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recording cds at home

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I can't believe the news today/I can't close my eyes and make it go away - anguished U2 lyric from 'Sunday Bloody Sunday'.

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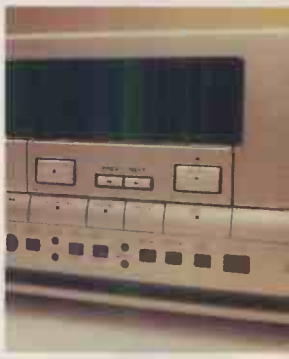

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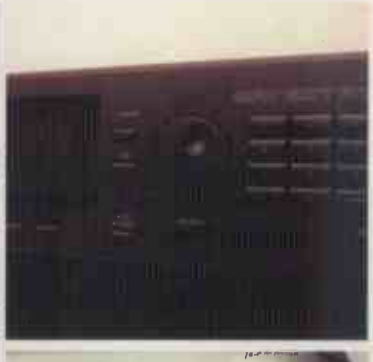

Technology

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Soaking your drum voices in reverb effects gives great sounds but it makes programming drum patterns much harder. Nigel Lord explains how to fit larger-than-life drums into a song.

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Who'd have guessed that Akai Iceland were about to release a MIDI bass controller and major software updates for the DD1000? Mørv Smørdilørv proves that you never can predict innovation.

editorial

ROLL REVERSAL

LET'S PLAY MAKE-BELIEVE. Let's suppose the synthesiser had developed in a different way. . .

We're back in the early '70s. A number of American companies are investigating the potential of synthesis using analogue electronics. Amongst them is Dr Robert Moog - his company leads the way with a number of large modular systems which have attracted the attention of, amongst others, British group Emerson, Lake & Palmer. Organist Keith Emerson is experimenting with a piano-style synthesiser; drummer Carl Palmer is experimenting with synthesisers controlled from his drum kit.

Although the keyboard allows Emerson to play pitched sounds in a conventional way, the system used by Palmer offers a range of dynamics unavailable on a keyboard. As a direct result, drum synthesis begins to take off.

An English guitarist foresees a great future for the all-electronic drum kit. His name is Dave Simmons. Simmons develops special hexagonal pads used purely for triggering his emerging SDS range of electronic drum "brains". The initial series of drum kits culminates in the SDS V, which quickly establishes itself as a world standard and virtually dominates the drum sounds of the world's pop charts. Simmons is recognised as The Father of Drum Synthesis; keyboard-based synthesisers, like guitar synthesisers, are declared a blind alley due to the difficulties in implementing control of the electronics and the general narrow-mindedness of their players. Bill Bruford takes his place at the top of the heap with his mastery of technology and innovative approach to its musical application.

From analogue electronics, synthesis - we're only talking drum synthesisers now - moves into the digital realm. Suddenly, it's possible to bring authenticity to drum synths. Those drummers still claiming that the electronic kit is no replacement for the old wood-'n'-skins kit are convinced. It becomes a rarity to see an acoustic-only drum kit.

Every leading hi-tech instrument manufacturer now bases its range of equipment on its electronic drum system. Simmons' expanding range reaches unsurpassed heights with the SDX digital drum system. The sampling and sequencing systems drummers have been dabbling with are brought together in this "complete" instrument. With it, drummers continue to break down the barriers which once confined them and their music. It's possible now to produce a whole song from behind a drum kit using pads to trigger pitched sounds and even vocal samples. The disquiet of other musicians becomes more audible. Drummers are accused of doing bass players, keyboard players, guitarists, orchestras and producers out of a job. Drummers are unimpressed, and compile endless "non-drummer jokes". *How many keyboard players does it take to change a lightbulb? Eleven - one to change the bulb, ten to discuss how James Taylor would have done it. . .*

The situation worsens as more percussion players latch onto the electronic revolution - Simmons' Silicon Mallet, for example, brings hi-tech to vibes players. The Musicians' Union consider banning the use of electronics from their membership but realise that the use of technology is so widespread that such a move would be totally impractical. Drummers, of course, are now in great demand for their programming skills. Somehow "conventional" playing skills have become optional - of course you can get a lot of mileage out of technology if you can get your chops together, but it's no longer essential. Anyone who can hit a few pads can sort out the mess in the sequencer. Quantisation becomes one of the drummer's buzzwords.

A "back to real music" movement is promoted by the record industry in an attempt to break new acts using old skills. The attempt is largely successful as neither the public nor the record companies realise how much technology - and how many drummers - are now involved in every aspect of music making.

Dance music booms, with drummers being totally in their element - the utter domination of rhythm, the hard electronic sounds, the visual excitement of seeing someone hitting all those pads. . . Drummers have reached a new stage in their evolution. The rest of the musical fraternity have missed the bus. ***Tg***

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY (ISSN 0957-6606) is published by Music Technology (Publications) Ltd, a subsidiary of Music Maker Publications (Holdings) plc, Alexander House, Forehill, Ely, Cambs CB7 4AF. Tel: (0353) 665577 (all departments). FAX: (0353) 662489 (PAN: Musicmaker)

Printing by *Cooper Clegg Ltd, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.* **Distributed** by *SM Distribution, London. Tel: 081-677 8111.*

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EDITORIAL

EDITOR
Tim Goodyer
ASSISTANT EDITOR
Simon Trask
PRODUCTION EDITOR
Debbie Poyser
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Italia De Santis

ART STUDIO

DIRECTOR
Stuart Catterson
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
Sam Masters

Darryl Tooth, Hilary Reed, Chris Brennand

PHOTOGRAPHY

James Cumpsty, Tim Goodyer

ADVERTISING

GROUP ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER
Colin McKee
CLASSIFIEDS
Alex Day
AD PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATORS
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Chris Williams
SECRETARIAL ASSISTANT
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ADMINISTRATION

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cheryl Oates
MAIL ORDER
Jenny Howard
SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES
(0353) 668586
GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER
Mike Stapleton
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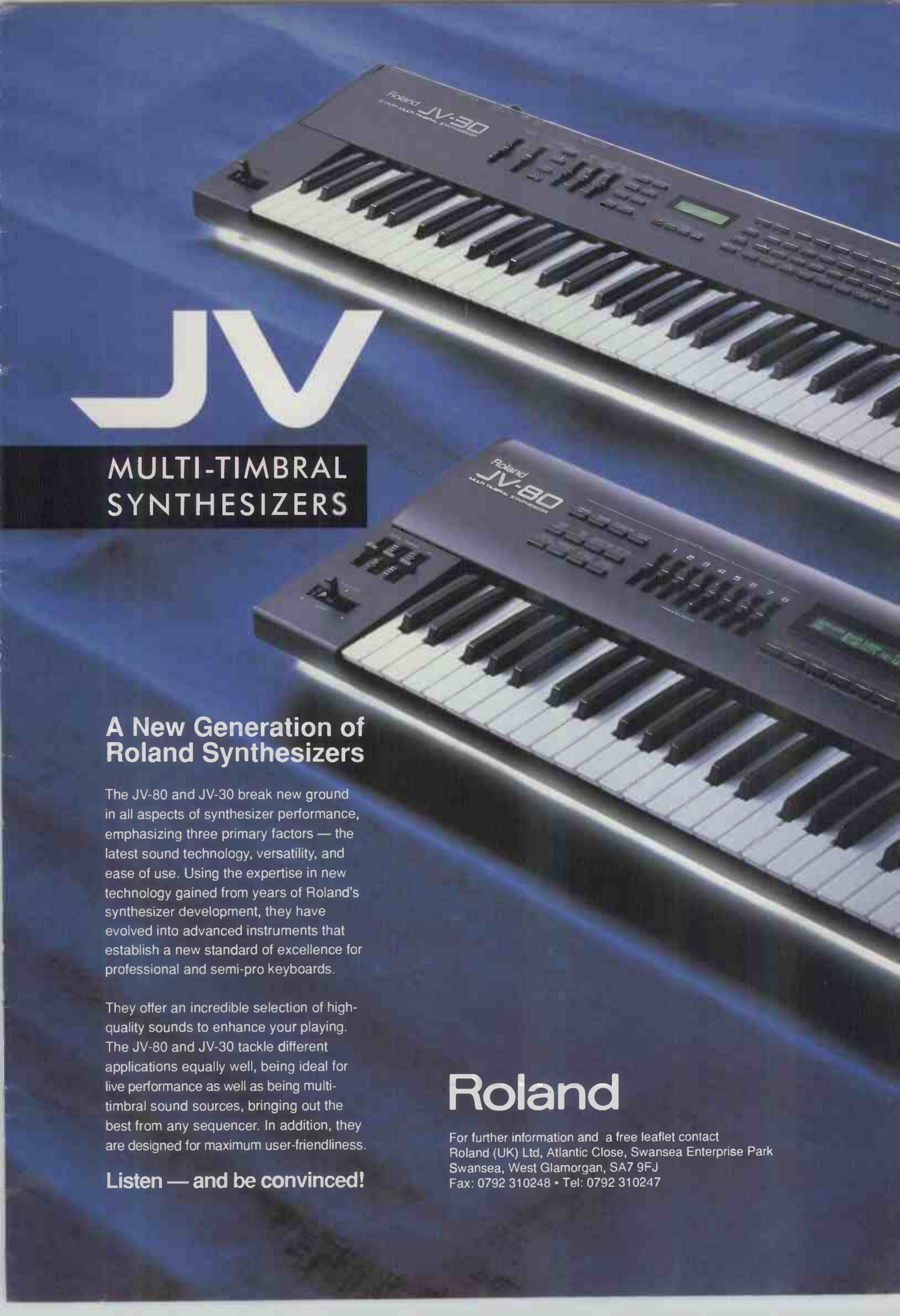

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AMG PRODUCE THE GOODS

AMG are set to release "the world's first sample compilation CD", featuring artists from their popular HitSound Producer Series. However, the new CD isn't simply a compilation of samples taken from these artists' existing CDs, it's actually a collection of completely new samples from the artists concerned. Pascal Gabriel has contributed dance samples, David Ruffy and Danny Cumming & Miles Bould have provided drum and percussion samples, Coldcut have made more of their own dance samples available, and there are producer samples from Pete Gleadall (Pet Shop Boys and George Michael), Norman Cook, Ian Curnow and JJ Jeczalik, while Neil Conti has provided dance drum loops. Final specifications are yet to be confirmed, but other artists may also be involved. Each artist concerned has contributed around 50 new samples, so the disc looks like it will be a gold mine of professional expertise in various musical styles. It's expected to cost £49 and a March release is projected.

A bit of stop-press news here from AMG, hot off the fax: the company are proud to announce the introduction of two new ROM cards for the Roland D70 and JD800 from Valhala. Valhala have added two new cards to their Studio Series for each synth - Top 40 and New Age. The cards, retailing at £50 each, should be available some time in March and further cards are expected in the near future. More recent additions to the Valhala range include two new cards for the Yamaha SY/TG77, SY/TG55 and SY/TG33. Each synth now has Rock and New Age cards available for £60 each, or £65 for the SY/TG77. Looks like a timely launch to go with that TG77 you're thinking of getting from ABC Music, eh? Finally, Valhala have extended their highly succ-essful ORGANizer series with a "Screamin' B3" card for the Roland D5/10/20, costing £45 and the prospect of a Korg M1 card entitled "B3 and More", to cost £50, before May.

More info from AMG at Hurst Lane, Privett, nr Alton, Hants GU34 3PL. Tel: (0730 88) 383. Fax: (0730 88) 390. ***Dp***

KURZWEIL KOUP

After some confusion, UK distributorship of the American Kurzweil range has finally come to rest with Washburn UK. The new distributorship, which also covers Ireland, comes into effect immediately. Information on the new K2000 and all the Kurzweil range from Gavin Mortimer or Steve Wright on (0462) 482466.

AS EASY AS A TG

Due to the success of ABC Music's recent special deal on the Yamaha TG77 Expander, ABC Music have managed to obtain further supplies from Yamaha at the even lower price of £799. Having received very good reviews at the time of its launch (although it was then sporting a retail price of some £1299), the TG77 now seems to represent an almost unmissable bargain if you're in the market for a modern-soundind synth expander. What's more, ABC are making an unusually decent gesture to any customers who have recently purchased a TG77 from them at the previous price of £999 - if you thought you'd got lucky with your TG77 at £999, you should contact ABC Music as soon as possible with a copy of your receipt, and you will be refunded the £200 difference in price - think of it as a small compensation for the current sorry state of the British economy.

More information from ABC Music, Department TG, 85 High Street, Esher. Surrey KT10 9QA. ***Dp***

PC IN OUR TIME

There's a veritable flood of news from PC software distributors Digital Music this month, kicking off with tidings of Big Noise Software's Cadenza for the Microsoft PC program environment Windows. Cadenza claims complete multi-tasking, a clear visual design and a long list of features, including copying of data from one track to another, quantising, humanising, Transport Bar, floating Edit toolboxes, and much more. The program also allows you to have as many edit windows open as you want, for any number of tracks that you want. Cadenza supports multiple MIDI interfaces with all interfaces active, Soundblaster and Ad Lib Sound Cards, Roland MPU401 and compatibles, Music Quest MQX16/16S and MQX32M with full SMPTE and MIDI support, and the Key Midiator MS101 and MS103 Lap Top interfaces. It's available from good dealers at £275 including VAT, or direct from Digital Music. UK and international dealers are being sought.

Digital Music also announce their exclusive UK distributorship of Thoughtprocessors' Showtune, a new program which will notate any standard MIDI file loaded into it. Operation involves simply loading your MIDI file into Showtune, designing a page layout, viewing the music on your PC screen where you may edit it, playing it back via your MIDI instrument, then printing it out. Showtune produces "beautiful' output, according to its distributors, on almost any type of printer, including 9- and 24-pin dot matrix, inkjet, bubble-jet and laser printers. Features include reading of up to eight tracks simultaneously, individual transposition of tracks, quantisation of tracks, four different clefs, choices of stem direction, meter changes, automatic or manual page format, support for text and lyrics - and that's just part of the list of Showtune's features. The program requires an IBM compatible with minimum 640K and DOS 3 or higher, 3.5" or 5.25" floppy drive, hard disk, graphics monitor - Hercules, CGA, EGA, VGA colour or mono, and printer. Showtune retails for the low introductory price of £65 including VAT.

Also new from Digital Music are two PC MIDI interfaces, the Music Quest MIDIEngine Array and the MIDIEngine LapTop. The Array offers eight MIDI inputs and eight MIDI outputs, independently accessible for full 128-channel capacity, MPU401 compatibility, remapping, filtering, echoing, merging and data buffering on all MIDI inputs and output, internal, MIDI, SMPTE In and Out, Click and MIDI Time Code sync modes, Genlock facility and more, for the suggested list price of £347.47 plus VAT. Amongst the features of the smaller LapTop are two MIDI inputs and two MIDI Outs, independently accessible for 32-channel capacity, parallel printer port connection for higher speed operation, which frees the serial port for your mouse, MPU401 compatibility, and the same MIDI data filtering and remapping facilities as the Array. The suggested list price of the LapTop is £149.36 plus VAT. Also on offer is the MIDIEngine FrameLock SMPTE synchroniser with a suggested selling price of £120.85 plus VAT. The Framelock provides a comprehensive range of facilities, including reading, writing and syncing to all SMPTE formats, conversion of incoming SMPTE to MIDI Time Code, dual MIDI Ins and Outs, and SMPTE regeneration to re-stripe bad or marginal sync tracks. All three MIDIEngine units will be available in mid-1992.

More information on any of the above from Digital Music at 27 Leven Close, Chandlers Ford, Hants SO5 3SH. Tel: (0703) 252131. Fax: (0703) 270405. ***Dp***

SWINGALONGA WAUGH

Words & Music, which is in fact our very own Ian Waugh, are pleased to present four new collections of MIDI music for all MIDI File-compatible sequencers. The MIDI Classic Collection comprises three volumes of favourite classical music on disk in MIDI File Format. Each disk contains over 500K of music data plus documentation. Volume 1 conains all four movements of Beethoven's Symphony No. 8, extract from Beethoven's 5th Symphony second movement, Shostakovich's 5th Symphony second movement, Mozart 40, Mozart's *Rondo Alla Turca*, Chopin's *Fantasy Impromptu*, *Habanera*, *Anitra's Dance*, *Ave Maria*, and more. Volume 2 features: Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and once again, much more. Moving swiftly on to Volume 4, this disk offers, amongst others, Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*, extract from Beethoven's 3rd Symphony and the *Blue Danube Waltz*. The fourth disk from Words & Music contains a collection of over 20 Ragtime tunes, arranged mainly for piano, some with orchestral accompaniment. Tunes on offer include 'The Black & White Rag', 'The Entertainer', the 'Blue Goose Rag', and others.

All the above are available on disk for Atari ST, Commodore Amiga and IBM PC and compatibles. PC users should state whether they require 3.5" or 5.25" disks. The disks cost £8.95 each, with any two disks costing £16.95, three costing £23.95 or all four for £29.95. All prices include VAT and P&P, and full details will be sent to anyone who sends a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Words & Music at 26 Newark Drive, Whitburn, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR6 7DF. Tel: 091-529 4788. Fax: 091-529 5327. ***Dp***

CHANGING COURSE

Media Production Services, the media training specialists, announce major management, staffing and course changes. The company is now managed by Paul Halpin and Mike Pressman and known as Media Production Facilities.

Simon Skolfield, ex-Amek Systems and Controls and a Grammy Award-winning engineer, has joined the company as audio courses director. His extensive industry contacts have added greatly to the courses, attracting the likes of Rupert Neve and Andy Munro for seminars, in addition to the regular team.

The coming year heralds new courses for both industry and individuals, including a full-time audio-for-video course and system training for Mozart users, as well as a series of console automation systems and techniques courses. Courses commence May and September.

More info from Media Production Facilities, Bon Marche Building, Ferndale Road, London SW9 8EJ. Tel: 071-737 7152. Fax: 071-738 5428. ***Dp***

CLEAN MACHINE

Recently launched by Lynwood electronics is a 2U-high rack-mounted power cleaner. It incorporates six 500W cleaners specifically designed for all types of audio equipment, effects units and recorders. Output is via a six-way distribution block on the back panel. The unit, according to its makers, "successfully eliminates noise and transient interference, resulting in much cleaner and sonically improved recordings". The power cleaner has a recommended selling price of £295 and is available through Stirling Audio or Studio Spares, or contact Lynwood at Coley Lane Farm, Wentworth, Rotherham S62 7SQ. Tel: (0709) 873667.***Dp***

CORRECTION

Those of you with a keen sense of timing will have noticed something of an inconsistency in Vic Lennard's review of the Friend Chip TCR1 timecode refresher (MT, February '92).

Specifically, the quoted delay between input and output should have been 140 microseconds not 140 *milli*seconds, so the unit performs 1000 times faster than suggested in the review.

Apologies to Q-Logic - the TCR1's distributors - and to Vic, who got his figures right. We've put the error down to MT office gremlins who, clearly, don't know what time it is. Further information regarding the TCR1 from Q-Logic. PO Box 109, Dundee DD1 9DF. Tel: (0796) 2001. ***Tg***

SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER

Following the success of Time & Space's Zero-G Datafile One and Two, T&S are now releasing Datafile Three, containing over 170 new breaks, a special collection of breakbeat intros, percussion loops, CR78 and TR606 drums, selection of vocals and ad libs, sci-fi bits and pieces and ad libs, "wicked" new basses, strings and other pads, and so on. The Datafile series is now available in seven formats: audio CDs at £49.95, £89 for two, £129 for all three; three 12" vinyl double picture discs at £29.95; three CD/ROMs/DAT-RAMs/three 128Mb optical disks, all in Akai S1100/S1000 data format at £199 each, £349 for two or £499 for all three (DAT-RAM requires an Akai digital interface); one 650Mb optical disk in S1100/S1000 format, containing all three Datafiles for £499; ten volumes in Amiga IFF format for use with various Amiga software, for £29.95 per volume.

Time & Space also announce that they are taking on the distributorship of equipment from US company East-West, including the Dance/Industrial sample CD and CD-ROM from top US producers David Frangioni and Rich Mendelson. Optional MIDI File sequences are also available for loops. The audio CD costs £49, while the Akai/EIII or Samplecell CD-ROM costs £199.

T&S also tell us that they have been appointed UK distributors for the official Star Trek Sound FX. Available as Apple Mac sound files, the *Star Trek* Sound FX cost £29.95 per volume or £49 for the two-volume set. Each volume contains the sound playback utility programme SoundMaster, which plays the sounds as the Mac performs its usual functions. So you could have the *Star Trek* theme played by your Mac on startup, or hear one of any number of vocal exclamations from the original *Star Trek* cast instead of your usual Mac bleep, for example. Sounds like fun.

Final news from T&S, very briefly: the company has now been appointed suppliers of the DAC range of removable hard drives, including the 3.5" 128Mb optical, the 650Mb optical and the DAC CD-ROM. T&S are confident that the 3.5" 128Mb optical disk will become an industry standard, citing its compactness, speed, security, reliability, economy and versatility. What's more, anyone buying a drive from T&S will receive the Zero G library in one of three formats free of charge.

More information on any of the above from Time & Space, PO Box 306, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 3EP. Tel: (0442) 870681. Fax: (0442) 877266.

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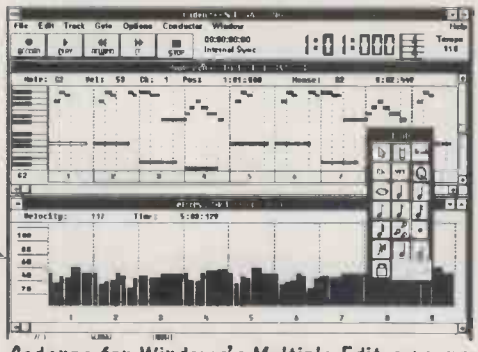

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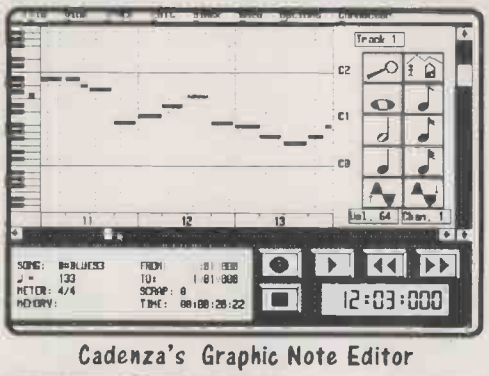

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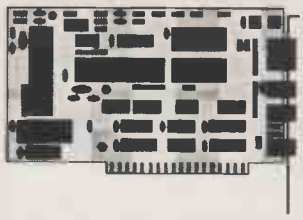

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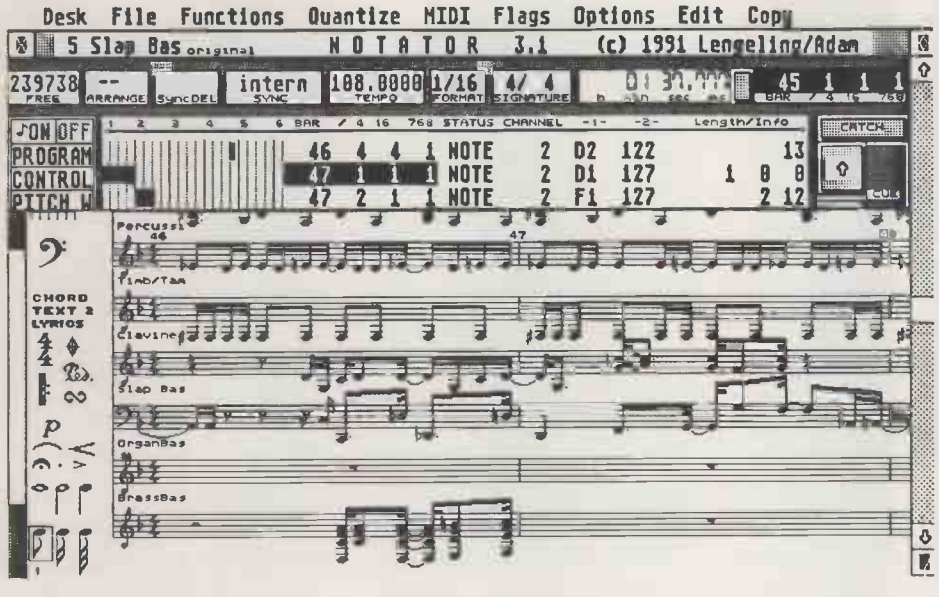
HEAVENLY MUSIC MIDI SONG FILES



HEAVENLY MUSIC HAVE been at it again - whiling away the small hours tinkering with a tepid terminal, exasperatedly exploiting expiring expanders, patiently probing poignant presets, delicately devising devilish riffs. . . The prose may be a little purple but then so are these discs. (Er, purple as in rich and ornate, in case you think I'm slagging off in the first paragraph.)

When Heavenly Music's Dr Beat Vol 1 was reviewed (MT, December '91) Vol 2 was promised - and here it is. HM discovered than many Vol 1 users were simply using the demo files to write songs around so Vol 2 contains 41 (no, I don't know why 41) rhythm patterns arranged into long tracks. The adventurous can chop 'em up as usual. The lazy can use them as is and write songs around them.

The patterns vary in length from around 32 bars to over 100 bars. The chances are that you'll need to do some editing in any case. Must admit my favourites are the Latin rhythms - an excellent base for rocky afro funk stuff.

The drums are mapped to the now-standard Roland MT32 but a map is supplied if you use something else. A brief description of the drums used is included, too. HM have an Akai S900/950 drum disk with suitable premapped sounds although I don't have this - yet - so I can't tell you any more about it. Anyway, there are far too many other things to scribble about right now.

The most damning thing I can think of to say about Vol 2 is that some of the patterns are a little open - but perhaps I'm just used to busy drummers (they don't teach the meaning of silence in drum school) and in any event the patterns are by no means all like this. All in all, another goody. If you liked Dr Beat Vol 1, you'll like this.

Ram Jam is a new(ish) idea from HM who modestly describe it as a collection of "killer grooves". Basically we're talking MIDI File backing tracks for you to jam to.

There are ten grooves in all - Blues, Funkjam, Fusion, Jazzswing, Jig (quite C&W), Laidback, R&B 1 and 2, Salsa and Southam. Some of these files are big - Southam is over 80K - so you may have to remove your auto programs and desk accessories if you run a big sequencer.

All the jams are good, although 77 bars of Funk in Dm can be a bit wearing. The Fusion is amazing; I bet they had a party programming that - manic synth and bass arpeggios with hectic piano and brass solos. The pieces also contain solo lines which can give you ideas for riffs of your own (so lift 'em, I'll not say anything).

The idea is to set up a loop point on the last chorus, play till you drop then exit from the loop and play through to the end of the jam. Of course, you could transpose sections of the jams to create versions which are more harmonically interesting and, dare I suggest, write a song around them.

The pieces are configured for the Roland U220 which HM swear by, and although they're close to Roland's GS standard, you'll have to adjust the sounds (basses in particular) and volumes (volume and pan data is included in the tracks and easy to edit).

There are two volumes of Guitar Classics. Volume 1 contains 'Black Magic Woman', 'Breezin'', 'Hocus Pocus' and 'Them Changes'. Volume 2 contains 'Jingo', 'Layla', 'Reelin' in the Years' and 'Soul Sacrifice'. These were actually intended as backing tracks for guitarists (sorry about the language) but there's no reason why a keyboardist can't use them. They include lead lines so you can even just sit and listen to them - after adjusting your equipment. In fact, I'm half convinced that that's what most MIDI file buyers do anyway - it beats watching *The Word.*

Which brings us to Heavenly Music's latest endeavour: Megga-Tracks, or good ol' MIDI song files. Rather than attempt to keep up with the fads of fashion and vagaries of the record buying public (who we all know is a spotty, pubescent, rich, spoiled brat living in Sevenoaks), HM have gone for rock and pop classics. Amazingly, they've already created over 400 files. The samples I tried included Toto's 'Africa', 'Radio Ga Ga', 'Killing Me Softly', 'I Heard it Through the Grapevine' (brilliant) and 'Never Gonna Give You Up' (we all slum from time to time).

In spite of what some may say, we live in a world increasingly dominated by the demand for instant gratification, easy options and the deslre to have things done for you. My excuse is time - lack of it. Much as we may like to spend a day programming a killer sound or a week on the ultimate drum riff, it's rarely feasible (especially if you lack expertise in a certain area). MIDI files to the rescue.

Playing around with these files is great fun and ain't that what this business is supposed to be about? (Who said "making money"?). The files come on an ST disk with an MS.DOS header which means they can be read by PCs, too.

At the very least send for their catalogue. Thank Heaven for little pearls...

■ ***Ian Waugh***

Prices *Dr Beat Vol 2, £10; Ram Jam Vol 1, £12.95; Guitar Classics Vol 1 & 2, £12.95 each; Megga-Tracks Midisongs £26 for 5, Megga-Tracks demo disk £2 (refundable against order).*

More from *Heavenly Music, 39 Garden Road, Jaywick, Clacton, Essex, CO15 2RT. Tel: (0255) 434217.*

communiqué

guitar wars

Way back in the late '70s, I was a busy session guitarist. My faithful old double-cutaway '61 Les Paul Custom (the cream and gold fittings, three-humbucker job) plugged into a Marshall Superlead 50 driving a 2 x 12 can was always sufficient. Were those the days? Nope.

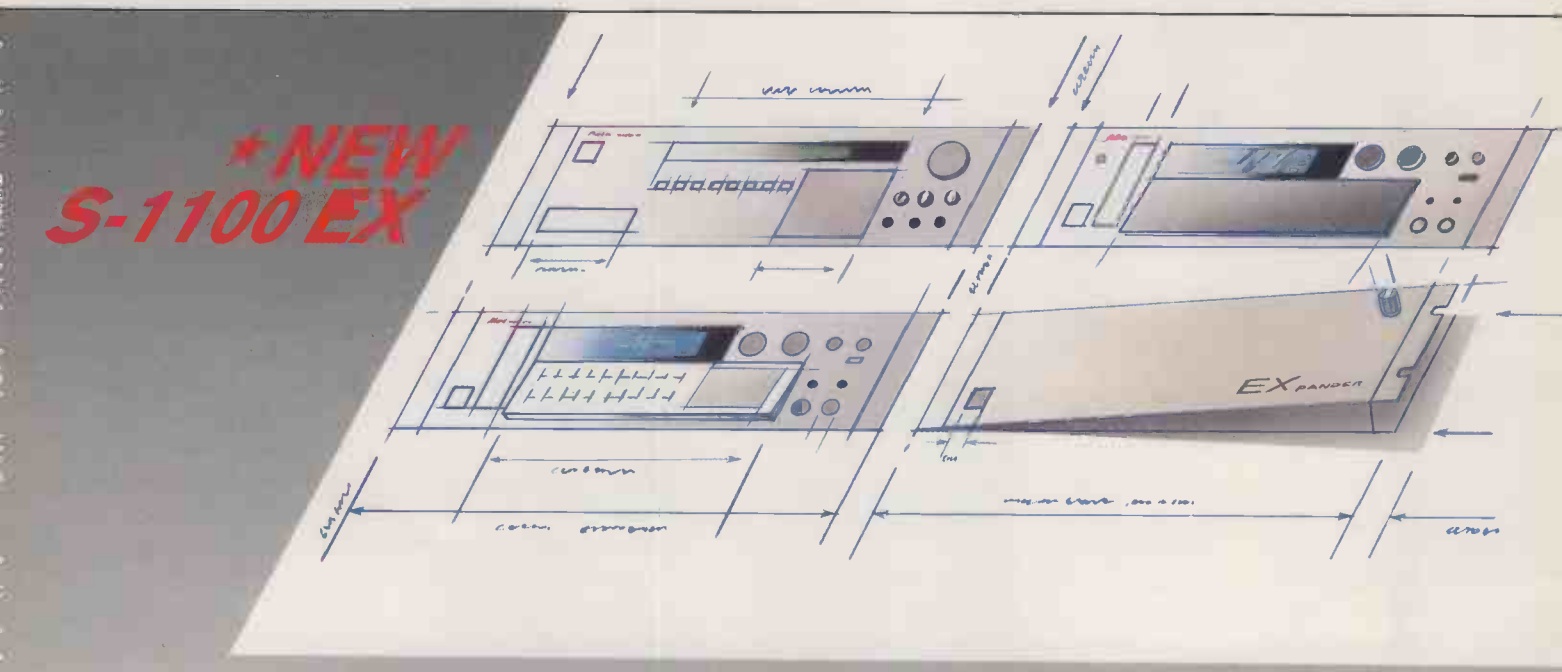
Two or three years ago, I just had to get back into playing. Out came the Gibbo and, within a few weeks, I was feeling frustrated at the limitations of guitar-only skills for the purpose of getting the song in your head onto tape. Enter the Roland GR50. Since then I have entered a whole new learning experience, the only limitations being my imagination and the depth of my pocket. My line-up now consists of Roland U220, SC/SB55 and GP16, Alesis Midiverb III, Tascam 644, PC200, Amiga and Music-X plus a range of performance equipment.

