Transoniq Hacker

Happy New Year!

At Long Last:

The BoWorks Collection Vol. 1

Pat Finnigan

Product: *The BoWorks Collection Vol. 1*
From: Walter Bowie.
Price: $24 (includes shipping).
Contact: 614.431.2307 (vox and fax), 30 Dillmont Dr., Worthington, OH 43235, email: BoWorks@aol.com.

Just about the time we get a handle on twisting our Ensoniq's tail and coaxing some real stuff out of it, it either gets superseded by the next variant, or in this day and age, simply discontinued.

And since the MR/ZR series (A) is one of the most misunderstood products in the Ensoniq line, and (B) almost always requires a computer editor to really scratch the surface of its wavetable, not a bunch has been written for it, at least in the commercial mainstream. But at long last, this has just changed, as this month we inspect the FIRST commercial offering for the MR/ZR variants. So this is a pretty tough act, as Ensoniq has given away some of the best stuff for it already. So...

The Roses

Nice EP's somewhere between the Roland and Yamaha tine/pad school. "BabyFace" is the quintessential Yamaha DX7 EpianoA patch. Coupla good ethereal aid pads reminiscent of the original factory "Tundra" patch. Coupla attempts at the Sam Mims School of Modulation: "Angel Wings" and "Dream Land" typify this bent. "Sub Level" is sure to rattle the welds out of many a hoopdee. "Moon Drops" is a nice departure from the staggered wave-entrance bill of fare.

Dayglo yellow disk is hard to be misplaced or forgotten. First commercially available set of patches for the MR or ZR-variants.

The Thorns

This collection sounds like topical edits of existing fare. The mod wheel only controls vibrato, and on the above "Marcus" patch, imparts different rates and depths for each different wave. Interesting, yes; usable, well, somewhere, I guess. The "BabyFace" EP is a standard GM electric piano with reverb and chorus (ala CC #91 and #93 messages to a GM module), although to be fair, a buyer's quote on the press release claims, "I'm in love with that Babyface patch", so different strokes. No drum kits or drum machine banks.

The "Saxxy" is a breathy edit of Pelle Piano's "Tenor Squeak" (add pressure and you'll hear Pelle's identifiable flat 5th squeak come in). No real alternate uses of the mod wheel for filter sweeps, but this may be by design rather than neglect. No analog brass or synth sounds, although "Juno 106" would lead me to believe one was hiding here. Not so.

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

Issues remaining: **10**

If your address label indicates more than 11 issues remaining, please let us know if we need to work something out with back issues or something.

No documentation: a photocopied half-page of 10-point type for a numeric listings of the 40 sounds in Bank A (as well as Bank B) are all you get. Then again, there's no real trick programming here so I guess you don't need anything else...

The Deal

Gang, by know you probably know me as a cynical perfectionist throughout these pages. So If I say this collection represents a great collection of novel patches you'd know I was being a wanker. My take on this set is basically a series of edits on existing patches you might already have in your library. No knockout winners or meat and potato faves. Just a nice set of clean and usable patches that sound disturbingly similar to what's already bundled in the box.

But most of you MR/ZR'ers would probably hear the difference between this collection and the factory sounds, although I dropped a few in my mixes and heard little, if any difference between my edits and the BoWorks edits. And, again, to be truly fair, programming the MR/ZR's isn't something for the fainthearted or to be taken lightly, so this set certainly bears auditioning, as well as standing on its own merit as a pioneering set of available sounds.

And to be unbiased, Matt Savard (who runs the MR/ZR web page at www.rain.org/~msavard/index.html) states *"Here are some of the nicest sounds I've ever heard programmed on the MR. There is a little of everything... This is a must buy!"* So just because my cranky butt goes hype on the lack of old school sounds (organs, in particular) doesn't imply this isn't a usable set for the MR/ZR gang. It's *very* tough to recommend it without knowing a price, so I'll guess and be a little predictive here. At $15.95, I'd say yeah, it's a must buy, at $19.95 it represents a great set of edits for the novice user, at $25.95 I'd say it's more grist for the mill than product, and at $29.95 I'd call it Bantha fodder. *[TH — It's $24. But that includes the shipping, so you're probably still in the $19.95 "great set of edits for the novice user" area.]* So there, that should cover any value questions perceived or implied...

And the fact that it's a collection of sounds for a discontinued keyboard from an historic keyboard manufacturer should add weight to Ms. Justices' blind scales. This collection isn't a left-of-center euro-trash 188 BPM loops for BMW ads, nor is it a collection of dreamy airbrush pastels for the nuage palette. It's not a set of LA "crap-jazz" stereotype windy-stringy-weenie-washie pads (yuk!) or definitive FM stacks. I think it really represents the first generation of edits that Walter Bowie has made available for the ranks of MR/ZR's owners yearning to breath free and load something other than MRD-100 and MRD-101 into their FLASH and RAM banks. On this count Walt has succeeded admirably. I give it a 7, but only if you reject censure and vote to impeach. As sounds for this family are RARE, if not simply very few and far between, I'd recommend it because in less than a year, I'll bet you won't find ANY new sounds for this pet. This synth wasn't made in the sheer numbers of a DX7 or an XP-80. So grab it while you still can. ▬

Bio: *Pat's not having much luck leading a normal life. Pat's wife recently had a baby boy. During all the hoopla she claims she vaguely recalls receiving SysEx messages from him, but that was months ago.*

ASR Sampling and Tracking on the Fly

Song-Building Strategies Using a Large Memory Storage Device — Part I

Phil Rogers

This article is primarily addressed to those of you who have expanded your ASR internal memory (using SIMMS chips) to its full 16MB capacity, and have connected to an external hard drive (removable or fixed) via your SCSI port. I myself have been using an Iomega Zip drive with 100MB removable Zip disks.

I. *A Song Project Involving Sampling and/or Auditioning/Loading a Large Number of Instrument Sounds — As the Song Evolves: Building These Serially Into Complex Kits Enabling Multiple Instrument Sounds for Each Track.*

When sampling from one of the more exotic CD-audio sampling disks on the market, namely *Heart of Africa, Volume 1* from Spectrasonics, distributed by Ilio Entertainments, I reasoned that it would in the long run waste less time to not do any serious programming of sounds/instruments during the sampling session itself. I could do that later, when I needed specific sounds that I could build into percussion kits and so on, while I was in the midst of creating a new musical work, or beefing up an existing one. (Then each type of percussion sound could be assigned its own volume level, pan setting, and so on, depending on the evolving mix of the particular sequence/song.)

A lot of the sounds on this disk were percussion sounds, vocal effects (yells, phrases), and pitched percussion, string and wind instruments that use native tunings/scales rather than equal temperament, although, on the disk, equal tempered samples were also provided for those who wish to flavor their contemporary sounding tracks rather than building songs using only traditional tunings. Since the projects I'm currently working on favor the latter, it made sense to use "no pitch" rather than "standard" pitch layers (see edit: layer) for these pitched instruments, and to assign a separate, single key for each pitch (see edit: pitch: wave sample range), usually utilizing only the white keys for the sake of simplicity. Also, part of the ambiance and charm of these instruments is displayed by the noticeable differences in timbre and amplitude of the individual notes of their kalimbas, slit drums, xylophones, and so on-mapping the same wavesample over several notes of the keyboard would throw the timbral design of the original acoustic instruments right out the window.

