing problems too. When he bought the desk he also bought some condenser mikes, but the desk wasn't built to take them. He didn't know that yet, being a novice. He didn't realise that it was an old fashioned live desk as opposed to a 'today' desk and, as such didn't have a built-in power supply, which meant, of course, that he could only use dynamic mikes. So, then he had to get a maintenance chap in to build a phantom supply. Instead of doing just that, he tried to convert the first 16 channels to phantom power by sticking 47 volts, or whatever it is, in there. It proved to be too much voltage for certain pots. They started to go mad, became live, and started to buzz, which of course made the whole channel useless. That was a big problem and has recently been solved with the purchase of a new phantom power supply box.

Besides the Seck 24 into 8 desk and Tascam 32-2B mastering machine, there's a Tascam 38½" eight-track machine. The large monitors are

Goodmans but are soon to be replaced by Tannoy Little Reds and the small monitors are AR.

In the effects rack we find the ubiquitous Yamaha SPX 90, a Drawmer dual noise gate, Aphex Aural Exciter, Yamaha R1000 digital reverb and a Vesta Fire SL200 compressor/limiter.

Another interesting facet of Adventure is the two live vocal separation booths, one of which is an old 'coal hole'. Studios in London pay a fortune to recreate the kind of natural reverb inherent in a structure of this sort.

As I write, the studio is still unfinished but extremely useable. It's what an estate agent might describe as 'cosy' or 'intimate' rather than roomy, but it's reasonably comfortable if not quite home.

Adventure has been in use now for about nine months and the quality of the recordings I heard is professional and free from unwanted noise. It is a home recording studio, in the strictest sense, although Russ admits that he's had to do a couple of paying sessions to enable him to meet the odd heavy bill, but they were for some of his musical mates anyway.

While we were chatting the doorbelf went. Another singing telegram for him. So it was into his gorilla costume and away for him, and back to a steaming typewriter for me. Ta-ra.

John Slater

STUDIO T E S T

ART Proverb ● RRP: £399

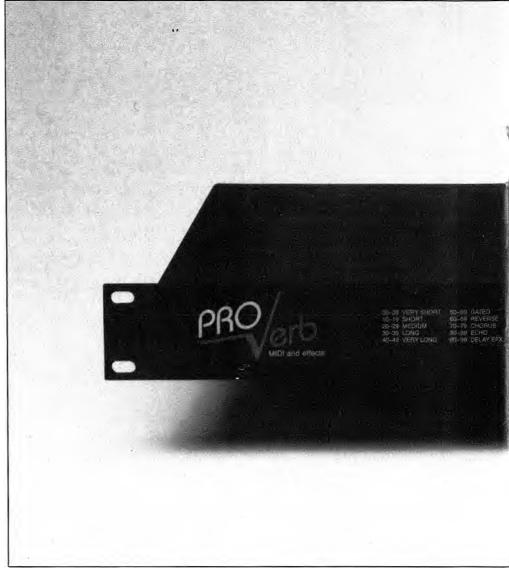
Remember MXR — one of the best known producers of affordable processing and effects gear on Earth? Well, strangely they went bust. But the same people did re-emerge soon after under the name of ART, and are doing well with a list of products that includes a 1500ms digital delay line, 1×31-band and 2×15-band graphics, a pitch shifter, two programmable digital reverbs — the DR1 and DR2A—and now this; the Proverb preset digital reverb.

The DR1 is an upmarket fully programmable model while the DR2 goes out at around £400 offering a 10kHz bandwidth with nine basic preset effects including standard, gated and reverse reverb, with programmable decay time up to 12.8 secs, pre-delay up to 75ms, HF damping and position in the imaginary room relative to the sound source. The DR2 sold extremely well, but was seen to falter a little in the face of competition from the Alesis Midiverb offering 63 fixed presets and the all-important MIDI compatibility (it don't mean a thin' if it ain't got that DIN) all for £399. Then the subsequent launch of the Alesis Microverb offering 16 presets with excellent 16-bit performance for a mere £250 really put a dent in it. Hence, we see the Proverb emerging from the ART R&D department, undoubtedly aimed at reclaiming the market from the ever so popular Midiverb.

On the face of it the Proverb stands a very good chance of winning the battle for new custom: it comes in a 1U 19" all-metal rack mounting box offering 100 presets against the Midiverb's 63, plus a number of other refinements.

The Extras

Like its competition, it can operate with a mono or stereo input and will provide a mono or stereo output. The clever thing is that a system of break jacks automatically combines the two outputs into one should only one jack be connected, hence in the case of stereo repeats, the full number of repeats will be heard in mono. This



The Proverb; everything but the mains switch

isn't possible with the Midiverb which uses phono sockets.

Programme number changes are made with a pair of nudge buttons and a large clear LED numeric display. The extra is that once you have depressed the relevant button to start you running up or down, depressing the other button will have the numbers jumping in 10s rather than units. So if you want to go from 15 to 95 you don't have to race through all the interim numbers; it makes complete sense in operation and removes much of the nudge tedium.

It could be argued that the smaller format of the Midiverb is better for home applications, but with everything else being either rack or half rack in design, having the controls and display on the top of the unit is rather awkward, and means that it always has to go on top of the pile. The front-facing 19" standard design, then, is almost certainly a plus.

One of the beauties of a stereo in/ stereo out device is that it is possible to use it directly in-line with a stereo mixer or instrument. With this in mind it's very useful to have a 'Mix' control on the effects device so that the subjective strength of the effect can be adjusted easily. Again, this is where the Proverb scores an extra tick in that its mix control is an easily accessible front panel slider as opposed to the rear panel rotary control of the Alesis.

A standard feature of most small format units such as Roland's Micro Rack or the Accessit range (both excellent in their own ways) is that the lack of space means they use an external power supply, ie a mains adaptor which, unless you get a rackmounted multi-unit version, has to sit on a shelf or on the floor somewhere slightly awkwardly. The Proverb has plenty of room and thus has a built-in power supply and a simple captive mains lead emerging from its rear panel.