I reckon I'm qualified to make a point or two on MIDI guitars. And having read the recent letters in *Communique*, I want to raise a few.

There's no way the tracking of even the best pitch-to-MIDI converter will ever mirror the fine subtleties of the actual sound of the guitar string, amplified or natural. It is another instrument and the way to approach it is to ask it to do only what it can. With an open mind and substantial experimentation you will discover at leat three Top Line Rules which apply not to your guitar but to a new instrument - the MIDI guitar. In order of priority, the rules are: (i) Play clean - there's no way you can faithfully reproduce all the subtleties and nuances generated by the string(s), so limit your demands; (ii) Play to the sound you are using - and the limitations embedded within that sound; (iii) As you are a guitarist, choose sounds and fingering complementary to both your style and the sound you're using. Don't expect to achieve the level of competence of a concert pianist when using a grand piano sound - despite your proficiency on ordinary guitar - you won't crack it but with practice, you'll achieve good results.

I've found that, by identifying the limitations, you can really expand on the possibilities within those limitations. I gig with confidence using my Ibanez Jem/GK2 converter because I follow these simple rules. I've had a few embarrassing moments for sure, haven't we all? But the "jaw dropping" effect I get in the remaining 99% of performance more than makes up for it. Bear in mind that you only actually need to "MIDIize" the parts of your music the other musicians in your band can't - if you have a keyboard player, don't try parts he can walk. That's rather akin to asking a keyboard player to take your guitar part.

It comes down to making sure that you're not using the technology for technology's sake. Keep focussed



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on using the technology to make the song. Would The Beatles have written better songs with all this technology? Who knows, maybe. . .

Adrian Pepin
Kent

seeing the 'light

I am interested in finding out about the Fairlight Series II. So far I have been unable to find anyone who knows anything about the instrument. Please could you suggest any company, organisation or shop from where I might acquire general information about the instrument?

Richard Keenan
Sheffield

Can do better, Richard. If you peruse MT's history as a magazine called Electronics & Music Maker (the title was changed to Music Technology in November '86) you'll discover that we ran a series called "The Fairlight Explained". This nine-part series began in August '84 and ran to the end of that year, resuming in March '85 to run until Jun '85. In it Jim Grant, a seasoned Fairlight user, went through the mighty CMI Series II at some length. This should certainly provide any "general information" you require but here's a little background information to keep you going - the Fairlight first appeared in 1977 and was the first commercially available, dedicated computer-based musical instrument, hence its title Computer Musical Instrument (CMI). It was invented in Australia by Kim Ryrie and Peter Vogel and was christened "Fairlight" after a hydrofoil doing service in Sydney Harbour.

The original Series II cost around £20,000 but was not equipped with MIDI - consequently the instrument underwent a retrofit and became the Fairlight IIx. This metamorphosis was covered in a feature called "Fairlight goes MIDI" which was penned by the inimitable Paul Wiffen and appeared in June '85.

The Fairlight Series III appeared in '86 at a cost of around £60,000. It was covered in MT's April issue (along with PPG's ill-fated Realizer) by the eloquent Simon Trask who suggested that it made the Series II ". . .look like an Alba valve radio".

Fairlight also ventured into the world of video technology with the £5000 CVI - Computer Video Instrument - but failed to reproduce the success they'd enjoyed with the CMI. The CVI has since re-emerged as a useful tool in the creation of "acid" video in the hands of Stakker.

In spite of converting the likes of Peter Gabriel, Kate Bush, OMD, Tears for Fears, and the Art of Noise's JJ Jeczalik into CMI owners, Fairlight themselves went into liquidation in the late '80s, but have since been rescued by the Amber Technology Group. The world waits patiently to see if they can follow up the CMI. **Tg**

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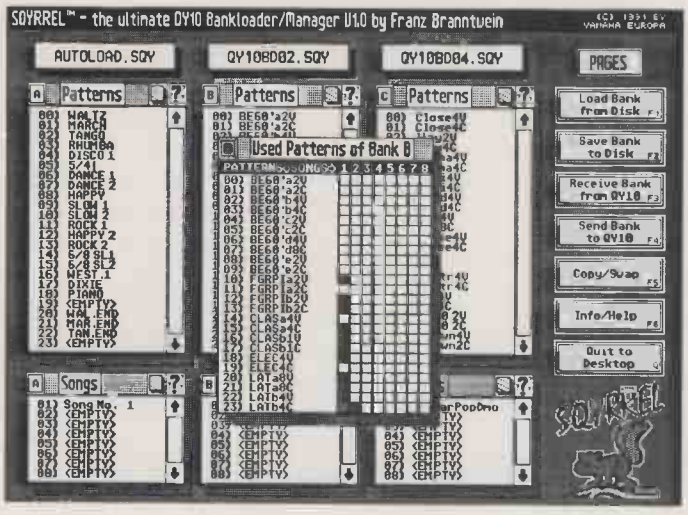
SQYRREL AND ST-EFFI FOR THE ATARI ST



THE FIRST THING you have to get right is the name. It's not quite "squirrel", although there is such an arboreal sciurine rodent on the loading screen. Probably something to do with the letters QY in it. But names apart, the best thing about Sqyrrel is that it's free.

The next best thing about Sqyrrel is that it's a Bank Loader/Manager for Yamaha's QY10 (reviewed MT, May '91) which runs on the Atari ST. Briefly, the QY10 is a video cassette-sized workstation - dubbed the Walkstation - which contains 30 sounds, a 26-piece drum kit, 76 preset accompaniment patterns and an eight-track sequencer. It is 28-note polyphonic and eight-part multitimbral and even sports a mini keyboard.

The QY10 was also one of Yamaha's surprise hits of '91 (so much so that they underrated its appeal and under-ordered) and at a RRP of £249 it has sold very well indeed, thank you. It has a good MIDI spec and I'm sure many owners have been using it with a sequencer.

Sqyrrel has only one main screen and this shows three banks of 24 patterns labelled A, B and C. You can transfer these between the program, a disk and the QY10 and five new banks of patterns are supplied. Operations such as copying and swapping patterns between banks, copying one bank to another, printing a bank, clearing a bank and sorting banks alphabetically are all supported.

Below the three bank windows are three song windows, each holding eight songs which you can copy between song banks, sort, print and clear. An Inspect function shows which patterns in a bank have been used by a song.

A memory gauge shows how much memory each bank of patterns uses. You can store more than 100% in Sqyrrel but, of course, the QY10 won't take them all.

Sqyrrel comes with no instructions, not even a read me file, and, in fact, the program has been carefully designed so that you can use it without any. It does have extensive on-screen help and no QY10 user should have any problems with operation at all.

Sqyrrel isn't Gem-based but operation is very graphic. You can perform all functions with the mouse and there are alternate keypresses for keyboard buffs. Particularly cute is the Undo button whose function is intriguingly labelled "Panic! My Boss is coming!", and which punches up a mock spreadsheet on the screen.

What else is there to say? If you have a QY10 you'll find Sqyrrel a very useful utility - especially for free.

As Sqyrrel is to the QY10, ST-Effi is to Yamaha's FX900 digital effects unit. Well, as far as management facilities go, anyway. The FX900 can hold 100 effect settings in memory and the program has two banks, each capable of holding 100 settings. These can be transferred between the ST, a disk and the FX900 and there are copy and swap functions which work along similar lines to those in Sqyrrel.

There is a small notepad included in the program - which is useful for listing the uses you've put the effects to. You may think you'll remember what Squidgidooglum was used for - but you soon forget. You can even doodle here with the mouse but it's no drawing program.

The FX900's MIDI control channel can be set and the memory area to which individual effects are sent stipulated - you don't have to transfer them a complete bank at a time. You can also set the program change number which will be used for that memory area.

There is no info/help screen - as in Sqyrrel - but there are lots of pop-up help boxes. An FX900 owner should have no trouble using the program and there are keyboard shortcuts for most functions.

The two programs come on the same double-sided disk and will run on any ST although you'll require a hi-res monitor. They were commissioned by Yamaha Europe and made public domain which means they are free. Catches? None! Yamaha will even send you the disk in a nifty carry box while stocks last. In any event, you should be able to pick the disk up from any good PD library.

I suppose the main criticism is that the programs can't run as desk accessories which is, ideally, how all voice managers should operate. On reflection it seems a little short-sighted of the programmer but then, how can you complain when they're free? Parameter edit functions? Well, let's not be greedy, either.

Full marks to Yamaha for this bit of free product support. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all manufacturers supplied free managers with their hardware? And if ice cream was free in the summer? And if *Escape to Victory* was never shown on TV again? And if. . .

QY10 and FX900 owners, to get your free disk contact Yamaha's hi-tech Professional Music Division. ■ ***Ian Waugh***

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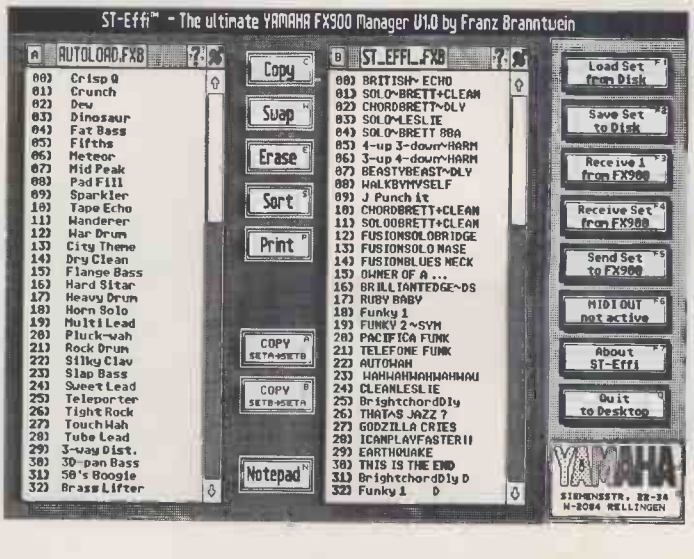

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ON THE BEAT

Part 29

WRITING DRUM PATTERNS TO ACCOMMODATE SOUNDS AS WELL AS A TUNE IS AN ART IN ITS OWN RIGHT - THIS SELECTION OF PATTERNS CONCENTRATES ON TURNING AMBIENT DRUM SOUNDS INTO MUSIC. TEXT BY NIGEL LORD.

WITH SO MUCH of the music we write and perform dictated by the instruments we play - and, therefore, by the manufacturers who design them - it is always rewarding to see users wresting back the initiative and placing demands on those whose job it is to decide what it is we should be listening to. If you see what I mean. It might suit *them* to install swirling 20-second synth patches called '#]Growth. . *!' in a synthesiser but this isn't likely to cut much ice with anyone actively involved in contemporary songwriting and recording.

At the other end of the scale, the mid-'80s saw a whole slew of drum machines released onto the market which, though consistently impressive in terms of the quality of the sounds they delivered, were, by the late-'80s beginning to fall well below peoples' expectation of what was required to construct a contemporary drum track. With the previously mundane task of handling drums in the studio having become something of an art by the

ILLUSTRATION: CLIVE GOODYER

end of the decade, someone, clearly, had shifted the goal posts when it came to what was demanded of the humble beatbox.

Before the gauntlet was picked up by the manufacturers, programmers - tired of the sterility of the current machines - turned their attention to samplers as a source of new sounds, and to older machines like the TR808 and TR909. Though no match for later models in terms of the accuracy of their voices, these old classics did, at least, have a character of their own. And with the latest processing technology, it was possible to produce rhythm tracks which could match the frenetic activity of that eight-step bassline courtesy of the SH101 or TB303.

That the manufacturers had realised that drum machines needed to sound exciting as well as offer the latest programming refinements became clear with the release of the Alesis HR16B. A monster of a machine, it demonstrated not only that weighty, studio-processed sounds could reside quite happily alongside more conventional voices (provided by its sister machine the HR16), but that even sounds which revealed something of the manufacturer's sense of humour could be included in a mass-market machine.

Since then, all the major manufacturers have made a point of including a range of highly distinctive onboard voices. This, of course, has come as something of a God-send for those unable or unwilling to spend their time programming elaborate rhythm tracks. Relatively simple patterns sound far more effective when assigned to huge, ambient voices - particularly snare and bass drums - and make it much easier for you to make your mark as a programmer. As far as it goes, this is fine. Those looking to create something more rhythmically interesting, however, often find these voices difficult to work with, particularly at faster tempos where multiple triggering can cause overlapping of sounds and a consequent exaggeration of the "machine gun effect".

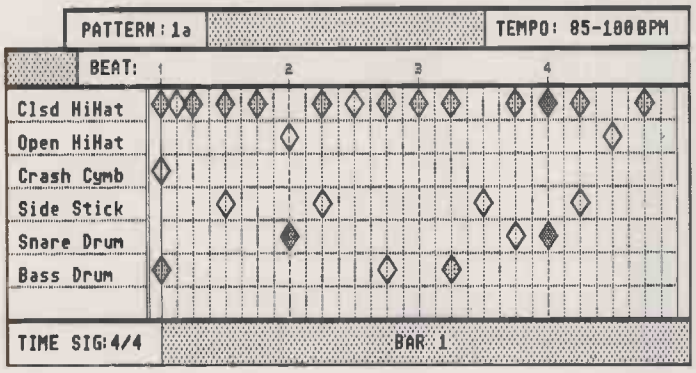
This month's article is dedicated to patterns suitable for use with heavier ambient sounds, and hopefully will act as a guide as to the best method of coping with these larger-than-life voices. I make no claims for any of the patterns being daringly original in structure - most of them are orientated towards the dancefloor and will rely on the assignment of your machine's more "extreme" voices to create rhythmic interest. That said, there are some rather unusual programming lines with which I hope to jolt your imagination, and being of similar tempo you should find it possible to switch these between patterns.

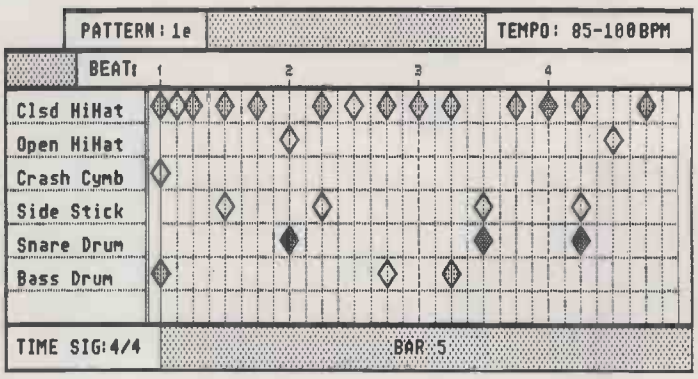
To accommodate the length of individual voices, I've kept the tempo slightly lower than the "preferred" 120bpm mark, but this doesn't detract from the essential groove of any pattern. ➢

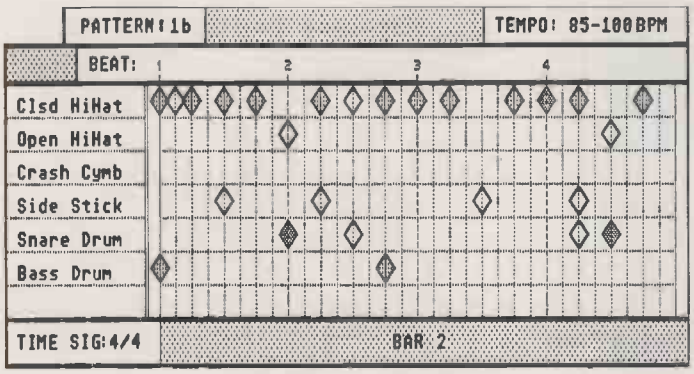
With the exception of Pattern 3, there's nothing more than the occasional flam (indicated by a letter F) to tax your programming skills; all your time will, I'm sure, be spent combing through your library of sounds for the most appropriate voices for each instrument line.

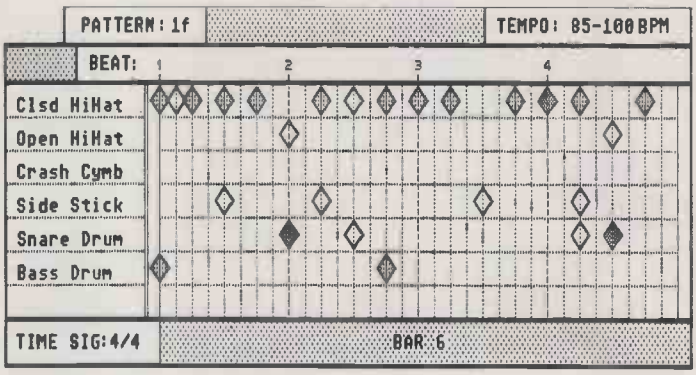
Pattern 3 is complicated slightly by a descending snare drum line for which the instrument's dynamic range has to be divided into seven levels - each of which is indicated by a number in the grid diamond. Don't make the mistake, however, of setting level one to zero, as it needs to be just audible over the level of the other instruments.

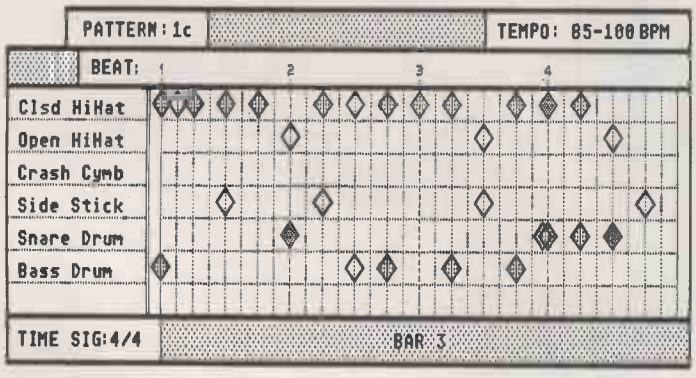
Incidentally, those of you using samplers to create rhythm tracks - I'm sure there must be many - should also find yourselves with plenty of scope for experimentation. All this months' patterns were written using sampler-based voices triggered via an ST. As I've said on a number of occasions in this series, these patterns sound pretty good at my end; whether they do at yours is largely a matter of how much time you spend after the notes have been entered into your machine. ■

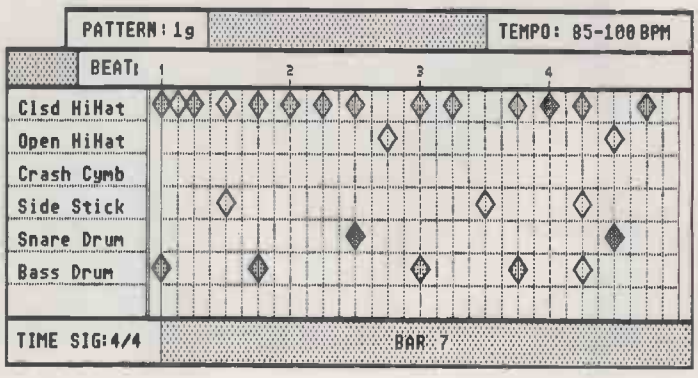


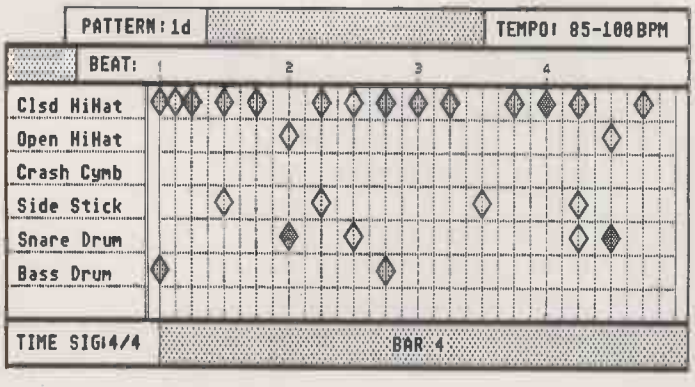


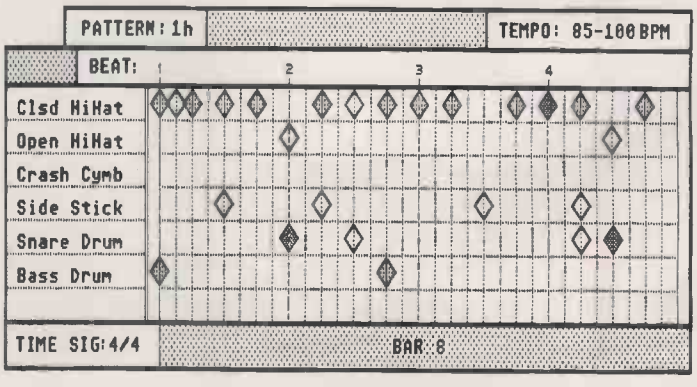












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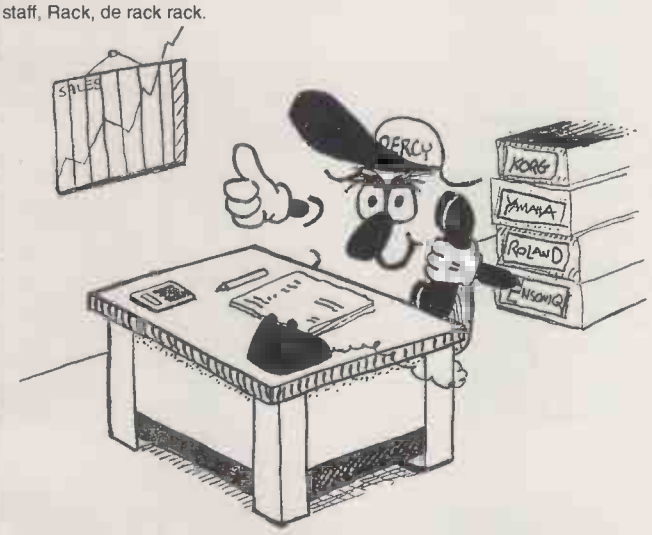

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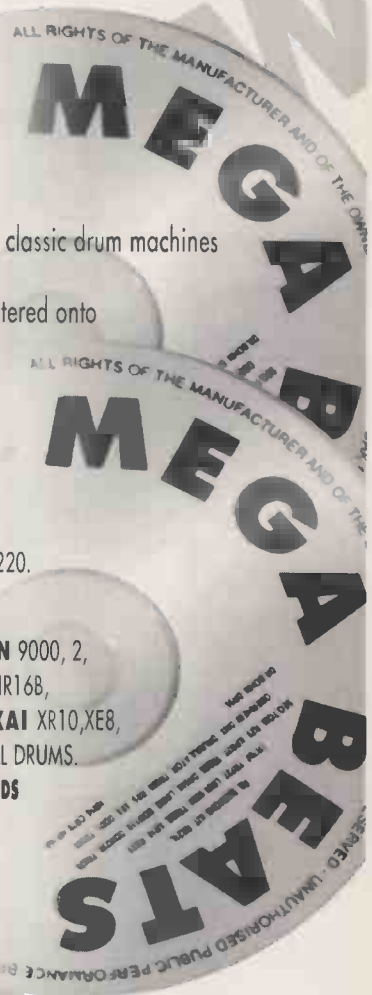

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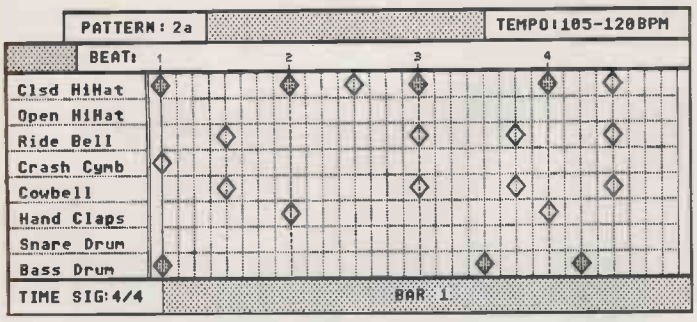
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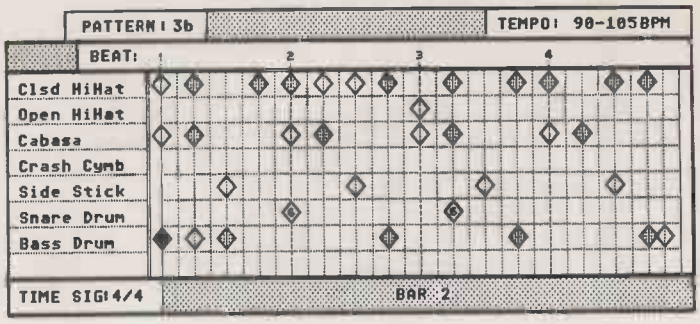
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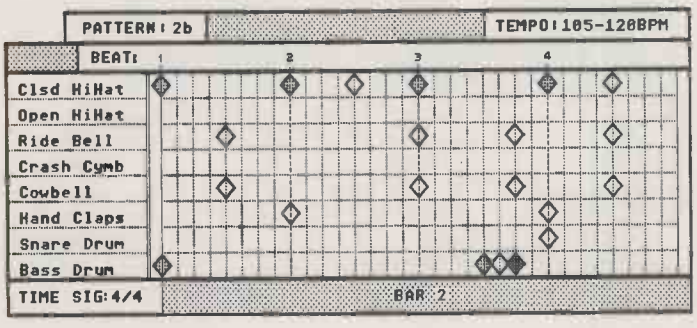
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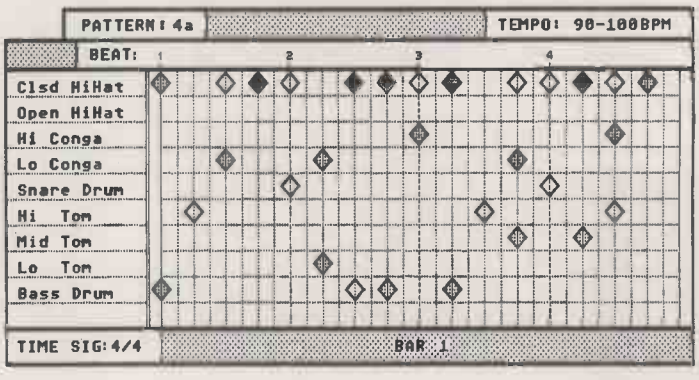
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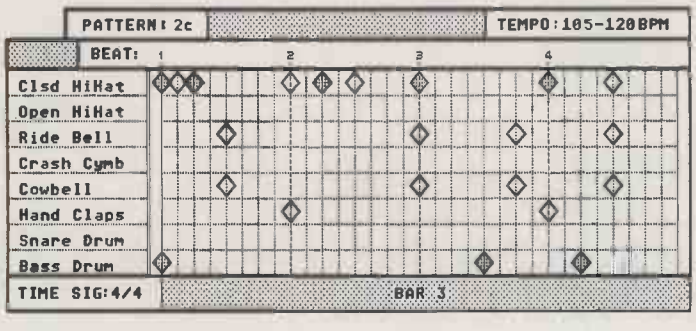
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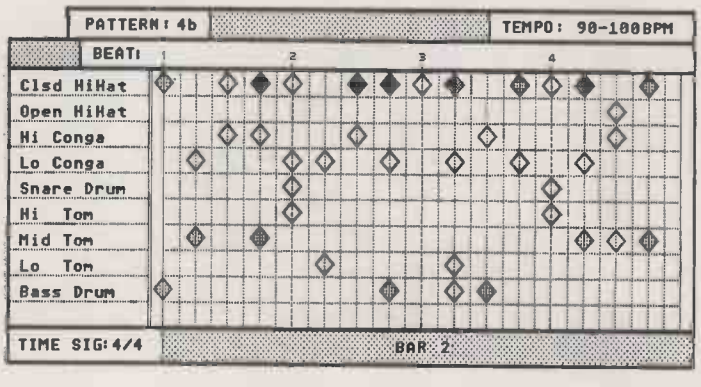
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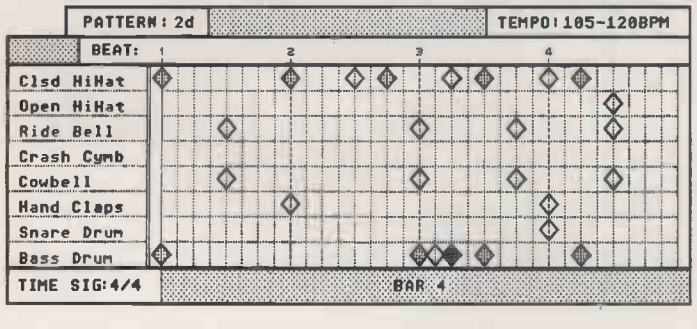
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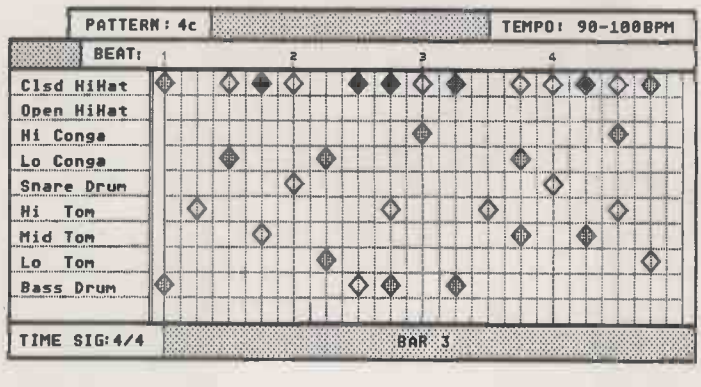
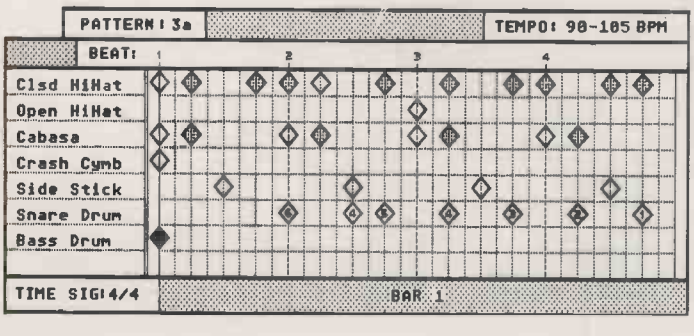
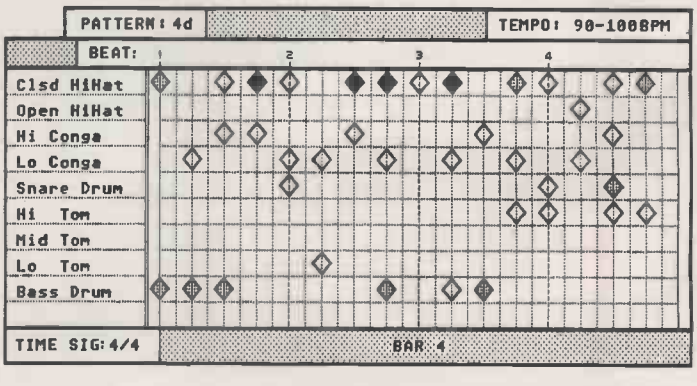
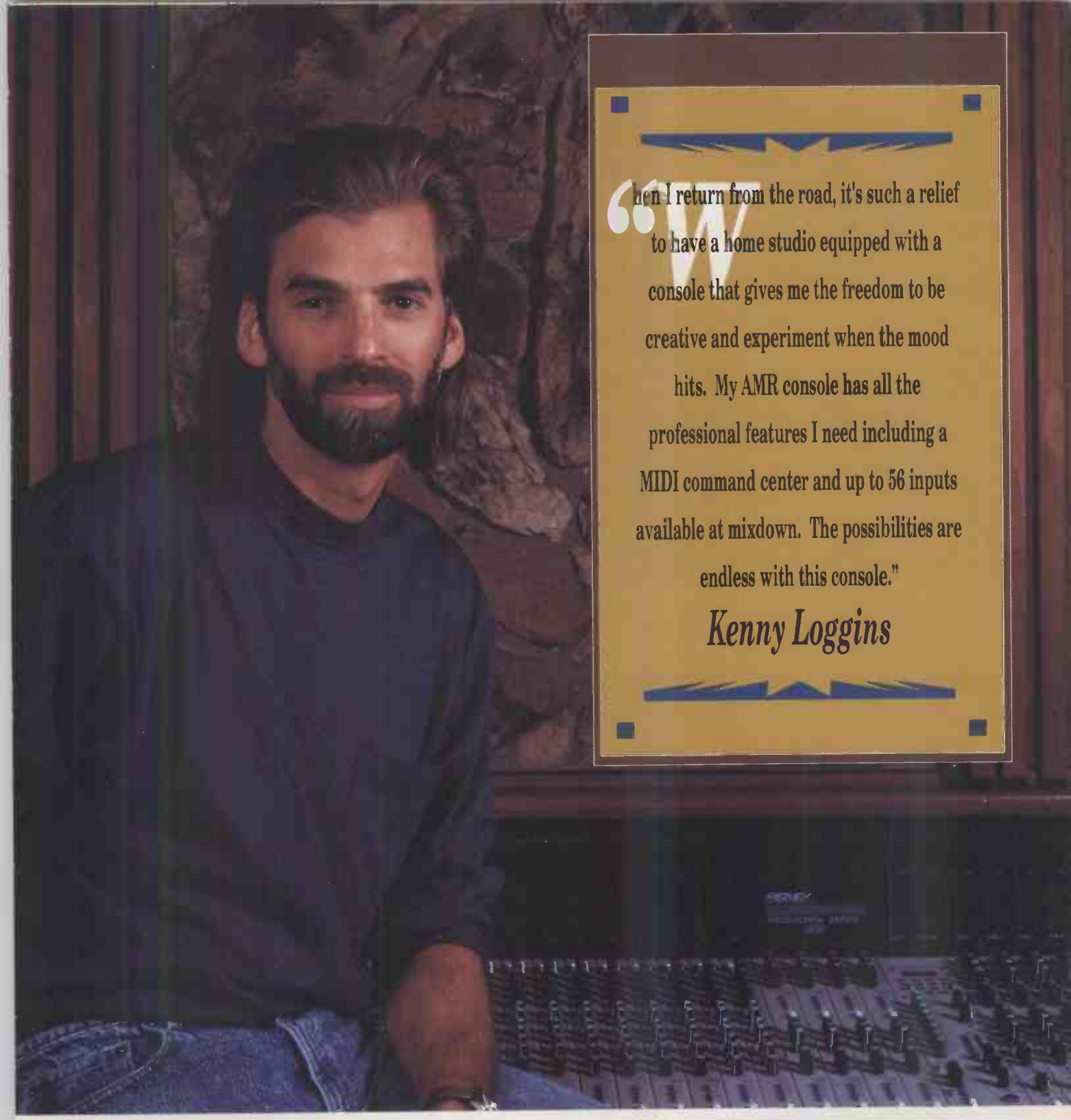
TIME SIG: 4/4
BAR 4