Please note that when you change a layer to "no pitch," you also will have to change the root key (edit: pitch) for all of the wavesamples in the layer to C4. That's most easily done by underlying the correct "layer" (rather than "wavesample") on the main instrument/layer/wavesample edit page, then pressing "pitch," then going to the page that lists the root key, and using the data entry slider to change the key to C4. The reason you use the slider instead of the data entry buttons is that, when editing all of the wavesamples in a layer, all will be changed to whatever value you scroll to with the slider; by contrast, using the buttons will change them all in increments according to the number of times you push the buttons up or down: so if you want to move the root keys of all the wavesamples up an octave (we're not doing that here, though), push the

"up" button twelve times (twelve half-steps in an octave); if you want to change them all to the same root key, use the slider.

I dedicated an entire Zip disk to saving this relatively raw wave data, setting up a directory as to types of sounds (percussion, winds, vocals, effects, etc.); and sub-directories when appropriate, such as within the percussion directory (drums, pitched percussion, body percussion, shakers, etc.), and sub-directories within those sub-directories when necessary, as within the pitched percussion sub-directory (kalimbas/mbiras, balaphones/xylophones, log drums, slit drums, etc.). There is a large variety of some of these multi-sampled types of instruments on this Spectrasonics disk. The majority are of extremely high quality. By using my ASR's digital interface to do my sampling, I kept them that way.

Another reason for keeping your instrument dictionary hard disk(s) separate from your song bank hard disk(s) is to prevent memory fragmentation which may make large parts of you disk's memory unusable, and, worse yet, may lead to loss of files. Once you commit an instrument to a hard disk, it's better not to edit it.

So load up your ASR with instruments and sounds from whatever storage media you have available, then tweak to your heart's content with reference to the actual song you're going to be writing; then when you are sure all your sounds are combined in a judicious way as is possible in a given instrument, save those that are complete to a directory you have created (that is dedicated to that particular song) on a songbank disk. At this time you can tailor your pan settings, and so on, at the wavesample level for these custom percussion kits, etc. which you are creating for a specific song at the time you are composing, since the instruments will be saved only for this particular song. The raw wavesamples are already stored on the sound dictionary disks and can be loaded and changed for subsequent projects: this is one of the many blessings that come with large amounts of internal and removable external memory.

If the song is particularly complex (in our context, meaning that the architecture of some of the instruments are extremely complex), don't necessarily try to get all your axes complete in one evening-in other words, don't save the bank until you're sure all the instrument/track locations are pretty much filled (in the meantime, keeping track of what goes where on a sheet of paper, or in a computer file). Of course, as a song evolves, or also as you listen to it on different sets of speakers, you may find that the volume and/or filter settings of individual wavesamples or layers of a certain instrument may end up out of wack with reference to the resulting mix, and so you may have to re-program the wave data or parameters for the instrument at that track location: after that, saving what seems like the final mix of the instruments and bank to a third generation Zip disk may be the only answer.

Many songs won't demand this level of detail, and then you can simply rely on sequence or song track overdubs to re-mix the volume of a particular instrument/track, since there will not be multiple types of drums and other percussion cohabiting within the same instrument.

I recommend saving your songs and sequences on a separate floppy disk, with a separate directory for each song with all of its sequences saved there individually, since you will be editing this stuff over and over again, and the little floppy is much less likely to become fragmented than the hard disk. If your song is loaded from the floppy at the time you finally save the bank on your hard disk, when (at your next session) you go to load that bank from the hard disk, it will also automatically load the song as long as the floppy disk is in its drive slot in the ASR.

I save all the sequences individually because of the operating system bug (third generation, inherited from the old EPS, passed from it through the EPS 16-Plus to the ASR) that mysteriously inflates the amount of memory a song takes up when you work a lot of overdubs, change sequence lengths, append sequences, edit song steps and so on for a period of hours (actually, sometimes much less time). When you try to save, all of a sudden the song is 1 or 2 thousand blocks and won't fit on your disk, yet if you save all the sequences, erase the song from internal memory, reload all the sequences and chain them back together just as you had them before, and then try to save, it will work, and the song will again be only 20-30 memory blocks. Of course any songtracks you have overdubbed will have been lost after you erased the sequencer memory.

Other than for vocal choir effects and so on (yells, whispered vowels, series of claps and snaps) I didn't create any multiple instrument kits from the *Out of Africa* disk, but, for instance, saved each percussion instrument with its ample variety of hits/sounds as a single instrument with its own name (e.g. djembe, Congo ankle pods, Nigerian udu pot). Most of the instruments were mapped starting on C4, and all of the sounds were panned to center. The majority of instruments had one layer only; some exceptions were instruments like the talking drum, which had a layer for bent notes, and another for straight hits; and for instruments that some of the samples on the sample disk were stereo and others mono. In other words, this Zip disk was to be used more as a sound/instrument dictionary than for song storage.

With a specific song in process, I would be auditioning a variety of instruments from this and possibly other disks, and I reasoned that (so as not to run out of sequencer tracks) I would build kits from the instruments I started using (as I began recording sequences) by copying the entire layer that constituted, say the djembe (drum) to a different instrument, say the Namibia slit drum, then adjusting the pitch ranges for either djembe or slit drum so that the two didn't overlap. I would then name the copied layer in the new instrument (edit: layer) djembe, name the original layer Namibia slit, and the total instrument something like *Afro 2- tr 1,* or something similar that reflects the song name and track number.

And don't forget to make sure that each layer is enabled in the patch (edit: instrument: patch selects): at this point, if you aren't hearing anything when playing the section of the keyboard that this layer is supposed to be sounding from, that's probably why. ▬

Conclusion next month...

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Bio: *Phil Rogers, who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, composes in a wide variety of genres, including world beat, early and modern classical, tribal/shamanic chants, and folk; on a number of occasions, he has been known to venture into the more humorous forms of hip-hop. Most recently he completed music for a couple of video documentaries about Peru, and has been working in conjunction with one of the area's better choreographers.*

Call For Writers!

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

How Sounds Work

Part V: Wacky Woodwinds

Mark (the MIDI Avenger) Clifton

Okay, boys and girl, this month we'll be examining the microcosmos of near-genius known as "Vibrato Oboe" and "Alto Flute." Vibrato Oboe can be found in Volume II of my *Hardwire* sound collection, distributed by Latter Sounds. However, Alto Flute does not appear in any commercially available sound collection to date. I'm saving it for the, as of yet, unfinished Volume III, so it should get released eventually. You can take some degree of satisfaction in knowing that you're the first humans beside myself to actually lay eyes on it. I realize that I probably shouldn't recklessly be giving away my product like this, but I like to be generous and I know it makes you happy.

Flutes

Alto flutes are just like regular flutes only bigger and sounding a fifth lower. They're used widely in flute pieces and are known for their velvety and voluptuous tone. The flute is classified as a woodwind mainly because it used to be made out of wood and it uses a fingering pattern similar to that used by most other woodwind instruments. Nowadays, however, most flutes are made of an alloy of brass and nickel, though it is possible to find ones made of wood and even crystal. Different types and proportions of metals will yield different sounds and most players will try to find a mixture that suits their taste. To generate sound, air is blown into a metal mouthpiece on the side of one end of the instrument. It then travels through the hollow body of the instrument where it vibrates, finally exiting out the other end. A variety of effects such as double, triple and feather tonguing are possible as well as rather difficult and little used harmonics known as "whistle stops."