Proper MIDI

The Midiverb was thus named because programme changes can be made remotely via MIDI. A serious limitation here is that there is no facility to change the relationship



between the programme selected on your other MIDI instrument, eg your synth, and the resultant programme on the Midiverb. In other words, if you select preset 58 on your DX, you'll get effect 58 on your Midiverb, which could be unfortunate if preset 58 is a Rhodes, because it's going to get a 500ms reverse reverb on it. The Proverb allows you to programme what effect you want for which external programme change, and that's very important. What it doesn't have that the Midiverb does, is a MIDI Thru port in addition to the MIDI In. A silly omission.

With all the complex processing and time delay manipulation required to create convincing reverb and echo effects (and the Midiverb certainly does that) it seems a shame not to throw in a few chorus/flanging-type effects. You guessed it, the Proverb does. All the effects are extremely good quality in terms of noise and apparent bandwidth (no figures available as yet) and more importantly, they are immediately musical. They have obviously been

programmed with a musical ear and it's easy to find a programme that works for a track. One of the nice touches with the Midiverb is the table of effects printed on its top surface. The Proverb can't do that, but there is a list of the rough divisions on the front panel:

0-9 Very short, from 0.2s 10-19 Short 20-29 Medium 30-39 Long 40-49 Very long, up to 25s 50-59 Gated, 200ms to 600ms 60-69 Reverse 70-79 Chorus 80-89 Echo 90-99 Delay effects

There is also a full list provided separately. But even with a list, in practice you will probably tend to go approximately to the right number for what you want, and then sequence through them using your ears to make the final decision. I've often started off thinking I wanted a medium bright room and finally settled for a close warm hall — or even a cosy warm lap,

but that's another story.

All the reverb tails are clean without the slight digital noise occasionally heard on some of the Midiverb's presets. The chorus and flanging effects are quiet and powerful, and the overall subjective quality of all the effects is very pleasing. One question, though, why no mains on/off switch? It's such a pain having to plug and unplug the mains every time, especially when the sockets are hidden down behind something large and heavy.

Conclusion

This is undoubtedly a winner and highly recommended. Though the Midiverb will take a bit of a caning, Alesis should still clean up at the lower end of the market with their amazing Microverb. If you want the greater flexibility, however, I'd say the Proverb is currently the business and there'll more than likely be one in my own home set-up very soon.

James Betteridge

RECORDING WORLD



Ebony Recording Studio, Hemingborough, North Yorks, YO8 7QS Tel: (0757) 638812 Telex No: 587619

Anyone with an appetite for strong atmospheres will immediately warm — or chill — to Hemingbrough Hall. Driving up to the large, imposing Manor House on a gloomy Sunday afternoon, I was reminded of the ghost stories of MR James. As I left the car, my breath turning to vapour in the wintry air, I half expected to see a spectral figure with a face like crumpled linen waving to me from an upstairs window.

The house and its on-site studio are owned by Daryl and Lindsay Johnson, an amiable husband-and-wife team who welcomed me warmly and no doubt extend the same hospitality to all visiting clients. Daryl is the studio's resident engineer, producer and general handyman, whilst Lindsay handles accounts and administration. Daryl's first 'studio' consisted of a

TEAC 2-track in an attic. In eight years he's progressed from these humble beginnings to his present position as Lord of the Manor. Mrs Thatcher would be proud of him...

The Hall itself came complete with seven acres of land and its own ghosts. The good people of Hemingbrough steer clear of the place after dark, believing it to be haunted by the phantoms of an old woman and a soldier. Recently, a workman decorating the living room saw a little old lady walk past the window on a number of occasions and politely asked the Johnsons if their Grandmother was staying with them.

Naturally — or rather, supernaturally — the old woman was no relation and her appearance could not be explained. Strange lights have been seen in darkened rooms, loud rappings have disturbed the silence of the night and a deafening fart was heard on the stairs for which neither Daryl nor Lindsay will claim responsibility.

However, nothing paranormal has occurred in the studio itself. (Once, Daryl assures me, 30 witches wanted to be recorded whilst dancing naked and chanting ungodly mantras, but they were refused admission). The control room has been carefully soundproofed and its crowning glory is a Trident TSM console custom-built to Daryl's own specifications with LED meters, a streamlined patchbay and upgraded ICs. There's a Lyrec 24-track recorder which was praised for its speedy drop-in facility; an invaluable aid to nervous vocalists and bananafingered guitarists like myself. Fans of

fuzz may prefer to record on a custom made Valve 24-track. Rack gear includes an AMS digital reverb, four channels of Aphex excitement and an Aphex Compellor. Noise reduction consists of 24 tracks of Bel NR for the tape machines and dbx150 for stereo mix-down. Recording is monitored by Tannoy speakers and tested for home consumption on nasty little Auratones.

The playing area comprises one thousand square feet and its ceiling is 18 feet high. The room possesses the kind of awesome ambience you'd expect from a haunted mansion and the dead can be raised with the aid of four Marshall cabinets, a Ludwig drum kit and an Oberheim drum computer.

And yet; as Hemingbrough only costs £40 an hour to hire, it'll obviously attract those with limited funds; surely it'd make sound business sense to install a couple of decent synths? Poor musicians invariably lack instruments.

Yet Daryl considers his studio to be complete and is intent on turning the house itself into a Hard Rock Hotel. During breaks in recording, bands can retire to the rest room where they'll find a TV, video and snooker table. A series of bedrooms with bathrooms en suite are available to accommodate musicians from afar and a fully self-contained flat is currently under construction.

Heavy Metal devil worshippers will love Hemingbrough Hall and £40 an hour is a highly competitive rate. Especially with the added attraction of a ghost in the machine.

David Bowker



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STUDIO [S [

TC 2290 DELAY/SAMPLER RRP: £2070 (8 seconds)

It would probably be unfair to expect Danish businessmen (those of to electronic) to have heard of Top Cat. However, TC and The Gang were such an important and fond part of my childhood that I can't quite help but find the title as applied to state-of-theart processing equipment rather amusing. What it is to be so easily amused.