PATTERN: 4c
TEMPO: 90-100BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Hi Conga
Lo Conga
Snare Drum
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Lo Tom
Bass Drum
TIME SIG: 4/4
BAR 3


PATTERN: 3a
TEMPO: 90-105 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Cabasa
Crash Cymb
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG: 4/4
BAR 1


PATTERN: 4d
TEMPO: 90-100BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Hi Conga
Lo Conga
Snare Drum
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Lo Tom
Bass Drum
TIME SIG: 4/4
BAR 4



Peavey Audio Media Research Production Series™ Recording Consoles

For more information about the Production Series™ 800, 1600, or 2400 Recording Consoles please contact your authorized Peavey AMR dealer or call/write to the factory for a free brochure.

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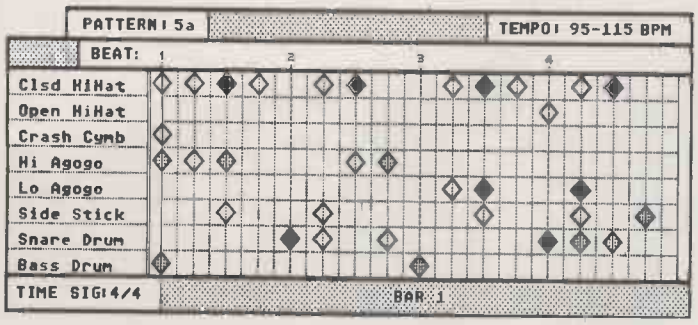
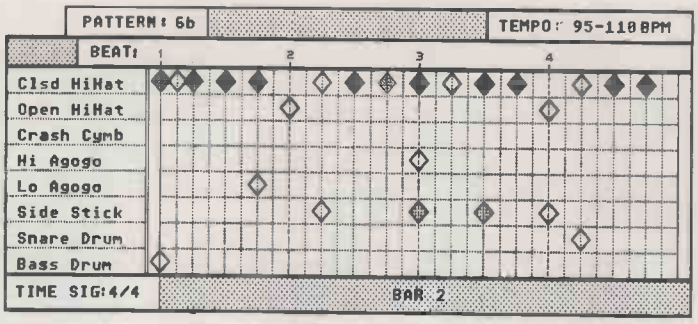
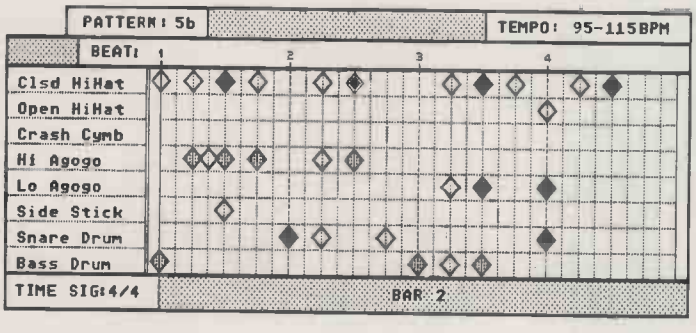
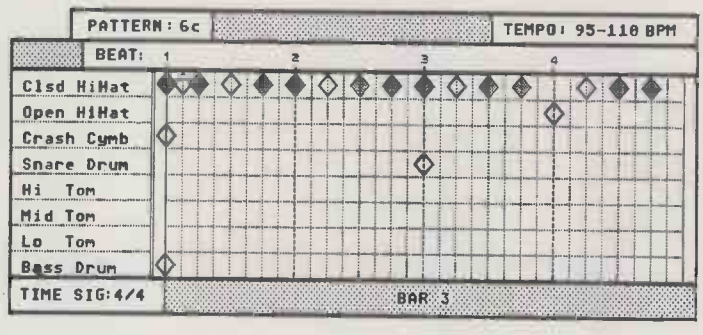
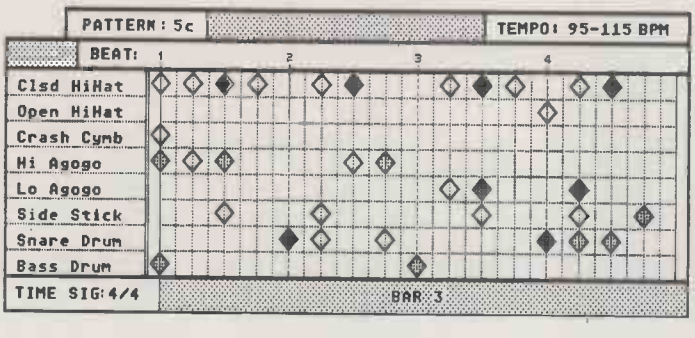
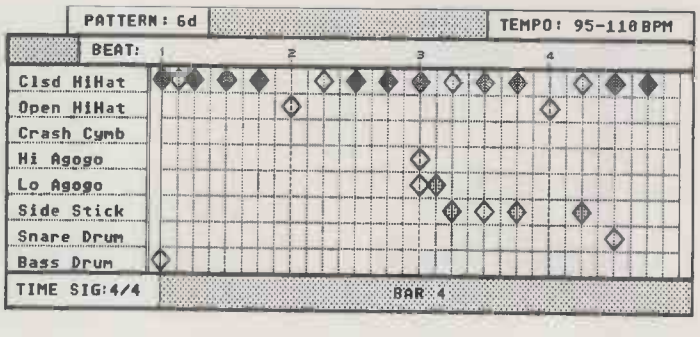

PATTERN: 5a
TEMPO: 95-115 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 1

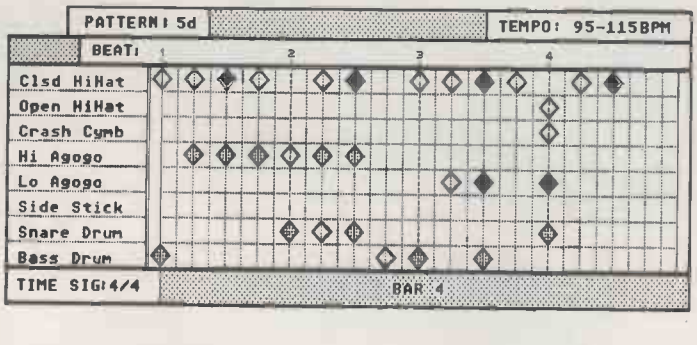

PATTERN: 6b
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 2

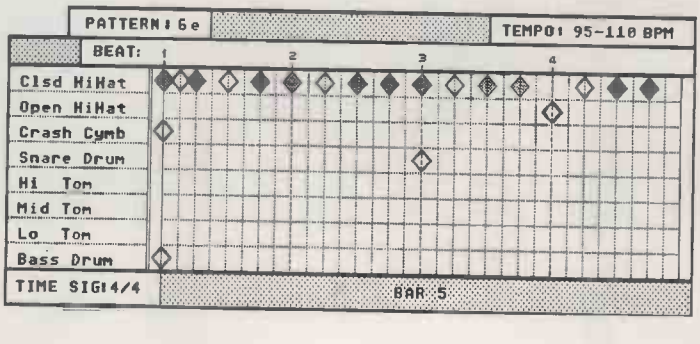

PATTERN: 5b
TEMPO: 95-115BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 2

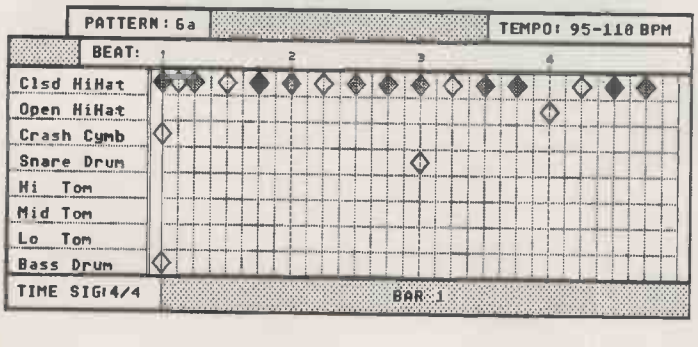

PATTERN: 6c
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Snare Drum
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Lo Tom
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 3

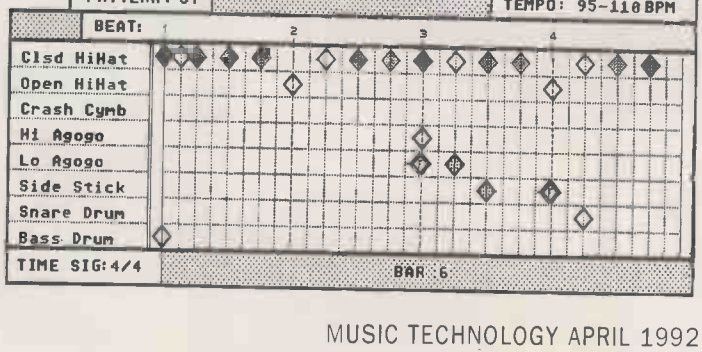

PATTERN: 5c
TEMPO: 95-115 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 3


PATTERN: 6d
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 4


PATTERN: 5d
TEMPO: 95-115BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 4


PATTERN: 6e
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Snare Drum
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Lo Tom
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 5


PATTERN: 6a
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Snare Drum
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Lo Tom
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 1


PATTERN: 6f
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 6

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- 16-voice multi-timbral
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- Programmable aftertouch
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KORG HAVE DONE IT AGAIN

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Hearing is believing.....£1749

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Alesis HR16B £250
Akai XR10 .....£319
Korg S3 .....£585
Cheetah MD16 .....£290
Cheetah MD16RP £399
Alesis D4 .....£399
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YAMAHA RY30

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Yamaha TG33 .....£450

YAMAHA TG33

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Akai S950.....£1089

Akai S1000 .....£POA

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SAMPLER gives you 5 seconds of stereo sampling and up to 43.5 seconds in mono. **ONLY £628**

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Roland A50 mother keyboard £999
Yamaha SY55 music workstation £799
Kawai K4 multi-timbral performance synth £599
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The M350 is a two way full range touring or backline PA speaker capable of 350 watt into 8 ohms. The M350 has a 15 inch LF driver and also an HF pure titanium diaphragm compression driver .....£999 a pair.
NEW JBL M360 .....35HZ – 22KHZ
The M360 is a 3 way full range loudspeaker system designed for bands who need a high quality PA system or sidefill speaker system. This unit also has 350 watt into 8 ohms handling and comprizing of a 15 inch high power woofer for clean accurate bass response, an 8 inch midrange tranducer speaker and a horn loaded + tweeter ...£1300

BOSE 802 SPEAKERS
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We are offering 802's for a limited period only for just.....£899 a pair
Bose 802 system controller for the speakers.....£200

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Electrovoice have always been known for quality and the S200 PA speakers are just that, they are small easy to carry units that produce an astonishing 300 watts per speaker of perfect accurate sound.....£999 a pair

TOA SL150
One of the most important requirements with equipment today is the cost as well as the quality.
The TOA SL150 speakers fit both these requirements, they have a 15 inch woofer and a horn capable of 240 watts each. All this for just .....£299.

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STUDIOMASTER POWERHOUSE 8:2
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12:2 .....£1100

CARLSBRO PMX 8:2
A similar unit to the Powerhouse but the PMX offers a staggering 300 watts per side.
Price £847

SUNN SX8350
This is a mono 8 input mixer amp designed for small bands with built in reverb £460

NEW CARLSBRO GRX7
A fine new mixer amp from Carlsbro, The GRX7 has 6 inputs (mono) capable of producing 400 watts of Power £486

AMPS

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Klynstrom Mosfet 1000 the leader of the range cost.....£799

THIS MONTHS DEALS

PA DEAL
1 x Carlsbro GRX7 mixer amp
1 pair of Carlsbro A115 speakers each cabinet has a 15 inch woofer and two tweeters.
1 x pair of stands and speakers leads
total.....£899

KEYBOARD DEAL
1 x Korg 01/W (keyboard of the month)
1 x Carlsbro K115 100 (watt keyboard amp)
1 x sustain pedal + lead
1 x frame keyboard stand
Items on their own £2027
Deal price £1850

RECORDING DEAL

16 TRACK SYSTEM
Fostex E16 complete with Studiomaster Proline gold 16 : 8 : 16 console, all wiring, looms supplied.
Total package £4369.00

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Tascam Porta 03.....£321

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Fostex R8 .....£1495

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Fostex E16 .....£2999
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Tascam MSR16 .....£3899

24 TRACK
Tascam MSR24. .....£POA

DAT
Tascam DA30.....£POA

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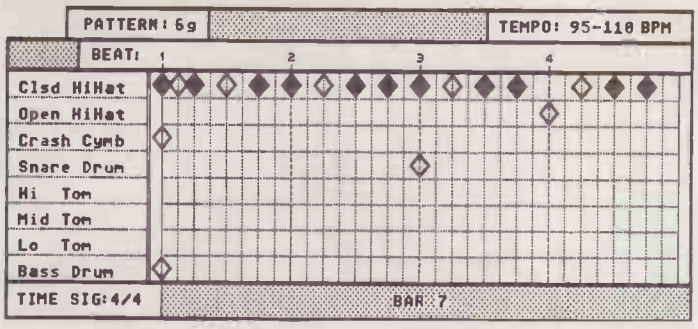
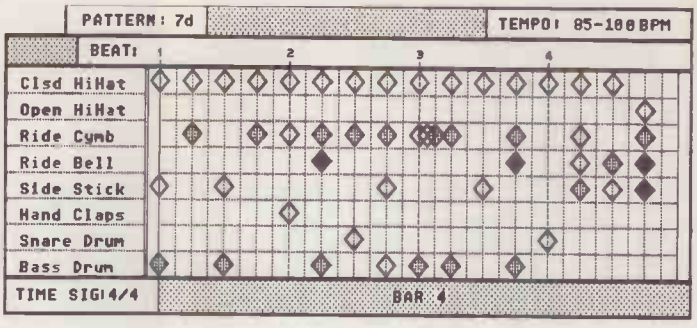
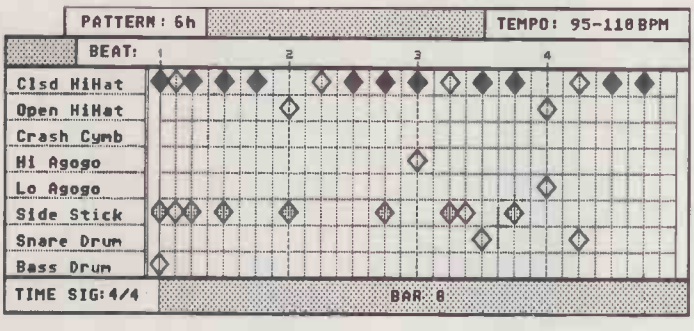
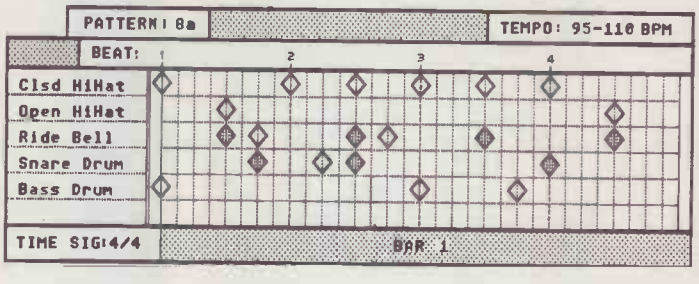
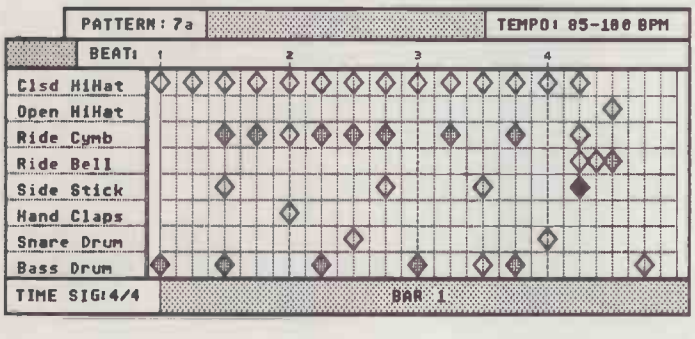
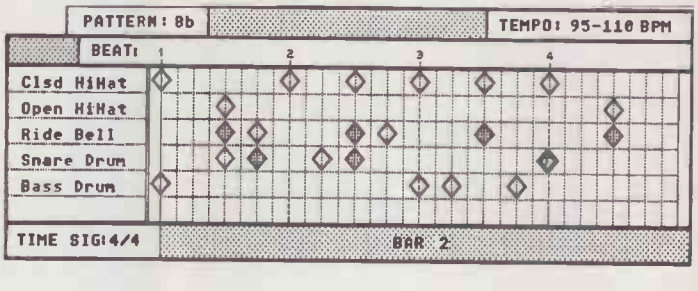

PATTERN: 6g
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Snare Drum
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Lo Tom
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 7

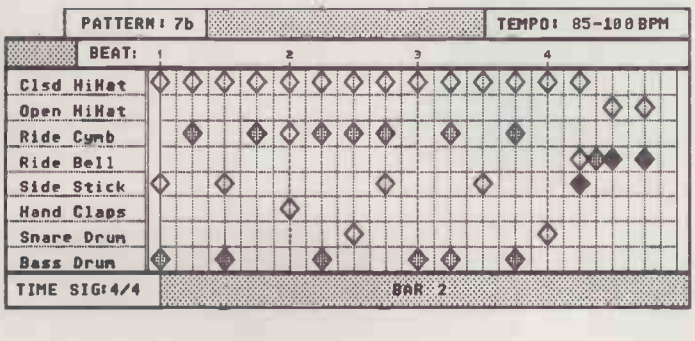

PATTERN: 7d
TEMPO: 85-100 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Cymb
Ride Bell
Side Stick
Hand Claps
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 4

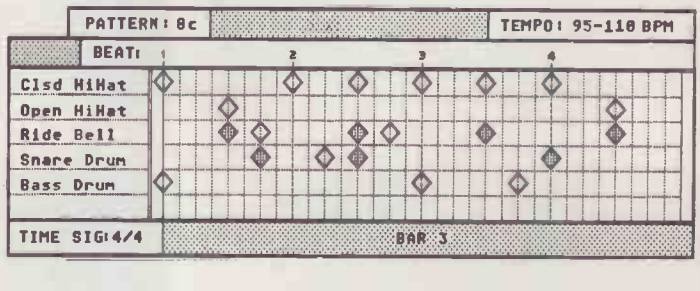

PATTERN: 6h
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Crash Cymb
Hi Agogo
Lo Agogo
Side Stick
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 8

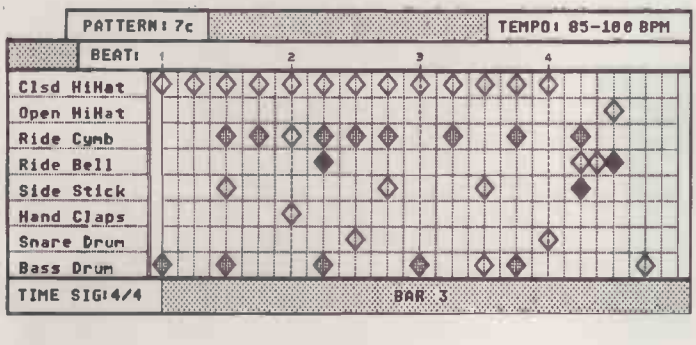

PATTERN: 8a
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Bell
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 1


PATTERN: 7a
TEMPO: 85-100 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Cymb
Ride Bell
Side Stick
Hand Claps
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 1


PATTERN: 8b
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Bell
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 2


PATTERN: 7b
TEMPO: 85-100 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Cymb
Ride Bell
Side Stick
Hand Claps
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 2


PATTERN: 8c
TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Bell
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 3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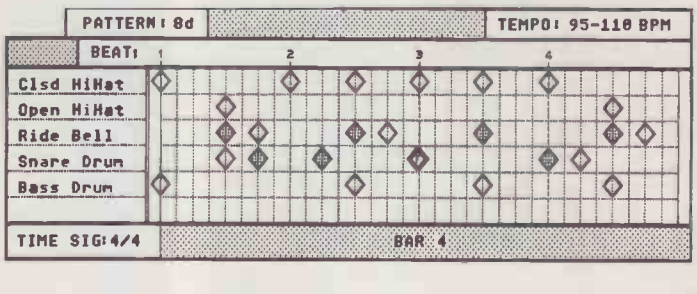
TEMPO: 85-100 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Cymb
Ride Bell
Side Stick
Hand Claps
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 3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TEMPO: 95-110 BPM
BEAT: 1 2 3 4
Clsd HiHat
Open HiHat
Ride Bell
Snare Drum
Bass Drum
TIME SIG:4/4
BAR 4

genetic ENGINEERING

IF YOU WERE LISTENING TO POP MUSIC IN 1990, you couldn't have missed a track called 'Tom's Diner'. Originally an a cappella track by American singer Suzanne Vega, 'Tom's Diner 1990-style' took the a cappella and gave it a moody, atmospheric instrumental backing complete with a brisk, bouncy dance rhythm and a rumbling bass. It was a strangely captivating musical collaboration - not least because it wasn't a collaboration at all, in the traditional sense.

The single went to No. 2 in the UK, No. 1 in Germany, Top 5 in America and Top 10 in France, and all in all sold over five million copies worldwide - yet

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CLUNN

Their white-label remix of Suzanne Vega's 'Tom's Diner' saw DNA in deep trouble with A&M Records, but the success it brought has earned them credibility as remixers and the release of their debut LP. Interview by Simon Trask.

DNA, the musicians responsible for the music behind Vega's vocals and whose name was on the sleeve, only earned £4000 from it. In fact, for a while no-one seemed sure who DNA actually were. One rumour had it that they were a couple of A&R men from Vega's record label, A&M - a rumour which the label did nothing to discourage.

In fact, DNA turned out to be a musician and a DJ - respectively, Nick Batt and Neal Slateford - from Bath in Somerset. Not eager to step into the limelight, in the ensuing period they've been busy but low-key. A second single, 'La Serenissima', was released around the same time as 'Tom's Diner' but was rather overshadowed by the latter's success - at least in the UK. A third single, 'Rebel Woman', was delayed by many months while a guitar sample from David Bowie's 'Rebel Rebel' was cleared, and never really did anything. The duo also put together an album of

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"I'd rather not make a complete dickhead of myself and then have somebody base their opinion of the music on how I came across on camera."

➢ remixes for Polygram in France called *DNA: Grooves and Remixes* which included remixes of tracks by Afrika Bambaataa, Oleta Adams, Amina and Voix Bulgares.

They've also been busy remixing tracks by artists as diverse as Kylie Minogue, Jesus Jones, Electronic, Kym Mazelle and Erasure.

But 'Tom's Diner' wasn't merely a prelude to a career in remixing. February saw the release of their debut album proper, *Taste This*, on EMI Records, preceded by a single from the album, 'Can You Handle It?', which reached No. 18 in the national charts.

Taste This is an impressive album, debut or otherwise, coupling well-crafted songs which stay in the mind with danceable rhythms. Although well varied in musical style - due in part to the duo bringing in a range of singers to co-write with them - it also has an underlying cohesion and a strong sense of musical identity. All in all, it's a classy set.

THE DNA LABORATORY IS LOCATED IN A quaint cottage situated somewhat incongruously in the heart of bustling Bath. As studios go, this one is little more than a collection of gear spread casually around a room, a typical hi-tech setup in its disregard for traditional studio aesthetics and practicalities. The ambience is down-to-earth, homely with a lived-in feel redolent of long hours spent burning the midnight oil.

It's here that I sit down with the technical half of the DNA pair, Nicholas Batt, in an attempt to shed some light on the mysterious duo. Actually, there's nothing at all mysterious about the friendly, talkative musician sitting in front of me - it's just that anyone who fights shy of publicity tends to be labelled "mysterious" by the media.

Batt and Slateford share the cottage with a couple of other local musicians who have their own studio at the other end of the building. According to Batt, his home town is a hive of musical activity: "There's a lot of local-level bands, and there's also quite a large percentage of working musicians, people actually involved in deals who have their own studios", he explains.

Indeed, some of the musicians can be heard on *Taste This* - namely singers Jo Nye, Neal Davidge (who's actually from neighbouring Bristol), Sally Larkin, and singer/rapper Babyshark, all of whom contributed to the album as co-writers. A talented bunch they are, too.

But let's look back on *that* single. Batt and Slateford got the idea to do it after hearing a couple of records which used snippets of Vega's a cappella. Their manager then approached A&M, but got no response from the company, so they pressed up the track themselves as a white label.

"I went to work at Glastonbury on the acoustic stage as a stage manager", Batt recalls, "and when I came back from a weekend in the fields there were about 20 messages on the answerphone saying that Gary Davis had been playing our track as a white label bootleg on Radio 1. Then from there it all went mad, basically. We got a solicitor's letter from A&M saying 'Sign this, this is all you're getting, or we'll take legal action'. We said 'Well, can we have a point?' and they said 'No, get lost'! They gave us 4000 quid, which covered the white-label pressings and left us with two-and-a-half thousand quid, which went on a mixing desk and an eight-track, and that was that. We didn't get any more money.

"We knew what we were signing, it wasn't that, it was the fact that A&M haven't really been courteous to us at all, so we have a bit of bad feeling between us. We got just one disc out of them, which was a DMC award for Best Dance Remix, but we haven't had anything for other territories like America, which would be really nice to have. Also, they put the record out under our name; I can understand why they did it, so it wouldn't appear to be a Suzanne Vega record, but the first we knew about it was when we saw it in the shops. That's not what we expected with them.

"We get on very well with Suzanne, though. We actually went over to New York and worked with her on another track which we'd demoed, which was out of her pocket, and we got on really well. She's really good fun. She came down here and recorded the vocal for a track on our album, 'Salt Water'."

So what was her reaction to DNA's "version" of 'Tom's Diner'?

"She thought it was great", replies Batt. "That was the whole thing. A&M were very worried about her getting all artistic and petulant, but she's not really like that. Anyway, they sort of shielded her, against her own will sort of thing, and put out all sorts of rumours.

"I think Suzanne appreciated what we did because it actually was her song still. It maintained the song - and it's a good song, but it never really did that well. I think the original a cappella charted around No. 30 when it first came out as a single. I think what we did with it really brings her song across."

She must have done well out of the single's success, though.