One of the major problems with creating an alto flute sound is that when the Wood Flute wave is transposed down to alto flute range, it has a tendency to sound too breathy, especially on the attack. The initial burst of air in a tongued flute attack is naturally a little breathy, but transposed this low it sounds like a sampled hurricane. To cut off a little bit of the extra air at the beginning of the sound, I increased the sample Start Index to 02.

The LFO is programmed to simulate the typical amount of vibrato that a normal (as opposed to abnormal) player would use. On a flute, vibrato is caused by stuttering the airflow by moving the lips up and down. This causes more of a change in volume and breathiness than in pitch, so this patch uses a lot of LFO to filter and output mod with only a slight amount of pitch modulation. The LFO itself is controlled by the mod wheel in case you want even more vibrato. It uses a typical triangle wave (sine/triangle works too if you want a more mellow sound) and the Restart is on, letting the LFO begin freshly on each new note.

I've routed ENV 2 to control filters, shaped for a sloped attack and gradually mellowing out as the sound sustains, imitating the changing character and brightness of a natural flute tone. The ENV 2 Velocity Level is set to 33, making the sound mellower at low velocities and brighter at high ones. The AMP envelope is set to a similar shape to ENV 2. Together they change the brightness and volume simultaneously for a more realistic response. The attack velocity of both envelopes is set to yield a soft attack at low velocities and a harder one at high ones. A wind instrument sound should always have a somewhat rounded attack for a realistic tonguing effect, even at high velocities. The high velocity level on the AMP envelope ensures a volume range from a whisper to a shout without the volume slider ever needing to be touched.

Oboes

The oboe is a double reed instrument. That is, it generates sound as air is blown between two wooden reeds, making them vibrate. The body of the instrument is usually made of of wood, but some inexpensive student models are make of plastic with plastic reeds. The thought of playing such an instrument, though, would probably move a professional or accomplished amateur player to a fit of severe whining, so I wouldn't necessarily bring it up if I were you.

"Vibrato Oboe" shares many common features with "Alto Flute," including LFO modulation of pitch, filters and volume, similar programming in the LFO section, ENV 2 modulation of filters (though to a lesser amount) and similar shaping of ENV 2 and the AMP envelope. The main difference between the two is that Vibrato Oboe contains a slight amount of ENV 1 to pitch modulation, with ENV 1 shaped to a sharp downward slope. This simulates the slight sharpening of pitch in the attack of a tongued woodwind note as the player adjusts his emboucher and airflow. Such a pitch blip will work on all wind instrument sounds as long as it's very subtle. The listener should not be able to detect any outright change in pitch. Instead, it should simply be perceived as part of a realistic tongued attack sound and nothing more. Such an effect is absent from Alto Flute simply because it was too conspicuous with that particular waveform transposed down that low. Once you start shifting the pitches of acous-

SQ, KS, KT, E' Prog: ALTO FLUTE *By: Mark Clifton*

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	Off	Off
Wave Class	Breath		
Wave	WoodFlute		
Delay Time	000		
Wave Direction	Fwd		
Start Index	02		
MODSCR	Off		
MODAMT	-		
Restrk Decay	28		

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	32		
Noise Rate	00		
Level	26		
Delay	59		
MODSRC	Wheel		
Wave	Tri		
Restart	On		

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	52		
Peak	99		
Break	94		
Sustain	88		
Attack	13		
Decay 1	20		
Decay 2	40		
Release	26		
Vel-Level	40		
Vel-Attack	06		
Vel Curve	Convex		
Mode	Norm		
KBD Track	+00		

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	-1		
Semitone	+00		
Fine	+00		
ENV1	+00		
LFO	+02		
MODSCR	Off		
MODAMT	-		
KBD Ptch Track	On		
Glide	Off		
Glide Time	00		

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	3Lo		
Filter 2	1Lo		
FC1 Cutoff	000		
ENV 2	+64		
FC1 KBD	+22		
MODSCR	LFO		
MODAMT	+19		
FC2 Cutoff	000		
ENV2	+99		
FC2 KBD	+26		
FC1MOD-FC2	On		

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	99		
Boost	On		
MODSRC	LFO		
MODAMT	+16		
KBD Scale	+00		
Key Range	-		
Output Bus	FX1		
Priority	Med		
Pan	+00		
Vel window	>000		

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

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	77		
Peak	99		
Break	89		
Sustain	79		
Attack	08		
Decay 1	63		
Decay 2	55		
Release	49		
Vel-Level	33		
Vel-Attack	19		
Vel Curve	Quick		
Mode	Norm		
KBD Track	+00		

EFFECTS — HALL REVERB

FX-1	50	LF Decay	+10
FX-2	60	MOD (Dest)	FX1Mix
Decay Time	42	By (MODSRC)	Modped
Diffusion	40	MODAMT	+36
Detune Rate	40		
Detune Depth	12		
HF Damping	33		
HF Bandwidth	86		

tic samples beyond their natural range, such as with that sound, programming details can get a bit touchy. Still, if you want to take a crack at programming your own pitch blip into the patch, be my guest.

Both of these patches are polyphonic, allowing chords to be played. The problem with this is that every note you play will have a simulated tongue attack, while in real life many notes may be slurred or legato tongued. To simulate slurring, simply switch Pitch Glide to Retrigger. Don't touch the Glide Time parameter, though. Increasing this above 00 or 01 may create an undesirably queasy portamento effect. Using pitch glide will also eliminate overlapping notes in solo passages. When a polyphonic sound is used to play wind trills or legato passages, note attacks and releases may slightly overlap. While fine on a piano, this can destroy the credibility of a synthesized wind solo.

SQ, KS, KT, E' Prog: VIBRATO OBOE

By: Mark Clifton

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	Off	Off
Wave Class	Waveform		
Wave	Woodwind		
Delay Time	000		
Wave Direction	-		
Start Index	-		
MODSCR	-		
MODAMT	-		
Restrk Decay	12		

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	+1		
Semitone	00		
Fine	00		
ENV1	+01		
LFO	+02		
MODSCR	Off		
MODAMT	-		
KBD Ptch Track	On		
Glide	Off		
Glide Time	00		

ENV1	1	2	3
Initial	30		
Peak	00		
Break	00		
Sustain	00		
Attack	14		
Decay 1	00		
Decay 2	00		
Release	00		
Vel-Level	00		
Vel-Attack	00		
Vel Curve	-		
Mode	Normal		
KBD Track	+00		

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	34		
Noise Rate	-		
Level	19		
Delay	72		
MODSRC	Wheel		
Wave	Sine/Tri		
Restart	On		

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	3Lo		
Filter 2	1Hi		
FC1 Cutoff	051		
ENV 2	+25		
FC1 KBD	+25		
MODSCR	LFO		
MODAMT	+12		
FC2 Cutoff	059		
ENV2	+04		
FC2 KBD	+08		
FC1MOD-FC2	On		

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	54		
Peak	99		
Break	92		
Sustain	90		
Attack	12		
Decay 1	59		
Decay 2	67		
Release	22		
Vel-Level	33		
Vel-Attack	00		
Vel Curve	Linear		
Mode	Normal		
KBD Track	+00		

