

THE
MUSIC
TECHNOLOGY
MAGAZINE

December 1992

£1.75

Terry Hall

Direct From Vegas

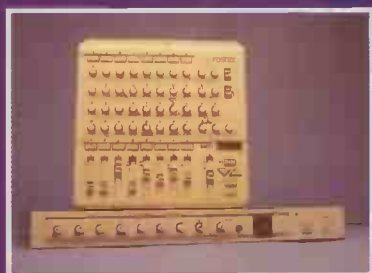
Calum Malcolm

At The Edinburgh Fringe

On Test:

Fostex DCM100 & MixTab

All Mixed Up?



Yamaha PSR-SQ16 Keyboard

The Home Arranger



Features:

Interfacing The Past

Syncing Old And New

Playing Live

Regular Coverage Starts This Month!

Kraftwerk

The Ralf Hütter Interview



music by numbers

You don't need a maths degree to work out who makes the best tone generator, but it's well worth checking the figures.

The new Yamaha TG500 has a massive 8 Mbytes of Waveform ROM and an optional RAM memory of up to 1 Mbyte. (Which means external samples can be loaded via waveform cards or MIDI Sample Dump.)

There are 256 preset voices and 128 user RAM locations.

Plus 128 preset and 64 user performance combinations, with up to 4 voice layers or splits in each one.

What's more, the all important multi-mode allows voices and combinations to be assigned to different MIDI channels.

And the 90 programmable effects rival even our own world beating signal processors for sound quality and flexibility.

But the most significant figure on the TG500's specification sheet is the 64 next to polyphony.

This, combined with dazzling, true-to-life sound (courtesy of Yamaha's unique AWM2 sound generation technology), leads to but a single conclusion.

The Yamaha TG500.

See it, hear it, and calculate the advantages of owning it at your nearest Yamaha dealer.

YAMAHA
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BROCHURE PACK

ONCE IN A LIFETIME DEAL! Revox C278 half inch 8-track - £1999 + VAT

At Thatched Cottage Audio we have been able to exclusively purchase a number of superb quality Revox C278 half inch 8-track machines (retail £5500 + VAT) for the unbelievable price of £2350 inc VAT! HX Pro noise reduction 7, 5 & 15 ips, built in speaker, fully balanced, the list goes on and on. We really believe that this product will actually appreciate in value, legendary Revox quality at this price is unheard of. For full details of this stunning machine (we also have supplies of the C274 4-track at £1499 + VAT) give us a call today! (If you parallel up the inputs you can use it as a stereo quality master machine.)

★ COMPUTER SALE ★

Atari 1040STE with SM144 monitor & Cubase£750
Atari 1040STE with SM144 monitor & Notator£775

NEW AKAI S01 NOW IN STOCK

The Akai S01 has over 15 seconds sampling at 16 bit, expandable to 31 seconds for only £699 - in stock now!

REVOX M3500 MICROPHONE

Actually a Beyer 201 without the humbucker (not required on balanced connections) for the silly price of £99. Comes with stand clip, pop filter, table stand, lead and case and you get your money back if you're not happy!

CREDIT FACILITIES

Full credit facilities available including Instant Credit.
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Grappenhall, Warrington

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SECOND-HAND & DEMO BARGAINS

This list represents only a fraction of our current second-hand and demo stock - call for a full listing.