"Oh, I'm sure she has", Batt agrees. "It brings out the whole question of whether if you do a remix of a track and it becomes an A-side 7" single, should you get some sort of publishing on it? It's an interesting question, because if you rewrite everything. . . I mean, in this case there wasn't even any music in the first place. So we basically provided a backing track and rearranged the song into a pop shape.

"When you do make a record a hit when it wasn't one before, and you just get a fee. . . I really feel some sort of publishing should be worked out in certain instances. At one point we were looking at whether or not we had a right to any publishing on the track. We could have pursued it, and it would have been a massive court case. We basically wanted to hurt A&M for their behaviour towards us, and make them pay up, but. . . The thing that finally stopped us was that the only way we could do it was publishing, which would have directly gone on Suzanne. There was no way we were going to do that, because we get on alright with her, and there was no way we were going to jeopardise that."

The single's success also had a knock-on effect on Vega's album sales.

"Suzanne's album went straight back into the Top

40, where it had only been for a very short time before, and stayed there for a long time", recalls Batt. "A&M used the single to sell the album - and also made a fortune out of the single, which doesn't usually happen."

The other side to the coin is, of course, that Batt and Slateford have gained far more than £4000 from the track. DNA broke through from anonymity into the public spotlight by hitching their wagon to a star; if they'd simply released a cover version of 'Tom's Diner' using an unknown vocalist, would it have had the same success?

"Oh yeah, there is that side of it, obviously", Batt concurs. "There's absolutely no doubt that we made our reputation from that track. That's something I won't deny. But then we did it, so why shouldn't we? It was a good record for the time. I mean, it was very simple and basic, but those tracks often work the best."

TURNING TO MATTERS TECHNICAL, BATT explains that, rather than try to make the sequenced parts follow the tempo fluctuations of Vega's performance, which he felt wouldn't work with a dance groove, he sampled the track in sections into his S900 ("through my little Tantek compressor, which is really vicious - that's why her voice has got so much bite") and then cut each section up into small samples which he sequenced so as to make the result fit the drum beat, laying the results onto a four-track as he went.

"I got maybe 'I am sitting by the', and it was in time perhaps up until 'I am sitt', and then the 'ing' would be another sample which I would jiggle about until it was in time", he offers by way of an example.

The sudden success of 'Tom's Diner' put Batt and Slateford on the defensive.

"It was like 'Oh my God, I've got all these people ringing me up at home, I don't want to tell them where I live. . .'", recalls Batt. "Anything could happen, so we did get a bit defensive. But we did play the game a little bit, too - I'd phone up interviewers from a phone box and they'd call me back. It was good fun. We didn't get much press about the single, anyway. I think we've just about kept a profile where people still remember the name if they're triggered, which is fine by us."

Coming up to date, Batt is distinctly unexcited by the thought of TV appearances - or, as he puts it somewhat cuttingly, "I don't want to have to work at talking to sheep on Saturday morning." Well, that's understandable.

"Anyway, we know we're not going to be teen-pop pin-ups", he adds. "I don't respond that well in front of cameras, so I'd rather not make a complete dickhead of myself and then have somebody base their opinion of the music on how I came across on camera. We don't feel any great need to be recognised, anyway. I think we're both a bit worried that if things get really big we'll lose all our privacy."

In the DNA scheme of things, Batt takes care of the playing and sequencing while Slateford is responsible for searching out sounds and loops from records.

"Also, because he's a DJ, he provides more of a global overview of the music", Batt explains. "He doesn't play anything, and it's quite good that he doesn't understand the technology, either, because that means that we each have our own areas."

Batt's approach to composition typically involves creating an atmosphere out of which a song can evolve.

"I'm not really a songwriter", he admits. "I tend to create an environment for a song to be written into. I don't sit down at a piano, play a few chords and mumble into a tape machine. I mean, I wish I did. It would be great if I could say 'I wrote three songs last night'. But I didn't, so. . .

"I tend to work from the atmosphere and the groove upwards to completion. Which is long-winded. I think sometimes it makes things a bit difficult, because you're sitting there slogging away until something happens. I quite often sit in front of the computer for hours and hours, and then just at the end of the session it starts to happen and then I'm off. I don't have a Great Method - which is probably my downfall when it comes to remixing, because it can take a bit more time."

BATT'S FIRST MUSICAL INSTRUMENT was a Korg MS10 monosynth. His early music-making days were spent playing keyboards in a couple of local bands, at which time he had a Roland Jupiter 4, an Ensoniq Mirage and a Yamaha DX7. His first experience of the recording studio came with a council-run course for the unemployed, learning recording techniques for a month at a local 16-track studio. While there, he also discovered the Atari ST and Steinberg's Pro24 sequencing software.

"I thought 'That's what I'm going to do'", he recalls, "so I saved up some money, sold a couple of things and bought the computer and the software."

Deciding that he would get into pre-production work and offer his services to local musicians, he signed up for the government Enterprise Allowance scheme, which he says was "pretty helpful at the time".

Having started out with Pro24 version III, Batt upgraded to Cubase, which is still his sequencer of choice today. He also uses Keynote's Chameleon universal patch librarian software for storing all his synth sounds centrally, and rates the program highly.

Today he has three samplers: a Roland S330, an Akai S900 and S1000.

"I always have drums and stuff in the S330 sampler, and I use the S1000 for any loops or string sounds or whatever. The S900 might get used for strings when the S1000 is being used for a lot of other samples; it doesn't get used a massive amount, but just enough to justify it being here."

For the album's big ballad track, 'Blue Love' (which as of writing is set to be the second single from the album, scheduled for release in the second week of March), Batt and Slateford used a real string section - of sorts.

"It's just this one guy called Stuart Gordon who we got in", reveals Batt. "He did a whole multitrack full of strings, and then we bounced that down. He had two violins, so we used them for double-tracking, which made quite a difference to the sound. I didn't engineer that, it was a bit much for me - I got in a ➢

"When I'm doing a mix, it has to have some sort of meaning - I find it difficult to go 'Oh, right, house piano part, no problem'."

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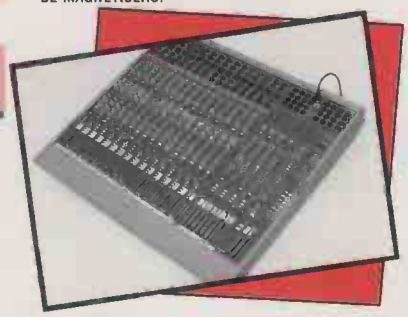

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➢ local guy who's good at recording acoustic instruments.

"We also used some sampled strings and synth strings on the track - Solo Violin off the S900 and some pads off the D110. My main source of string sounds in general is the Akais, although I also use the D110, which is an instrument I swear by. I'd thoroughly recommend it to anybody - a classic if you get into programming it at all. It's not fun to program, but you can actually fool the ear with it quite effectively if you spend a bit of time. You'd be surprised how many instruments I use it for. It hasn't got a massive amount of sonic depth, but you can sort that out by blending it with other sounds. For a long time I just used to use the D110 with the Atari, and it was great. It's good enough if you take some care with it."

Like any hi-tech musician, Batt has his gear wish-list. One instrument figures prominently on it: "I'd love to get one of the big Roland samplers", he reveals, "'cos I really love the S330. It's so powerful, and for bass sounds you can't beat it. I mean, the bottom end you get out of it is really frightening; it's much lower than the Akais."

A recent addition to the DNA studio - but not such a recent instrument - also gets the thumbs up for bass from Batt.

"The Juno 106 is great for bass. It's absolutely uncontrollable - really massive", he enthuses. "I saw one advertised in *Music Technology* and it was someone local, only six miles out of Bath. It cost me about 270 quid, which isn't bad for a polyphonic synth. I got it 'cos I'm a great fan of Bass-O-Matic, all William Orbit's work I really like, and he uses one a lot.

"I haven't really got into using it yet. It sounds a bit large for a lot of the mixes that we're doing at the moment, 'cos they're quite fast and there's not really enough room for the big bass sounds.

"When I went to buy it I thought 'I'm sure I remember it having more parameters', and I was a bit worried that it wasn't going to be very good. But it is. For the amount of parameters it's got, you can get a lot of different sounds out of it."

On the subject of analogue synths, what does Batt think of his Cheetah MS6?

"It's not as fat as the Juno, but for the price it's a bargain - you get a lot of synth for your money", he replies. "I use it for strange evolving sounds - usually monophonic lines rather than chords. I'll usually find a sound that's near to what I want and then just tweak it.

"I got the MS6 secondhand, as well. I'm a great believer in buying secondhand equipment, 'cos most of it doesn't really go wrong. I don't have a problem about buying secondhand. I buy new when I have to have something quickly. A lot of the effects I bought new, and the S1000 I bought new 'cos I wanted the digital interface to my DAT machine; it saves a lot on disks for storage."

Talking of effects, Batt is particularly keen on his Lexicon LXP1 and LXP5, even preferring to use them instead of more expensive units.

"There was a Lexicon 480 and stuff where we were mixing", he recalls, "and I still ended up using the LXPs. I was sitting there thinking 'This doesn't spread enough, there's not enough depth to it', so I just used those."

One bit of gear which has gone down in his estimation, however, is his Korg M1.

"I'm getting a bit sick of it, actually", he admits. "I bought it when I was trying to get pre-production work and I thought 'I've got to have one of these'. Then when I got it I found that 70% of the sounds were unuseable anyway, because they all turned up in aftershave adverts!

"Nowadays I don't use very many of the sounds in it, mostly just piano and a few odd noises - though they are featured quite a lot on the album. There are certain sounds in it that you have to have for doing dance remixes, like the piano and the organ. Some of the basses are quite nice.

"It's done me well, I can't pretend it hasn't, but I would like to get another workstation-type instrument, I must admit. But I can't really go mad on buying equipment at the moment, 'cos things are quite tight. We've got to wait until the album starts selling before we see any cash."

BATT AND SLATEFORD HAVE BUILT UP AN impressive list of remix credits during the past year, and in the process have demonstrated an ability to handle a variety of musical styles. Batt has, er, mixed feelings about the remix business, however.

"It's a love/hate thing for me with remixing", he admits. "Sometimes I love it and sometimes I just think 'I don't want to do this'. I do take time to work on things, and if you're faced with 15 remixes on the trot it can take it out of you, because you just get a bit jaded by it. I'd quite like to speed things up a bit, because if you get the turnover going you can just have more fun.

"We're trying to get more of a system with remixes. I find it difficult to. . . I can't go into auto-pilot mode when I'm doing a mix, it has to have some sort of meaning. I find it very difficult to go 'Oh, right, house piano part, no problem'. But it's not worth spending a lot of time on remixes, because when it comes down to it it's somebody else's record and it's only going to be around for a short time. Although I think some of the mixes we've done have been fairly timeless."

So how does Batt set about remixing a track?

"First of all I take the multitrack to whatever studio I can get into, and transfer it across to 16-track", he explains. "Usually I'll get rid of the drums and the bass, and that often leaves me with about 16 tracks. I usually put all the drums on a DAT, just in case they'll come in handy at some other point. Then I'll get rid of most of the instrumentation, maybe just keep something that gives a sense of the chords, or I'll completely start from scratch. It's generally a matter of getting a groove going that works rhythmically with the vocal, and then building the music around it. We tend to follow the arrangement of the song quite faithfully, and then edit it afterwards if we want to chop and change it."

Have he and Slateford ever turned down a remix assignment because they felt the track didn't need remixing?

"Yeah, we got offered Oleta Adams' 'Rhythm of Life' once, but we couldn't do it", Batt replies. "It was ➢

perfect as it was, and we didn't want to touch it. That was a really good track.

"We'll also refuse a track if it's rubbish, obviously. One of our most famous ones was turning down James Brown. We got offered it and we thought 'Wow! We've made it', 'cos to be asked to remix James Brown is a real honour. But the track was so crap, it was really disappointing; it was just awful, so we turned it down, 'cos it had just come out and there would have been so much focus on it. We couldn't polish it, basically - it just wasn't possible."

Although Batt is fully conversant with his hi-tech setup, he's been nursing a secret desire which has dared not speak its name - until now, that is.

"I would really love to have somebody who could work all the gear, and be able to tell them what to do without having any communication problems", he reveals. "If you're trying to do everything at once yourself, it can get. . . I'm not one of these people who can do a million things at the same time. I tend to only be able to deal with one or two things at a time - when things get really intense I tend to overload and just run out of the room.

"Now we bring in Neal (Davidge) quite a lot on remixes; he helps out when I can't handle looking at the computer any more. He's very quick, and also he's very good at arranging our ideas faster than we can, so it saves time. He's also got a lot of creative input, so he's a good guy to be collaborating with.

"Mostly we do the mixes ourselves, it's just recently that we've started getting more heads in on it. Last year it was getting really mad, though. I was doing everything, and it felt like I wasn't going to be able to keep it up for much longer, 'cos it is pretty intensive. I put a lot of effort into things, and you just end up working amazingly long hours."

It takes as long as it takes.

"Yeah. One mix might take two weeks, another might take two days. We're trying to regiment things this year, though. Since we got the deal and we got the studio and Neal gave up his day job. . . What was happening was that I'd be working all day on something and then Neal would come in for the evening and we'd work all evening on it as well, and then at the weekends, and it just got. . . mad. Nowadays we do try and keep the weekends free, or at least Sunday if we can. We're working all weekend this weekend. It just depends what has to be done.

"People think it's a doddle doing the sort of thing we do, and yes, it can be - it beats other jobs - but it's not a nine-to-five job. Quite often you're doing seven days a week, 12 hours a day. A lot of people definitely wouldn't stand for that sort of thing."

And what of the future - apart from more long working days with no overtime pay?

"I'd like to have some time to breathe, get some more writing done and learn how to play the drums. But I'm really looking forward to the album coming out. When we haven't got anything out and nothing's happening, I get very affected by that. If it's not going well I feel terrible, I feel really depressed. But then when it goes well I feel really good."

With an album as classy as *Taste This* under his belt, Batt should be feeling really good really soon. ■

"We thought 'Wow! We've made it', 'cos to be asked to remix James Brown is a real honour - but the track was so crap."

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demo takes

"My name's Pat Gomersall. I'm 23 years old and enjoy wearing womens' underwear." Well, you've got me interested enough to give yer demo a whirl, Pat - it's always nice to come across someone I can sympathise with. Just don't give me any Gilbert O'Sullivan covers. . . Happily there doesn't seem to be much danger of that, since all four tracks on your demo are claimed to be original compositions, written and performed by yourself and the rest of your band, **Men Of Straw**.

The first track on the tape opens with a promising sampled orchestral line, probably your S900, I'd say - joined by a breathy reversed reverb sound which slides nicely into the strong male vocal, sparse percussion and a nice bleepy bassline, augmented with distorted guitar. It's credit to your engineering and mixing skills that I can hear each new element as it's introduced, and there's not that muddiness which can result from a busy arrangement. I can't really pick fault with your arrangement either, but there's a sad lack of a hook in the vocal and I find the sampled string line stays in my head much better than the actual song melody. Remember this: unless you're talking dance market (which you're definitely not) the folks love a good toon. The second track changes tack completely, slowing down and somehow initially reminding me slightly of Godley & Creme's 'Cry' - I hate to strike a negative note here (it's a dirty job but someone's got to do it), but this may not be such a good thing in the '90s. Another comparison which springs to mind on listening to the rest of your tape is Johnny Hates Jazz. It's all pretty lightweight, not too memorable and a bit dated, sad to say. But it's also very, very competent and I keep hearing snatches of something which could be worth developing - for this reason I can't quite bring myself to be really mean. Even so, your considerable engineering prowess and the professional performance of your vocalist, not to mention the tight competent playing overall can't disguise the absence of a really hook-laden song - and this is what you really need. In your letter, you're lamenting the absence of any response from the record companies whom you've sent your tape to, and you'd like me to tell you why you'd had no response at the time of writing. Simple; for 99% of the people who do it, sending out demos to record companies doesn't work. I'm not here to tell you why, or what you can do about it. If I knew the answer, do you really think I'd be sweating over *your* demos instead of my own?

Patchwork Club

Moving on, I know you'll all agree when I say that I've been the model of restraint so far - so it's all the more fun to slide **Low Society**'s demo into the ghetto blaster. What a shame plans are afoot to scrap that august acme of shite, the *Eurovision Song Contest*, because the first track on this tape would be good if it was the 1987 Turkish entry. Sorry Gary Clutterbuck and Al Barley, in 1990s Britain it don't cut ice at all. Searching for something good to say, I've decided that it's not badly recorded and you've got a nice solid bottom end (nothing personal). But Al Barley on vocals *is* Gene Pitney. I haven't heard enunciation like that since Michael Ball was in the charts with that naff ditty from *Aspects of Love*. Clearly you haven't caught on that not only is it desirable to slur, it's almost obligatory if you want any cred at all. But somehow I don't think cred is what you're after - everything on this tape is altogether too *nice* - little civilised patches from your Roland D10 and U20, Kawai K1 and Cheetah MS6, tidy, stilted drum patterns, text-book arpeggios, predictable chord changes. Would I be right in guessing that someone's got the benefit of A-Level music? A suggestion to Al - have you considered auditioning for *Cats*?

OK boys and girls, not to put off the whole readership from sending in a tape, I'm going to be relatively nice about the next one - the **Patchwork Club** and their front-room demo, recorded with the aid of Korg M1, Roland D10, Yamaha TX81Z and QX3 sequencer, Tascam 238 eight-track and Alesis Quadraverb. The Club sent in a tape many moons ago and were unfortunate enough to have had it reviewed by yours truly. Unfortunate because I trashed it pretty good, as I recall. Some people seem to like pain. . . I can relate to that. This time, however, I can be much more complimentary with a clear conscience. This tape is the Patchwork Club coming of age, so to speak. Polished, sophisticated, in the mellow soul/dance vein, it's really quite pleasant to listen to (doesn't taste too good though). I've got a slight problem with the vocals; Christine Hayton seems to be trying too hard, and the singing consequently sounds forced to the point of being a little affected. Having said that, I've heard worse singing in the national pop charts, though I don't know how much of a yardstick that should be. It's not my cup of tea musically, but with Lisa Stansfield riding high in the estimation of the nation, there's probably some hope for the Club. In particular, the chorus hook of 'A Certain Song' is pretty catchy, but Christine should watch the tuning. On a negative note, the last track, 'Another Day', features some very dated instrumentation which puts me in mind of mid-80's dancefloor fodder, and I'd venture that the duo should have another look at their programming, or get a more current synth if they're not into creating their own sounds.

I feel another wave of nastiness coming on - where's me demo bag? Cue manic laughter. . . (*Time's up, now bugger off. Ed.*) ***Skum***

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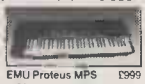

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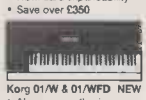

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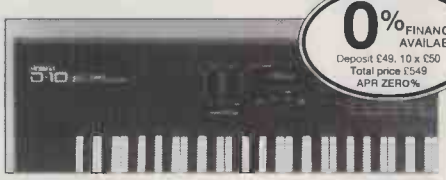

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MX1000 & PM76

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES CUMPSTY

When is a MIDI controller keyboard not just a MIDI controller keyboard? When it's an Akai MX1000 fitted with a piano sound board - the first "dumb" controller with a voice. Review by Simon Trask.

MIDI CONTROLLER KEYBOARDS promised much when they first appeared on the market back in the mid-'80s. Musicians, instead of being forced to add a new keyboard to their setups each time they wanted to add a new synth, could buy one keyboard instrument which itself made no sound but which was optimised for centralised control of other MIDI instruments. The principle was to build up a collection of MIDI sound modules around this controller.

Yet, while this MIDI modular concept has become the foundation of the modern MIDI setup both in the studio and on stage, dedicated MIDI controller keyboards have never really caught on in a big way. The oft-quoted reason is simply that many musicians are unwilling to buy a keyboard instrument which has no sound-generating capability of its own - especially

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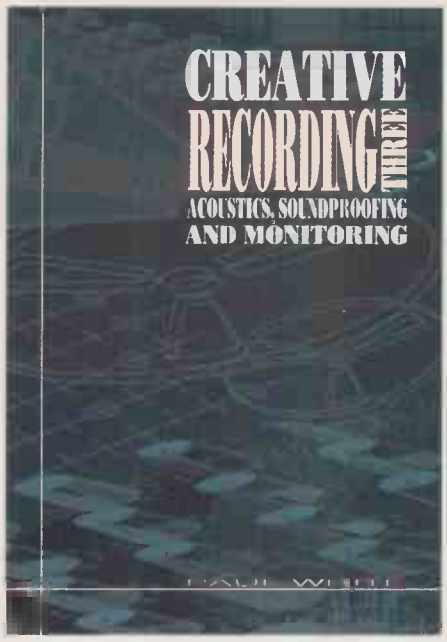

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➢ when they can get a sound-generating instrument for a similar price or less. No doubt the rise and rise of sequencer culture, and the corresponding decline of performance culture, has played its part in determining musicians' response to what has from the outset been a performance-orientated instrument.

Meanwhile, for those musicians who *do* want controller keyboard features but not necessarily a dedicated controller keyboard, synthesisers are increasingly adopting such features as multiple keyboard zones and multi-channel MIDI transmission. Korg's Wavestation, E-mu's Proteus MPS (reviewed last month) and Roland's forthcoming JV80 spring to mind. In fact, the Wavestation and the JV80 both offer eight keyboard zones and eight-channel MIDI transmission where dedicated controller keyboards more commonly offer four.

"The MX1000 is straightforward yet it's not lacking in the sort of features and flexibility you'd expect of a decent MIDI controller."

Akai - no strangers to the dedicated MIDI controller keyboard, having previously produced the MX73 (reviewed MT, December '86) and the MX76 (reviewed MT, May '89) - have tackled the silent keyboard problem with their latest controller, the MX1000, by providing an optional sampled piano board which can be fitted inside the instrument. The ten S1000-derived keyboard sounds of the PM76 board effectively turn the MX1000 into a digital piano - but one which has MIDI controller facilities found on no digital piano I can think of. Will this added dimension be enough to persuade musicians in the direction of Akai's new controller keyboard?

SIZE & FEEL

THE MX1000's 76-NOTE (E-G) weighted keyboard is sensitive to attack and release velocity, and channel aftertouch. Its dimensions - 50"(W) x 15"(D) x 4"(H) - coupled with its weight - just over 45lbs - and its solid build quality convey an impression of substance and serious intention. However, the familiar Akai light grey colouring makes a pleasant change from the more sober and sombre grey and black usually adopted by other manufacturers.

Akai have obviously paid much more attention to the design of the MX1000's casing than they did to the design of its predecessor's. The MX76 had, shall we say, some rough edges, but on the MX1000 Akai have ensured that just about every edge in sight is smoothly curved. They've also ditched the MX76's clumsy front-panel buttons in favour of smoother low-profile buttons which are much more satisfying to use; the front-panel sliders, meanwhile, have perhaps a little too much resistance, but they run smoothly enough. The MX1000 also looks more stylish than its predecessor, which is no bad thing.

The new controller's weighted keyboard action is nicely balanced, avoiding the exaggerated sense of weightiness which some piano-action keyboards have. But at the same time it's clearly more substantial than the standard unweighted fare you get on synths, while the key travel is, thankfully, deeper than that of the average 61-note synth keyboard. There's a slight sense of "flappiness" in the action, but it's not something I found offputting in performance. In fact, I would feel happy with the MX1000's keyboard as my main keyboard, though personally I find the keyboard on Cheetah's Master Series 770 controller slightly more appealing.

FRONT PANEL

"NICELY BALANCED" IS a description I would also apply to the MX1000's front panel - which is neither cluttered nor sparsely populated with controls. In addition to the standard pitch and mod wheels to the left of the keyboard, there are four performance sliders, four performance switches with built-in pinpoint LEDs to indicate on/off status, an 8 x 40-character backlit LCD under which are six "soft" buttons and a Panic button (pressing this causes MIDI note off commands for all notes on all 16 MIDI channels on all four Outs to be transmitted), a two-digit LED which displays the currently-selected Program number, up/down/left/right cursor buttons for manoeuvring around the LCD screen, data inc/dec buttons for parameter value setting, and two rows of ten buttons for selecting Bank and Program numbers or Program Chain step number. Gone are the Start and Stop/Continue buttons and tempo control slider of the MX76, which allowed you to control a sequencer remotely, and gone is the ability to select LCD pages from the bottom 18 white keys of the keyboard when in Edit mode and the ability to enter alphanumeric characters using the black keys.

Unfortunately, the backlit LCD on MT's review model wasn't - backlit, that is - and consequently required a desk lamp to be shone onto it to make it readable. Although this rather obvious fault was presumably an aberration of the review model, I mention it so as not to keep you in the dark.

REAR PANEL

MIDI CONTROLLER KEYBOARDS often have more rear-panel sockets than the average synth, and the MX1000 is no exception. In addition to the standard one MIDI In and one MIDI Thru, there are four MIDI Out sockets (labelled A-D), a Program up/down footswitch input, a dedicated sustain pedal input, four programmable footswitch inputs and four programmable footpedal inputs. Disappointingly, the MX1000 isn't able to detect the polarity of connected footswitches on power-up - you can only use normal-closed types.

Additional rear-panel features are, along with the power on/off switch and AC input, a memory protect on/off switch, an LCD contrast adjust knob and a RAM card slot. The positioning of the card slot on the rear panel isn't as inconvenient as it may seem because the slot is located on the forward-sloping upper half of the rear panel, making it both visible and readily accessible when you're seated in front of the instrument.

With the PM76 piano board fitted, the MX1000 sports a few sockets you won't find on any other controller keyboard, namely Left and Right audio outputs and a headphones output, together with an output level adjust knob.

OPERATION

THE MX1000 IS a straightforward and accessible instrument yet it's not lacking in the sort of features and flexibility you'd expect of a decent MIDI controller keyboard. Physical front-panel operation is easy to grasp, as is the organisation of the LCD's software pages, while the pages themselves are informative, well designed, and make good use of graphics to convey their information clearly and concisely. For instance, the display of the Main (Program select) software page, which is centred around a keyboard graphic, tells you at a glance each Key Group's note range and its MIDI channel and MIDI Out assignments.

Clarity is assisted by the fact that Akai have ditched the bizarre terminology which afflicted the MX76. Libraries, Packets, Bullets and Shuffle Boards have given way to less colourful but more readily understandable terms like Program and Program Chain.

The MX1000 utilises the now widely-used "soft button" approach to LCD page selection. This and the logical organisation of its software pages allow you to find your way around its various features both quickly and easily. The Main page is never more than three button-presses away, and getting back to it is easy: keep pressing the F1 softkey (variously labelled Main or Quit, depending on your location in the page hierarchy) until you get there.

If you've edited any Program parameter(s), the MX1000 prompts you with the query This Edit Save? each time you reach the stage of exiting to the Main page. You can then select Cancel (return to editing), Yes or No using the F4, F5 and F6 softkeys. The good thing about this is that, because you're forced to make a choice, you can't forget to save an edited Program, while at the same time if you've made a mess of editing you can recall the stored parameter values with a single button-press. However, it can get tiresome if you need to keep switching between Key Group and Controller pages while editing, as you have to go via the Main page - which means you get the save prompt every time.

One aspect of editing on the MX1000 which is particularly helpful is the way you can select different Programs using the Bank and Program buttons while you're on any software page. For instance, you can be editing the Footswitch parameters for Program 12 one moment, and then almost instantaneously switch to editing the same parameters for Program 13, 19, 24, 36, 42. . . You get the This Edit Save? prompt if you've made any changes to a Program as opposed to having simply checked on its parameter settings, but you can be through this in an instant, safe in the knowledge that your edits have been stored.

ORGANISING CONTROL

THE MX1000 ALLOWS you to create up to 100 Programs, and give each Program a name (of up to ten characters) which is then displayed in large letters on the Main page. Each Program in turn consists of four Key Groups, and each Key Group can be given an independent note range on the MX1000's keyboard (so Key Groups can be layered and overlapped) together with a MIDI transmit channel (1-16), MIDI Output assignment (A-D), MIDI patch change number (1-128; transmitted when the Program is selected), MIDI volume amount (off, 0-127; also transmitted when the Program is selected) transposition amount (±50 semitones in semitone steps), pitchbend range (0-127), modulation range (off, 1-10), sustain pedal enable/disable setting, aftertouch amount (off, 1-10), aftertouch offset (off, 1-10), MIDI In merge on/off setting, and velocity curve selection (preset curve 1-6, global User 1-8).

In addition, you can define up to four extra MIDI patch changes per Program, each with its own MIDI channel and MIDI Out assignments; these patch changes are transmitted whenever the Program is selected, so you could use them, for instance, for external changes which you want to align with a Program change, such as changing the effect on one or more signal processors or calling up a different multi-timbral configuration on a synth.

So that you don't have to remember which MIDI instruments are on which MIDI Outs and MIDI channels, the MX1000 includes a global System page which allows you to assign a five-character name (S1100, MPC60, M1R, D550) and an Output assignment (A, B, C or D) to each MIDI channel. Wherever you're required to select a MIDI channel on the MX1000's software pages, the name associated with the selected channel is shown; at the same time, the Output which you assigned to the channel is automatically selected - a useful time-saving feature. This system presumes that you're using different MIDI channels on different Outs; however, if you're not and you want to route, say, a Key Group to a different Out or more than one Out, you can override the default assignment.

> **"Libraries, Packets, Bullets and Shuffle Boards have given way to more readily understandable terms like Program and Program Chain."**

Incoming MIDI performance data on all channels is routed through to the MX1000's MIDI Outs provided that MIDI In merge is enabled for at least one Key Group in the currrently-selected Program, and that Key Group is routed to at least one MIDI Out. If each Key Group is routed to a different MIDI Out, you can limit the MIDI input to a specific Out. This system works well if you're routing another MIDI keyboard or other MIDI controller through the MX1000. However, if the input is from a MIDI sequencer which you're also recording into, you need to avoid routing the sequencer's output back to its input via the MX1000; with the controller keyboard's merging and routing ➢

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➢ system, you have to forgo one Key Group in order to do this.

The MX1000's velocity curve programming function is the most sophisticated I've come across, yet it's presented in a way which makes it very intuitive - again, through intelligent use of graphics. Basically it works on a graph principle, with the horizontal axis describing the input (MX1000 keyboard) velocity and the vertical axis describing the output (MIDI transmit) velocity. You can program any MIDI output velocity (1-128) for any keyboard input velocity (1-128), which means in effect that you can create any velocity curve you might want. You don't have to edit *every* velocity value - instead, you can edit selected values and the MX1000 will "join the dots" for you on the graph and set the MIDI velocity values accordingly.

Along with velocity curves, you can also create a Program-specific Key Follow curve and choose, per Key Group, a velocity offset value (±10) and upper and/or lower velocity limits (allowing you to create velocity splitpoints).

LIVE CONTROL

SETTINGS FOR THE MX1000's sliders, switches, footpedals and footswitches are Program-specific; also, the sliders and footpedals share the same settings (connecting a footpedal to the rear panel disables the corresponding slider), but the switches and footswitches are separately programmable.

You can assign any MIDI controller in the range 0-121 to each of the performance controllers. Meanwhile each slider/pedal can be used to transmit pitchbend or aftertouch and each switch and footswitch can be used to transmit a four-note chord or a MIDI patch change.