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	82		
Peak	99		
Break	94		
Sustain	92		
Attack	09		
Decay 1	64		
Decay 2	60		
Release	19		
Vel-Level	40		
Vel-Attack	06		
Vel Curve	Linear		
Mode	Normal		
KBD Track	+00		

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	99		
Boost	On		
MODSRC	LFO		
MODAMT	+10		
KBD Scale	+00		
Key Range	-		
Output Bus	FX1		
Priority	Med		
Pan	+00		
Vel window	>000		

EFFECTS — HALL REVERB

FX-1	50	LF Decay	+10
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HF Bandwidth	99		

You'll notice that both sounds use basically the same Hall Reverb effects setting, with only slight variations to match the characteristics of that particular sound. This is my handy all-purpose concert hall reverb setting which I use on almost all of my orchestral sequences. FX2 amount is slightly higher than the FX1 amount. This is because instruments that are further back on the stage from the audience are acoustically reflected through the hall to a greater degree before the sound reaches the audience's ears than instruments in the foreground, creating a livelier, wetter sound. By routing instruments that are usually in the rear of the stage such as brass, percussion, choir, harp and extra keyboard instruments to the wetter FX2 bus and routing those in the front such as strings, woodwinds and solo keyboards to the drier FX1 bus, you can create a more realistic three-dimensional effect. By adjusting the wetness of the effects busses, you can increase or decrease the "distance" between instruments.

As always, it's important to play instrument sounds within their natural ranges. The alto flute's (concert pitch) range is from G3 to G6 and the oboe's is from Bb4 to A7.

Well, kids, I'll be back right here in a month or two to confront a serious problem that plagues many Americans today: fake funk. So stay tuned, it may just save your life. ■

Bio: Mark Clifton is a player and composer of Jazz, New Age, Orchestral and Rap (yes, Rap!) music and an aspiring Cyberpunk writer who also wouldn't mind going into sound design or film scoring. His favorite color is the infinite, star-speckled blackness of space.

This article originally appeared in TH #98 (Aug., 1993).

HACKER BASEMENT TAPES — Steve Vincent

Harpsichord Suites 2 and 3

Frederick Hoffer

CD: *Harpsichord Suites 2 and 3.*
Artist: Frederick Hoffer.
Equipment: Yamaha PSS-795 keyboard, Roland MC-50 sequencer, Ensoniq DP Pro, Alesis MEQ-232 equalizer, BBE-462 sonic enhancer, HHB CD recorder.
Contact info: Fred Hoffer (Mockingbird Music Co.), 100 Forsyth Street, New York, NY 10002-5166. Phone: (212) 966-3221.

And I thought I had it rough, hawking my CD of Christmas music at holiday bazaars and craft fairs, putting up with scowls from the elderly vendors at neighboring booths who thought the music was "too loud," or toddlers toppling my carefully constructed mountain of CDs in the display or tearing the corners off my meticulously color-copied enlargements of the CD insert. Just when you think you have license for a little self-pity, along comes Fred Hoffer, who peddles his CD on the streets of New York City, where vendors are required to fulfill a number of stringent requirements: A plastic box holding the CDs must be a precise distance from the

ground, with a sign displaying his peddler's license, sales tax certificate, the prices of his CDs and tapes, a map displaying his allowed sales territory, and the name and address of the Consumer Affairs Bureau with instructions on how to file a complaint! Along with his boom-box, Fred states, *"And it all has to be easily portable, because if the cops chase me, I have one minute to move!"* Talk about takin' it to the streets!

So, what is Fred selling on the streets of New York? Well, he certainly got my curiosity up in his accompanying letter, in which he states right off the bat, *"The music is perhaps not quite what you are used to getting, so I don't know what you will make of it, but I will leave that up to you."* As a matter of fact, I'm not really "used to getting" any particular type of music. The privilege of being the *Basement Tapes* reviewer for these past three years has exposed my ears to a more amazingly diverse sampling of musical styles than I could ever have imagined. But I will admit, this is the first time I have reviewed a recording of harpsichord suites.

The title of Fred's CD is *"Harpsichord Suites 2 and 3 (1994-1996)."* He tries to explain the changed order on the CD by stating, *"On the CD, the order of the suites has been reversed. It makes a better connection that way."* And that's it. Apparently, what he calls *"Suite 3,"* (or Op. 34) comes first (tracks 1 through 8), followed by *"Suite 2"* (Op. 33), tracks 9 through 16. But then there are all these additional numbers next to each track, like 9639, 9529, 9502, etc., without any explanation. Never mind. We'll just trust Fred that *"It makes a better connection that way."* Let's just go on to the music.

If I were to listen to this music completely out of Fred's CD context, I would probably be grabbing for one of his complaint forms to get him off the street. It sounds like a bunch of harpsichord ditties that a novice harpsichordist is playing to practice for his or her lesson on Thursday after school, complete with hesitations, clams, rushing/dragging, and all. Why would I, a passerby on the streets of New York City, want to buy this? For myself, I wouldn't. But if I realized that this project was intended to demonstrate some basic and important music theory concepts, my interest would be initially aroused. In reading further in the CD insert, Fred explains, *"To avoid unnecessary disappointment with this music, let me tell you what I have tried to do."* (We're all ears, Fred...)

"This music is based on a very old principle, which is called 'counterpoint.' Counterpoint is a very intimidating word, but actually we are familiar with one form of it: the 'round.' 'Row Row Row your Boat' *is an example of a round, so is* 'Fr'ere Jacques.' *Counterpoint, then, is several players or singers singing different melodies, all at the same time, or the same melody at different times. It is linear, rather than vertical (or chordal) music. With very little practice you can follow these separate lines or melodies. It is like a piano player playing different notes with each hand.*

"This music developed from Church music during the later Middle Ages, continuing during the Renaissance. A little over a hundred years later, and in Bach's hands it was fully developed in the fugal form. Bach sometimes had three or four melodies going at the same time. Then it gradually fell out of favor, and by Mozart's time, it was no longer in use, replaced by homophonic or chordal music. That is the kind of music we are most familiar with today."

Fred goes on to explain some of the finer points and "rules" of counterpoint, then explains four of the tracks on his CD in terms of the different parts, demonstrating different aspects of counterpoint. But why the harpsichord? Well, Fred says, *"The harpsichord is the instrument of choice for playing counterpoint, because all those nasty twanging little notes are so separate from each other."*

I have to admit, if you can make it through the first couple of tracks on this CD, a sort of medieval trance sets in, and it is not entirely unpleasant! One begins to effortlessly distinguish between the strict counterpoint and free counterpoint, as well as separate out the parts from each other.

Let's peek into Fred's spartan studio and see what he uses for gear: *"My studio is entirely MIDI, so of course it is instrumental only. For this CD, I used the harpsichord patch on my first MIDI synth, a Yamaha PSS-795, which cost me $199 new. I find that I keep going back to the sounds, because they are so generally satisfactory. It just goes to show, more money doesn't always get you better.*

"My sequencer is a Roland MC-50 box, which I am used to and like better than a software sequencer, because there are less unpleasant surprises. I also used a doubling patch on the [Ensoniq] DP-Pro, rolled off some of the bottom end with an Alesis MEQ-232 equalizer, and used a moderate setting on a BBE 462 enhancer.