Tascam ATR60 "2" track	£1999	Star LC2420 printer.....	£199
Aphex expander gate.....	£299	Allen & Heath GS3 (demo).....	£1920
Aphex Dominator pro compressor.....	£599	Roland JV30.....	£635
Aphex Type III exciter.....	£475	Teac V750 cassette deck.....	£150
Aphex Compellor pro limiter.....	£650	Ensoniq SD-1 synthesizer.....	£1350
ZOOM 9010 effects processor.....	£999	Fostex 4020 SMPTE event controller.....	£299
Yamaha MT120 portastudio.....	£335	Tascam TSR-8.....	£1699
Aphex Impulse audio MIDI trigger.....	£399	US Audio 4 way splitter box.....	£150
Yamaha RY10 drum box.....	£219	Teac AX75 amplifier.....	£110
Roland JV80.....	£1025	Technics cassette player.....	£75
Akai XR10 drum machine.....	£99	Fostex M22RP mic (RRP £725).....	£499
Oberheim Navigator arranges MIDI.....	£185	Function Junction Plus.....	£289
Ampex 456 2" tape (used once).....	£39	Fostex 812 12:8:2 mixer.....	£899
Nexus 2 x 8 Midi merger.....	£79	A/D converter for soundtools.....	£199
Ensoniq VFXSD synthesizer.....	£899	Korg 03R/W synth module.....	£849
Fostex SPA303 pair (hi frequency).....	£299	Ensoniq EPS16+ sampler keyboard.....	£1199
Aphex Expressor comp/exciter.....	£299	Ensoniq SQR+ synth module.....	£620
Anatek pocket effects various.....	£59	Yamaha TG55 tone modulu.....	£450
Fostex SP707 each (bass speakers).....	£299	Yamaha PSS51 mini keyboard.....	£175
E-mu Percussion drum module.....	£489	Ensoniq SQ1 + rack.....	£999
Fostex TS15 tape sync unit.....	£39	Apple Mac Classic 2/40 computer.....	£799
Roland XR8 drum machine.....	£325	Alesis MMT8 synthesizer.....	£175
Teac MF502 multi filter (hiss/hum).....	£75	Symetrix 511A noise filter.....	£345
Ensoniq SQ-2 synthesizer.....	£999	Atari STFM computer.....	£299
Symetrix SX206 multi dynamics.....	£175	Seck 12:8:2 desk.....	£599
BEL BDE3200 delay/sampler.....	£899	Korg Wavestation.....	£999
Kurzweil K1200 weighted k'bd.....	£1565	Seck 6:2 mixer.....	£275
Digitech DSP16 reverb/delay/fx.....	£179	Phillips colour monitor.....	£199
Kurzweil Pro 76 keyboard.....	£1460	Studiomaster Proline 16:2 rackmount.....	£729
Yamaha PW100 (100 series power supply).....	£79	Studiomaster 1200B power amp.....	£489
Harrison X1150 amplifier.....	£325	Yamaha MA10 headphone amplifier.....	£49
Yamaha EMP100.....	£175	RSD proline 16:2 R Gold.....	£799
Ativa HDS1 DAT player.....	£299	Fostex G24S.....	£5850
TCD DD200 hard drive (200 meg SCSI/DMA).....	£899	Roland D20 with full flightcase.....	£575
Roland RSS 3-D system.....	£13999	Seck 6:2 desk.....	£299
Denon PMA 737 amplifier.....	£199	Fostex TS15.....	£39
Roland RR.....	£399	BOSS DR550 MkII.....	£189
Yamaha MTP3X 4-track.....	£399	Studiomaster Showmix 16:2.....	£1089
JL Cooper mac sync link.....	£125	Atari Mega 1.....	£199
Yamaha NS10M speakers.....	£210	Studiomaster 1200B amplifier.....	£599
Tascam PW5MD sync cable.....	£49	Alesis MMT8.....	£175
Akai S1100EX polyphony expdr.....	£799	Alesis HR16 drum machine.....	£139
Yamaha S12 monitors.....	£139	MTR 12:8:2 mixer, mint.....	£399
Revox C278 8 track (demo).....	£2219	ST1200CL dual comp/gate/exp.....	£139
Yamaha SY35.....	£525	Fostex G16S as new.....	£3499
E-mu Performance 1.....	£240	Behringer Denoiser noise filter.....	£195
		Fostex A8 mint condition.....	£599
		Korg Wavestation EX.....	£1150

ALLEN & HEATH S2/GS3

Full eq on two monitors - full MIDI muting, loads of inputs - every feature you can imagine has been packed into this stylish console. The S2 is the basic model - the GS3 allows you to control a sequencer from the desk (but costs £300 more). We have full details on both.

PC SOFTWARE

Package deals available on software/interfaces - call for details.

FULL YAMAHA PA - HALF PRICE!

We have managed to obtain a number of stunning Yamaha PA systems at around half price! The powerful (250 + 250 watt) EMX2300 full feature mixer (12 full inputs and dual 9 band eq built in digital effects) - RRP £1450 is coupled with a pair of 3 way S315S monitors (15", 6" & tweeter) - RRP £599 to form a powerful combination. Come and hear it on demo in Royston and Warrington.