Output routing for the sliders and footpedals involves selecting one or more Key Groups for each slider/pedal. The MIDI data generated when you move the performance controllers is transmitted on the channel and Output(s) of the selected Key Groups; you can also select an extra MIDI transmit channel for each slider/pedal and route the output of this channel to one or more of the MIDI Outs. Remote control of instrument volumes from the sliders/pedals is one obvious application; the flexible output routing means that you can program volume sliders which affect individual sounds or groups of sounds.

Output routing for the front-panel switches and the footswitches is more straightforward but less flexible: you simply assign a MIDI channel and one or more Outputs to each controller. As these channel and Output assignments can differ from those of the Key Groups on the keyboard, the switch performance controllers needn't have anything to do with the keyboard performance - something I'll return to soon.

The switches and footswitches transmit only minimum and maximum values when a MIDI controller is assigned to them - so, by assigning MIDI controller seven to one or more of these switches, you can use them to mute and unmute selected instrumental part(s). There are two trigger options for each switch and footswitch: they remain on or off for as long as you hold them down, or remain on or off until you next press them. In the muting example, the former works best for rhythmic muting effects while the latter works best for sectional muting.

If you have a mixer which implements MIDI-controlled muting via note ons and offs, you can use the chord triggering function mentioned earlier to mute and unmute mixer channels - individually and in groups using the MX1000's front-panel switches and footswitches. The MX1000 lets you program up to ten globally-selectable Chords consisting of from one to four notes each, so there's plenty of scope here, especially for combinations of individual and group channel muting.

You could also use the Chords to trigger sample loops, or patterns on some drum machines. If you select the on/off-until-next-press trigger option, the sample or pattern will loop continuously once you've triggered it, leaving your hands free to roam the keyboard.

Other possibilities include playing over Chord-triggered drone notes and, yes, triggering straight chords (as in harmonies). For chord sequences and tight, rhythmic chording, the on/off-while-held trigger option is the one to select. Incidentally, when you play in your Chords - on the logically-named Chord page - the MX1000 records both the notes and the velocity you played them with. Therefore you have control over the volume level of the Chord, and you can, for instance, accentuate a particular note in the Chord or determine how much you want the filter cutoff point to be opened up for each note.

Triggering chords from the front-panel switches and the footswitches isn't a substitute for playing them on the keyboard, it's a different way of working which generates its own characteristic feel and leads you along different creative paths. You can also find new demands being placed on your co-ordination once you start combining fingers and feet - and once you start pulling together the various possibilities I've mentioned - MIDI muting, MIDI-controlled audio muting, triggering sample loops and/or drum machine patterns, triggering drones, triggering chords. . . And playing on the keyboard at the same time, of course. Well, the MX1000 is a MIDI *controller* keyboard, and control is what it hands you. For the adventurous, there are many possibilities for live music creation which aren't just about playing on a keyboard in the traditional way.

Once you start getting into the possibilities of Chord triggering, ten Chords for 100 Programs hardly

seems enough - ten Chords per Program would be nice. However, it is possible, with some practice, to play in a new Chord from the keyboard with one hand while triggering Chords with your feet or with the fingers of the other hand. The only thing you have to avoid is playing in a new Chord while the old one is being played back from one of the switches, because when you release the old Chord the MX1000 sends note offs for the new one - which leads to hung notes. Rapid recourse to the Panic button is the order of the day.

When you're playing on the keyboard, the MX1000 allows held notes to overlap Program changes. However, this very useful feature doesn't apply to held notes triggered from the controller's switches and footswitches, which are cut short as soon as you select a new Program - a shortcoming which I hope Akai will remedy in any software upgrade they may provide for the MX1000.

SYSTEM CONTROL

THE MX1000'S SYSTEM Setup page allows you to choose a MIDI receive channel (off, 1-16) for remote selection of the MX1000's Programs via MIDI, to choose whether or not the Reset All Controllers command (controller #121) should be transmitted by the MX1000 each time you select a new Program, and to choose whether or not a message will pop up in the LCD each time you move one of the performance controllers telling you what MIDI code the controller is generating and where it's going to.

Other System pages govern MIDI SysEx transmission and reception of MX1000 data (bulk transfer only), onboard Copying of Program data from one memory to another (All, Key Group, Controllers or Velocity Curves), bulk transfer of MX1000 data between onboard and RAM card memory, and the earlier-discussed labelling of MIDI channels.

System mode also provides access to MIDI receive and MIDI transmit monitor pages, with (translated) MIDI data scrolled across six lines from bottom to top of the LCD window; if you get confused about what's coming and going where, these two pages can be very useful.

IN CHAINS

THE MX1000 ALLOWS you to create up to four Program Chains, each one of which can have up to 100 Steps - a Step consisting of one of the 100 Programs. You select Chain mode from the Main page by holding down the F1 softkey (Chain) for a second or so. Once you're in Chain mode, the Data inc/dec buttons allow you to step sequentially in either direction through the selected Chain, while for hands-free operation you can use a single footswitch plugged into the rear-panel Program Up/Down jack to advance through the Steps or a dual footswitch to move in either direction. And, invaluably, you can move directly to any Step by tapping in its number using the Bank and Program buttons.

Chain programming is something you can pick up almost immediately. All it entails is scrolling through a list of Steps to select the required Step, scrolling through a list of Programs to select the required Program, then hitting the F5 softkey to Insert the Program at that Step. Then you select the next Step, scroll through the Program list to find the required Program, hit the F5 Softkey again, and so on. To change a Step setting you've already made, you just Delete the relevant Step and then Insert the required Program. It's easy enough, though a simple Replace command wouldn't have gone amiss.

PM76

THE OPTIONAL PM76 piano board provides ten multisampled sounds playable with 16-voice polyphony: Grand Piano, Upright Piano, Electric Pianos 1 and 2 (hard Rhodes-type and softer effected sound), Mellow Piano, Honky-Tonk Piano, Vibes, Cembalo, Pipe Organ and Jazz Organ. They're a well-chosen and nicely-balanced collection of quality sounds, selected for their general usefulness to the performing musician. You can play them either by selecting a special "stand-alone" Piano mode from the Main page or by integrating them into your Programs - though you can only use one at a time. The PM76 is, in effect, placed in the path of MIDI Output D, so to assign it to a Key Group you have to route the Key Group to Out D and set the transmit channel to the PM76's receive channel (which you program in the Piano mode).

VERDICT

THE MX1000 IS Akai's best MIDI controller keyboard to date, and is a fine example of the genre. While I had mixed feelings about the MX76 when it came out, I have no problems about recommending the MX1000. Although it doesn't have all the bells and whistles of Cheetah's significantly cheaper Master Series 770 controller (nor the 770's 88-note keyboard span), it does have a well chosen and well-implemented collection of features whose possible applications are well worth exploring (I'm thinking in particular of its many performance controllers). Thanks to a well thought-out user interface, it's also a very accessible instrument, not at all a daunting prospect. The optional PM76 board is a neat idea which could make the MX1000 a good keyboard for some musicians, but equally it could simply be an unnecessary expense for others.

There's a lot to be said for having a keyboard which is dedicated to the function of controlling (perhaps I should say marshalling) a MIDI setup - particularly when it's as effective on the job as Akai's new controller keyboard is. If you feel the need for a controlling influence in your musical life, try out the MX1000 for size - it could well fit your requirements. ■

Prices *MX1000, £1199; PM76, £499; both prices include VAT.*

More from *Akai UK Ltd, Haslemere Heathrow Estate, Silver Jubilee Way, Parkway, Hounslow, Middlesex TW4 6NQ. Tel: 081-897 2487.*

"The MX1000's velocity curve programming function is the most sophisticated I've come across, yet it's also very intuitive."

CRIMINAL RECORD?

In the second part of this examination of sample CDs, Simon Harris, Norman Cook, Coldcut, Ed Stratton and Pascal Gabriel discuss further ethics and technology. Interviews by Tim Goodyer.

SAMPLING IS HERE TO STAY. THE MANUFACTURERS who developed the sampler as a means of imitating other instruments have played an unwitting part in a movement that has thrown the copyright laws into confusion and seen musicians facing million-dollar lawsuits.

A logical extension of sampling other artists' music for your own purposes is that of sampling it for use in someone else's sampler - a move which potentially complicates the issue of copyright and its infringement still further. As if all that weren't enough, you've got to address the delicate issue of pricing a sample CD - should it cost the same as a "normal" music CD? Less? More?

"I just believe that you should make things as cheap as possible for the kids so that they can afford them if they want them", says Simon Harris in defence of his £15 CDs (the first six come as three £25 double CDs). "Look at this", he says producing a list of sound effects CDs produced by George Lucas' film company. "£651 for the *Starwars* sounds - these are too expensive for kids. *Sonic Boom*, two CDs of gunshots for £875; you could buy a gun and a DAT machine with that!

"I produce about three albums a year, each one contains about 13 new breakbeats and 50 samples and scratches. And the most important thing to me is that it's all useable stuff - it's not 500 sounds of which you end up using one every blue moon. They're easy to manage and they don't confuse you with a million things crammed into two minutes."

"The Datafile discs are more expensive", concedes Ed Stratton, "but what you get is out of proportion to the cost. For four times the money you get ten, 15, 20 times the material. And when people see 1000 samples on one compact disc, they know they're getting value for money. It's actually a very cheap way of getting sounds.

"Also, as the sounds are very short, the bottom end of the sampling market - in terms of what gear they've got, and how much sampling time they've got - are able to really get stuck into the stuff."

"The thing that Ed Stratton has to accept and that I have to accept" counters Harris, "is that many of these are not our sounds to charge for."

"I'm not a big fan of CDs costing ten pounds, let alone 50", comments Norman Cook. "You are paying for two or three years of someone else's collection, but you need only pay for it once, and then you can swap it ➢

Cook: "It's ludicrous when you've got the world of drumbreaks to choose from that the same five get used - the point of collecting breaks is using your imagination."

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➢ with your friends. If you sell something to someone expecting them to sample off it, where do you draw the line?"

One aspect of musical importance - to samplers at least - is that of sample "exclusivity". In the early days of sampling - certainly in hip hop - finding a hot sample was only part of the job, keeping its origin a secret was almost as important. Stratton's guarantee of excellence for his Datafile CDs was the fact that he *was* giving his library (and with it, years of research) away to anybody prepared to buy it - and his claim has been adopted by most of the sample CD originators.

"I use all of mine the whole time", claims Harris of his *Beats Breaks & Scratches* series. "In a way, what I've done is to put my entire sample collection onto CD because it's easy to manage and easy to use. Whenever I want a siren I know I'm gonna use it off *Beats Breaks & Scratches* because I know that two years ago I put my best siren sound on there. All those samples you recognise, all those hip hop samples - 'Aah yeah', 'Pump up the volume', 'Bass!' - they're all on there. At some point I've gathered them all up and put them there. The only samples I don't use are things that aren't there - 707 kits, Linn kits and so on. But whenever I want a breakbeat I go back to my own set.

Coldcut: "We've got so many records that have got good breaks on that haven't been used yet, so you should find a lot of breaks that'll stretch your mind."

"My *Stretchbeats* CD is another album I use myself because it's nice to have a load of basic breakbeats that you use all the time - 'I'm Coming', 'Funky Drummer', 'Apache', things like that - put at a different speed. Once they're in the area that you want to use them, it's easy to pitch them up or down a little bit if you need to. I'm going to do more of those."

"We've concentrated on Coldcut specialities", counters Matt Black. "It's a mixture of the useful and the weird - the weird isn't going to appeal to everyone, but everything will appeal to someone. There are drum sounds, bass sounds and keyboard sounds as well as good breaks that you're not going to get elsewhere. A lot of the records they've come from are pretty obscure and you won't find them unless you seriously get your nose to the grindstone. This is an easy way in.

"We've got so many records that have got good breaks on that haven't been used yet, so you should find a lot of breaks that'll stretch your mind, and that counts doubly for the 'head noise' selection - good interesting weird noises from reggae noises to hip hop noises, soul, acid jazz and, of course, your hooligan and techno selection. Coldcut tries to cover every base, so we've touched base with everything. We've tried to give people the breadth to seriously mash up some styles. I feel that things have got quite a bit madder and people are looking for weird noises, the sort of thing you can use as just a beat and a weird noise. Something we've called 'something heavy, something stupid' - that's quite a good recipe whether you're doing hooligan or hip hop. Plus a collection of classic Coldcut phrases, some used, some fresh - while compiling this album, we've come across many samples we'd forgotten about which are actually really good and we're intending to use."

Cook admits to having "certain reservations", about releasing his library, "but only for distinctive samples that can only be used once and have their full effect. If we're talking snare drums, bass drums, I've no problem with anybody else having them. Anybody else's libraries I've been through I've been terminally disappointed in. I've thought 'Oh, you've got all the 909 and 808 sounds too. . .'. But they're the basics - it's like you can't play a guitar without strings. They're especially useful for house music - that way you never have to go out and buy and MIDI up an 808. It's socialism in action."

Part of the beauty of using samples of music to build new pieces of music is the wealth of recorded material available. Contrarily, the principle of releasing samples on CD invites the sampler to limit his or her choice of material to that pre-selected by another artist. More than any other, this issue divides those currently involved in sample CDs.

"That's what I call the *Ultimate Beats & Breaks* syndrome", says Cook. "The whole point of sampling drumbeats is that it adds to what you can do - but you still end up with everybody using 'Funky Drummer' and 'Hot Pants'. If you consider that you've got to spend a certain amount of money on material when you start sampling, then one sample CD that covers all the basics is quite a good 'starter pack'. The problem comes when you carry on using the same sounds. But there's well-known producers who have access to all the sounds in the world and they still use the same sounds, so the person's imagination can limit them no matter what samples they have. I think they're a good beginner's kit. I only tend to use those sort of samples as a basis rather than building a whole tune out of them. I'm not sure about them having riffs on them because then I suppose people would be using all the same riffs and vocal samples too.

"It seems ludicrous when you've got the world of drumbreaks to choose from that it's still the same five that get used. The whole point of collecting breaks is using your imagination."

"You're touching on a subject which has screwed up the whole of the British hip hop movement", responds Harris. "Which breakbeats should be kept special and which are useable? It's true, there are some very commercial breakbeats out there which everybody has used. If you're a musician working on a track and you want a commercial element to put in it which is non-musical, the only thing you can use is one of these breakbeats.

"So many people criticise the fact that 'Funky Drummer' or 'Think' has been used on such a lot of

records. It's become a well-known thing in its own right - and that's the advantage of it. People slag it off, but the whole point is that you can add a commercial element into a track by having this underlying beat which is very well known. What's wrong with a dozen of those breakbeats that we all know and love becoming like that? There are plenty of others out there for people to use if they don't want to use those ones.

"George Michael used 'Funky Drummer'", he continues. "And I hate to say that Michael Jackson - or Teddy Riley - has been sampling, but the Lynn Collins 'Shaker' break is all over about four tracks on *Dangerous*. Either that or the best Lynn Collins impersonator that I've ever heard is. And it's added a commercial element. I don't see that there's anything wrong with a well-known musician making a record with 'Funky Drummer' in it.

"It depends so much on what other artists are doing. Everybody says 'I'll never use 'Funky Drummer' again'. And then a Public Enemy single comes out with it on and everybody reckons it's all right again. Right now the '900 Number' break has died right out. Give it another year and something will pop up with it on. They're all there to use or not use as you see fit. Some of them are cliches and that's good, because nothing should be *too* special."

THE STUDIO THAT HARRIS HAS BUILT UP during his career as a remixer and in-house producer for the record company he runs with partner Chris France, Music of Life, is impressive. There's an extensive array of keyboards both old and new, drum machines ranging from Roland's classic TR909 to their current R8M module, and the inevitable Atari ST running Steinberg's Cubase sequencer. Gone is the two-inch, 24-track machine that was here last time I visited, now replaced by two Akai ADAM units. The samplers which Harris used to compile most of the *Beats Breaks & Scratches* albums have also been Akai's - first an S900 and more recently an S1000. *Vol 8* saw Harris move further upmarket still with Akai's DD1000.

"It's been getting better with each album", he comments. "Some of the early stuff was recorded in mono with a bit of 'room' reverb cheekily added to make it sound a bit more 'stereo'. I got a few complaints about that, so I graduated to doing them on the S1000 but to start with I didn't really understand the machine's Note On Sample Coherence function. So on the early S1000 albums you can hear that 'wide stereo' phase effect. Now I do all the *Beats Breaks & Scratches* albums on the DD1000, which is the best of all. With that I can get things dead on three minutes long, looped, in stereo and in near-perfect quality. It's just a case of digging out all the stuff and getting on with it. Did I ever tell you the chicken story?

"I recorded the entire a-side of the second album while I cooked a chicken. I put a chicken in the oven - roast chicken, you know, it was a medium-sized bird - and I had the entire first side of the album done before the chicken was cooked. That's why you'll find a track called 'Chicken Beats' on *Vol 5*. . . The second side took longer because I had to edit leader tape between the samples. That was before I discovered gates."

Since the material that goes into sample CDs isn't original, the final quality is largely determined by the quality of the source. Where possible Harris attempts to take material off CD rather than vinyl and avoids treating it with outboard processing or EQ.

"Sometimes I add a little bit of EQ if it's a bit dull where I've taken it from" he explains, "but then again, I might only be compensating for a dodgy record. I try to trust my ears. My ears are the basis for each one of the albums. I've sort of matched everything. If you listen to a breakbeat on *Vol 2* and on *Vol 8* you'll find there is a continuity. Although things might have improved technically, you'll still be able to hear there's continuity in terms of sound."

The technical aspects of Ed Stratton's library begin with his samples being spread across four different samplers: an Akai S1000 with 8Meg memory, Prophet 2002 Plus, Ensoniq Mirage and Casio FZ1 with expanded memory.

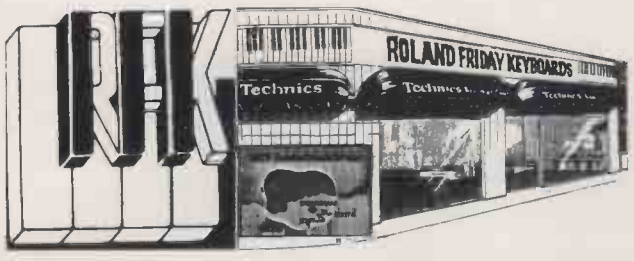
"I bought each one as it came on the market and built up a library for it", he explains. "I thought the best way to organise it was to get everything onto the S1000 first - that took about two months using Avalon and resampling some things direct. Then I organised the running order on paper and mastered direct to DAT. Any noises were edited out at the CD mastering stage using a digital editing system."

Pascal Gabriel's *Dance Samples* library was also prepared on an Akai sampler (S1100) and digitally edited using Digidesign's Sound Tools system. And the applications of technology don't end there, as Harris' recent *Stretchbreaks* CD (and LP) demonstrates. Departing slightly from the format of the *Beats* albums, this forsakes the one-shot samples in favour of 14 three-minute breakbeats, all of which have been treated to run at some tempo other than that of the original recording. Take for example the track called 'Funki Drummer' - it began life as James Brown's famous 'Funky Drummer' running at around 100bpm, but now finds itself running at 110bpm courtesy of Harris' S1000 and its timestretching capabilities.

"I'm trying to do the timestretching for people who haven't got S1000s", explains Harris. "Trying to decide what people want is really an impossible job, but it was really a matter of being practical. So I picked well-known fast breakbeats and made them slow, and picked well-known slow breakbeats and made them fast. It's as simple as that, really. We've had requests for more of them. From memory, I wouldn't go more than about 25-30% off of the original - plus or minus - which can be quite a big jump. That's why I've got breaks that would normally run at 104bpm running at 130bpm and that can be helpful.

"Timestretching can be quite complicated and some people may not want to get involved with it, and there are other people who simply don't have S1000s. This album was done on the S1000 but the next one will be done on the DD1000 because the new timestretching software will be through by then. There were just the odd glitches I ran into. If I found something was glitching I would try it at different bandwidths, different sampling rates until it worked."

Simon Harris: "Everybody says 'I'll never use 'Funky Drummer' again' - then a Public Enemy single comes out with it on and everybody reckons it's all right again."



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National Music Day

A CELEBRATION

Cajole your choir, polish up your piccolo, get out your guitar! Because on Sunday 28th June it's National Music Day. The brain child of Mick Jagger and Arts Minister, Tim Renton, National Music Day is quite literally a national celebration of music-making for people of all ages – professionals and amateurs alike.

WHAT IS NATIONAL MUSIC DAY?

A national celebration of music-making in Britain to be held as an annual event, the first being Sunday, 28th June 1992.

THE OBJECTIVES

To encourage as many people as possible throughout the United Kingdom to participate in music making of all kinds on an appointed day each year.

To encourage people of all ages especially young people to enjoy listening to and taking part in all kinds of music nationally and locally - e.g. pop, rock, classical, jazz, opera, country, folk and every form of minority music.

To offer everyone the chance to understand and learn more about music – from all the different types that exist to its recording and publishing, and even the way musical events are staged.

A supply of poster shells will be provided onto which local events can be overprinted. There will be an opportunity to raise money by selling National Music Day merchandise.

Schools and colleges will be encouraged to arrange concerts, local choirs will be asked to perform, church groups including the Salvation Army, brass bands, the country's major orchestras, pub rock groups to major world class stadium rock concerts, etc.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

National Music Day is encouraging people to arrange musical events all round the country. Anybody can organise an event – buskers, choirs, groups etc. If you decide to do so, please register your event with National Music Day by filling out Part I of the registration form opposite.

Part I of the form together with £5 registration fee must be received by National Music Day not later than 17th April 1992.

Organisers are asked to plan and prepare details of their event together with information details so that they can complete Part II of the attached form. Part II must be returned by 30th April 1992.

This information will be used to build a national and local advertising and publicity plan.

All events must be self funding and self operated.

PART 1 – EVENT REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete and return this part of the registration form by 17th April 1992, together with your £5 (cheques and postal orders payable to "National Music Day") registration fee to National Music Day, PO Box 2BZ, London W1A 2BZ. Please do not send cash.

Contact Person: .....

Name of Organisation: .....

Type of Organisation: .....
(eg School, voluntary, commercial etc)

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....
(it is imperative that your postcode is included)

Phone No: .....

Fax No: .....

Proposed Activity to celebrate National Music Day:
(Type of Music etc)

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REGISTRATION CLOSES 17TH APRIL 1992
Have you remembered to enclose your registration fee of £5?

PART II – EVENT AND PROGRAMME DETAILS

Please complete this part by April 30th and return it to National Music Day, PO Box 2BZ, London W1A 2BZ

Name of Organiser (if known)

Contact Person: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Post code: .....
(it is imperative that your postcode is included)

Phone No: .....

Fax No: .....

Venue: .....

Venue address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....
(it is imperative that your postcode is included)

Capacity: .....

Ticket prices: .....*(include box office details if any)*

Time: ..... Duration: .....

Beneficiary (if any i.e. charity, school etc) .....

If details are known when completing Part I please complete Part II and return together.

Registration No: .....

DETAILS OF EVENT
To include title, programme etc. Please give as much information as possible but keep description brief.

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PLEASE RETURN BY 30TH APRIL 1992

RAISING THE QUESTION: "WHAT NEXT?" prompts a variety of responses from those likely to be involved.

"I think there'll be more people like me and Coldcut doing them because it allows the interchange of samples between different producers", Gabriel predicts. "I'll buy Coldcut's CD and I'll buy JJ Jeczalik's when he releases his; Coldcut and JJ will buy mine - it's almost as if you're in the studio with other producers: 'hey, here's some of my samples' and we all do a big swap. It's very useful for creative people.

"When you buy my CD or Coldcut's CD you buy a bit of our character, you buy the brains behind the sounds. And I think that's going to happen more and more. If Trevor Horn brought out a sample CD loads of people would want to buy it because *he* would have selected the sounds on it. It's a bit like people buying Gaultier sunglasses instead of C&A sunglasses."

"The next thing to do is to make the Datafile sounds more accessible to people by making them available on more formats", declares Stratton as Datafile 3 is about to become available and his resource of "good enough" samples is almost exhausted. "The format I think is going to be the biggest and most influential is the 3.5" optical disc. It's small, very fast and very reliable and you can take it through x-ray machines, for example, yet it holds about 160 times as much data as a 3.5 floppy.

"I'm making the whole Datafile library available on separate 3.5" optical discs; I'm also making the whole lot available on one 600Meg disc. The beauty of all this is that everything's already mapped and looped.

"CD ROM will be the next format - the whole library on one CD ROM. Going down 'below' CD to floppy disks, the samples are all going to be available to Amiga users. Regardless of whether they've got any sampling hardware, if they've got something like Sequencer One, that will play a sample if it's in the right format. So I've picked out the highlights of the library for that and they should be available by the time anybody reads this. There'll be five discs with 200-300 samples in each set. That means that people who've got an Amiga and aren't into the serious music *yet* can start using these sounds. If somebody wants to buy the optical discs instead of CDs but they haven't got a drive, I supply them a drive and give them the library free."

One of Harris' aims is to make his albums available as MIDI files for direct compatibility with samplers and sequencers.

"If MPC60s were a mass-market item, I'd be releasing discs of loops and complete songs with samples that would run for three minutes", he elaborates. "I can see it happening in the future. You've got to accept technology and move along with it. But I'd still keep the format the same - I'd still be giving 14 breakbeats and samples because you can't be seen to give less value for money as time goes by."

On a musical level, Harris claims to be trying to "grow with each album, if I can put it like that.

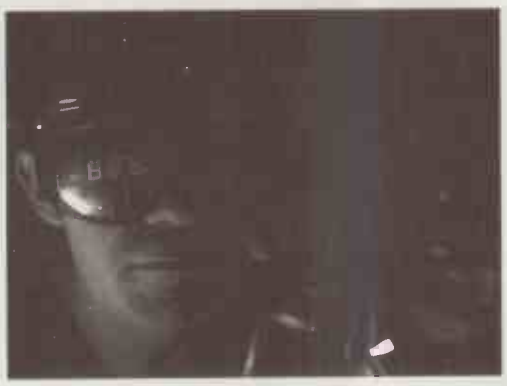
"A lot of the early albums were done partly because a lot of the stuff was handy and partly because a lot of the stuff was obvious. If it was easy to do I would grab it and do it. But for the later albums I've spent a lot of time finding and buying £20 jazz albums, hunting through shops for old stuff and digging out obscure James Brown stuff. That's because I feel that it's my duty to give people something that's a little bit special now.

Pascal Gabriel: "I'll buy Coldcut's sample CD and I'll buy JJ Jeczalik's; Coldcut and JJ will buy mine - it's almost as if you're in the studio with other producers."

"I also have to say that I'm having trouble with the samples and scratches because I've been putting 50 on each album. There are only so many 'Pump up the volume' and 'Bass!' samples around. What I've been doing is scouring video tapes for bits of old films and using some of the samples that I wouldn't have put on in the early days, I'd have saved them for myself. Now I'm saying 'What the hell. . .'. So everybody's *really* got my sample collection and scratch collection.

"I see the whole sample CD thing developing as music develops. I see it changing as the music changes. If people suddenly get into Kylie Minogue breakbeats, then you're going to hear Kylie Minogue breakbeats on them. In ten years time, if people regard all these techno records as incredible breakbeats, then they'll be up there."

Yeah, you could say that sampling has a lot to answer for. ■



Ed Stratton: "My samples are going to be available to Amiga users - if they've got something like Sequencer One, that will play a sample if it's in the right format."

THE MMAN FROM NAMM

AS AMERICA PUTS ASIDE WORLD PEACE AND GLOBAL ECONOMY IN FAVOUR OF THE PARTIES AND PARADES SURROUNDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, THERE'S ONE REMINDER OF SERIOUS BUSINESS - THE NAMM SHOW. TEXT BY VIC LENNARD.

WHEN I ARRIVED in Anaheim to check out the latest gear at this year's winter NAMM show, I had it in mind that this is the first NAMM show since January 1991 (the summer '91 show was cancelled). As such, I reckoned it was fair to expect a generous helping of new equipment which won't be seen in Europe before the Frankfurt show in mid-March. Korg and Yamaha had decided to use NAMM to launch their first General MIDI (GM) equipment. **Korg** launched the 03R/W, a 32-voice polyphonic rack module with 128 sounds in ROM (the GM set), 100 RAM programs and 100 combinations. Korg also added to the 01/W with a rack version (01R/W), a 76-note version (01/W Pro) and 88-note version (01/W Pro X). The latter two of these have 48,000 note sequencers which will read and write Standard MIDI Files. **Yamaha** launched their TG100 GM sound module, a 28-voice polyphonic tone generator with 192 instruments and eight drum kits, costing £299. It also carries an eight-pin DIN socket on the rear panel labelled To Host for direct connection to computers. This could be an interesting digression from MIDI: will it work without a MIDI interface on PCs and Macs? Yamaha also released a very necessary update to the MDF1 MIDI Data Filer in the MDF2 (reviewed last month). This uses 3.5" disks (the MDF1 used 2.8" Quickdisks - which aren't) and can read and write Standard MIDI Files; it's also battery operated and can act as a real-time MIDI data recorder. The other Yamaha release was the RY10 AWM tone generator with 28-voice polyphony, 250 internal instruments, 36 songs in RAM and 12 percussion pads. It's an interesting follow-up to the QY10.

Korg 01/W Pro X

From **Roland**, derivatives of Sound Canvas were the flavour of the day. Two new CM modules (CM300, CM500), a keyboard version (JV30), a workstation with a 16-track, 49,000-note sequencer and built-in 3.5" disk drive (JW50) and an enhanced Sound Canvas with nine faders and various buttons to control level and pan (SC155). Oh, and a new guitar synth with the same sound chip (the GR1) which comes as a floor unit driven by a GK2 stick-on controller. Roland also released the JV80, a five-octave replacement for the U20 containing 129 preset waveforms with options for an 8Meg Wave expansion board and a 2Meg PCM Wave card. Also replaced, after many years of service, was the MPU401 PC MIDI interface. The Super-MPU features independent processors for SMPTE and MIDI, along with two independent MIDI Outs.

Alesis launched a 76-note synth keyboard (S5) and sound module (S4) which had already been quietly disclosed to selected members of the press. Unfortunately, there was still a photography embargo and nothing was to be heard. Still, the S5 looks promising, containing 64 voices, seven effects and a mixture of additive and subtractive synthesis. As for the Alesis ADAT, there was still no sign of this being operational. Rumour has it that there are problems with the S-VHS transport. There were also rumours that another company have a digital eight-track up their corporate sleeve.

E-mu launched their Proteus/3 World which, as the name suggests, uses sounds gathered from around the globe. Yes, you can now play sampled didgeridoo and troubador harp. Now where's that film score I was writing. . .

Peavey had released the DPM C8, 88-note Master keyboard and DPM CH8fd equivalent with sounds onboard at the October AES show. At NAMM they added the DPM Spectrum Synth, which is 12-voice polyphonic and has 24 oscillators, 16 resonant filters and 999 presets with waveforms stored in ROM. Also on the list was the Spectrum Bass which is eight-voice polyphonic, multitimbral, and contains 1Meg of bass samples. Sounds can be layered and run in Mono Mode. Sounds like bass heaven. ➢

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Casio CZ5000	£275
Ensoniq VFX	£999

Yamaha TG100 Expander

SOFTWARE

AS IS TO be expected at a US show, you could count the number of Atari and Amiga computer companies present on one hand - the Atari will have its day at Frankfurt.