The TC 2290 is a very high quality digital delay, effects unit and sampler aimed at taking a bite of the AMS and Bel markets. It apparently uses some new form of sampling equivalent to the 18-bit system that involves an extraordinary 1MHz sample rate, using 1Mbyte of memory per one second of delay to produce a very audibly excellent 20Hz-20kHz (±0.5dB) audio bandwidth, a 100dB dynamic range and 0.05% distortion at 1kHz, 0dB on the meter. These figures undoubtedly outstrip both AMS and Bel, and the sound quality is certainly quite excellent.

It has remote control possibilities including a straightforward footpedal remote for stage work - The Link, and MIDI-keyboards, sequencers etc. At present the MIDI facility is just for triggering and preset number changes, but a future software update will allow pitch changing of samples. In fact, being almost entirely 'soft' its internal workings are very flexible, and membership of the tc Software Club opens you up to abuse from Officer Dibble (no relation to Ken) and future software innovations available on low cost replacement chips. These might include programmes to cope with second generation MIDI (if and when), different computer/sequencer interfacing or just a simple memory extension - up to 32 seconds at the moment, with no loss in quality.

Five sets of in/out sockets at the rear allow five external processors to be inserted in the 2290's line and switched in from the panel in any combination. That's an extremely useful facility to have in a studio, and makes for a very high level of flexibility.

On first glance the 2290 looks rather complicated and overendowed with knobs, meters, nudge buttons and numeric key pads. But when it comes to control systems, more controls



What's up TC?

often mean greater operational simplicity because you don't have to remember lengthy sequences of pushes and twiddles to make alterations - there's generally a separate, clearly titled control to give access to each basic parameter. Indeed this is the case here. A quick east-to-west shows the front panel to be divided up into 14 clearly labelled sections. It soon becomes apparent that, though offering further levels of control, the 2290 can be used as a simple delay, chorus/flanger and sampler, and that it is user communicative - to coin an unnecessary extension of the usual

There are 100 internal memories, 20 of which come with semi-permanent factory presets – meaning that you can set it up so that they can be written over, but otherwise they remain safe as basic effects.

Going For The Nudgers

Four of the 14 sections involve adjustable (rather than simply switchable) parameters and so have LED value displays and associated up/down nudge buttons. These are Delay Time, Feedback, Modulation Speed/Depth and Output Volumes. In each case you can choose a central calculator-type keypad to determine the values rather than the individual nudge buttons if you so desire. The keypad is simply assigned to a particular parameter by pushing either the up or down nudge button relating

to that section, and a green LED below the section's display flashes to indicate that it's currently under consideration. There is still a slight bias in me toward knobs and sliders as opposed to nudge buttons, but when setting a delay time that might range anywhere from 0ms to 32,000ms, resolution problems start to arise with sliders and you have to have coarse and fine controls or continuous travel pots which are bulkier and probably more likely to go wrong. So when it comes down to it, for quick and reliable parameter adjustment it's better to go for the nudgers - a principle that could also possibly be applied to other areas of life. Within minutes, and with hardly a glance at the manual, I was steaming away at the controls with a real feeling of familiarity. A welcome thought for studio managers who will often have to leave freelance engineers to fend for themselves.

On the far left the first section contains, as per normal, a rotary input trim control with associated 3-colour LED meter. This is a 'one in, two out' device, ie it has one input and two outputs – stereo left and right. At this price I'd expect to have a stereo in/out option to allow it to be connected directly in-line with a stereo source. For professional studio use, or use in a PA auxiliary rack at the end of an auxiliary send, it won't make any difference.

One of the major features of the AMS 15.80S delay is that it can do



stereo samples, unlike any other straightforward sampler. This involves actually having two complete delay lines within it and that's one reason AMSs are so expensive. Later this year new software should be available enabling two 2290s to be linked (clocks included) to allow stereo samples, but at present it's only a mono sampler. Similarly, pitch shifting should be a future update, although at present none is available.

On the positive side, the 2290 has both unbalanced and balanced inputs and outputs. The unbalanced connections are on mono 1/4" jacks; the input is very high impedance (1Mohm) and will produce 0dB on the meter with an input signal between -22dB and +2dB, which means that it will interface with virtually any standard line level and that it's possible to directly connect an electric guitar without the need for a DI box. The outputs are 7500hm and capable of 16dBm. The balanced XLR input is designed for professional balanced line level feeds from -10dB to +14dB and the balanced outputs will deliver +26dBm. There is a fairly generous 12dB headroom on either input to preclude overloading with peaks. In the same section is a bypass button with its own LED sensibly marked 'Delay On', avoiding the confusion that can arise when a lighted LED means the bypass is on - in other words the effect isn't.

Recalling and storing presets is simplicity itself. The Preset section

consists of a 2-digit display to cope with the 100 presets 0-99, and two buttons: Preset and Store. Pushing the Preset button allows you to select the desired memory number via the keypad, hitting the keypad's Enter button to bring it into effect. Editing takes place in a memory buffer which empties when a preset is changed or when the power is switched off. Selecting a preset copies it into this temporary memory, and having edited it to your heart's satisfaction, pushing the Store button allows you to select the memory number into which you want to store it, finalising the operation by a touch of the Enter button. A doddle.

Then there's the 'Feedback' section in which a large 2-digit LED display and a pair of nudge buttons allow the amount of feedback to be adjusted from 0-99, ie from a single repeat to infinite sustain. In addition to the amount, it is possible to alter the tone of the feedback effect by inserting a high and/or low pass filter. A second button allows any one of these three parameters to be selected, and their values are set via the nudge buttons.

Dynamic Duck

Continuing with their unconscious allusions to the world of popular cartoons, this is obviously tc's answer to Donald Duck. It's one of three types of modulation available on the 2290, and is an extremely useful effect. The idea is that the level of the echo is controlled dynamically by the level of

the original signal, so that when you're playing, the repeats are ducked down in level by an adjustable amount, and when you stop playing they come up again, at a preset rate, to 100%. This allows you to set strong repeat echo effects with plenty of level and feedback, without completely confusing your playing. This effect can be reversed so that the repeat is only there when you are playing and ceases when you stop. An example of a use for this is where you're playing over a number of chords or with key changes and you want an echo but don't want the repeats from the previous bars to hang over.