"For the CD itself, I used my new HHB stand-alone CD recorder, which sounds great and is easy to use. It has an audio input, so I can record right off my synth, and it puts the track numbers in last. I do notice that it does sound a bit more mellow than what I am used to hearing on CDs. The only gripe I have with it is that it doesn't stop recording automatically after the last song, but keeps recording until the end of the CD, so you have to be there to stop it." (I think I would make sure and "be there" on my CD project...)

So, what is this project? It's a music lesson! Marketed as such, I think Fred would sell more copies, and perhaps not have as rough a time of it down on the streets, as opposed to depending on the ears of the passersby falling in love with "those nasty twanging little notes" to sell his CDs. For admittedly, some of the tracks indeed sound like a petulant little girl pounding on the keyboard in protest of her harpsichord practice, when she'd rather be out in the alley playing stickball.

If I was a teacher of music theory, I would buy this CD to use as a lesson on counterpoint. What is your time worth to you, music teachers? How much time would it take for you to find and record some examples of counterpoint, and type out an explanation? One hour? Two hours? Spend the $3.69 (plus $0.31 sales tax) for this tape (Fred didn't state a price for the CD). You will be money (and time) ahead.

What does it take to sell your CDs on the streets of New York? Fred admits, *"It's a little rough. You have to be able to take rejection, so you need the right attitude."* I'd say Fred Hoffer has the right attitude.

If you want to get hold of one of Fred's tapes or CDs, contact him at the address above. To file a complaint, contact the NYC Dept. of Consumer Affairs, 42 Broadway... ▬

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

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

The Interface

Letters for The Interface may be sent to any of the following addresses:
U.S. Mail - The Interface, Transoniq Hacker, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland, OR 97221
Electronic mail - Internet: interface@transoniq.com. In many cases a quick answer can be obtained by posting to our interactive, on-line Interface at our Web site (http://www.transoniq.com/interface.html) or calling Ensoniq CS at 610-647-3930.
This is probably one of the most open forums in the music industry. Letter writers are asked to please keep the vitriol to a minimum. Readers are reminded to take everything with a grain of salt. Resident answer-man is Pat Finnigan (PF). Letter publication in the printed version of TH is subject to space considerations.

Hi all!

I have an **ASR-10** and a Mac (Powercenter 150) which will not cooperate when it comes to SCSI. The mac's only SCSI bus is SCSI-1. I've also added a PCI SCSI (JackHammer) card to the Mac. Will I damage either one if I hook up the ASR to SCSI card's 68-pin port? I would love to use Peak to edit my samples.

Thanks all.
Chibcha98@aol.com

[PF – Chibcha98: I'd stay away from the Jackhammer and connect to the standard onboard (built-in) SCSI port for two reasons. First, the Jackhammer is a fast and wide port, which is wasted on the ASR as the ASR is only capable of SCSI-1 (narrow) operations. Second, I don't know if the Jackhammer has fused termination lines (like the ATTO). If your drive supplies termination power AND the Jackhammer supplies termination power, somewhere down the SCSI chain those two will meet and it will NOT be pretty. Just for safety's sake, stay off the 68-pin port and leave it for data-intensive issues that requires 10-20 Mb/sec data xfer rates.

Check out our "back issues" link: Sam Mims of Syntaur Productions penned an excellent article on connecting your Mac to an ASR...]

Hey there Transoniq,

First things first, thanks for an absolutely wonderful site with more info than I'll ever be able to digest, it makes me think that my purchase of a 10-year-old synth was not unwise. Also, many apologies for asking about things which I expect have been asked many times before, I simply could not find anything in the ftp site regarding these issues where you said there would be.

All right then, to the questions: I need the Musicians' and advanced technical applications manual for my **EPS-16+**. I asked about this 6 months ago while at home in Canada, but had no luck with any distributors and have since moved to the Netherlands. Any advice on where to find them here in Europe and if there are any 3rd party tech manual distributors who you would recommend.

Second, while the single-line alpha-numeric display on the EPS-16 is endearing, I'd love to find out if there's a software program which can operate the EPS-16+'s sample editing and sequencing functions for the Macintosh. I've got a Mac5260 with 100MHz, 16meg RAM and 1.2gig HD. also, if someone in the '80s wrote a program doing this for an ancient Mac like the ones that came out around the time of the EPS-16, I'd gladly track down one of those since they retail used for 50 bucks or so.

And last, I'd like to subscribe to the *Hacker*, but I'm wondering if you think it will be useful considering you probably cover mainly ASR and newer Ensoniq synths. What's your thinking on that?

That's all for now, again apologies for polluting your column with, I expect, previously discussed matters.

Tot Ziens from Holland,
Jesse Proudfoot,
destijl27@hotmail.com

[PF – Jesse: Answers, in order:

(A) The Musician's Manual and other factory materiel is still available from Ensoniq. Call 610.647.3930 and wade through the phone prompts to the "User Accessories" menu. If they claim they are now unavailable, try Syntaur Productions at www.fatsnake.com/syntaur...

(B) Which sample editor did YOU see that was only $50? The only program that even comes close to this price is the Mac version of EAVES just released for the Mac last month by Rubber Chicken Software, and it's a parameter editor, not a sample editing program. It'll probably do what you're looking for – check them out at our "related links" at the top of the interface...

(C) Well, as the ASR is the last keyboard sampler Ensoniq ever manufactured, I don't think Creative Labs is going to let them get too "creative" and grab more of their Emulator market. Only time will tell if Fizmo is a winner or a fizzler. And of course, yes, I'd highly recommend subscribing to the Hacker, but as the collective Emu-Ensoniq-Creative has slammed the door in our face, we won't be here after 1999, so party on while we're still here...

(D) We'll be kicking at the lid WAY after the coroner leaves...]

TH –

I am planning an article on keyboard amps, and am soliciting input from those of you who play live. Please email me directly (address below) with a description of your gig, your rig, and why you use the amplification setup you do. If possible, please include pros and cons of your rig, other rigs you've tried, tips and tricks, and generally, anything you can think of that our readers might like to know about live gigging and amplification. Thanks, and I look forward to hearing from many of you!

Steve Vincent
vincents@harbornet.com

Hi Hackers,

My **DP/4** is making some unusual noises. While sitting idle, outputs 1 and 2 generate rhythmic pulsating and whooshing sounds, the patterns of which change depending on the patch selected. It's as if it is processing a signal, although none is present (nothing is plugged into any of the inputs). This is very bothersome, as the noise generated makes it unusable in a studio situation. Any ideas, suggestions? Is it time to call the Authorized Ensoniq Repair Station? BTW, it's got O.S. 1.14. And yes, I re-initialized it. Help!

Steve Vincent
Tacoma, WA
vincents@harbornet.com

[PF – Steve: Sounds as if your DP-4's DAC needs adjustment. It may be as simple as an adjustment; it may be as serious as a logic board. As the DP-4 doesn't exist anymore, you might run into trouble finding a spare. Let me tell you my story about the repair of my DP-4...

Last year about this time I took mine in to an Authorized service center where the unit was diagnosed as having a faulty logic board. Board was ordered and delivery was promised 2 weeks later. Three weeks later the tech explained Ensoniq couldn't give a delivery date and explained I should contact them. After speaking with Bert Neikirk, he politely explained that delivery dates were proprietary info available only to dealers.