For the PC and its compatibles, however, there were several new developments - especially for the Windows 3.0 environment. **Coda** released the desktop music publishing program MusicProse (previously only available for the Mac) with a buy-back option if you upgrade to the top-of-the-range Finale. Meanwhile **Passport** launched MusicTime, a low-end program of a similar sort. On the sequencer front, **Steinberg** showed Cubase PC while a relatively unknown company called **Oktal** were demonstrating Multitude, a 256-track sequencer with a resolution of 768ppqn and grid, drum, song and event editors along with a tempo track, real-time MIDI mixer and SysEx librarian. All this, and it's available for the PC, ST and Mac.

For MS.DOS machines, there were also a few newcomers. Showtune from **Thoughtprocessors** scores any MIDI File that you load in, while The Jammer from **SoundTrek** (no relation to the Star variety) is a Band In A Box-style program but with control over each individual drum and the ability to impose separate styles on the bass and accompaniment.

For a large proportion of the "serious musicians" in the US the Apple Macintosh is the preferred computer, so the wealth of Mac software came as little surprise. Star of the show, as far as I was concerned, was **Passport**'s Producer software. This is an integrated digital audio and MIDI soundtrack program which takes a different approach to multimedia from other programs; it uses a visual cue sheet to provide links between files created on other programs. The screen is divided into six columns with time shown on the far left-hand side, although the divisions are virtual ones simply to allow you to clearly see the different elements. Audio, MIDI or graphics files can be imported into Producer where they appear as boxes which can be positioned in the columns and can be moved by dragging; graphical envelopes can be used to visually mix the various files. A double-click on any box calls up the native program, from which the current file can be edited in real time - even when Producer is synchronised to an external source. With enough RAM, multi-finder or System 7.0 allows direct switching to the different programs. Data from computer animations, laser discs, CD-ROM, QuickTime, sound cards, samplers and MIDI instruments can all be integrated for post-production and multimedia projects. Also, full support is given to MPC compatible hardware on PC computers. Watching a program like this makes your mouth water.

"ROLAND RELEASED THE JV80, A REPLACEMENT FOR THE U20 CONTAINING 129 PRESET WAVEFORMS WITH OPTIONS FOR AN 8MEG WAVE EXPANSION BOARD AND A 2MEG PCM WAVE CARD."

DIGITAL AUDIO

EVERYONE SEEMED TO be releasing software and/or hardware to allow you to record audio direct to disk at NAMM. **Digidesign** launched Sound Tools II, a four-track version of Sound Tools, while **Mark of the Unicorn** were showing their

Roland JV-30 Synth

new Digital Waveboard and Digital Performer software. **Opcode** had serious updates to Studio Vision while **Steinberg** were giving Cubase Audio its first US showing.

Alongside the widespread support for the Macintosh, it was nice to see one company still supporting the ST. **Hybrid Arts** (now under new management and working hard to improve their profile) launched Digital Master EX. This is a four-track version of the direct-to-hard-disk recorder Digital Master (which won awards at the AES show) which will be expandable to 12 tracks within a few months. Hybrid Arts also showed Sample Playback, a 12-output, 24-voice polyphonic (at 44.1kHz) sample player which can be loaded via its SCSI port, the ST-MAC CD-ROM player which reads and accesses all Mac sound libraries on the ST, and a SCSI module which plugs into the ST's DMA port and allows you to use any SCSI hard drive with the ST.

EFFECTS UNITS

ANOTHER CURRENT TREND seems to be towards squeezing as many effects as possible into one effects processor and making them simultaneously accessible. **ART** were having a field day with their effects units, adding the SGX T2 and SGX-LT to the SGX range. The former has 70 effects from which 12 can be used simultaneously and boasts real-time MIDI performance. Up to eight MIDI controllers can access parameters (as with the Alesis Quadraverb), and the unit features a two-and-a-half octave pitch shifter and two seconds of delay. The latter is an auto-programmable guitar pre-amp and multi-effects unit with separate channels for clean and distortion. The Multiverb Alpha 2.0 is similar to the SGX T2 but without the MIDI addressing and with only six effects usable out of the 60-odd provided, while the Multiverb LTX is a preset effects module with 250 programs. The DRX 2100 is again like the SGX T2 but without the speaker simulation and distortion effects. Find a good formula and milk it. . .

Peavey continued to build on their hi-tech profile, replacing their Pro-FEX effects processor with the Pro-FEX II, which adds a second pitch shifter, a moveable noise gate and a stereo simulator; up to eight effects can be used in any order. The Bass-FEX features 22 effects types, again with up to eight being accessible at once.

Yamaha launched a high-end digital equaliser and also introduced the EMP700 stereo multi-effect processor - this handles 28 effects including an excellent rotary speaker simulator.

Zoom released the 9000 multi-effects guitar processor, boasting 21 effects, from which five can be used at once and a foot control unit thrown in free-of-charge.

THE FUTURE NOW

LOOKING AT THE most futuristic developments of the show, **Carver** launched their CDR (CD Recordable) machine, the PDR10; CDs can only be written to once, but unwanted tracks can be hidden from the TOC to allow them to be removed from the playing programme. Cost is likely to be around £7000. (See Marantz CDR1 review elsewhere in this issue.)

After years of talking about it, **Warner New Media** released the first CD+MIDI disc. This will play back the normal CD audio on a regular CD player, but needs a CD device with MIDI ports (like Commodore's CDTV) to play the MIDI data encoded onto the disc. Hearing 'Rhapsody in Blue' with the clarinet line played back on Hammond organ (or didgeridoo) is a daunting prospect, but that's technology for you. Given a year or so, we'll see CD+MIDI players down around the £200 mark if this takes off.

Most of you will have been aware of what **Fostex** have achieved with MIDI and tape recorder transport control over the last two years. This was accomplished in a proprietary manner and depended on support from the software companies. However, MIDI Machine Control (MMC) was ratified by the MIDI authorities just before the NAMM Show and will lead to support from most sequencers and tape recorder companies. Fostex were showing their R8/MTC1 combination running under MMC with Opcode's Vision on the Mac, while **Tascam** have the stand-alone MMC100, which will transmit the various commands to any of their recorders with a serial port.

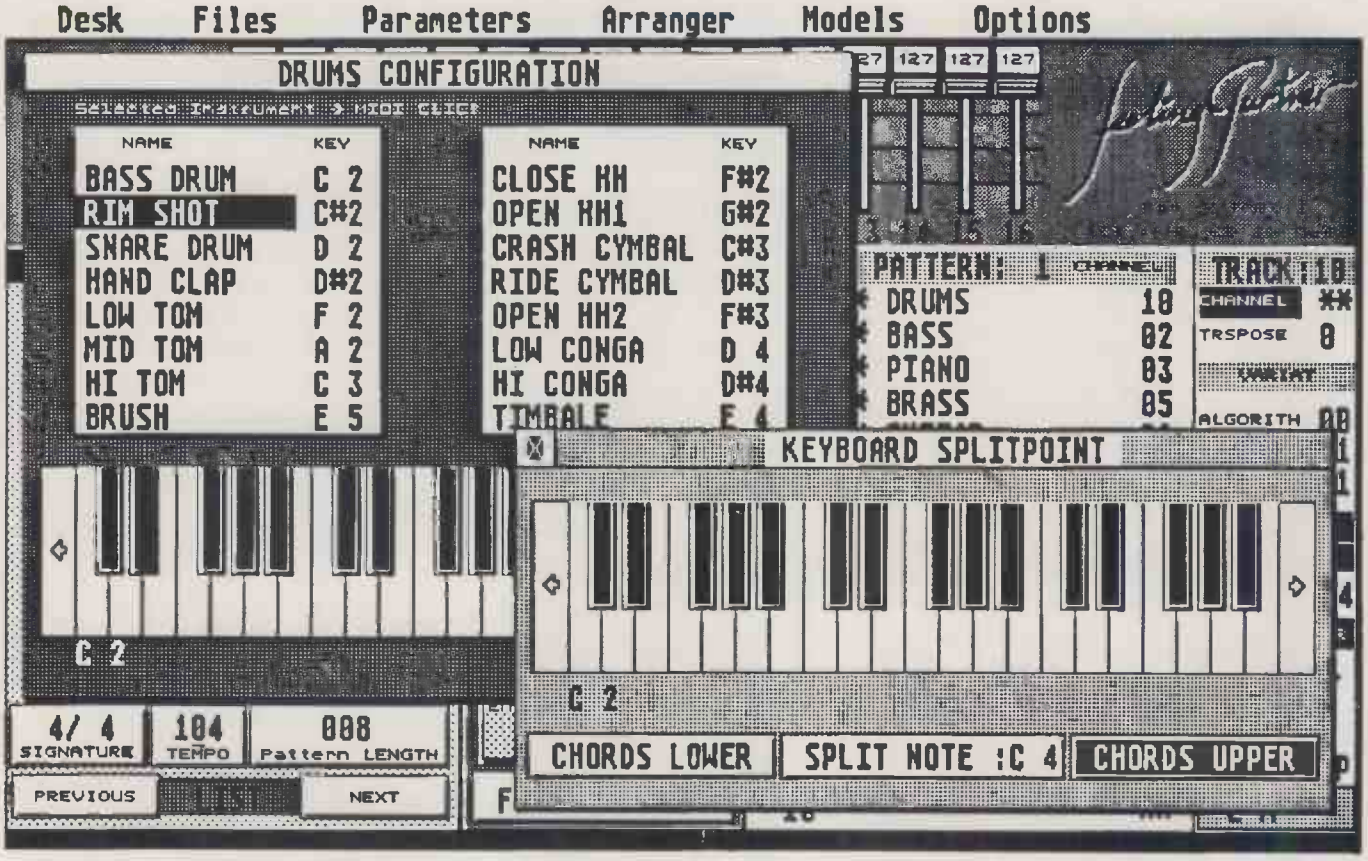
Lone Wolf have tried to make Local Area Networking (LAN) a reality within MIDI for some years with MidiTap, but due mainly to high pricing, their ideology is practically unknown outside the USA. This technology now exists on a single board, the MicroTap, which allows for MIDI control of any audio device. Seeing the input and output of a power amp monitored on a Mac screen was pretty mind-blowing.

As the dust settles on America, the industry prepares itself for the Frankfurt Musikmesse and another round of innovation. . . ■

"HEARING 'RHAPSODY IN BLUE' WITH THE CLARINET LINE PLAYED BACK ON HAMMOND ORGAN (OR DIDGERIDOO) IS A DAUNTING PROSPECT, BUT THAT'S TECHNOLOGY FOR YOU."

Tascam MMC-100

FEELING PARTNER



Who says machines don't have feelings? Feeling Partner sets out to endow your Atari ST with a sense of musical style and become a part of your musical lifestyle. Review by Ian Waugh.

YOU CAN MAKE smutty jokes about the name Feeling Partner but the distributors certainly knew what they were doing when they chose it. That is, they knew the English connotation although what they could not know is what effect, if any, it will have on sales or on our perception of the program. Perhaps they believe it will make it more sexy - and there's not much software brings sex to mind.

Feeling Partner is a music sequencer and arranging program from French developer JCD Software. C-Lab Notator and Creator owners may have a sense of *deja vu* when looking at the main screen - that's partly intentional, and the design was done with the tacit consent of C-Lab. It may help to know that in France, Feeling Partner's distributors (MPI) are also the main C-Lab distributors.

The program comes on a protected disk which acts as a key disk - you can copy the files to another floppy or hard drive but the original disk must be inserted on booting. The program requires 1Mb of RAM but will run in hi-res or medium-res. Feeling Partner's screen is divided into four main areas. At the top is a mixer with one fader for each of the 16 MIDI channels. On the left is a window which toggles between a Pattern List and an Arrange Song window. On the right is the Pattern Tracks window and in the middle is the Pattern Style window and sequencer transport controls.

Like Notator, Partner lets you construct a Song by chaining together Patterns, each of which can contain up to 16 tracks with a length of up to 999 bars. However, it also lets you add auto accompaniments to your sequences.

SOUND ADJUSTMENT

THE FIRST STEP is to get the program and your MIDI setup talking to each other. Partner opens with six instruments in the Pattern Tracks area - drums, bass, strings, guitar, piano and brass - each assigned to their own MIDI channel. These are used to produce the accompaniment patterns. You can select a sound on your MIDI equipment for each instrument along with a volume and pan setting using the Mixer at the top of the screen.

With MIDI Thru on, your keyboard will transmit messages on the MIDI channel of the currently ➢

four minute warning

samples

W30/S330/S550/S50
S1000/S1100
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> highlighted track. Click on Program in the Mixer area and use the slider (or click on the number) to send a program change message to select a suitable sound. Adjust the Volume and Panoramic parameters in the same way. The sliders are most useful in showing the relative volumes of the channels.

Default settings are for the Roland MT32 but it's easy to select sounds for any instrument (although only 128 program change messages are accommodated, so changing banks on instruments with more than 128 sounds has to be done manually). The mixer controls are very sensitive and it's easy to skip a number when altering the settings; the numbers are quite small and difficult to read even at an arm's length from the monitor.

"Feeling Partner supports MIDI files, so you can export the resulting arrangement into your sequencer for further editing."

DRUM SET & MATCH

THE NEXT STEP is to set up the drum map to match your drum sounds. Sixteen drums are used and, again, the map defaults to the MT32 but you can assign different keys to the sounds by clicking on a small keyboard which pops up. You can save and load drum configurations separately so you can use different kits for your "proper" gig sets and the *Come Dancing* jobs you won't admit to. This even makes it easy to switch drum machines.

When you create other patterns you can use these "preset" instrument settings and, unless you change them, they use the same MIDI channels as the original MIDI configuration, simplifying new pattern creation procedures. Two asterisks appear in the Channel column to indicate this. You can override them, of course, simply by scrolling to different MIDI channel numbers.

However, it would still be nice to know which channels these are assigned to without having to flip back to the previous configuration - so that you know which sliders to tweak in the Mixer if you want to change them. It would be useful if the fader corresponding to the currently-selected MIDI channel was highlighted.

PUTTIN' ON THE STYLE

THE MANUAL CONTAINS a tutorial which takes you through the main functions of the program. However, Feeling Partner has a certain level of complexity so you'd be advised not to tackle it after 17 cans of Pilsner Urquell. We'll look at the accompaniment generation first. The architecture goes something like this. . .

There are 74 Styles divided into a number of groups. The manual says there are 32 groups but there were only 15 with the review copy (v1.52) - rock, rock shuffle, slow rock, jazz rock, jazz, funk, disco, samba, afro, suka, bossa nova, tango (argh), paso, march and waltz.

Styles provide the "feel" of the accompaniment but many of the Styles within a group are not radically different from one another. On closer listening, the only discernible difference lies in the drum patterns - something the manual doesn't make clear.

Styles load with the program and cannot be loaded separately. Program updates (already in the pipeline) should offer a greater range and variety of Styles.

MODEL ALGORITHMS

FOR EACH STYLE there are a number of sets of Models and a set of 16 Algorithms. At the risk of allowing terminology to obscure explanation, a Model is simply a one- or two-bar sequence, a variation on the selected Style.

Within each group, each instrument has its own collection of Models - the actual number varies from group to group but averages around six. The instrument Models are two bars long while the drum Models are one bar long.

You can try out each Model for each instrument using the Taste Model (in keeping with the name of the program) from the Model menu. Having found a Model or two you like, you can assign them to the Model 1 and Model 2 areas on the main screen. These are basically buffers which are used to determine the Models used in the Algorithms. Perhaps it would be useful if Models were assigned to the Model 1 or 2 areas automatically after exiting the Taste Models option.

An Algorithm (you were dying to ask) is a collection of Models and Icons (coming up) put together to form a pattern (the Algorithm) which can be up to 16 bars long. This is quite neatly done in the Setup Algorithm window where you can drag icons (small i) of the Models into the Algorithm list. Icons (capital I) are other patterns (sequences/rhythmic styles) which include rests and the "basic" Style rhythm.

The Icons - and icons - consist of two bars of Models, et cetera in different combinations so that you can select, for example, a one-bar rest followed by one bar of Model 1 or one bar of the basic Style, followed by a bar of Model 2 and so on.

Three of the instrument Icons make the parts play in time with the bass drum, snare drum or hi-hat. The drum patterns, er, icons in an Algorithm can be set to play a fill with a "density" determined by a percentage setting. Use a 100% setting at the end of a phrase or a lower percentage fill to add a little variation in the middle of one.

For all the choice this gives you it would, perhaps, have been easier to use one-bar icons, thus doing away with the need for several two-bar combinations. Perhaps for ultimate flexibility, you could be given the ability to assign any Model number to any of the Algorithm's bar slots. However, as it is, the system works fine.

OK, so this isn't the easiest concept you've been asked to grasp within the pages of Music Technology, but it makes more sense when you're clicking the mouse, tasting Models(!), dragging icons and reading the manual - if you're one of those clever dicks (or dickesses) who ignore manuals, don't say you weren't warned.

GOING FOR A SONG

HAVING EXPLAINED (I hope) the basics of Partner's *modus operandi*, let's see how it works in practice >

THE MUSIC CORPORATION...THE MUSIC CORPORATION...THE MUSIC CORPORATION...

➢ (relax, you've done the difficult bit).

First, select a general Style for your song from the Style list. You can audition them on the fly. Next, create a new Pattern and name it in the Pattern List (the name in the Pattern window doesn't change as it does in Notator). Set the length of the Pattern, the time signature and adjust the tempo.

Now add tracks to the Pattern using the Create Tracks option. This lets you insert the auto accompaniment instruments but you can, of course, create your own tracks, either additional accompaniment patterns or a melody line.

Select suitable Models and Algorithms for the accompaniment parts. There are Modify Pattern and Modify Track options which will select these at random - useful when you're feeling lazy.

CHORD TRACKS

NOW YOU NEED to enter some chords so the accompaniment section has a set of harmonies to follow. Partner doesn't use a chord list as such, rather it gets its chords directly from one of the tracks. The program recognises 12 chord types including major and minor 7ths with flattened 5ths. However, it doesn't recognise 9th, 11th and 13th intervals which I could live without but neither does it recognise 6ths or augmented chords, the latter being a more serious omission.

> "The range of material in the Styles and Models come into their own for creating non-repetitive and customised accompaniments."

After recording your chords, you can nip into the Track Editor to see what a mess you've made (quantisation buff joke). The editor is simply a numeric event list which shows all recorded data - note ons, note offs and aftertouch (a display filter would be useful here). Editing in the editor is rather basic. Scrolling through the list is rather slow, too - fine for a 16-bar pattern but tedious for anything much longer.

There is a quantise function if you need it although, again, it's rather basic. You can set the quantise value in fractions of a semibreve and select triple time (represented by T) or double time (represented by B - something left over from the translation?). There's also an Auto Quantise function which saves you having to think about all this.

If the program discovers a chord in your recording and the track has been defined as a Track Driver (coming up), it shows the chord name and type. This is why it's important only to play chords it recognises and to ensure that chord changes occur at the correct place within the bar. Nice, easy and precise is the way to do it. It's not just a question of bunging in a melody and some loose chords and expecting to get an accompaniment out - you won't.

Chords are displayed in two parts: the name and the scale number. The scale number refers to the chord type from which Partner generates the scales it uses for the accompaniments.

Interestingly, you can change both the chord name and type from within the editor, so if you recorded a C major chord you could change the chord to E minor 7th and the accompaniment would produce a different set of harmonies. Come to that, you could change it to F#m7♭5! Lots of scope here for the adventurous harmonist.

TRACK DRIVERS

HAVING RECORDED A chord track you need to define it as a Track Driver (a right click to the left of the track does it) which tells Feeling Partner which track to take the chord information from. The chords it is using appear in the bottom right of the screen.

You can drive Partner in real time from a MIDI keyboard - portable keyboard mode - and, by assigning a split point, use the lower half of the keyboard for chords and the upper half for playing a melody.

The program has three recognition modes. In Absolute mode, it treats any note you play as a tonic and generates a chord based on that. In Relative mode it tends to remain in the same key, so playing a D note in the key of C would produce D minor rather than D major. In Extended mode it will analyse the note you're playing to see if it forms part of a tonic triad which has just been generated and, if so, plays that rather than generating a new chord.

Again, you need to be quite precise when playing and it helps if you play a little ahead of the beat rather than behind it. You can select Step or Bar mode for the analysis. The former looks for a chord change on every beat of the bar, the latter just once every bar.

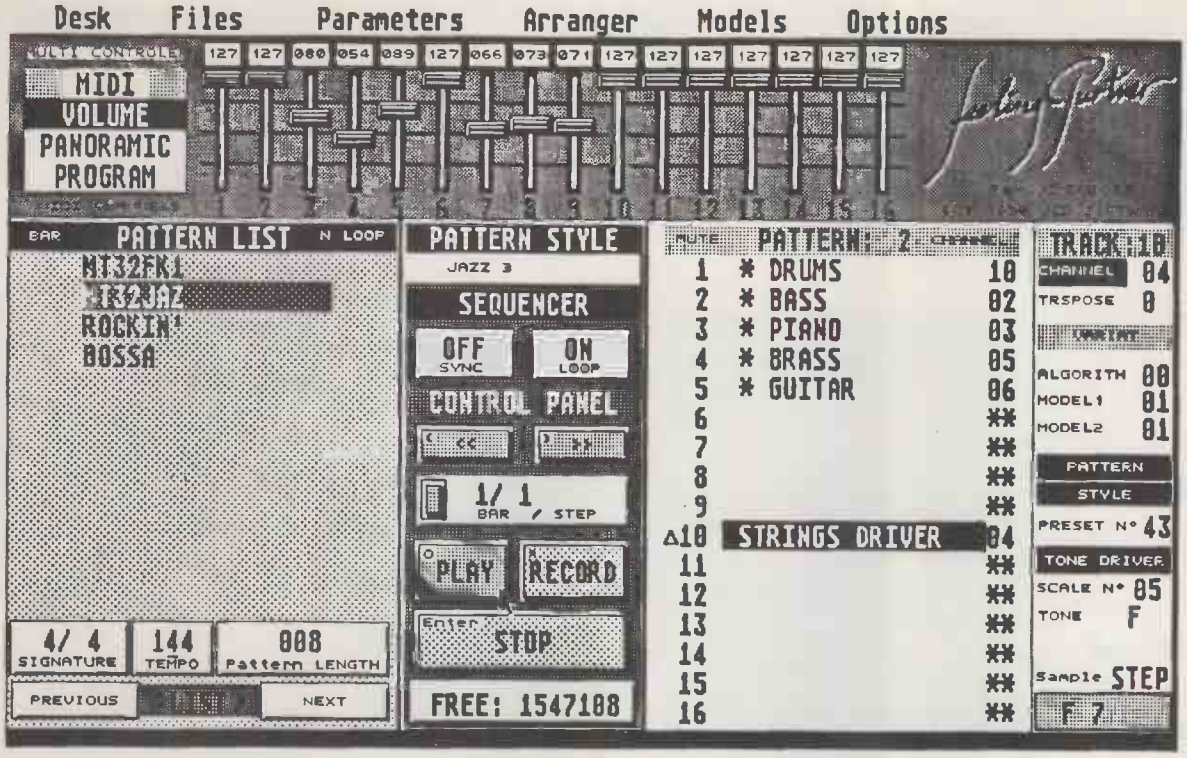
SEQUENCER

THE SEQUENCER SIDE of Partner is fairly basic. You can copy and merge tracks, transpose them, change MIDI channel - but that's all. You can't punch in, adjust velocity levels, set delays, copy sections of tracks and so on. For the purpose of creating an accompaniment, this is no major loss although it's worth bearing in mind if you're hoping to do extensive sequencing work. Partner does have a Sync function which allows it to be driven by an external drum machine or another sequencer.

To build up a song you can copy and transpose Patterns, adjust their length and so on until you have all the bits you need for your song. The Pattern List window will show all these Patterns and you can now link them together by toggling this to the Arrange Song window.

You add Patterns to the list by copying and changing them or by using the Create Patterns option. The Arrange window shows the bar number at which each of the patterns starts. You can't alter this or allow for cuts or upbeats as you can with Notator, for example. The best you can do is to create a one-bar Pattern with a time signature of 2/8 and pad with others of a similar ilk. You can stipulate the number of times you want each Pattern to loop.

Feelie supports MIDI files, so you can export the resulting arrangement into your sequencer for further editing. It'll even play the file as it saves it. You don't



have to record the melody or any other parts, you can simply record the accompaniment Patterns, assemble them in your sequencer and add the toppings later. Given the limited editing functions you may find this a better way of working.

LIBRARIES

AS IF YOU haven't already been spoiled for choice with Models, Algorithms and Styles, Partner lets you create your own Models, too. Basically, it will take any recorded track, divide it into two-bar Models and store it/them in the Models Library. This is only available for instrument tracks, however, not drums.

The new Models Library can then be saved. It replaces the existing library and is loaded automatically when the program boots. If you want a greater choice of Models you could always create several alternate Model files.

What of the accompaniments themselves? They really are very good - they may lack some of the pizazz of the accompaniments found on Roland's E-series keyboards, for example, but they're infinitely more programmable and customisable and that's the name of the game - tailoring the patterns to suit your music.

MANUAL

THE MANUAL IS quite thorough. It contains a good step-by-step introduction which you'll need to follow closely. However, it could do with a few more diagrams. The areas of the main screen are referred to by number - a few illustrations would be welcome and help break up the text - and it wouldn't do any harm to show the actual windows from the menus.

The tutorial is followed by a reference section which is organised alphabetically. There's also a list of all the menu options and the page numbers where further details can be found. And there's an index. Appendices include keyboard shortcuts (although some need to be explained more clearly) plus a four-and-a-half page introduction to MIDI.

VERDICT

NIGGLES ARE MAINLY to do with implementation, and the developers are already working on updates which will correct many of them - although they hope the innovative nature of the program will tempt interested parties into a purchase.

The fact that Feeling Partner can function as a sequencer is a bonus, and tempting to those whose arranging skills have yet to be honed but who are looking for a first-time sequencer. However, Feelie is no substitute for a dedicated sequencer so if you were thinking along those lines, just make sure its facilities match your requirements. If you already have a sequencer then the program's ability to handle MIDI files makes it a more attractive proposition.

The range of material in the Styles and Models come into their own for creating non-repetitive and customised accompaniments. You can put an accompaniment together fairly quickly and spend time later beefing it up if you wish.

As with many new programs, Feeling Pard introduces a few concepts you have to wrap your head around before you can exploit its full capabilities. In return for your pains, however, you have access to the most flexible accompaniment generator currently on the market. ■

"When you build up other patterns they use the same MIDI channels as the original MIDI configuration, simplifying pattern creation."

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BREAKING *the* ICE

With so many new developments coming from Japan, America and Germany, it's easy to forget that research work is going on all over the world. This report from Akai Iceland serves as a reminder of its importance. Text by Mørv Smørdilørv.

Photography: Matt Johnson

ICELAND MIGHT SEEM A STRANGE PLACE to find a section of a Japanese Company's R&D department, but Akai have been steadily building an international team, utilising abilities that have developed in various countries. Iceland, of course, is renowned for its post-production houses and has produced a stream of fresh ideas which fit in readily with the advance of technology. As none of the regular MT investigative team were able to make the trek to Iceland in time for this issue, I was asked to leave my own job as owner and manager of the popular Mackerel Pie Studio to bring in this report. ➢

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➢ Downtown Reykjavik is the home of Glacier House Productions, the brainchild of Erik Thrømsjargg who also heads up the Akai team currently working on developing new systems.

"I started with Akai last year and it's been great", he explains after introducing himself. "I had my own production company for some time and had lots of ideas on how equipment should progress in the future."

How, I wondered, did Erik's work come to the attention of Akai in the first place?

"Well, I was doing some work for The Iceland Television Service", he replies. "It was a soap opera called *Herringfølke* and we decided that we could improve the speed and efficiency of laying down the audio. Back then we were still using the old Gaussfunk recorders and they were not so reliable. Sometimes we had to go on air and add the effects in real time. We used to get lots of complaints. Then I had this idea: a friend and I had got into computer programming using our Commodore 64s and one morning I woke up and said 'hey Lars' (Lars Trentøklaarksvl is Thrømsjargg's long-time friend and collaborator) 'we could make a something here! Of course he wasn't awake and said something like 'Go back to sleep, you wønker!' He's quite a joker, you know?"

The result was a genuine innovation - a multitrack digital recorder with timecode synchronisation running from custom software in the Commodore. Trentøklaarksvl takes up the story.

"Of course we had lots of problems", he begins. "Storage space was limited because we had chosen 2.8" Quick Disks as the storage media and we had to find a way to change disks quickly. Fortunately, the same day we got the system up and running, we had a visit from our friend Løøf (Løøf Lirpa - now a permanent member of the team) who used to work with some British company. Løøf came up with this quick-change system where the disks were stacked and just dropped into place on request. It was really original!"

This was the start of even greater things as the work piled in and the system gradually expanded as the team got into their stride. We asked where they sourced their sound effects for the very impressive library they currently own.

Thrømsjargg: "Most of them we recorded ourselves. Whenever we needed something, we just whipped out the portable wire recorder and made noises - great fun! One time we needed the sound of a group of angry sea-lions for *Herringfølke* and we just stood in the middle of the room grunting and slapping each other with wet fish. Unfortunately, the landlord walked in just then and we had to find another place to work. But you can't find that sort of thing in the BBC library, can you?"

So how did they start to work with Akai? Trentøklaarksvl: "Everytime we saw them at an exhibition we would suggest improvements to their DD1000 optical disk recorder based on our own system. I don't think that they appreciated it at first, but eventually they suggested that we did it ourselves. They were very reasonable about it and said we could take as much time as we liked as long as we updated them on progress every year or so."

So what improvements will go into the new model?

"Currently they are looking at making the system completely open-ended so that the user can program-in the features that they require."

Doesn't this mean the user will have to learn high-level programming?

"Yes, obviously", says Thrømsjargg, "but it is a very small price to pay for getting this possibility. The only problem is with the operators' manual - it's getting a bit big."

What other features are likely to be included?

Trentøklaarksvl: "Whilst we agree on the importance of front-end software, we feel that the backside has been neglected, so we're working hard to make it more accessible. We are also developing a mode called Foreplay mode, this is where the entire machine can be primed before plugging in. Also, we will make use of the digital processing board to whip up an effect or two. We've just finished one called Flange-elation."

"Although we haven't got an optical disk to work with, we've managed to duplicate the effect by utilising the ultraviolet rays coming through the hole in the ozone layer" reveals Thrømsjargg. "Bouncing them off a giant mirror mounted on top of Lars' house and directing them through an open window in the roof works good on sunny days but it does slow us down when it's cloudy."

Trentøklaarksvl continues: "I'm still programming in Basic, of course. I mean, if it ain't broke don't fix it! Know what I mean? This gave me an idea to incorporate a 'Shoot-em-up' game into the DD1000 for those moments when you need some kind of diversion."

"The portable version is nearly ready", Thrømsjargg reveals, "we just had to make up a special pair of

"I'm still programming in Basic, of course. I mean, if it ain't broke, don't fix it! Know what I mean?"

brackets for the ski attachments. We'll have to make the buttons a bit bigger too, because it's a bit tricky trying to hit the right one wearing thick woolly mittens."