The built-in LFO (Low Frequency Oscillator) can be used to produce a number of tremolo/vibrato, flanging/chorus effects all with adjustable speed, depth, delay and feedback. There is also a built-in auto-panner function which allows the direct and/or the delayed signal to be set left or right or automatically panned – again with adjustable speed and depth. By taking the delay signal level right down, the 2290 could be used simply as an auto-panner.

Sampling is also a simple matter with audio or manual triggering, and straightforward top and tail editing via the Delay section nudge buttons. The quality of the samples really is unusually good - there's virtually no difference from the original sound. The standard model that will be marketed by Sound Services in the UK will have eight seconds of memory and this can be divided up between samples and delay so that you can store (say) a two second sample in one of the preset memories and still have six seconds available for delay. Or you can store any number of samples in preset memories up to the total time you've allocated. At present there is no offline storage for samples mainly because the 2290 uses 1 mbyte of memory per second of sample, and thus they will probably have to use a hard disk system to cope with the volume of data, which could be expensive - we'll find out later in the year.

Conclusion

Being almost entirely software controlled, the 2290 I have before me is actually only the beginning. Via a 'Special' button, there are various sub levels of programmability that my incomplete manual didn't advise me on. As it is the unit offers a great deal at an extremely reasonable price, and the pristine quality of its samples and delays should make it attractive to studios at any level. If the off-line storage, the stereo link and the pitch change options all become available at an affordable price, the 2290 could be a huge success.

James Betteridge

If it's out of sight, you must be out of your mind!



Sanity available from:

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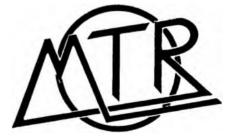
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There's more to home recording than pointing a mike at your mouth and singing. How much more? Chris Vee has the answers

When I first started recording in my second floor flat in Kensington some 10 years ago, much to the chagrin of my neighbours, I had a 4-track Teac recorder, a mono PA mixer/amp and a Shure Unidyne B. The results were far from breathtaking and with the benefit of hindsight, the reasons are now all too obvious. Experience is the greatest teacher, but for those readers who haven't got 10 years to waste I'll do my best to guide you through the more dense parts of the recording jungle in a somewhat more expedient manner. Recording is like photography, any idiot can point a camera and get a recognisable picture, but it won't bear any resemblance to the same scene photographed by an

experienced pro. We've already covered the basic equipment that you'll need in previous months and you probably know the meaning of words like multitrack, microphone and plug, so I won't dwell on these areas more than I have to — what I want to do is to get you producing results that you can play to your friends without wanting to crawl away and die — and without it taking years of trial and error...

Recording, by which in IM&RW we really mean multitrack music recording, can be divided into two easily identifiable stages — getting the sounds onto tape, and mixing the recorded tracks down to produce a finished stereo master. Assuming that

you've got your act together musically, (which could be an over optimistic assumption), the first hurdle is to get everything onto tape cleanly and that's what we'll be looking at this month. There are two ways of presenting a sound to a recording system; you can either use a microphone to capture a 'real' sound or opt to DI or direct inject the output from an electronic instrument such as a synth, a drum machine or an electric guitar. If an instrument is purely electronic, there is no sense in playing it back through an amp and then miking it up unless you are desperately in love with the way it sounds through your old Marshall

The second method is simple, just plug the instrument into the line input of your recorder, set the meters for a healthy reading and you're off. This brings us to the first area that needs explanation — metering and the definition of a healthy level. Firstly though, why are there any meters at all? I mean, you don't have meters on your ears but you can still hear most sounds okay without making any adjustments. The truth is your ears cover a tremendous range, from hearing a pin drop to a gunshot. Electronic equipments is only just starting to be designed with anything approaching that range and good old fashioned recording tape, particularly at cassette tape speeds, is still a mile off.

Noise annoys

With either tape or audio circuitry you run into difficulties at both extremes of level — if the signal you are processing is too small, it becomes contaminated with noise, and if it's too large, it becomes distorted. Noise is present to some extent in any electronic system but usually at a very low level. If the signal is much larger than the noise, then the noise is hidden, so the trick is to get as much level into the circuit as possible before distortion becomes a problem. If you feed in too much level, however, you come up against the upper limit of the circuit and then you hear distortion life can be a real swine can't it?

The way that most recording systems operate is to have a set level corresponding to 0VU on your meters, the bit just before the red zone, at which the signal will be large enough to overcome noise but which will still leave a little leeway to cope with unexpected peaks without adding distortion. This leeway is often termed headroom — no relation.

It makes sense so far, but the world being the way it is, music doesn't come in convenient fixed levels; it varies, sometimes drastically, so you have to know how to interpret what your meters are trying to tell you. The easiest type of meter to understand is the peak reading meter, or PPM as it is sometimes called by those in the know, and this is most often seen as a bar of LEDs or as a plasma display. These respond very quickly to changes in level but are contrived to hold the loudest level for a short period so that you don't miss seeing a reading caused by a very short spike of sound. Because you are seeing the true peaks in your signal you can afford to use up a little of the headroom by recording the very loudest peaks at around plus 3VU, or more, into the red. Tape distortion is gradual rather than sudden, a bit like valve distortion, so you can play about to find out just what level you can get away with before the distortion becomes objectionable.

The only other piece of sage-like wisdom I can pass on here is to take extra care with very bright sounds such as cymbals or tinkly DX synth sounds — always record these at a lower level than usual or you will find that distortion once again becomes a problem for reasons too technical to delve into here. When recording drum machines, take care not to get the hi hats too loud as they tend to dominate the mix.

Many home multitrack machines have these peak reading bar meters but some still have the older moving coil meters which use a mechanical pointer. These are fine for sounds that don't vary a lot in level, but being mechanical they are simply not fast enough to keep up with really fast changes such as individual drum beats. The result is that the meter always reads quite a lot lower than the



Fishnet popshields help the — untrained — vocalist

actual signal peaks and a drum beat indicating 0VU might easily be peaking at + 10VU. Because a drum beat is short, it isn't affected so badly by distortion as other sounds, but | 10 VU is still a bit much and the drums will start to sound gritty unless you drop the level. Try setting up so that drum beats peak at -3VU and you'll probably do okay. It's worth spending some time fiddling to find out how far you can push it. Cymbals and hi hats on their own should be set to peak at around -10VU to avoid distortion problems.