So anyway, a month later the board arrived, the tech put it in and returned it to me. However, five minutes after it was turned on it started feeding back (like a guitar) with no inputs. Back to the Authorized service center. A week later another new logic board arrived that fixed the problem.

Needless to say, I sold it while it was working. And, to Ensoniq's credit, this is the only horror story I can tell about them, as they've always provided prompt and courteous service.

I suggest calling Ensoniq direct and see if they'll issue an RMA directly to you and repair it at the factory (if spares are still available). And good luck...]

[Rob Martin (rimm@panix.com) – Check which algorithms and routing paths are loaded – along with all levels. Some algorithms actually generate sound, most use internally clocked triggers to generate the effects. Try setting all algorithms to "No Effect," and all unit volumes to 0. If you still hear the "whooshing," then you may have a hardware problem. I've found many ways to configure my DP/4 to sound noisy!

If you have a Mac, download my Editor from (www.reset.com/surgical). Although it declares itself to be "shareware," I'm re-releasing it as "donationWare." So just email me, and I'll send you the password. It really helps in trying to solve this kind of problem! Good Luck, Rob]

TH:

Does anyone know if there is a difference in MIDI implementation between the operating systems of the **MR-76** and **ZR-76**? The Ensoniq Web site lists the ZR-76 as "able to respond to Multi-mode" on 16 channels, whereas the MR-76 doesn't even mention multi-mode in its index. In other words, does this mean ZR MIDI works more in the manner of a conventional Multi mode synth? My MR, as much as I love it, is a royal pain in the keister when I try to import a sequence into Cakewalk – almost not worth the trouble. And as for the drum track work around, I STILL haven't gotten it to work yet (I know – Midi out, Channel 10 – nada).

Love to hear from anyone about this.
Jamie Haynes
jhaynes3@snet.net

[PF – Jamie: Just request the Sysex Specification for BOTH the MR-76 and the ZR-76 directly from Ensoniq. It's free, and then you'll have the docs to A-B which does what...]

[Eric Montgomery (Emu-Ensoniq) – The MIDI implementation between the MR and ZR is identical. There is not a MIDI implementation manual for the ZR, just for the MR.

From a Hacker *article I wrote:*

To set the ZR/MR up (using the MR/ZR with an external sequencer) is as simple as pressing the Select button in the SoundFinder section, then turning the Parameter knob to get to the MIDI OUT instrument. You are done. This simple setting throws the ZR/MR into multi mode

and turns keyboard local control off.

So far as getting sequences into Cakewalk, it is just a matter of saving the currently selected sequence as a MIDI file on the MR. Load the MIDI file into Cakewalk. This midi file will NOT contain the drum patterns. The only way to get the MR drum patterns in to Cakewalk is to set cakewalk to use an external midi clock. Go into the system midi area of the MR (edit midi settings) and be sure that Xmit MIDI clocks = ON. Then, press the Select Sounds button and turn the parameter knob to get to the MIDI out instrument. Change the MIDI channel to 10. Press the send to track button and put this sound on the Rhythm track (assuming the sequence and drum track was already loaded into the MR). Choose midi channel 10 in Cakewalk and go into record mode. Go back to the MR and press play.]

[PF – Okay, how do you save an MR sequence or song as an SMF on the MR/ZR series? Am I missing/overlooking something here, or is this a menu option available with a ROM upgrade? I can't find "Save as SMF" in ANY menu...]

[Eric Montgomery – If you have a sequence in memory, press save in the disk global area. Turn the parameter knob to get to MIDIFILE, press enter. (The most current OS version is 2.11.)]

[PF – Eric: Ah, THERE it is! Thanx man!]

TH –

Just a quick note to let you know about my new website for Ensoniq **SQ-1, SQ-1+, SQ-2, SQ-R,** and **KS-32** users. This site includes a collection of utilities, sysex files, and midi files. We are also looking for new sysex file submissions. This site is completely free, and so far has no annoying links from sponsors, it is just for the good of everyone who would like to use it. So check it out: http://fairfax702b-1.runet.edu/~sqxchnge.

sqxchnge@fairfax702b-1.runet.edu

TH –

As a long-time subscriber, I'm hopeful that I'll find some guidance here. Let me start by saying that I've accepted the fact that I'm a MIDI idiot. Maybe it's just a patience thing, but I spend more time trying to get everything working than I do on writing music.

Anyway, I'll try to be brief: I have a **TS-12**, an Alesis QS6, a MOTU Express XT, and Cakewalk running on Windows 95. On the TS-12, I set up tracks that I want to use TS-12 sounds on as SEND/RECV. In Cakewalk I'll assign the tracks to the appropriate ports and use program changes for the sounds. If I have tracks 1 and 2 set up as Piano and Bass (TS-12 internal sounds), and I click on track 1 in Cakewalk and play the keyboard, I hear the piano. If I click on track 2 in Cakewalk, I hear the piano and the bass. To hear the bass alone, I need to change track 1 on the TS-12 to LOCAL-OFF. This doesn't make sense to me, especially since when I click back on track 1, I play the keyboard and hear the piano. How am I hearing the piano if the track is set to LOCAL-OFF?!?

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to my configuration problems, but I was hoping that one example of the problems I'm having might generate a response that will point me in the right direction. I realize I'm dealing with many variables here, and that the problem could possibly lie within my Cakewalk and/or MOTU configuration as well. But I feel most comfortable trying to get advice from this forum as my first step.

Any comments are greatly appreciated.
Anthony Ruocco
anthonyr@geocities.com

[PF – Tony: If you wanna make music, get that @#$%^ computer outta the loop. Right Brain-Left Brain exercises ALWAYS result in collisions...

ALL sounds should be set to Local OFF, as the computer is the "Local ON" connection between the keyboard and its own internal tone module. Unless you have "MIDI Thru" off in Cakewalk, you'll be playing the same note twice...

Ah, computers: they're great for some things. Musically speaking, they just get in the way. If I wanna make music, I build my tunes on the Ensoniq keyboard. If I want to waste time I connect my Ensoniq keyboard to a computer and tell myself "Yeah, this is really gonna make better music for me."

NOT! Computers are appliances: Ensoniq keyboards are musical instruments. Connecting the two in some diabolic pretext of "making better music" and wiggling a mouse is balderdash and poppycock. Unplug that MIDI cord and get back to the real task at hand...

Do you fire up your keyboard to log on to the net? Then why would you connect it to the computer to "make music"? Diametric opposites. Computers are expensive clocks: they can clock your keyboard, but they CAN'T collect your most emotional compositions. They CAN copy it, but they can't invent it...

To quote Dennis Miller: "Then again, I could be wrong." Ah, I love going out on a limb...]

[Peter Heim (pch7@interport.net) – Been using my Mac (and before that, Commodore 64) for years to make music. With the right software, it's as valid a musical tool as any we've got, IMHO. Then again, I could be wrong.]