**YAMAHA 250 WATT PA
£1199!**

TCA FAX PACKS

Need help with any aspect of recording? Try sending for one of our Faxpacks (PA, MIDI, Portastudios, 8-track Financial, 8, 16 & 24 track studio packages, or courses). This information is FREE - give us a call!

ALESIS ADAT

They are in stock, they cost under £3500 including VAT and we will take a Tascam TSR-8 or Fostex RR in part exchange! CALL!

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SPECIAL OFFERS (ALL NEW) ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT

Drawer LX20 stereo compressor/limiter/gates.....	£199	Roland A30 (76 note synth weighted keyboard).....	£499
E-mu Proteus 3 (ethnic & world).....	£475	Yamaha RY10 drum machine.....	£229
Roland DJ70.....	£1699	Yamaha SY35 the new vector synthesizer.....	£550
Yamaha KX5 remote keyboard.....	£229	TCD Stripper (removes DAT copy code).....	£135
E-mu 9015 (makes Proteus 1 into Proteus 2).....	£199	Yamaha FX500B (expanded FX500).....	£219
Allen & Heath S2.....	£1649	Akai S1100 & 1100EX (pair).....	£3799
Alesis Microverb III.....	£155	Yamaha FX900 multiprocessor.....	£399
Alesis Quadverb Plus.....	£299	Yamaha TG100.....	£289
Alesis Microseries (stereo) various.....	£76	Yamaha SY99 keyboard.....	£1899
Allen & Heath S2 eight channel expanders.....	£799	Fostex R8 tape machine.....	£1399
Sony DPM7 harmoniser (stunning).....	£949	JBL 4206 monitors (pair).....	£299
Roland CS10 stereo micro monitor.....	£89	JBL LX44 3 way speakers.....	£275
Aphex Dominator.....	£939	JBL LX66 4 way speakers.....	£450
Aphex Type III exciter.....	£710	JBL LX32 2 way speakers.....	£199
Aphex 4 way distribution amp.....	£149	Studiomaster Diamond 12:2 console.....	£310
Akai 8 meg expansion board.....	£299	Revox MK1 monitors (pair) - brilliant!.....	£219
IB104 Digital interface for samplers.....	£165	Sony DTC P7D-AT (MIDI stereo).....	£375
Aphex Compellor.....	£699	BOSS DR660.....	£269
E-mu Proteus 1.....	£475	Revox MKII monitors (pair).....	£295
Yamaha P2075 amplifier.....	£289	Akai S01 sampler.....	£699
DAC 80meg internal drive/SCSI interface for S1000.....	£689	Sony PCM2300.....	£999

Some shops can service equipment. A few even do it while you wait. The difference at THATCHED COTTAGE is if your multitrack breaks down on a Sunday morning or your sampler blows up on a Bank Holiday Monday you CAN ring us, we'll be here and we WILL do something about it - 365 days a year. Have you ever needed help and advice outside shop hours? If you are serious about your music you will know that it is quality of service that makes the difference and at THATCHED COTTAGE it's only a phone call away. If you are thinking of buying a package try calling the shop on a Sunday - some day you may need to! SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

DDA QMR 24 : 24

All the features of the DMR12 - plus 96 inputs on remix (all with effects sends) for under £10,000! - Give us a call!

YAMAHA NEWS

The new generation of Yamaha equipment is now in stock and the good news is that the SY85 keyboard, the TG500 expander and the RM50 drum expander all have hundreds of sounds, loads of outputs and all accept your own samples! WOW!

★ EIGHT TRACK PACKAGES SALE ★

Fostex R8 & Studiomaster Mixdown 16:8:16 Gold.....	£2799
Revox C278 & Studiomaster Mixdown 16:8:16 Gold.....	£3899
Fostex R8 & Allen & Heath S2.....	£2899
Fostex R8 & RSD Proline 16:4:8.....	£2099
Revox C278 & Allen & Heath S2.....	£3999
Fostex R8 & Allen & Heath GS3.....	£3199
Tascam TSR8 & Allen & Heath GS3.....	£4299
Revox C278 & Allen & Heath GS3.....	£4299
Tascam TSR8 & RSD Proline 16:4:8.....	£3099
Revox C278 & RSD Proline 16:4:8.....	£3099

★ YAMAHA EMP100-£179! !★

Multiple effects - pitch shift, reverb, delay, etc - the best value multiprocessor around for only £179 including VAT!