Microphones

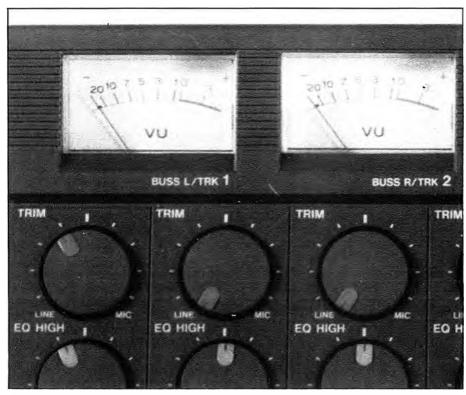
And to the mystic world of microphones. There are hundreds to

choose from and they all sound different. You are almost certainly going to want to record vocals and, unless you have a high budget, that probably means a medium priced, undirectional dynamic mike. Fortunately, if you pick the right one, it will also double as both drum mike and instrument mike too - the Shure SM57s, 58s and Unidyne 3s are good examples of established models. Skimping in this area is false economy because the sound will never be better than the microphone produces in the first place. Expect to spend not less than £50 on a reasonable vocal mike and at least £100 on a really good one. Choose a model from a reputable manufacturer and take notice of the recommended uses in the brochures they are generally not far off the truth.

When recording a singer, try placing the mike about six to eight inches from the performer's mouth and point it slightly up or down so they are not singing straight into it. If popping on Ps and Bs is a problem, use a piece of fine nylon gauze or stocking stretched over a suitable frame between the singer and the microphone. If the singer is a bit on the quiet side, the mike may be moved even closer if you use this improvised breath shield, and this should help you to get enough level when you might otherwise be struggling.

At this point you're nearly ready to make a start, but I will say this only once — clean your hands before every session and don't use any crappy cheap tape, otherwise you'll live to regret it.

Get your finger off that record button and wait till I've finished damn you! There are a few other things to weigh up when planning a session. By now you have probably mastered the art of overdubbing and dropping in over duff sections, but did you know



The danger zone — the meters sometimes lie

RECORDING WORLD

that you can get up to 10 instruments onto the final mix from a 4-track recording without ever having to play more than one instrument at a time and without bouncing any part more than once? The system is easy; you record three instruments, one at a time if need be, onto the first three tracks and then mix these down onto the fourth adding another instrument live as you mix. If you balls'it up, just run the mix again, the only thing you can't do with the live part is a drop in. That's four instruments in the can already and you have the first three tracks free to record over again with new parts. Record two of the remaining tracks and then mix these onto the third adding yet another instrument or vocal as you mix. This gives you seven parts on tape with still two tracks you can wipe and fill up again. Once this is done, you have nine parts on tape and you can add one more live as you mix onto your stereo machine — easy isn't it?

This kind of planning is worth the hassle because every time you submix or bounce tracks, you lose a noticeable amount of quality, and if you can limit each track to only one bounce, your finished result will be a lot cleaner and sound much more professional for it. If you have to bounce more times than this, plan your session so that any sounds that have to be bounced a lot are the ones earmarked to be in the background in the final mix - backing vocals for example. Don't bounce the drums or lead vocals any more than you absolutely have to, drums in particular suffer badly from bouncing, especially on cassette multitrack machines that use noise reduction. And on the subject of noise reduction, don't forget that it is a two way process, if you record with noise reduction, you have to play back with it. Dbx noise reduction seems to make some drum sounds a bit unclear so you could try adding a bit of treble then you record the drum part to try to balance things out a bit. Effects are not

normally added as you record because this deprives you of choice when it comes to the final mix, but if you only have four tracks to play with and a limited number of effects, then you might have to add some of your effects either as you record or as you bounce several tracks down to one. Simple rules are not to use too much effect and to try to get echoes in time with the tempo of the song if you must use them. Next month I'll be describing how even cheap effects might be used to enrich your recordings, but to finish off this month -- a few words of advice for anyone at home trying to mike up drums and electric guitars.

Talking drums

The popular method of miking drums is to use a separate mike for each drum with maybe a couple high up on stands to pick up the cymbals and a bit of the overall feel. If you have a Porta One with only four mike inputs, this obviously isn't on unless you can get hold of an extra mixer and a few more mikes from a friend who just happens to run a PA company — so you have to find another way. And now a couple of truths about drums; if they are tuned well and played well then they will be easy to record, but a badly tuned kit fitted with old heads and played too lightly will be a nightmare, even in a professional studio. Take time to get the kit sounding right with a wooden kick drum beater, remove the front kick drum head, and try rolling back the carpet if the overall sound is too lifeless. Use a mike about three inches above the snare and another in the front of the kick drum pointing at the beater and use a folded blanket in the bottom of the shell to damp the sound. For the rest of the kit, use a single mike at a distance or a pair if you can afford the tracks to record in stereo. The distance mike could be virtually anything you have at a pinch but a mike with a good top end will be an advantage as it will give a better

cymbal sound. Those zany looking square PZM mikes that you can buy at Tandys are cheap and give a bright sound but they need to be stuck to a wall or other flat surface, otherwise you get no bass out of them. Two on opposite walls work fine if you want stereo. If you don't have a separate room to use as a control room, you'll need to set the mike levels by trial and error to get the right balance between the kick drum, the snare and the rest of the kit, and you might want to alter the tone controls a little if the mikes you have are not giving the sound you want. Changing the position of the mike inside the kick drum will help and you will get better results if this is on top of the blanket.

Recording the electric guitar is easier as it has a middley sort of sound and doesn't make too many demands on the microphone used. A general purpose undirectional dynamic mike, even a boring old Unidyne B, placed a few inches in front of one of the speakers will work fine and you can hang a few towels over a clothes drying frame to build an acoustic tent if you need to keep out the sound of other instruments in the room. On the other hand, it's easier and far more sociable to buy a Rockman. Recording the bass is similar but may benefit from the mike being a bit further away from the cabinet and the mike will need to be one that is designed to work well with bass sounds. This will either sound good straight away or it will be such a pain that you will resort to plugging the bass straight into the mixer and DI'ing it, which is what most studios seem to do anyway. Like drums, a lousy sound is often the result of bad playing, not the microphone's fault.