Are the resourceful duo still managing to keep up their post-production work during this development period?

"For sure", says Trentøklaarksvl. "We've just received a contract to work on a new series called *Magnus*, which is all about a quizmaster who solves murders. We've got to do all the language dubbing for other countries - the first one is for China. I don't

know where we'll find an Icelandic who speaks Chinese, I suppose we'll have to find a Chinese who speaks Icelandic. Then we've got a film coming up. It's called *Geyser II - the final confrontation.*"

Astonished at the level of development which had been going on almost under my own nose, I was disappointed when it was almost time to wind up the interview. One final question had to be answered, however. When will this tasty system be available?

"Well, you know what software is like", says Thrømsjargg, enigmatically, "it's completely impossible to predict. So we'll announce it now and hope for the best."

Thrømsjargg, however, is not the only Icelander with ideas - Trentøklaarksvl too has an invention going through the Akai R&D department. But where Thrømsjargg's creativity begins in the studio, Trentøklaarksvl's ingenuity favours the performing

"You pluck it just like a string, but it doesn't need a neck because it's rigid - you just 'fret' the string itself."

musician. His Rod-knee, therefore, is a MIDI bass controller with a difference - a couple of differences, in fact. He explained them on the Ski-doo as we travelled back to Reykjavik station.

The first is derived from the fact that Trentøklaarksvl has modelled it on a tea-chest bass, and so it has only one string. The second - and this is the secret of its success - is that the "string" is solid.

"Ja ja", responds the friendly inventor as I point this out. "You see, the trouble with MIDI basses is that they use pitch-to-MIDI systems and these are too slow for such low notes. So I use the graphite rod - I'm a *Brookside* fan so I call it the 'Suspended Rod' system - instead. You pluck it just like a string but it doesn't need a neck because it's rigid - you just 'fret' the string itself. The vibrations are much faster than ordinary guitar string vibrations and they're detected by special circuitry in the headstock. This deducts the unfretted length of rod from the total length and gives you the pitch that was played, but there's no conversion from pitch information so it's very fast. Also it's wireless - the transmitter is part of the Rod-knee and it comes with a receiver/decoder ready to connect to any MIDI system.

"Oh, yes - I call it Rod-knee because of the integral knee rest in the design. It's kind of an Icelandic joke, yes?

"Before I had the right material for the string it was not so good, though. I was using a zinc-based material and it wouldn't conduct the vibrations unless it was super-cooled. That's how my wife lost three of her finger tips. She used to be a cellist, you know?"

Lars Trentøklaarksul and Rool-Knee

Since this interview took place, Akai Iceland have generously given me the chance to to try the new recording/editing system at Mackerel Pie. And, as we had an important solo session with the Sugar Cubes' Bjork lined up, we were able to put it through its paces in earnest - but Earnest was on holiday that week! (That's another Icelandic joke!) Although we're sworn to secrecy regarding system specifics, I can confidently say that we can't wait to get a production version installed. And the finished version of the Rod-knee is arriving next week and should be launched at the Frankfurt trade show. It's going to be a great step forward for MIDI and for bass players. And for Iceland. ■

WAVESTATION A/D

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES CUMPSTY

If the M1 brought Korg mainstream popularity, the Wavestation brought them credibility, combining the old style flexibility with current technology - now it has even more to offer. Review by Simon Trask.

BACK IN 1990, there emerged a synth which turned its back on the familiar terrain of sample-based synthesis and headed straight for waveform heaven instead. That instrument - Korg's Wavestation - offered musicians an opportunity to (re)discover creative synthesis using abstract sound material in place of recognisable instrumental samples. However, unlike the analogue synthesisers of old, with their small number of waveforms, the Wavestation provided 365 digitally-stored waves covering a wide range of timbres, suitable for use both as sounds in their own right and as starting points for synthesis. It was characteristic of an instrument which embraced new possibilities at the same time as it harked back to old values.

In addition to a familiar subtractive synthesis-type programming environment - oscillator, filter, amplifier, amplitude envelope, ENV1, LFO1 and LFO2 - the Wavestation had two programming aces up its sleeve: vector synthesis and wave sequencing. The former, which was derived from Sequential's old Prophet VS synth (many of the Wavestation R&D team being former Sequential employees), allowed the four oscillators which constituted a Wavestation Patch to have their amplitude levels dynamically mixed, relative to one another, from either a programmable Mix envelope or the synth's front-panel Vector Position joystick.

Wave sequences were, quite simply, user-programmable sequences of the Wavestation's waves which could be assigned to its oscillators and either looped or else played as one-shot sequences while synced to an internal clock or externally-derived MIDI clock. For those musicians looking for something different to come from a synth, wave sequencing provided the real creative heart of the beast, allowing, as it did, a new sonic vocabulary to be created out of existing sounds.

Two years on from the Wavestation's Frankfurt Music Fair debut, there have been some significant additions to the synth's capabilities (turning it into the Wavestation EX), plus the introduction of a rack-mount version, the Wavestation A/D. The latter not only matches the features of the Wavestation EX, but also adds a feature not available on its keyboard counterpart, namely two rear-panel audio inputs (hence the A/D, for Analogue/Digital).

Since its arrival last Autumn, the A/D has consistently outsold its keyboard counterpart - which must say something about the desire of musicians to add modules to their setups, particularly as buying the A/D represents no significant saving in cost over the Wavestation EX.

My intention in this review is to look at the main areas of development on the Wavestation (EX and A/D) since I originally reviewed the synth (see MT, September '90). Therefore if you want background on the Wavestation and a fuller appraisal, I suggest you look back over that review.

SAMPLES RETURN

IN SOME WAYS the most significant addition to the original Wavestation is the addition of sampled instrumental sounds alongside the waveforms. Yes, Korg have added the acoustic and electric pianos, saxophones, flutes, slapped basses and drum and percussion sounds which people evidently want. Perhaps what it comes down to is that, if you're paying out a lot of money for an instrument - and the Wavestation isn't cheap - then you want as much scope from the sounds as you can get. Not that the extra sounds really substitute adequately in their scope for a full-blown sample-based synth.

The extra drum and percussion sounds are a welcome inclusion in particular, because the Wavestation excels at rhythmic patterns, courtesy of its wave sequences - as an early PCM card for the Wavestation, Drum & Percussion, very ably demonstrated. Indeed, many of the Wave Sequences in RAM3 show off the A/D's (and EX's) enhanced drum and percussion vocabulary. The inevitable grand piano puts in an appearance too, of course. It's much better than the piano which came on another of the early PCM cards; however, I wouldn't call it an elegant classical grand, it's got a more lively edge to it which makes it well suited to more contemporary contexts.

Although the Wavestation may include more recognisable sounds now, once you get them into a wave sequence you can treat them as much more abstract material, thanks to the obscuring ➢

"The Korg Wavestation A/D is one of the most versatile, most powerful and most intriguing synths on the market at the moment."

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➢ possibilities of sequence step crossfades.

The greater range of source sounds to choose from is reflected in the extra Bank (RAM3) of Performances, Patches and Wave Sequences, and extra Wave Sequence steps. And talking of steps, Korg have taken the unusual step on the A/D of leaving the RAM2 Wave Sequence Bank blank - the idea is to encourage you to get into creating your own Wave Sequences by giving you an otherwise unused area to play around in. Seems like a good move.

EFFECTS

EIGHT DIGITAL EFFECTS have been added to the original set, bringing the Wavestation's total to 55. The new ones seem to have primarily been added because of the synth's individual outs, although the EX has the new effects too. These are Mod Pitch Shift-Delay (allowing the pitch of the audio inputs to be shifted), Stereo Comp-Lim/Gate (for smoothing out the level of the incoming signal, or in some cases adding more punch to it), Small Vocoders 1-4, Stereo Vocoder-Delay 1 and Stereo Vocoder-Delay 2. The Vocoders really open up a new sonic area on the Wavestation, but although they can be very effective on combinations of internal Wavestation sounds (using a rhythmic Wave Sequence to modulate a sustained pad sound, for example), the A/D's analogue inputs give it the edge over the EX - especially if want to get classic vocoded vocal sounds and so on. Vocoders work by superimposing the timbre of one signal (the modulator) onto that of another (the carrier); the Wavestation's vocoder effects draw on its FX busses (A-D) as modulators and carriers, giving you a great deal of flexibility in deciding what sound, or combination of sounds, you want to use for one or the other.

"The Wavestation's audio inputs typify the 'looking backward in order to go forward' philosophy underlying the Wavestation's design."

AUDIO IN

THE AUDIO INPUTS typify the "looking backward in order to go forward" philosophy underlying the Wavestation's design. Yes, the A/D has audio inputs "like the old synths used to". But all the developments which have taken place in digital synthesis and MIDI in the intervening years mean that new possibilities exist for the manipulation of audio data once it's in the Wavestation's digital domain.

The A/D's rear panel provides Input 1 and Input 2 jacks, together with level knobs and -40/-10/+4db gain switches for each jack, allowing the A/D to cope with a wide range of input signals. Incoming analogue signals are taken into the digital domain via 64 x oversampling ADCs. The Global page Analog Input Assign provides the parameters for initial control of the incoming audio signals. As well as being able to enable or disable the incoming signals globally, you can specify a MIDI channel, volume amount, filter cutoff point (12dB/octave low-pass filtering), Exciter amount and FX Buss routing for *each* of the two signals.

To pass the audio data directly to the Wavestation's effects, you enable one or more of the FX Busses A, B, C and D. In this way the Wavestation can be used purely as an effects processor for external sounds.

The MIDI Channel and Volume parameters between them allow independent automated mixing of the two input signals. When you edit the Volume amount (which controls the gain setting of the signal), MIDI controller #7 data is transmitted on the channel specified by the MIDI channel parameter; if you record this data into a MIDI sequencer and subsequently play it back to the Wavestation on the specified MIDI channel, it controls the Volume level remotely.

If you don't want the incoming signal(s) to be routed directly to the Wavestation's effects, you simply set all the FX Bus routings on the Analog Input Assign page to Off. As each signal can be routed independently, you could have one going straight to the effects while the other follows one (or perhaps both) of the two other possible routings. By assigning Wave 516 (Input 1) or Wave 517 (Input 2) to one of the four oscillators within a Patch, that oscillator will play whatever comes in on the relevant input, for as long as a note is being triggered via MIDI from your keyboard - in other words, the audio signal is gated by MIDI note ons and offs.

The other option is to select one of the two Waves as a step in a Wave Sequence. In this case the audio signal is only "let through" when its Wave's turn comes in the Wave Sequence - and then its appearance is governed by step duration and crossfade settings. In both cases (Wave and Wave Sequence) the input signals are passed through the Wavestation's synthesis parameters - although any relating to pitch are ignored - and on to the digital effects in the usual way.

If you want your incoming audio and your Wave or Wave Sequence to be synced together, the best way to achieve it is probably to sample the audio and then assign the sample to the relevant MIDI note - so you trigger the sample each time you trigger the Wave or Wave Sequence. The Wavestation is also able to sync its Wave Sequences to incoming MIDI clocks, so there are other possibilities there for anyone working in a sequencer-based way.

VERDICT

THE WAVESTATION A/D is one of the most versatile, most powerful and most intriguing synths on the market at the moment. For the adventurous musician it offers unique creative possibilities, and, to my mind, any effort expended on getting to grips with it is sure to be amply rewarded in terms of sonic results. The A/D is, without reservation, an instrument well worth taking some of your time out to investigate. ■

Price *Wavestation A/D, £1600; Wavestation EX, £1495; EXK-W expansion kit for the Wavestation, £400 including installation, latest software version and transport of instrument from local Korg dealer to Korg service dept. All prices include VAT.*

More from *Korg (UK) Ltd, 8-9 The Crystal Centre, Elmgrove Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2YR. Tel: 081-427 3397. Fax: 081-861 3595.*

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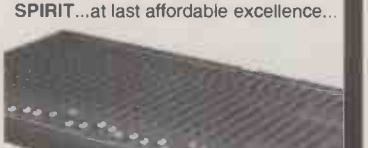

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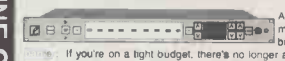

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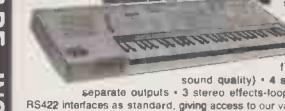

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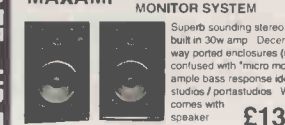

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CDR1 CD RECORDER

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES CUMPSTY

Genuine technological breakthroughs are few and far between,but the facility to record your own CDs for under four grand qualifies comfortably - hi-tech self sufficiency takes a quantum leap forward with the Marantz CDR1. Review by Tim Goodyer.

"STANDARDS ARE WONDERFUL", goes the old adage, "that's why we have so many of them". One of standardisation's better moments must be the CD - write in and tell me the last time your CD player wouldn't play a disc (that someone hadn't painted with Hammerite or scarred with a Stanley knife), or played only one audio channel, or chose not to recognise the track numbers. . . You get the picture; basically a CD is a CD and it'll play happily on any CD player you care to load it into. The reason for this idyllic arrangement is a document agreed between Philips and Sony and respected by (almost) all manufacturers of CDs and players. This splendid document is called the Red Book; discs and players which follow its guidelines are termed Red Book Standard. Yet somehow standards wouldn't be standards if there was only one to worry about, so there's also an Orange Book covering CD recording systems.

Of course, machinery for recording CDs has existed from the beginning of the CD revolution but most of it is the kind of thing used by pressing companies for commercial purposes - producing long runs of CDs for record companies - which makes it costly, complex and cumbersome. If you're looking to knock out a handful of CDs in the same way you might DATs or cassettes this isn't for you.

As with all technology, however, the cost of the hardware involved in making CDs is falling. The cost of systems allowing erasable recordings (CDE) to be made to compact disc is still stratospheric but that of a WORM (Write Once Read Many) CD system is plummeting. Last year Yamaha released their YPDR 601 system which would allow you to cut CDs for around £12,000 - blank discs not included. This year the price is falling again with talk of machines

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➢ costing nearer four grand than 12. These machines will be coming from companies presently associated more with hi-fi than the recording studio - Mission, Micromega and Meridian - and will all be built around Philips technology. One such machine is already available, however: Marantz' CDR1.

As a result of this price crash, CDR, or Compact Disc Recordable, as the system is termed, will fall into a price bracket consistent with that of serious hi-fi equipment. Consequently, CDR has been under discussion in the hi-fi press for a while - and with one or rather surprising results. For example, according to one of the experts at Meridian, a CDR copy of a commercially available CD can sound better than the source CD. Certainly, if this turns out to be the case (and quite possibly if it does not), CDR will earn itself a place in the prestigious hi-fi rig, but what impact is it likely to have on the business of making music itself?

While most DAT users are unlikely to acknowledge any difference in quality between DAT and CD, none are likely to dispute the fact that CD is a significantly more "universal" medium than DAT will ever become. Material recorded on CD can readily be replayed anywhere from the recording studio to the living room - via the A&R office, naturally. Material on DAT, however, is generally restricted to airplay in professional circles only.

"The CDR1 fits so perfectly into the self-sufficient, hi-tech setups many dance musicians are building for themselves, you could be forgiven for thinking it had been designed for them."

COMPACT LOOKS

LEAVING GENERALISATIONS REGARDING CDR aside for a moment, let's take a closer look at the CDR1. Although the machine does come with ears suitable for mounting it in 3Us of studio rack space, it's fair to say that its gold finish and overall styling are more in keeping with current hi-fi than pro-audio gear.

The front panel is dominated by a large display which contains visual indications concerning most aspects of operation. To the left-hand side of the panel there is a power on/off switch, and headphone socket and level control. Beneath the disc drawer are most of the controls associated with any well-facilitated CD machine - Time mode (disc total, total remaining, remaining track), Shuffle, Repeat (track, whole CD, marked section), A-B (repeat markers), Scan, Forward, Fast and Reverse. To the right of the disc drawer are pushbuttons for opening and closing it, Previous/Next track selection, Play, Stop/Clear Memory, Pause, Mute and Record. Next to these are the Rec Level and recording balance controls.

The more specialised functions are concealed behind a drop-down section which runs the full width of the recorder and occupies the lower 1" of the panel. Reading left to right, these are: Play/Prog (switches between direct selection of a track to play and programming a selection of track numbers), Review (of Program), Clear (Program), Store (Program), ten track selection keys 1-0, Input Select, red LEDs for digital or analogue input as selected, New Track Increment (manual track marking on record), Auto/Manual track marking (on record), red LEDs for Auto or Manual track marking as selected, Skip, Unskip, Rec Sync and Fix-up.

On the rear panel of the CDR1 are analogue audio inputs and outputs (phono sockets), digital input and output (co-ax and optical), remote control connections (phono sockets for Philips RC5 interface protocol), Input select switch (Bal/Unbal/Micro), Microphone inputs (left and right, quarter-inch jack sockets), balanced inputs/outputs (XLR) and mains input.

Supplied with the CDR1 (but not provided with the review model) is a cordless remote control.

LASER LOVE

MARANTZ ARE RENOWNED for their line in high-quality hi-fi equipment - including compact disc players and the £9000 AX100 Audio Computer. The CDR1, then, can be regarded as a high-quality CD player with the significant addition of a recording facility. For the purposes of this review, functions relating to normal CD playback operation will be overlooked in favour of the machine's performance as a CD recorder.

Obviously, the CDR1 requires blank CDs in order to make recordings. These come pre-formatted and are currently available with 63 minutes of recording time, although 74-minute discs are soon to be available. The present cost of a 63-minute CD is around £23.50 (inc VAT), although the price is expected to fall quickly in line with demand.

An ordinary CD player reads a recording off a disc by firing a laser at the track areas and reading the intensity of the light reflected from "pits" burned into the recording layer. This digital information is then converted to analogue audio information to be amplified and replayed. This conversion either takes place inside the CD to be presented at its analogue outputs, or is retained in its digital format to be presented to an amplifier equipped with digital inputs. In order to record a CD, the CDR1 must, therefore, be capable of burning these pits into a blank disc. This is achieved using a higher-powered laser than is found in playback-only machines - 4-8mW is the quoted recording power.

Although the purpose of the Compact Disc Recordable system is to produce Red Book Standard CD - CDs fully compatible with domestic CD players - the CDs themselves have recording areas on them that are not present on a commercially-produced disc. When a blank recordable disc is loaded into the CDR1 for the first time, the recorder automatically makes a test recording in the first of these areas, the Program Calibration Area. Once made, this test recording is referred to each time the disc is loaded so that the CDR1 knows the correct power setting for recording.

In a commercial CD, details of the contents and running time are encoded in a Table Of Contents (TOC) which is automatically read by a CD player. As the CDR1 allows you to build up the contents of a recordable disc - you don't have to complete the recording in one pass - the information needed to compile this table is not available until the last recording has been made. The second of these areas is called the Program Memory Area and this serves as a temporary TOC for the CDR1. Neither of these special areas of a recordable CD are accessible to a domestic CD player, and so a part-recorded disc

➢ cannot be played back on any other machine.

One important aspect of Compact Disc Recordable is that of WORM recording. The practical implication of this system is that you only get one shot at getting a recording right - once something has been recorded, it's permanently encoded on the disc. There is, however, a safety net of sorts; this takes the form of the CDR1's Skip function. Using this facility, you can instruct the CDR1 to exclude complete tracks from the final TOC or include directions to skip over a section within a track. While this won't allow you to claim back areas of the disc you've recorded to, it will allow you to preclude unsatisfactory areas of the recording from appearing when the disc is played back.

BURNING IN

THE CDR1, BEING a professional machine, does not support or recognise any copy protection system. This means that you can copy commercial CDs to CDR if you so wish - although the manual is careful to imply that any CD you might wish to record already contains your own work. The signal may be input digitally, using either optical or IEC 958-II co-ax protocols, via balanced line or as analogue audio from a line source or microphone. If a digital input from DAT is to be used, it must be from a recording made at the CD standard of 44.1kHz, not the DAT standard of 48kHz. Unless the digital input is acceptable to the CDR1, a No Lock error message is displayed and the machine automatically switches back to analogue input.

OK, you've chosen to commit a recording to CD; this is what you do. Once the appropriate connections have been made, you place a blank (or partly-recorded) disc into the CDR1's drawer. The disc is acknowledged with CD Recordable appearing in the display and the message "OPC" (Optimum Power Calibration) appears while the test recording is made. Pressing Record drops the recorder into Record Standby mode in which the Rec Level control is used to set the signal level. Bearing in mind the horrors of digital distortion, the bar graph meters go up to 0dB (not somewhere between +3dB and +10dB, as is usually the case with analogue recorders). The manual directs you to set an average level of -10dB, above which the display appears in red rather than yellow. If one of the digital inputs is to be used, the record level is set automatically. The balance control allows you to correct any imbalance in the stereo signal.

To put the CDR1 into record, simply press Play. Recording is begun at track number one unless previous recordings have been made, in which case the next track number is automatically allocated. During recording, most of the CDR1's panel controls are disabled to prevent accidental damage to the recording. Only the Mute, Track Increment, Time and Stop/CM functions are operative. Recording is terminated by pressing Stop/CM; alternatively a 30-second (analogue) or six-second (digital) signal absence will cause the machine to exit Record mode. Putting the machine into Record Standby and pressing Mute causes a three-second silent passage to be recorded. Once a recording is complete, pressing Fix-up instructs the CDR1 to compile a final TOC from the contents of its PMA. After this operation no further recording can be made to that particular disc. Fixing-up took around three-and-a-half minutes for the 12-track, 61-minute test disc I recorded. During Fix-up, the CDR1's display gives you an indication of the time remaining until the operation is complete. Once finished, "Recordable" disappears from the CD Recordable display, and the CD effectively becomes an ordinary CD.

If the Skip function is to be used, it must be before ➢

"In operation, the CDR1 couldn't really be much simpler. It behaves as a normal CD player with the addition of a few straightforward, yet crucial, recording functions."

➢ fixing-up. Two Skip options are available, though these only apply when the disc is replayed on the CDR1 - when replayed on a domestic CD player, all tracks and passages, including any skips, are played. The first option allows you to exclude a complete track from the running order of the disc, the second to remove sections of a track. To Skip a whole track, the track number is selected with the track selection keys after which the Skip button must be pressed within two seconds. The Record LED flashes, the display reads "Skip" and the selected track disappears from the track number indicator. If Record is pressed, again within two seconds, the track is prevented from playing. The process can be reversed (before fixing-up) by repeating the procedure and substituting the Unskip button for Skip.

To skip a section of a track, the section must first be marked using the A-B repeat function. Pressing Skip brings up the prompts Skip and Verify in the display. The CDR1 now automatically plays the track from five seconds before the A marker to five seconds after the B marker without the marked section. The skip is confirmed by pressing Record. It's worth noting that removing a passage of music from a song in this way doesn't really qualify as a professional edit - it's not an accurate system and you're also left with a short dropout. This would be acceptable for editing speech perhaps, but not music. To unskip a skipped section, the A and B markers must be inserted around the skip and the procedure repeated using the Unskip button. All routines are fail-safe as you need to be quite deliberate in your actions to keep inside the two-second time-outs. Also, the operations can be aborted at any point using Stop/CM. Tracks and sections can be skipped and reinstated a maximum of 20 times.

The subject of track numbering is one of the less instinctive aspects of the CDR1's operation. Before beginning a recording it is necessary to select either Manual or Automatic track incrementing. In Manual mode, the track number is incremented by pressing the Increment button at any point in the recording. In Automatic mode, the CDR1 can be made to "clone" a commercial CD (or CDV). Using digital inputs and automatic track incrementation, it's a simple job to knock out a clone or two; using the RC5 sync protocol and a number of CDR1s, multiple copying is equally simple.

What's not possible with the CDR1 as it stands is the reading of track index flags from the DAT's bit stream and interpretation of them as CDR1 track increment flags. This means that, in order to give the individual tracks on a DAT master their own track numbers on a CD, you have to insert them manually during recording. Once this is done, however, subsequent copies of that CD will include track numbers.

The reason for this shortcoming is that there is no standard (that word again) concerning DAT track index flags and, consequently, different DAT machine manufacturers have handled them differently. HHB - UK distributors of the CDR1 and no strangers to the world of DAT - will be offering "smart boxes" capable of interpreting this information. I'm certain that they will prove a popular item.

"The CDR1, being a professional machine, does not support or recognise any copy protection system - this means that you can copy commercial CDs to CDR if you so wish."

REMOTE ACTION

ALTHOUGH THE CONNECTION for remote synchronisation is explained in the CDR1's manual as being for use with a dedicated remote control or for syncing to a suitable CD or CDV player, its use in the recording studio extends to linking up multiple machines for duplication purposes. It is possible to mass-produce CD copies in this way, but it's not a cost-effective alternative to using commercial disc mastering facilities. With another of HHB's custom add-ons, however, a small suite of CDR1s is a facility that is likely to appeal to certain areas of the studio market.

VERDICT

IN OPERATION, THE CDR1 couldn't really be much simpler. It behaves as a normal CD player with the addition of a few straightforward, yet crucial, recording functions. In fact, my first criticism of the machine has to be aimed at the documentation: it's so simple and non-technical that I suspect it's been prepared with the domestic, rather than professional, market in mind. As the answers to the sort of questions the professional users are likely to come up with are also pretty straightforward, I'm sure that HHB will be fielding more technical enquiries than they need if the present documentation isn't supplemented. The CDR1 itself, however, is a pleasure to use.

The burning question is *whose* pleasure that's likely to be. The key markets are fairly obvious: CD mastering (it's cheaper than U-matic and offers better signal quality); radio station jingles, stings and idents; film sound effects; archiving; mix evaluation; record company promos; even demos could be presented on CDR. In the fast-moving world of dance music, we may well see recordable CDs replacing white label acetates as a source of hot and exclusive tracks. The CDR1 fits so perfectly into the self-sufficient, hi-tech setups many dance musicians are building for themselves, you could be forgiven for thinking it had been designed for them. Expect to see it appearing in the MT gear listings soon.

The viability of CDR as a medium will be hotly debated in certain areas (not the least of which will be the hi-fi world) but I suspect it's a major breakthrough on two grounds: firstly, it makes CDs available to almost anybody - and its popularity would help bring the cost down still further. Secondly, while the limitations of a once-only record system will ensure that it doesn't depose DAT from its present position, the proliferation of CD players is certainly going to make CDR an attractive format for anyone wanting to get their music heard. ■

Price *Marantz CDR1 £3519.13; 63-minute recordable CDs, £19.92 each.*

More from *Chas Rowden, HHB Communications Ltd, 73-75 Scrubs Lane, London NW10 6QU. Tel: 081-960 2144. Fax: 081-960 1160.*

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KAWAI K1 multitimbral synth, exc cond, sounds + editors (Atari), £350 ono. Glenn, Tel: (0932) 567614.

KAWAI K1, £245; Kawai R50e, £120. Both immac, boxed, manuals. Nick, Tel: (0329) 235818.

KAWAI K1M, 1000 sounds on Atari MIDI file or Q80 disks, £240 or swap K1R. Scott, Tel: St Albans (0727) 810033.

KAWAI K1R, exc cond, £185. James, Tel: (0786) 78655.

KAWAI K4, home use only, normal cond, £450. Tel: 081-674 9207.

KAWAI K5 additive synth, 15-part multitimbral, 5 separate outs, £300. Scott, Tel: Glasgow 041-336 6947.

KAWAI M8000 mother keybd, 88-note weighted action, exc cond, £850 ovno. Chris, Tel: (0705) 828587.

KAWAI WK50 keybd, 61 keys, MIDI, 7-voice multitimbral, 16-bit sounds, £140 ono; Casio CZ1000 digital synth, w/MIDI, £95 ono; Seiko MR1000 MIDI sequencer, stores 5000 notes, £30. The lot: £220. Philip, Tel: (0425) 275655.

KORG 01/W keybd, unemployment forces sale. Tel: (0324) 31513.

KORG DW6000, superb analogue sounds, £150. Tel: Hove (0273) 726219.

KORG DW6000 synth, MIDI compatible, saves sounds to tape, £230. Mike, Tel: (0908) 320798.

KORG M1 editor, 3000 sounds, £60. Tel: (0223) 212226.

KORG M1, exc cond, home use only, boxed, stand, leads, pedals, manuals, £830. Paul, Tel: (0939) 232489.

KORG M3R, as new, £400; Cheetah MS6, £150; Roland SH101, £90. Russell, Tel: 021-358 7612.

KORG MS20 analogue monosynth, good cond, original manual, patch cords, £175. Tel: (0354) 695239.

KORG POLYSIX, £180; Seck 12:8:2 mixing desk, £550. Tel: Merseyside (0744) 35567.

KORG POLY61, fully programmable synth, stand, vgc, £190. Tel: Fife (0383) 850225.

KORG POLY800I, £150; Yamaha TX81Z module, £175 or swap Casio FZ1 or DX11. Daniel, Tel: (0889) 583347.

KORG POLY800, manual, good cond, £160. Tel: (0843) 32357.

KORG T2, boxed, Valhala disk, £1900; YS200, ROM card, boxed, £350. Jeremy, Tel: (0932) 849312, after 6pm.

KORG T3, £1200, will deliver anywhere. Nick, Tel: (0364) 42633.

KORG T3, exc cond, hardly used, 40 song sequences on disk. Felix, Tel: (0842) 751212.

KORG WAVESTATION, 1 yr old, home use only, boxed, sell or p/x for Korg M1. Charles, Tel: 081-741 3416.

KORG WAVESTATION, as new, only couple mths old, extra drum cards, piano cards + data cards, absolute bargain, £850. Richard, Tel: Halifax (0422) 244927.

MOOG MINIMOOG, pre-Norlin, fully serviced, good cond, £485. Tel: (0726) 883265.

MOOG OPUS III, stereo brass strings organ, boxed, superb Moog filter, may deliver. Paul, Tel: 081-650 4610.

MOOG POLYMOOG, classic analogue synth, 71-note poly, original handbook, chrome legs, poly pedal, multi-pedal board, leads, Moog voltage control pedal, mint, rare opportunity, £595 ono. Nigel, Tel: Rochdale (0706) 40184/(0831) 602252.

MOOG POLYMOOG keybd, £600 ono. Colin, Tel: 081-961 9498.

MOOG PRODIGY, 2 oscillators,

sync, famous Moog filter, classic sounds, MIDI'able, baby Minimoog, £95. Steve, Tel: (0222) 462743.

MOOG ROGUE, manual, service notes, perfect, boxed, £125. Tel: (0843) 32357.

OBERHEIM MATRIX 6 keybd, £450; Seck Dynamix 16:8:2 mixer, £425; Midiverb II, £100; Sequential Prophet 5 rev3.3, in need of repair, £299. John, Tel: (0255) 675748, eves only.

OBERHEIM OB8 MIDI keybd, good cond, £700; Roland SH101 monosynth, £100; Roland MC202 sequencer, £80; ART SGE MkII fx processor, £350; Revox A77 reel-to-reel, just serviced, pair new reels + tape, £300. Tel: (0469) 577152, days/588559, after 6pm only.

PEAVEY DMP3/SE workstation, 8-track sequencer, built-in drums + fx, absolutely brilliant, all offers considered. Alan, Tel: 091-263 5135.

RHODES 660, as new, boxed, 2 ROM cards, f/case, £500. Andy, Tel: (0293) 528934.

ROLAND CM32P sound module, multitimbral, U110 player, accept cards to add more sounds, as new, manuals, £175. Mike, Tel: (0908) 320798.