EDUCATION

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FREE SPEAKERS

This month we are giving away a free pair of self powered two way monitors with any Portastudio - just plug them in and start recording!

Suggestions:

Yamaha MT3X & monitors.....	£425
Tascam 424 & monitors.....	£468
Yamaha MT120 & monitors.....	£349

This amazing offer applies to any Portastudio - just give us a call!

ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT



ALLEN & HEATH GS3V Fully Automated Recording Console

A fully automated console for about £3000 including VAT? The new GS3V is a full feature recording console with fully automated faders and midi facilities built in. No computer is required but an output to a monitor is provided allowing a full visual display of all facilities. Amazing! Give us a call! (Other desks taken in part exchange.)

ADVANCED MULTITRACK OFFERS

ANALOGUE IS STILL THE BEST VALUE!

Fostex G24 plus Allen & Heath 24:24 S2.....	£8799 including VAT
Fostex G16 plus Allen & Heath 16: 16 S2.....	£5199 including VAT

TCA SERVICE

Our fully equipped service department can offer fast turnaround (sometimes while-u-wait) and very competitive prices on Fostex, Tascam & Revox tape machines, most portastudios and desks, Atari computers, Akai samplers and many other products. Give us a call before it's too late!

T C A
THATCHED COTTAGE AUDIO
You only become the biggest -
by being the best

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Music Technology December 1992

Anyone who read Mark Nohr's fascinating insight into the world of the A&R men back in the August issue might be forgiven for feeling depressed at the current prospects for securing record company interest in their music. It seems that the signing of new talent – at least from the point of view of the 'majors' – rests largely on artistes already having made a name for themselves in some way. These days, notoriety appears to be the attribute most likely to open record company coffers – particularly if it has brought you to the attention of the tabloids. Only those with a starring role in a current soap opera or prepared to run naked across a football pitch need apply.

As someone who has followed closely the machinations of the record companies over the years, nothing has given me greater pleasure than to have seen them consistently caught wrong-footed by ignoring popular interest in virtually every significant musical development until the ground-swell of opinion has forced them to act – usually belatedly – to supply demand. Dance was but the most recent example.

One of the ways this regularly occurs is through bands amassing an intensely loyal following through the consistency of their live performances. Build up a substantial cult following and watch the record companies fall over themselves in a race to sign you up. No matter how small, a sell-out gig, is in microcosm, the success a band could well be enjoying nationally. And record companies know it.

Of course, this places considerable demands on your professionalism – an area paid scant attention by all too many bands. And for those involved in the hi-tech side of things, there's the added burden of dependency on equipment ill-suited to live work. Nothing is guaranteed to kill a gig stone dead like a three-minute wait to load new data into a sequencer – no matter what your vocalist's skills as a stand-up comedian.

That's why *Music Technology* is committing itself to regular coverage of the techniques and equipment used in live performance – beginning this month with the problems faced by those who compose on sequencers at home or in the studio and then have to risk taking them on stage.

There's still a popular perception of bands only being worthy of the name if they are capable of turning in a live performance. And this, perhaps, is no bad thing. If a band who have sold as many records as Kraftwerk can still take the trouble to get up and do it on stage, those further down the ladder have no choice but to pack their gear and head down to the *Rat & Screwdriver* for the Tuesday night gig.

Music Technology says: keep musicians alive... NL

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Arriving at the office, the Editor is gratified to find his staff already hard at it....

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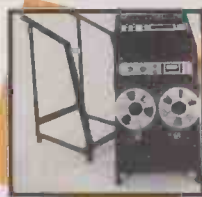
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ROLAND
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ROLAND FP8 DIGITAL PIANO
ROLAND EP DIGITAL PIANOS
ROLAND S750 DIGITAL SAMPLER
ROLAND SC-55 SOUND CANVAS
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KORG SD1X • ROLAND FP8
RHODES MK80



NEW PRODUCTS

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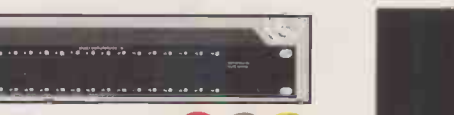
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Dear MT,

Thanks for a good magazine, which I've been buying in Sweden for about three years now. I have two points where your comments are appreciated.