Once you've got your head around these few simple guidelines, you'll be able to get started in laying a few tracks down (man) — next month it's monitoring and adding special effects, then onto mixing.

Chris Vee



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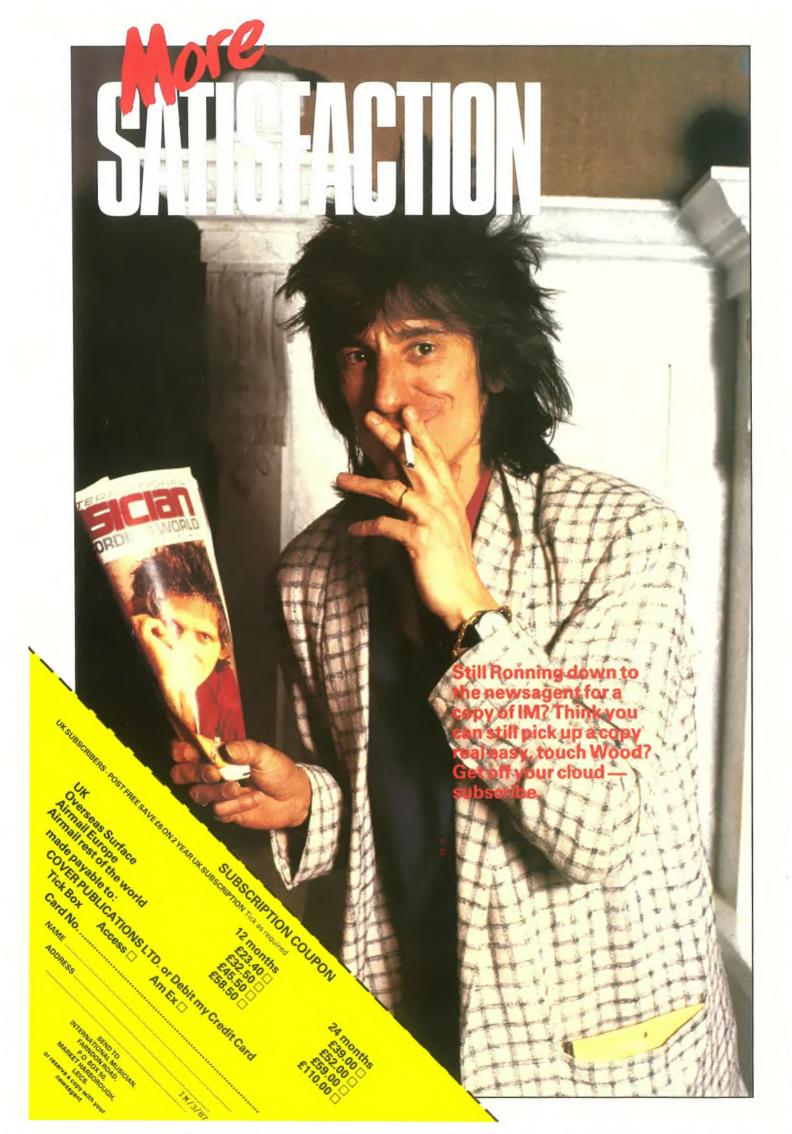
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Kawai -Tech

Perhaps spurred by the largely favourable reception their R-100 drum machine and K3 synth received last year, Japanese piano and organ manufacturers Kawai have taken two further significant steps into proinstrument manufacture and marketing. The first, the establishment of a UK subsidiary, has allowed their entire range of instruments ranging from acoustic pianos through electronic keyboards to guitars, mixers and amplification, to be made readily available over here. And now that subsidiary has brought forth

a new product, in the form of a top-of-the-range digital piano. Available in 88 or 76note scale lengths, the piano features a wooden keyboard, MIDI In Out and Thru, keyboard split, and a variety of instrument voices, all based around Kawai's digital wave technology as featured on the K3 synth. The larger Model 250 will cost you £1,395 inc benchstyle stand and VAT, and boasts no less than 10 voices taking in two acoustic-style pianos, two electrics, harpsichord, vibes, jazz and 'full' organ, brass and string ensembles. The smaller Model 150 features a correspondingly smaller price tag (£1,245 inc bench stand and VAT), and a shorter list of voices - eight, all told, leaving off the jazz organ and the string ensemble.

The Model 250 sports a tremolo (?); both feature a chorus, built in amplification (20W on the 250, 10W on the 150) and, interestingly enough, six alternative temperaments for authentic pitching of classical pieces. Expect a review spon, but for more information on the pianos now, contact Kawai on: (0202) 296629.



HHB's new demo facility

Move On Up

HHB, the well-known Hire and Sales firm, have just moved to new and spacious premises at 73-75 Scrubs Lane, London NW10, a half mile up the road from their old Nicholl Road location.

The new location, easier to reach by road, boasts a permanent demonstration facility showcasing Amek and TAC 24-track systems,

had from UK distributors

Blue Suede Music, on (0302)

Sony analogue MCI JH2424 and digital PCM 3324 machines, the PCM 1630/ DMR 2000 & 4000 CD mastering systems, and a wide range of other equipment including consoles, amplifiers, studio effects, mikes, monitors, the F1 and 701ES digital recorders, CLUE computer logging and editing gear, and the AMS Audiophile, which is also used in the site's digital editing suite. More space too for the Hire and servicing side of the business.

If you want to know more about HHB's range of services, phone the company on: 01-960 2144.

Air Guitars#2

Persofthe ultimate in air guilarsolos will doubtless be delighted to hear that Blow Hard, the people behind the ludioneus pink inflatable Strateopy featured below, have now gone and done the same for veryone's favourite sons—the Flying V habitd, Explorer, Les Paul Custom and Les Paul Standard flame top. Giddy with success for breathlessness they've also applied their inflationary principles to a sax ophone, the Steinberger headless (weightless?) bass, and a rather dubious device of llew.Hard's own devising, he ZX7-synthesizer (17).

The balloon is likely to go up on other Blow Hard products later in the year, but for the time beingside on the greatly expanded land expandable) range can be



66803.