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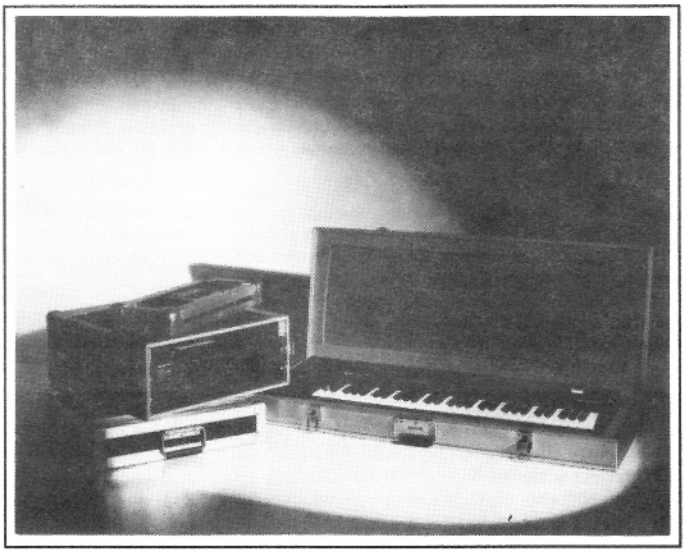

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[Steve Vincent (vincents@harbornet.com) – I have recently been listening back to music I created during the past 12 years, and noticed a dramatic decrease in the passion, human-ness, and sheer number of tunes I produced since "automating" my studio with a Mac, Opcode Vision, Sound Tools, etc. I am an expert computer user, but for me, it interferes with, and does not enhance, the creative process, at least for music-making (writing is a different story). I actually created far better sequences on my ESQ-1 and EPS Classic, and am very tempted to blow the dust off these venerable machines and start making real music again. Spend 3 hours fine-tuning a groove quantization template to "humanize" 4 bars? Never again.]

[PF – Steve: The truth is out there. And it's not a computer. It's a black box with black and white thingees sticking out of it. And the really productive ones say Ensoniq on them. They'll be worth a fortune in the next three years...]

[Anthony Ruocco (anthonyr@geocities.com) – Wow ... this is not exactly the response I expected, but thanks just the same. Pat, I'm with you on the quality of the TS-12 internal sequencer – I've written a lot of stuff that I'm very proud of on it, and I still use it to get down any inspiration that comes. I do like the computer as a tool for basic editing, notation, and the like, but certainly not "making better music." The music is made on the keys, I just want to clean up that bad note, and easily access that sound from another keyboard, and do some manipulation of a rough mix in a more efficient environment. "Tool" is the way I would describe it, as Peter did.

Anyway, I must say this: I am extremely happy to see that purists still exist!! Thanks to all for the responses, and the "LOCAL" info.]

[PF – Tony: I agree totally with you. Being able to use a mouse to do pitch bends and draw continuous controller data is pretty cool. Given a "perfect" composition, you can, in fact, load it into a computer and do MANY esoteric editing functions impossible on the Ensoniq built-in sequencer and make it MORE "perfect"...

But it doesn't really change the music; only the sound. And what I've discovered is by the time I translate an Ensoniq sequence into a Standard MIDI File, load into a computer sequencer, edit it to taste, RE-translate the sequence back into Ensoniq format, I could have redone the take a dozen or so times.

Which is why I do exactly that. I'm glad to see a lotta Hackers coming back to their roots, and I'm not dissing anyone who uses a computer to make music. It's just that most keyboard players I know grew up on a piano-ish (or, in my case, organ-ish) keyboard, so putting the sequencer into the instrument is of immense productive benefit. Coupled with that wonderful Ensoniq interface, nothing even comes close, IMHO.

I'm well aware of guys (like our guitar player) that are Performer whizzes, and players that are Cakewalk gurus. I simply compose at a keyboard, not a computer, so the Ensoniq "workstation" method is what I prefer to ANY other hardware/software combination. Hats off to those who feel the same way, and to all of those who chose not to flame...]

[Margaret Sison (mcsison@earthlink.net) – Do you turn your TV on to go on the internet? Maybe, maybe not. I think it depends if you have web TV or not...]

[Joe Travo, Visalia, CA – I've used the internal sequencer on the EPS (classic), my software sequencer (PC-based) and my Alesis MMT8 to create music. Interesting thing I've discovered – when I save my sequences to disk, no matter what device I've used to create them, they play back better when I save and play them on my Alesis DataDisk. I think this probably has something to do with the fact that a computer is trying to do a lot of things at once, including keeping the music on the beat, and the DataDisk is only trying to do that one thing, its top priority – play back the music exactly the way I wrote it. Specialization seems to be the key, and work better when the human ear is involved.]

Fooey...

I just read your special announcement in Issue 161.

You will really and definitely be missed... Here's one subscriber who writing Emu to bellyache..

Suggestion... Before (if) you go, how about printing a listing of CD-ROMs available for Ensoniq products (esp the **ASR-10**)? Not detailed analysis like you do from time to time on specific disks, but a more general listing – company identity and location that produce 'em, brief run down (eg...CD ROM #x from so and so is Orchestral). Maybe also a cross index to where a specific disk was reviewed in past issues. Maybe even a grading system for each disk.

That would REALLY be helpful to those of us who don't have access to the full set of past issues or the time to search them one at a time for reviews...

Thanks and keep up the good work...
danton@medford.net

[PF – Danton: Actually, Ensoniq has a VERY comprehensive indexed catalog of their own CDs, as well as their other floppy-based offerings. You can probably request it directly from Ensoniq at 610.647.3930. I got one with my ASR-10, and sounds, sizes, and which CD it was located on was provided. VERY helpful...

Don't think such a thing exists for 3rd party CD's...]

[WARNERPRD@aol.com – I too will be giving EMU the serious roasting of their lives. This forum has been the real deal for me the past year and a half. I still wait day after day after I've read each issue just to see what else I can learn from you all at the Hacker. Thanks always, Kyle.]

TH –

Could anyone help: I have a problem with my **Mirage** and a low pitched free-floating drone while I'm doing MIDI tracking. I use the Mirage as my keyboard controller and I've set it up so the upper and lower is silent. Parameter 69 set to 0. If I keep the Mirage volume slider down (off), I don't hear said drone. But as I raise the slider I now hear drone. Not in a constant way. It's intermittent. What can I do to stop this problem?

Jack
LHWOODMAN@aol.com

[PF – Jack: Unplug the audio outputs from the Mirage. Since you're using it merely as a controller, there's no need for audio connections from it to your mixer. Just make sure the MIDI plug is firmly connected and you'll be fine...]

Hello,

I have a little problem. I am a composer. My home page on the WEB is okay but I can't get a link between a song and the MIDI file or the Realaudio files. I have read in *Keyboard* mag that the links should be http://www.yourserver.com/audio.ra. My songs are already encoded Realaudio Realplayer as mountain.ra. I am on AOL, so would the link be http://www.aol.com/mountain.ra?

Of course I will have to upload my WEB page plus the song in Realaudio format to the AOL's computer. The

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problem is the same for the MIDI files. Could you help me?

Thank you very much,
Vielfaure@aol.com

[PF – Vielfaure: Being a composer is a BIG problem. I'm one myself, and it's seriously affected my lifestyle for 35+ years. Hang in there – the ox is slow, but the world is patient...

As far as web issues evolve, I'd contact AOL and see if they can resolve your problem. We're an Ensoniq forum and deal with Ensoniq keyboard problems, not web issues...]

[TH – In Issue #157 Duane Frybarger did do an article on getting Realaudio to play on a web site – you might want to check it out. (I suspect that the URL you suggest for your link needs some more path info in-between the aol.com and the mountain.ra...]

TH –

I'm in desperate search for an **EPS** output expander – HELP! I was told that you were the guys to touch bases with and if you guys couldn't find one then it was a done deal.