The 'On The Beat' series is interesting and very good for a non-drummer... but have you ever thought of releasing the whole series on a diskette in Standard MIDI File format? This diskette could also be an appreciative giveaway to attract new subscribers. It would also be a welcome present to myself for this excellent idea.

Living in Sweden and being interested in music and MIDI leaves you to buy expensive foreign magazines. One very annoying fact is that US and UK magazines constantly repeat themselves in product tests, advertising etc. Since I happen to both speak and read German fluently, I suggest you try and find someone in the UK who is fortunate to do the same. Then have this person watch what's going on in Germany in this area. I can only say it's a lot and it's of great interest to all of us in Europe. By doing so, you would very soon have a competitive advantage over many of the US magazines.

Best Regards,

**Hans Wendschlag
Stockholm
Sweden**

Point taken, Hans (...I think). But assuming for one moment we don't already have a competitive advantage over US magazines (hrrumph...), would it, anyway, be of any real benefit to the overwhelming majority of our readers who do not read international music magazines?

As someone whose record collection positively bulges with German bands (my interest began in the very early seventies) I'm not unaware of what a creative force Germany has become in musical terms over the past couple of decades, but neither am I convinced that closer scrutiny of what goes on there industry-wise would be of any direct

benefit to British readers. Indeed, discovering that the Falcon computer is already available in German shops (for example) is the kind of thing which causes frustration amongst many in this country.

If it's artistes you're speaking of, I couldn't agree more, and I'm sure I don't need to point out the appearance of Kraftwerk on the cover of this very issue – or Die Krupps a couple of months ago. But really, in a rapidly shrinking world, I think one has to accept the considerable amount of overlap that exists between technical publications. Thanks largely to the efforts of the Japanese, we use virtually identical equipment to the Germans, the Americans, the Swedes and most of the rest of the world. And, give or take a month or two, we receive it at just about the same time. Hence the 'repetition' of which you speak.

The idea for releasing 'On The Beat' in MIDI file format has been considered – as has its release as a book, a cassette and a CD, but until someone says I can take a month off work (ie. writing this) to get it done, it's unlikely to see the light of day – **NL**

Dear MT,

Why don't you give away free CDs like every other music magazine in the universe? I've been an MT reader for a few years now, but I do read other mags too and every time I go to the newsagent for my fix I walk out laden with enough CDs to double my collection each month. I feel like I've been to the Virgin Megastore. However, as a big fan of techno music I'd like to discover some new or obscure stuff like that, instead of the usual collections of ancient guitar rock or unlistenable jazz. Surely you could come up with a better alternative, or is this a trend you don't want to follow?

I don't have a studio or any gear at home, I just like synthesiser music and would like to find out more about it. Then again, if all the mags are going to start sellotaping shopfuls of goodies to the covers they'll probably continue to double in price. That would cut down my shopping list, at least, and maybe make the journey home a bit lighter!

**Ian Dickson
Bromley**

Actually, I noticed one of the gardening magazines came with a free trowel a couple

of months ago – now that's what I call a freebie! As regards MT giveaways, we hope to follow up last month's disk with some other tasty morsel in the near future – but it's unlikely to be a CD. Call me a cynic, but it seems to me that magazines that go to those kind of lengths are trying to divert attention from what's going on inside – **NL**

Dear MT,

I have played guitar for years – finally with a Takamine EF39 acoustic/electric and effects pedals. Recently, I bought a small keyboard and took lessons on the piano – discovering I was better at it than I thought I might have been. And so the bug bit. A synthesiser workstation is what I want. I actually dreamt I was playing one the other night! (And my wife had a curious smile the following day!) So bloody expensive though – wives and families... ho ho!

I'm not sure I can afford the Yamaha SY85 or a knock-down SY77, though I would like either. I know what a Roland D20 is and I don't want one. But all these others – JV, XYW, U, 20, 50, 80 and so forth – I have my work cut out as an unformed novice. I'm looking at a Korg M1 this week, so at least I'll know what it is. The problem seems to be that most information is about current models and little about recent, but possibly still good, deleted models.