But is that a '53 or '62 yintage?'

Mega Metal Mania

Gigsville, UK distributors of Aria products, have just unveiled a new range of guitars from the Japanese company destined to bring a glow to the crotch of any axe-hero. Their modestlytitled Mega Metal Series is headed up by the Stage 3

EWS

KPi, claimed to be the first production guitar available in the UK with both the inevitable Kahler flyer trem system and a 'one-touch' locking top nut—so it's goodbye Allen key and hello a 'simple cam lever' to lock the strings in place.



'Dramatic but tasteful' but is it metal?

The guitar itself is active, controlled via a Hi/Lo eq, and is driven by two single coil pickups and one humbucker in the bridge position, selection of which is via a 5way switch. The guitar also has volume and pickup on/ off controls (useful for a positive start or end to a solo). Looks-wise, we are told that the Mega Metal series is 'dramatic yet tasteful', featuring the familiar RS body shape, cranked headstock and 'lightening-stroke' marker inlays. The Stage 3 KPi and the single-pickup Stage 1 KPi are both available in Black, White, and Black Burgundy, at £499 and £439 respectively, while the remaining guitar in the range, the 'more subtle' Stage 3, features the FT-1 fine tuning locking trem, passive circuitry and conventional dot intay markers, and is available in Black or White for £359. More info from Gigsville on: 01-847 5595/7.



More Studiomastery

Four Play

Studiomaster, purveyors of fine mixers to the world, have a whole new series out to follow on the heels of their MIDI-equipped Series II. The non-MIDI Series IV comprises two models, a 12:2 PA and a 16:4:2 recording desk. The 12:2 has 10 mono and two stereo

Amiga Amigo

Supersoft, makers of the rather wonderful Microvox sound-sampling system for the C64 micro, have secured UK distribution of an American made MIDI interface for Commodore's top of the range Amiga micro. The Skyles interface has two MIDI Outs, one MIDI In and a MIDI Thru, and has been obtained as a precursor to the release by Supersoft of their own software for the

Amiga which despite its enormous potential for sound sampling, sequencing etcetera, has yet to be supported by the really pro software it needs to make its mark musically. Hopefully, with Supersofts help, that situation will soon change...

The Skyles interface is available from Supersoft for £49.95 inc VAT. Reach them on 01-861 1166.

Input channels with switchable RIAA eq for use with turntables. Extra inputs can expand the desk up to 32 channels. Features include 3-band eq on inputs and L/R outputs, four auxiliaries with two returns, ALPS 100mm faders, switchable output levels by onboard links, individual phantom power selection and an external power supply.

1111111111111111111111111111111

The 16:4:2 can have an extra four groups added, and an extra eight input channels, taking it to a 24:8:2 configuration, sharing many of the on-board characteristics of the 12:2.

Further details on both mixers and the rest of the Studiomaster range from the company on: (0582) 570370.

Strictly CP

Carlsbro have just brought out a range of three MOS-FET power amps, their first to feature the ultra-low distortion technology and dependability inherent in the design. These lightweight, 19" rack-mounting units feature external stereo/ mono switching, DC load protection, surge-free turn on (I could do with one of those), and comprehensive In and Out facilities. The CP250 goes out at £549.01, the CP600 at £725.48, and the CP1000 at £862.73. The

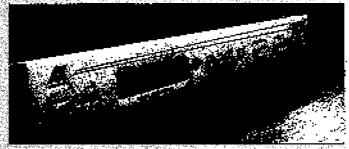


Heavy Metal... and Oxide, and Silicon... 600W and 1000W models also feature a two-speed cooling fan.

Fine Fies

Audio Kinetics;
Manufacturer of the famous O lock-timecode system for video and lape synchronisation; have been busy offate, upgrading their 4.10 Alpha System with the addition of four new software packages; O. Soft, ADB, SPX and Conform, available now as standard within the price (EIK our entity: £8:145).

They vealso gone and ... done a very clever thing—



The best way to earn your stripes, their new Striper timecode, generator can be used to timecode ('stripe') an audio tape at twice or even four times the normal speed. Striper's generator can be locked to internal crystal, yideo syncs, or the frame rate output of the updated.

Timelink, now known as the Gearbox—making the Striper/Gearbox combination a flexible timecode/mixed standards system.

Eurther info on the entire range of Audio Kinetics products from them on: 01-9538118.

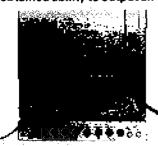
Reinventing Stereo

AKG Acoustics have come up with a new concept in sound reinforcement, and a new buzzword to go with it Audio Sculpting. Their DSP 610 compact Delta Stereo Processor is essentially a multi-channel controllable delay unit and digital signal processor which allows up to six inputs to be processed and output to up to 10 separate channels, each with computer-calculated delay settings. Why? To eliminate the audio mess time lags can create in large area multiple. PA situations. (Try listening to the station announcement at Kings Cross, and you'll see what I mean...)

Also new from AKG is the ADR-68K digital reverb and effects processor, a so-called 'blank-slate' totallyprogrammable device, capable of a vast range of software-controlled effects, and featuring 16-bit converters for compact-disc quality sound, full MIDI implementation, the ability to run two programmes simultaneously, and RAM cartridge dump for user programmes. Details on these and the rest of the AKG range from the company on: (4868) 25702.

Opcode Update

Opcode Systems, the Californian music software specialists, have just announced two further additions to their extensive range of products for the Apple Macintosh micro. The Studio Plus MIDI interface gives a Macintosh Plus micro six MIDI Outs and two fully independent MIDI Ins, allowing simultaneous input from two different MIDI sources (a pair of keyboards, keyboards and drums) or the often desired, rarely obtained ability to output an



The back of a MIDI'd Mac

external MIDI clock sync on one port whilst simultaneously recording into the other. The Studio Plus connects to either the Modem or Printer ports of the Mac and, finish in matching beige, is designed to operate whilst sitting neatly under the Mac itself.