ROLAND D5 synth, boxed, manuals, vgc, £325. Carl, Tel: 051-625 9009.

ROLAND D10, f/cased, £400 ono. Steve, Tel: (0205) 360651.

ROLAND D10, boxed, manuals, as new, £495. Tel: (0494) 727634.

ROLAND D110 multitimbral module, PN03 sound card, £350; Yamaha KM602 6:2 mixer, built-in chorus, stereo return, mic input, £100; Amiga Music-X v2, £45. Must sell, any offers, swap for old analogue gear or MIDI thru box + MIDI-to-CV converter. Tel: Portsmouth (0705) 294024.

ROLAND D110 synth module, sounds, £275. Martin, Tel: 081-691 1087.

ROLAND D20, disks, M256D card, stand, Cheetah MS6 synth, Yamaha EMT10 piano module, Akai ME30II MIDI patchbay, 8U flight rack, £1200. Tel: N Yorks (0757) 705018.

ROLAND D20, boxed, manual, sound card, perfect cond, £580 ono. Graham, Tel: 051-645 0074.

ROLAND D50, exc cond, 5 cards, £550 ono. Andrew, Tel: Luton (0582) 487003.

ROLAND D70 Super LA megasynth, boxed, full f/case, manuals, mint, still guaranteed, £1200; Emulator II, HD, immac, large sound library, £1650. Don, Tel: 031-441 3948, after 6pm.

ROLAND D70, 14 mnths old, only home used, £750. Barry Lewis, Tel: (0491) 39320.

ROLAND E5 LA synth, 8-part multitimbral, 128 single tones, 128 multi-tones, 63 drum sounds, 256 samples, 4 fx built-in, fully programmable, ideal for computer setup/performance synth, RAM/ROM card facility, absolutely perfect cond, fully boxed, manuals, £330. Tel: 081-953 1586.

ROLAND E70 keybd synth, as new, £915. Dorothy, Tel: 081-577 0222.

ROLAND JUNO 6, perfect cond, £100. Stephen, Tel: (0298) 26184.

ROLAND JUNO 6 analogue 5-octave synth, warm resonant filtered sounds, bass work etc, £125; Boss DR550 drum m/c, 48 16-bit sampled sounds, inc TR808 etc, hardly used, £125. No offers pls. Sher, Tel: (0602) 414432.

ROLAND JUNO 106, f/case, exc cond, £300 ono; Roland TR505 drums, exc cond, £100 ono; Ensoniq Mirage, MASOS, disks, soft case, exc cond, £400 ono; Yamaha CS5 double oscillator monosynth, exc cond, £60 ono. Michael, Tel: Brighton 205048.

ROLAND JUPITER 8, f/cased, manual, immac, you won't find a cleaner example, £900 ono. Toby, Tel: (0252) 515007.

ROLAND JX3P, exc cond, recently serviced, £225. Chris, Tel: 081-302 5849.

ROLAND MKS70 synth module, 1 RAM, 1 ROM, boxed, manual, £575; Roland SPD8 Octapad-style unit, w/R5 sounds, £275. Chris, Tel: (0296) 81379, after 7pm.

ROLAND MT32 multitimbral sound module, £200. Dave, Tel: (0803) 550067.

ROLAND MT32, £150. Simon, Tel: (0705) 733969.

ROLAND MT32, exc cond, manuals, leads, extra sounds + sound patterns in MIDI file on disk worth £50, £210. Poss delivery. Paul Wright, Tel: (0255) 430008.

ROLAND MT32 sound module, multitimbral, 128 presets, manuals, psu, exc cond, £200. Graham, Tel: (0206) 867863.

ROLAND MT32 multitimbral sound module, cousin to Roland D-series synths, sounds, editors, other useful utilities, Atari ST, £180 ono. Glenn, Tel: (0932) 567614.

ROLAND MT32 sound module, exc cond, home use only, boxed, psu, £200. Kev or Matt, Tel: (0703) 641211.

ROLAND MT100 sequencer/sound module, disks, manuals, application books, mini workstation, boxed, mint, £350. Paul, Tel: (0536) 761014.

ROLAND PC200 keybd, CM32L multitimbral sound module, Steinberg Tentrax sequencer, making complete MIDI 10-track desktop music system for Atari, all as new, manuals, £420. Mike, Tel: (0908) 320798.

ROLAND RA90 real-time arranger, 128 E70 sounds, 56 music styles, £600; MSL15 super card, 60 additional music styles, £150. Tel: (0932) 843068.

ROLAND RD1000 digital piano, 88 wooden weighted keys, built-in EQ + chorus, full MIDI, if you want the best digital piano this is it, £1500. Graham, Tel: (0582) 451260.

ROLAND SH101, CSQ600, psu, leads, manuals, £195 ono. May split. Jonathan, Tel: (0494) 772690.

ROLAND SH101, £90; MC202, £90; Groove M2CV, £85; Roland PC200 MKBD, £95; Akai AX73 synth, £200. All as new, manuals. Nigel, Tel: (0522) 793781.

ROLAND SH101, £150 ono; Yamaha DX21, £295 ono; Roland Juno 2, £300 ono; Cheetah Master Series 5V, £200 ono; Casio VZ10M, £350 ono; Alesis MMT8, £250 ono; Yamaha EMT10 + EMT1, £200 each or £350 pair. Recession forces sale. Tel: (0924) 386527.

ROLAND SPV355 rackmount guitar/mic/CV gate monosynth, £350; RS101, £110; CS01, £30; SH09, £100; Poly61, £125; Bit99, £325; Casio CZ101, £120; Juno 60, MIDI, £360; other items. Tel: (0726) 66715.

ROLAND SUPER JX10 synth, split/layer, 6-octave keybd, powerful analogue sounds, good cond, £499. Tel: (0772) 203233, days only.

ROLAND U20, original packaging, immac, £575; Sequential Circuits Sixtrax, £225; Drumtrax, £150; Yamaha PF15 piano, full-size, weighted action, £375. Alan, Tel: (0623) 517002.

ROLAND U20 RS.PCM keybd, over 1 yr old, good cond, £600 ono. Mike, Tel: Brighton (0273) 675000.

SEQUENTIAL PRO1, manual, vgc, £120; Roland SH101, psu, good cond, £100. John, Tel: (0772) 634970.

SEQUENTIAL SIXTRAK, analogue polysynth, sequencer, arpeggiator, good cond, no manuals, £170. Darren, Tel: (0494) 443761.

SEQUENTIAL SIXTRAK, great analogue synth, 6-voice multitimbral sequencer, latest chip, just serviced, manual, boxed, MIDI'd to Sequential Drumtrax, tuneable sounds, separate outs, manual, both home use only, exc cond, £350 ono the pair. May split, poss delivery. Miles, Tel: W Midlands (0384) 274923.

SWAP MY TX81Z + Poly800, both w/manuals, psus, soft keybd case, for your DX11, Korg DS8, Kawai K4/5, Casio CZ1/VZ1 or similar 5-octave multitimbral synth. Daniel, Tel: (0889) 583347.

YAMAHA CLAVINOVA CVP70, absolutely immac, rhythms, voices, disk drive, orchestra, cost £3500, accept £1650. Tel: (0903) 872539.

YAMAHA DX7, sound library, £195; Akai GX4000D open-reel 2-track, £70. Tel: Sheffield (0742) 586328.

YAMAHA DX7S, f/case, extra ROM cartridge, stand, home use only, £300 ono. Can deliver free within 50 mile radius of Preston. Tel: (0772) 828577, eves.

YAMAHA DX11, as new, £270. Marcus, Tel: (0223) 233515.

YAMAHA DX21, exc digital synth, manual, £225; Korg Poly61 analogue synth, lovely fat sounds, £200. Lee, Tel: 081-805 1002.

YAMAHA KX88 £700; Roland A50 £700; D50, £650; Ensoniq EPS16+, £1400; M1R £800; M3R, £550; E-mu Proformance, £250; Quadraverb, £350; Proverb, £200; Yamaha MV802, £200; Peavey CS800 amp, £450; Aces 300W amp, £150; Toa SL150 spks, £250; MMT8, £150; Yamaha MJC8 MIDI patchbay, £175. Tel: (0792) 897426.

YAMAHA PSS680 music station, PCM drum m/c, MIDI, built-in synth, boxed, chrome stand, mint, £65. Paul, Tel: (0536) 761014.

YAMAHA SY22 vector synth, perfect cond, £490; Roland MT32 sound module, good cond, £170. Johnny, Tel: 031-228 5140.

YAMAHA SY55, £595; DR110, £20. Paul, Tel: (0229) 66238.

YAMAHA SY77, disk drive, full aluminium f/case, £1200 ono. Joanne, Tel: (0543) 492690.

YAMAHA TG55, sample playing expander module, as good as new, boxed, manuals, £325. Phil, Tel: Sunderland 091-548 6124.

YAMAHA TX802, £600; Yamaha SY22, £450. Both boxed, home use only; Roland Juno 106, good cond,

£350. David, Tel: (0606) 77823, after 6pm.

YAMAHA TX802, multitimbral FM synth module, separate outs, cartridge, sounds, £450. Steve, Tel: (0222) 462743.

YAMAHA TX81Z module, manual, £125. Adam, Tel: (0524) 832382.

SAMPLING

AKAI S612 sampler, disk drive, 45 disks, £250; Fostex 2016 16-input line level mixer, £180. Tel: (0580) 891622.

AKAI S700, £350 ono; Roland S10, £395 ono; Akai ASK90 expansion board, £60 ono. Tel: (0924) 386527.

AKAI S900, v2 s/w, £560; Roland D110, £250; ART Multiverb II, £250. Andy, Tel: 071-387 0161 X208, 9am-5pm.

AKAI S900, mint, boxed, £700. Nigel, Tel: (0245) 263786.

AKAI S900, latest s/w revision, large library, £600. David, Tel: (0606) 77823, after 6pm.

AKAI S950, mint, manual, disks, £875 ono. Steve, Tel: 061-737 9659.

AKAI X7000 sampler, £300. Steve, Tel: (0205) 360651.

CHEETAH SX16 stereo sampler, £600. Tel: 081-769 8845.

DESPERATE TO SELL Emax SE 12-bit sampler, sound library, Steinberg editor, I'll give you Digital Muse's Virtuoso Atari sequencer program absolutely free on top, any price considered. Narinda Singh, Tel: 021-356 1344, after 7pm.

EMAX SAMPLING KEYBD, exc cond, basic model, 0.5Meg RAM, 3.5" drive, box, disks, manual, £700 or offers. Des, Tel: 081-692 6857.

EMULATOR II, HD, double internal memory, 20Meg hard disk, 47 full banks of sounds, large sound library, full MIDI, sequencer, SMPTE, f/case, manual, £1650. Don, Tel: 031-441 3948, after 6pm.

EMULATOR II, twin disk drives, large disk library, f/cased, £1250 ono. Rob, Tel: 051-605 0392.

ENSONIQ EPS keybd, f/case, disks, £1300. Andy, Tel: 051-733 4964, after 6pm.

ENSONIQ EPS, 2x expander, £900; 4x expander, SCSI, £170; 0EX8 output expander, £150. All exc cond, boxed. Tel: (0234) 343682.

ENSONIQ EPS 16-bit sampler, 4x expander, built-in 16-track sequencer, over 1000 dance sounds, £1350. Kevin, Tel: (0270) 872558.

ENSONIQ EPS, mint, original packing, home use only, full documentation, £750 ono, may consider p/x cheap MIDI synth + cash difference. Tel: Frome (0373) 452928.

ENSONIQ EPS16+ sampler, digital sampling, 16-track sequencer, 24-bit fx, sound disks, £1250, no offers. Paul, Tel: Rotherham 880687.

ENSONIQ EPS16+ rack sampler, absolutely brand new, never gigged, full sound library, warranty card, packaging, any price considered. Narinda Singh, Tel: 021-356 1344, after 7pm.

ENSONIQ MIRAGE, expansion port, disks, foot pedal, manual, £400 ono; Yamaha QX21 sequencer, £110 ono; Yamaha RX21 drums, psu, £110 ono. Keith Gilmour, Tel: (0925) 822611, during office hrs. Pls leave name + pm contact number.

KORG DSS1 keybd sampler, hardly used, still boxed, manual, MIDI music library, bargain £695. Douglas, Tel: 061-228 1771, work/061-969 8263, home.

ROLAND MKS100 digital sampler, £200. Kev, Tel: (0268) 750079.

ROLAND S330 sampler, green monitor, custom library, boxed, as new, £650. Mark, Tel: (0202) 315330.

ROLAND S750 sampler, 2Meg memory, expansion board for 18Meg memory, library, screen, mouse, 1 mnth old, never used, open to offers. Y Jarno, Tel: 081-349 1335.

ROLAND W30 music workstation, good cond, £1100. Paul, Tel: (0302) 538304.

ROLAND W30, 40 disks, instruction manual, good cond, £800 ono. Nick, Tel: (0603) 54941/(0494) 762785.

SEQUENCERS

ALESIS DATADISK SQ, brand new, hardly ever been used, £300 ono. Joanne, Tel: (0543) 492690.

ALESIS MMT8, new, boxed, manuals, unwanted gift, cost £250, will sell £130. Tel: (0793) 873317.

ALESIS MMT8, exc cond, psu, manual, £150, no offers. Mark, Tel: Preston 722722, days.

KAWAI Q80, 32-track sequencer, sync code, 1000 sounds for K1, £300 or swap for D110. Scott, Tel: St Albans (0727) 810033.

KAWAI Q80, 32-track sequencer, disk drive, exc cond, boxed, £350. Roger, Tel: (0205) 354884.

ROLAND MC50, immac, as new, used couple times only, unwanted present, £450, no offers. Norman, Tel: (0633) 858904, after 6pm.

ROLAND MC500, good cond, £250 ono. Tel: (0484) 512030.

SEIKO MR1000 sequencer, unused, perfect, 5000-note capacity, boxed, manual, £30. Tel: (0354) 695239.

YAMAHA QX1 mega sequencer, 80,000 notes, built-in disk drive, better resolution than Cubase, £280 ono. John, Tel: (0253) 873716.

YAMAHA QX3, f/case, £450; Yamaha RX5 drum m/c, 4 sound cards, £350; Yamaha KM802 mixer, £100; Roland MC202, £50; 5-star 6U full f/case, £75 ono. Rich, Tel: 081-661 2786, eves.

YAMAHA QX5, the tightest sequencer around according to Rhythmatic. Mark, Tel: (0747) 54406, between 4-6pm.

DRUMS

AKAI XE8 16-bit sampled drum module, exc cond, £100. Neil, Tel: 071-252 0409.

AKAI XR10 16-bit pro drum m/c, 64 presets, 8-voice, 20 songs, fully assignable, fx send, MIDI in/out, 99 additional rhythm patterns, a pattern w/max 4 measures, good cond, £250. Paul, Tel: 041-774 5659.

ALESIS HR16 drum m/c, £150; Cheetah MQ8 sequencer, £100. Adrian, Tel: (0928) 560047.

ALESIS HR16, good cond, boxed, manual, power supply, £160. Chris, Tel: 061-792 1967.

ALESIS SR16, boxed, manual, £195. Paul, Tel: (0925) 726309.

ALESIS SR16 drum m/c, brand new, boxed, £220 ono. Joanne, Tel: (0543) 492690.

BOSS DR RHYTHM DR550, 16-bit drum m/c, great drum sounds + patterns, MIDI compatible, power supply, manuals, £120. Mike, Tel: (0908) 320798.

CASIO RZ1 digital drum m/c, 1 second sampling, small library usable dance sounds, 10 individual outputs, on-board mixing, £130. Sean, Tel: (0438) 313865.

CHEETAH MD16 drum m/c, 6 mnths old, £250 ono. Tel: Lancs (0254) 703078.

MARLIN 8-PIECE KIT by Pearl, cymbals, hi-hat, sticks, stool, everything, silver, good cond, £250. Nick, Tel: (0438) 728348.

ROLAND R5, perfect cond, £200. James, Tel: (0786) 78655.

ROLAND R5, vgc, £255. Steve, Tel: Fleet (0252) 616429.

ROLAND R8, exc cond, boxed, manuals, £400. Dave, Tel: (0293) 521648.

ROLAND R8 drum m/c, 96 internal sounds, 5 full drum kits, RAM + ROM sockets, human feel programming, individual outs, much more, mint, boxed, manuals, card, delivery poss, £395. Tel: (0642) 484359.

ROLAND R8 human composer, still fairly new, manuals, leads etc, Roland Cube 60 amp, £550; Roland R8 ROM card, power drums, as new, £30. Steve, Tel: 091-258 3852.

ROLAND R8, boxed, manual, psu, exc cond, home use only, swap for Roland R8 rackmount module. Kev or Matt, Tel: (0703) 641211.

ROLAND R8, mental beat box, Roland TR808 card, £400 ono. Richard James, Tel: 081-399 5497.

ROLAND SPD8, drum pads, sounds, similar design to Octapad, only £250 ono. Glenn, Tel: (0932) 567614.

ROLAND TR505, exc cond, boxed, manuals, psu, £95. Stu, Tel: Ely (0353) 661864.

ROLAND TR505 composer, as new, boxed, manuals, £90. Gary, Tel: (0533) 742857.

ROLAND TR505 drum m/c, as new, £95. Pete, Tel: Wakefield (0924) 364407.

ROLAND TR626, boxed, manuals, new, hardly used, £150. Tel: (0793) 873317.

ROLAND TR626 drum m/c, £150 ono. Kev, Tel: (0268) 750079.

ROLAND TR626, unboxed, manual, good cond, £180. Nick, Tel: (0296) 394538.

ROLAND TR808 drum m/c, slight attention needed, £180. Tel: (0484) 512030.

ROLAND TR909, manuals, transformer, offers. Graham, Tel: (0772) 322399.

SIMMONS TMI, 8-channel trigger MIDI interface, £100. Alan, Tel: 071-267 7224.

STIX SOUNDMASTER SL305 computer rhythm, great analogue house sounds, separate outputs, trigger inputs, bargain, £35. Tel: (0280) 705288.

YAMAHA RX21 drum m/c, manual, MIDI compatible, £65. Tel: (0223) 212226.

COMPUTING

ATARI 1040STE, SM124, £400; Pro24 v3, £50; RX21L, £50; Chameleon, £50; Band In A Box, £25. Tel: (0792) 897426.

ATARI 1040STFM, 1Meg, mouse, SM124 mono monitor, brand new, any price considered. Narinda, Tel: 021-356 1344, after 7pm.

C-LAB CREATOR, v3.1, manual, dongle etc, £180 ono. Andy, Tel: Leeds (0532) 430177.

C-LAB CREATOR, v1.2, £120; C-Lab Creator v2.2, £160; Steinberg Avalon, £160; Steinberg Cubase, v2, £200; Steinberg Cubeat v1.0, £60. Alan, Tel: 091-263 5135.

DR T'S MT32 EDITOR, Atari, £35; Syco MR1000 5000-event MIDI sequencer, £25; Amdek percussion synth, £15; Cheetah Spectrum, 3 kits, sampler interface, Sinclair Spectrum 48K, £90 the lot. Tel: (0264) 738750.

GEERDES SY77 editor + sounds, as reviewed in MT, £90. Martin, Tel: 081-691 1087.

MIDIMAN UNIVERSAL SYNTH EDITOR, Atari, £50, swap official Cubase w/dongle. Tel: Sheffield (0742) 586328.

OPCODE VISION pro sequencing s/w, v1.2, unlimited amount of tracks, registered, boxed, manual, cost £370, will accept £200. Y Jarno, Tel: 081-349 1335.

SHARP RGB colour monitor, w/Sharp tube, good cond, £70. Y Jarno, Tel: 081-349 1335.

STEINBERG CUBASE V2, manual, dongle, tutorial disk, £250; Semi-flight case for Ensoniq ESQ1, £60 ono. Tel: (0392) 876675.

STEINBERG FZ SOUNDWORKS, £100; Korg MS10, £100. Tel: Merseyside (0744) 35567.

STEINBERG PRO24, v3, original sequencer, manual, dongle, £35. Tel: (0223) 212226.

STEINBERG PRO24, v3, key, manual, £50; Yamaha YMC10 tape-to-MIDI clock sync unit, will sync drum m/c, sequencers etc to tape, £50; XRI Systems XR20 MIDI timecode reader/writer, ideal for Cubase, £140. Tel: (0255) 220247.

SYQUEST SQ400 removable cartridges, 44Meg, brand new, boxed, never used, ideal for Roland S750, cost new £80, will accept £50 or exchange for 4Meg SIMMs. Y Jarno, Tel: 081-349 1335.

2 SYQUEST 45MEG removable hard drives, SycoLogic 19" rackmounting, £575 ono; 140 HD floppies, £10 for 12 or offers for more; Mastertracks Pro 4.14, Mac, Opcode 6-operator ed/lib, Passport Transport MIDI SMPTE interface, any offers considered. Ian, Tel: 081-556 7888.

TURTLE BEACH SAMPLEVISION sample editing s/w, IBM PC + compatibles, manuals, original disks, costs over £200 new, sell £100 ono. Colin Tel: (0242) 251574, after 6pm.

RECORDING

AKAI MG614 pro portastudio, high spec, 4-track, separate sync track, 20kHz bandwidth, 6-channel 10-input mixer, parametrics, auto locate, was £1295, sell £595. Delivery poss. Dave, Tel: (0264) 738750.

AKG BX5 analogue stereo reverb, £95; Cheetah MIDI interface, 8-track sequencer, £30. Mark, Tel: Preston 722722, days.

ALESIS MIDIVERB, offers. Nick, Tel: Ross-on-Wye (0989) 84219, before 10.30am or after 7.30pm.

ALESIS QUADRAVERB GT digital multi-fx unit, guitar fx, studio use only, reluctant sale, £375. Tel: (0480) 66346.

ART MULTIVERB LT multi-fx, 16-bit digital reverb, 128 presets, reverb, reverse, delay, chorus, flange etc, exc cond, boxed, £100. Glenn, Tel: (0932) 567614.

BOSS RBF10 flanger, manual, boxed, mint, £50. Tel: (0843) 32357.

BOSS RSD10 sampling delay, boxed, manual, vgc, £150. Tel: (0843) 32357.

CASIO DAR100 portable DAT recorder, long play mode, digital in/out, optical, remote, £395 ono. Glenn, Tel: (0932) 567614.

DIGITECH VHM5 VOCALIST, pedal, never used, £750. Paul, Tel: (0978) 822294.

DYNAMIX 16:2 mixer, good working cond, £190 ovno. Leon, Tel: (0935) 23227.

EMS RMX16 digital reverb, as new, just recalibrated, £2500. Tel: 021-354 2889.

FOSTEX 160 portastudio, genuinely only used 4 hrs, high speed record, similar to Tascam Porta 02, immac, boxed, manuals, £265; Korg KMS30 MIDI-to-sync, 24/48 converter, vgc, £60. Tel: (0642) 484359.

FOSTEX B16, 16-track recorder, immac, hardly ever used, £1750. Mike, Tel: Durham (0740) 657112.

FOSTEX MODEL 80, 8-track, remote, £750. Tel: Leeds (0532) 787180.

FOSTEX R8, 8-track tape recorder, absolutely mint, 6 mnths old, hardly used, boxed, manuals, looms, demagnetiser, head cleaner, £900. Paddy, Tel: Huddersfield (0484) 648275, eves.

FOSTEX X26 multitrack recorder, exc cond, £175. Andrew, Tel: (0388) 819913.

FOSTEX X26, £200; Casio CZ5000, £300; Roland TR505 drums, £110; Accessit reverb/noise gate/comp, £50; Steinberg Pro24, genuine, dongle, £40. The lot: £600. Delivered free, all exc cond, boxed, manuals. Gerry, Tel: (0437) 532440.

GRAPHIC EQ, stereo, 20-bnd, (10x10), rackmount, £120; Vesta Fire RV2 stereo reverb, rackmount, £75; Akai HX1 cassette master deck, as new, £50. Tel: (0264) 738750.

KUDOS 6:2 mixer, as new, boxed, swap for small combo amp. John, Tel: (0484) 664458.

KUDOS 12:2 mixer, exc cond, 2 auxs, 3 EQs. Dave, Tel: 081-478 1482, after 6pm.

LYREC 2" 16-TRACK tape m/c, remote, £1500; Ampex 440 quarter-inch stereo recorder, £400. Both good cond, well maintained, manuals. Ray, Tel: (0752) 558907.

MCI 2-TRACK mastering m/c, 3 speeds, requires service, hence £200. Tel: Hornchurch (04024) 74740.

MMA MIXER MODULES: 3 inputs, £120; 2 sub groups, £85; faders for above, £15; Apple II Europlus computer, disk drive, £35 or exchange for Kawai K1R or similar multitimbral expander. Tel: Luton (0582) 597109.

MTR 16:2 mixing desk, 3-bnd EQ, 3 auxs, PSL, mute, talkback, all channels allow XLR or half-inch line or mic. Kev, Tel: (0276) 34466.

PEAVEY 115 spks, 300W stereo amp, accessories, £420 the lot. Tel: (04867) 6524, eves.

PEAVEY MONITORS, brand new, £120 ono. Joanne, Tel: (0543) 492690.

REVOX A77, just serviced, 1 yr guarantee, 20 aluminium reel tapes, quick sale, £200. Mr Grant, Tel: (0923) 242113.

ROLAND CP40 pitch-to-MIDI converter, suitable for brass, vocals, acoustic/electric guitars, boxed, £95. Tel: 051-648 1668.

ROLAND SBF325 stereo flanger, 19" rack, very rare, fabulous rich warm analogue flanging + chorus fx, true stereo, exc w/digital synth, immac, manuals, box, £250. Tel: (0280) 705288.

SANSUI WSX1, vgc, unwanted present, only 10 hrs use, £400, no offers. Tim, Tel: Bristol (0272) 428247.

SANSUI WSX1 6-track, exc cond, almost new, manuals, £550. Robin, Tel: (0373) 472735.

SECK 12:8:2 mixing desk, £550. Tel: Merseyside (0744) 35567.

STUDIO RESEARCH 6:2 mixer, EQ, 2 auxs on each channel, boxed, exc cond, 5 mnths old, £120. Neil, Tel: 071-252 0409.

TANNOY 1K PA spks, lions + panthers, good cond, great + powerful sound, bargain, £1150 ono; C-Lab Creator MIDI sequencer, dongle, £150 ono. Giles, Tel: Somerset (0823) 480746.

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TASCAM 424 portastudio, 2 mnths old, £325 ono. Steve, Tel: 061-226 0147.

TASCAM 488, 8-track portastudio, exc quality, 12 inputs at mixdown, sync facility, memo locators etc, perfect cond, home use, hardly used, boxed, £750. Steven, Tel: (0424) 33205.

TASCAM PORTA 02, exc cond, only 1 yr old, manual, boxed, cables etc, £300. David, Tel: Huddersfield (0484) 426188, eves.

TASCAM PORTA 02, immac, £400; Kudos 16:2 mixer, mint, £300. Paul, Tel: (0685) 73500.

TASCAM PORTA 05, high speed, mint, boxed, £220. M Rai, Tel: (0344) 424842, days.

TASCAM TSR8, 150 hrs use, boxed, manual, £1100 ono. Nigel, Tel: (0329) 234739, eves.

TEAC A3440 + RX9 dbx n/r unit, new heads, good stable m/c, £400. Adrian, Tel: 061-860 4397.

YAMAHA DR100 digital reverb processor, 4 presets, fully adjustable, £75 ono. Lee, Tel: 081-805 1002.

YAMAHA KM602 keybd mixer, £65 ono; Yamaha MCS2 MIDI control station, £65 ono. Poss exchange reasonable sound module. Tel: Andover 357134, early eves.

YAMAHA MT44, 4-track, 4-input mixer, graphic EQ, Dolby C, patchbay, vgc, £200 ono. Mark, Tel:

021-449 7938.
YAMAHA R100 reverb, £85; Korg KMS30 MIDI sync, £50; Amas Amiga sampler, £10; Music-X v1.1, Amiga, £75. Andy, Tel: (0252) 26536.
YAMAHA R100, slightly damaged, £70; SoundTech ST200CL comp/lim, £140. Tel: 081-954 5275.

AMPS

AMCRON PSA2, self-analysing amp, 600W stereo, 1200W mono, £650; Gallien & Krueger 2000CPL stereo guitar preamp, £200; Carlsbro Stingray 150W lead combo, £100. Alan, Tel: 071-267 7224.
CARLSBRO COLT 45 keybd combo, 2 channels, reverb, immac, never gigged, £150. Tel: (0280) 705288.
HH K80 keybd combo, 3 inputs, fx loop, reverb etc, £100. Tel: Cambridge (0223) 276311.
HH PRO200 bass cab, good cond, HH S130 amp, £150 ono the pair. Paddy, Tel: Huddersfield (0484) 648275, eves.
MARSHALL VALVE STATE PREAMP, brand new, boxed, manuals, £150 ono. Joanne, Tel: (0543) 492690.
PEAVEY KB300 combo, £250 ono; Oberheim Drummer MIDI Performance FX, £100 ono. Tel: (0533) 517165.
QUAD 33 preamp, boxed, instruction book, as new, £80; Quad 303 100W power amp, instruction book, £80. Both £150. Mark, Tel: (0202) 315330.
SOUNDTECH PA SYSTEM, 4-channel mixer amp, reverb, EQ, auxs send + monitor, 2 huge cabs, w/15" bass drivers, 10" horn tweeters, £450 ono. Sean, Tel: (0438) 313865.
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URGENT. Production team in style of Jam + Lewis, Quincey Jones, Teddy Riley, and Leon Silvers seek management to place songs + obtain production work. Positive Productions, Tel: 081-691 0639.
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ROLAND SOUND CANVAS, 3 mnths old, as new, £390 ono. Tel: Bedford (0234) 854707.
TECHNICS SL1210, MkII, black, boxed, £240. Alan, Tel: 071-267 7224.

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AKAI X7000 sampling keybd, preferably w/memory upgrade. Dan, Tel: (0602) 281074.
ANYONE got any interesting synths/drum m/cs I can borrow to sample, I'll pay. Pete, Tel: Midlands (0527) 543452.
ARP AXXE circuit diagram, will pay. Jason, Tel: Nr Luton (0525) 717557.
ATARI SM124 monitor + cheap expander, will swap for SLR camera or other photographic equipment. Drew, Tel: (0793) 611311, days/(0249) 650816, eves.
CASIO FZ1 sampler, must be mint, must have memory expansion, cash waiting. Colin, Tel: 071-287 3033, days/(0932) 566473, eves.
CASIO FZ1, will pay £500 or offers. Steve, Tel: Crawley (0293) 510946.
DESPERATELY WANTED: MPG80 programmer for MKS80 synth + Oberheim Matrix 6R rack. A Prentice, Tel: 031-440 1797, 8.30am-4.30pm office hrs.
IBANEZ AS9 auto filter, will pay £20-25 + postage. Rob, Tel: (0273) 682131.
KORG M3R, good cond, cash waiting. Andy, Tel: Leeds (0532) 430177.
KORG WAVESTATION or M1R required. Tel: 061-678 8088.
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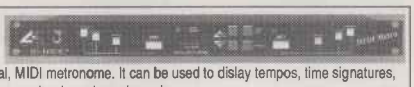

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