O.G. One
og1@worldnet.att.net

[PF – OG1: We really aren't a clearing house for Ensoniq equipment, but you could post a wanted ad in the Hacker for one. These are very scarce; the connector cable is even scarcer. Try www.fatsnake. com/syntaur: Sam runs into these occasionally. You could try Rubber Chicken Software, as well as Rogue Music and the other auction sites...]

TH –

I wrote to Ensoniq, and they told me:

"Thanks for writing! Any questions regarding **ESQ** products can be directed to: *Transoniq Hacker,* www. transoniq.com/interface.html."

Sorry – not a subscriber. Instead of giving me an answer, they passed the buck. If anybody has an answer, I'd appreciate it.

Here's what I wrote to them:

I believe you stopped support recently but I'd like to ask something anywho to see if it's worth fixing. I have a couple of ESQ-Ms that seem to have both exhibited odd behaviour around the same time. One of them won't work on some midi channels, the other is like when you play a patch, the sound kind of fades in and out volume wise. Sounds like there's some kind of modulation of the sound happening (LFO?) or being flanged with much feedback. Also, if I tap a note I experience a mild *thump* sounds every eight notes or so.

The batteries still register 00 after 13 years abouts. Does anybody have an opinion? I though it might be something in my little rig here that caused it, but I took it out of the loop and just hooked a couple of simple midi keyboards to it and it still does it. Are these crapped out or worth fixing. Or a new battery regardless?

Thanks,
jon
jfrancis@villagenet.com

[PF – Jon: First, reinitialize the units. Then replace the backup batteries. They're 2/3 AA 3.6V lithium batteries (1 per ESQ-M) that are soldered onto the motherboard. The every "eighth note" scenario could be a bad filter chip, but retune the filters before you pronounce the CM filter chip bad. As an 8-note poly synth, this behavior indicates one of the bank of 8 filter chips is misbehaving. By retuning the filters, this may eliminate the problem: if it doesn't, one of the 8 filter chips is in fact defective and should be replaced.

The funny MIDI behavior you're experiencing may be the fact that one (or both) of the units have switched into MIDI "Overflow" mode. This mode allows the ESQ-M to pass thru notes on its selected MIDI channel once it has reached its 8-voice playback limit. This was designed for guys like me who used ESQ-1 keyboards and wanted to add polyphony by purchasing an ESQ-M. Cool MIDI mode germane ONLY to the ESQ family. This might be part of the problem you're experiencing. Reinitializing the unit should take care of that issue.

My apologies for not knowing (A) which front panel buttons to hold down/press to reinitialize the unit, as well as (B) not knowing which other buttons you hold down to retune the filters. Check out www.ensoniq.com for the skinny on these procedures. And good luck!]

To ALL at the HACKER –

WOW !! In light of the page 1 article in #161 (still choking on my coffee):

....* I think I'm going to be ill.* This really is terrible news.

Man, I look forward to my monthly *Hacker* like a kid looks forward to Christmas. I'm gonna miss getting my *Hacker* fix!!

I know, I've even been guilty of flame-mail (on rare past occasion), but always got a 1st-class response that helped me think a little more clearly in my times of despair...

I'm not proud of the fact that my own letter to the *Hacker* a few months back, may have been a contributing factor in their decision to bail out of the open-forum newsletter business. I still regret typing all the *lack-of-RAM* bashing letters... I'm still REPENTING!!

Be sure to thank Eric Montgomery for me. I'm extremely happy with my MR-76 now, and am drooling over the prospect of purchasing PARIS in the hopefully not too distant future. (...Gotta buy that Pentium to run it first. :o) Anyway, my MR problem was handled quickly, and I can assure you, I don't feel at all bitter.

(At the time, my local dealer was CLUELESS as to what to do, and it was my last letter to the *Hacker* that seemed to finally get the ball rolling.) That right there was worth at least a 100-year subscription to the *Hacker*.

At any rate, best of luck to ALL at the *Hacker*. I've gotten more useful information from your mag., worth more than the cost of subscribing – 50 times over. (...And my $$$'s hard to get!!)

Gee, Maybe Emu-Ensoniq will change their minds?!

The *Hacker* is/was a class act!

I just wanted to say, semi-personally, how disappointed I am at their decision. I like to think that just the availability of such a publication as the *Transoniq Hacker*, was a selling point of my MR. From Mirage to MR – The *Hacker* was always there for me.

Gonna miss ya, man!
Tim Roche
TRWEBBS@velocity.net

[TH – Well, thanks for you many kind words. Don't worry about those letters – there was no one single reason for their decision, and those letters are one of the reasons we're here at all. If everything were perfect and easy, there never would have been any reason for a Hacker *in the first place. We really doubt anybody's going to change their minds about this – but we're still going to be hanging in there for the next year.]*

[Eric Montgomery (Emu-Ensoniq) – Thank you very much. I have received very kind words from many people and I just wanted to say thanks! It has been a wild ride! Just so you all know, I really do pass your comments to the people in charge.]

Sir,

I'm having trouble connecting an **ESQ-1** to a DS-330 using midi thru and Cubase VST on my PC. I keep getting midi offline displayed on the DS-330 and find references to local on/off that I should be checking on the ESQ-1, but I can't find where this setting is. Any help greatly appreciated.

Lesley Hands,
lespaul@globalnet.co.uk

[PF – Lesley: It is set at the track level of the sequencer. Assign ANY sound to a sequencer track, then set it to "MIDI" rather than "Local," "Both" or "Seq." As far as a Roland piece saying "MIDI offline" that just means it isn't receiving active sensing (those pesky FE's clogging up the MIDI pipe 4 times a second). Set the DS-330 to active sensing off and that'll go away...]

TH –

I just purchased a **ZR-76**, (YES, I am going to subscribe to the *Hacker*), and I have been pouring over the manual. I need to know how to convert the ZR's files to WAV or MIDI files. Can you suggest some software or can one or the other be done from the ZR?

ZZmn54@aol.com

[PF – ZZmn54: Get AWAVE. PC program. Inexpensive. Good 'ol Garth of Rubber Chicken software might just have something for you as well. Visit his site at: http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/. Garth's a pioneer of Ensoniq goodies, so check him out...]

TH –

Question #1: What is the best way of getting the **SQ-80, SD-1** and **TS-10** to play and record Cakewalk? (Getting the most out of their multi-timbral capabilities?)

Question #2: How come Cakewalk doesn't appear to have banks set up for the TS's sample RAM?

Thanking you in advance,
Mike
OBXaJP8@aol.com

[PF – Mike: (1) Setting them in multitimbral mode. You'll want to locate an Instrument Definition File (IDF) for Cakewalk for these instruments; otherwise you'll have to write one yourself and it could be a chore.

(2) I don't know. Call Twelve-Tone Systems and share their answer with us.]

TH –

I have an unmoderated **SQ-80** and **ESQ-1** list. Anyone is welcome to join.

The URL for the list is: http://SQ80.listbot.com/. For the discussion list, people can send mail to: SQ80@ listbot.com.

Thanks!
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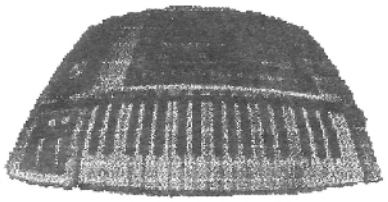

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