On the software front, Opcode have just released the latest version of their well-established sequencer package. The version 2.5 package combines all of the features of the flexible version 2.0, including track looping and recordable tempo changes, music transcription option and MIDI files, with the ability to save your sequences directed to the highly sophisticated Deluxe Music Construction Set (Electronic

Arts) or *Professional*Composer (Mark Of The
Unicorn) where the
sequences can be
transcribed, and printed out
as scores.

Prices and details on both products from Opcode's main UK distributors Argents, on: 01-379 6690.

Session Step Out

Always nice to hear of a company responding to customer demands, so lot

of Brownie points to **Session**, makers of the

sponymous ampaior th

production of the FS3, a new footswitch which provides

owners of their bassionetts and SC 2100 amps with a number of much-requested factures. The three switchs on the tough polycerbonich

device offer in addition to

switching, the ability to mis both clean and overdrive chemics together—LEOs by the side of each foliable click' switch show you the options currently selected. The FS3, designed by

Session parent compeny Axess, goes out at 224.



Session's stomper

Axess have also set up a design order nothing and delivery service to allow their entire range to be delivered to your local should be a d

delivered to your local shop within 48 hours of them

.Wore on the entire Sessic: range on: 01-352 2900.

Dynamic Beyer

Mike manufacturers Beyer Dynamic have added five new models to their extensive range. Two models, the M380 and the MCE6 are particularly appropriate for dealing with the high sound pressure levels generated by some instruments. The M380 would be a natural choice for bass drum miking, for example, but its broad bass frequency response and rugged design means it could also handle brass instruments, double basses, and amped bass guitars. The MCE6 meanwhile, developed originally from a 'tie-clip' design has amongst

other applications, found favour with flautists...Also new to the range is the MC740 studio capacitor microphone, switch selectable for omnidirectional, wide cardioid, hypercardioid and figure of eight pickup patterns.

Completing the additions are two new stage vocal mikes, the M700 which boasts a very rugged design and feedback-proof hypercardioid response, and the MCE80, a high-quality electret condenser mike which can be battery or phantom powered.

More info from Carlsbro on: (0623) 753902.

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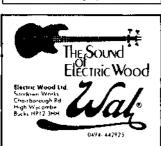
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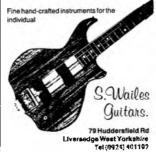
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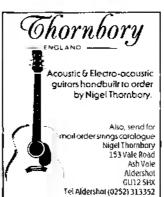
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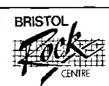
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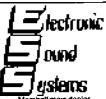
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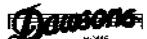
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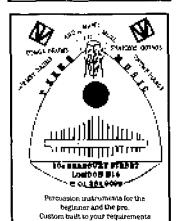
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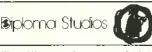


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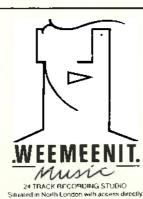
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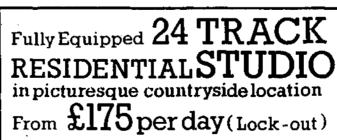
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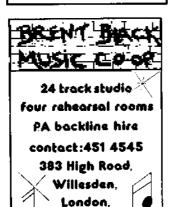
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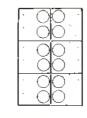




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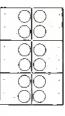
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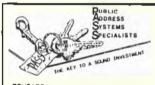
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| AXE MUSIC20                                                                     |
| BASS CENTRE69                                                                   |
| BEYER DYNAMIC105                                                                |
| BLACKPOOL SOUND CENTRE78                                                        |
| CARLSBRO SALES28                                                                |
| CARLSBRO SOUND CENTRES72                                                        |
| CELESTION INT130,IBC                                                            |
| COMPUTEC34                                                                      |
| ELECTROVOICE100                                                                 |
| ELKA ORLA UK25                                                                  |
| FCN18                                                                           |
| FRAZERWYATT9                                                                    |
| H/H ELECTRONICS74                                                               |
| HIGH-TECH MUSICAL SERVICES LTD21                                                |
| HUMBUCKER MUSIC80                                                               |
| JOHN HOLMES (ROCKCENTRE)78                                                      |
| JOHN HORNBY SKEWES16                                                            |
| KAWAI                                                                           |
| LONDON ROCK SHOP3                                                               |
| LUBBOCK FINE34                                                                  |
| MARSHALLOBC                                                                     |
| MTR101                                                                          |
| MUSIC LAB78                                                                     |
| OHM INDUSTRIES90                                                                |
| OPUS AMPLIFICATION62                                                            |
| PHILIP REES34                                                                   |
| PROFESSIONAL AUDIO14                                                            |
| PRO GUITAR WORKSHOP130                                                          |
| PROJECT ELECTRONICS101                                                          |
| PUL\$AR48                                                                       |
| ROCK CITY MUSIC54                                                               |
| ROCK-1T MUSIC82                                                                 |
| ROCKY ROAD80                                                                    |
| ROD ARGENTS39                                                                   |
| ROLAND UKIFC,68                                                                 |
| ROSE MORRIS59,61,63                                                             |
| R.S.D 8-9                                                                       |
| SCHOOL OF SOUND RECORDING82                                                     |
| SENNHEISER HAYDEN46                                                             |
| SHURE10                                                                         |
| SOUNDCRAFT12                                                                    |
| SOUND SALES35                                                                   |
| SOUND TECHNOLOGY83                                                              |
| STUDIO EQUIPMENT DIST92                                                         |
| T.A.C97                                                                         |
| T.C. ELECTRONIC24                                                               |
| THATCHED COTTAGE AUDIO84                                                        |
| UNISOUND38                                                                      |
| VINCE HILL ASSOC32                                                              |
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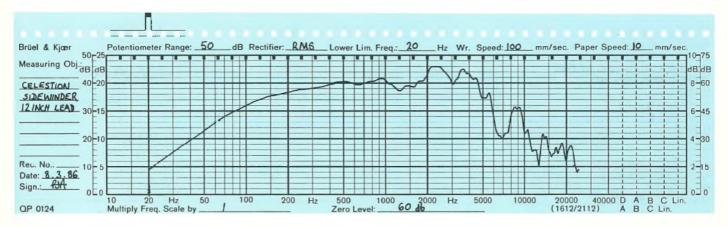
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