Reading your magazine was enjoyable, while at the same time a little annoying – "Gosh, there's something else I can't afford!". However, I agree totally about the 'Syd Lawrence Effect' (October issue) and the review of Tubular Bells II (which I wouldn't buy). I've heard bits on TV and it does seem to be a painful exercise in non-creativity.

Yours sincerely,

**Dave Newell
Baguley
Manchester**

PS. *I'm seriously considering a subscription based on the one issue I've read.*

Welcome to the wonderful world of music technology, Dave. Yes, workstations do tend to be rather pricey, but if you're prepared to forego the convenience of an all-in-one package, perhaps you would be better opting for separate units – keyboard, sequencer

and effects processor – which could at least be bought individually, thus spreading the cost.

I'm only too aware of how confusing it all seems when you first open the pages of the magazine, but keep reading and it'll soon fall into place. Understanding the system by which all the equipment is interconnected – MIDI – makes a good starting point and you're not too late to get back issues containing the first three parts of our *MIDI By Example* series which goes right back to square one. Any queries you may subsequently have can be directed at our *Technically Speaking* pages compiled by Technical Editor, Vic Lennard. The problem with the dreams, however, should be directed at a qualified counsellor – NL

Dear MT,

I would like to express my appreciation for Anthony Braine's features on the subject of copyright. Very informative they were. Almost as informative as they were when they appeared in *Guitarist* magazine three months ago!

Come to think of it, where have I seen

Michael Brook interviewed recently? You've guessed it... Guitarist again – although I must concede that, in that instance, the emphasis of the text in each magazine differed.

*Meanwhile, MT has been a little slow off the mark about reviewing the Roland GR1 guitar synthesiser, so why not simply borrow David Mead's write-up from *Guitarist* too?!*

*We may be in the depths of an economic recession but that is no justification for this sort of rip-off. A former MT Editor once claimed that comparisons between the two afore-mentioned *Music Maker* titles were erroneous but that case clearly no longer stands up. If you are going to share articles between both of these magazines, perhaps you should simply merge them (ho, ho!). Alternatively, why don't you play fair and slash your prices?*

I look forward to finding Joe Satriani on next month's cover.

P.Stov
(Subscriber)

Tush, tush, Mr Stov, not been doing our homework, have we? You neglected to mention the interview we did with Pat

Metheny a couple of issues ago which also appeared in *Guitarist*. Only it didn't. Neither did the Michael Brook interview. Both were conducted at different times by different people and were in all ways different interviews. And I certainly make no apologies for MT's interest in the two musicians simply because their 'primary' instrument makes them obvious candidates for inclusion in our sister publication.

As regards the Copyright article, this was, in fact, commissioned by me during my brief stint as caretaker Editor on *Home Studio Recording* (in which it also appeared). The decision to run the feature in *MT* was taken because I consider copyright to be a subject which affects all musicians equally (and potentially, dramatically), and therefore worthy of as much exposure as possible – particularly when the article was as cogent and lucid as Anthony's was.

At the time, it seemed to me that the potential benefit of bringing the article to the attention of the ninety-seven percent of our readers who don't also read *Guitarist* far outweighed the risk of receiving some ill-informed criticism from a member of a tiny minority who do – NL



A CYNIC WRITES...

Comment By Brian Aspirin

LIVE OR DEAD?

God I hate gigs. How can the Musicians' Union continue to campaign to keep music live when the experience is so dreadful? Getting a drink is like Monday morning on the Northern Line; getting a good view (in most venues) demands a pair of platform soles, binoculars and a powerful deodorant; and just getting in engages you in a ritual combining Gestapo interrogation techniques with the rudiments of ovine transfer as practised on *One Man And His Dog*.

Even revered concert halls like The Albert Hall yield few rewards. I was recently unfortunate enough to obtain a seat in the upper tiers of this wedding cake of a structure, and by the time the sound reached me it had been across the main road, three times round Hyde Park, and back the scenic way stopping off in Kensington High Street to look at shoes. And that was a quiet band.

Any act that knocks out more than a soupçon of dBs greets the audience much as Hurricane Andrew greeted the Florida coast. What

I've never been able to understand is how and why PA systems down the years have continued in their failure to wrest a powerful yet ear-preserving sound from the tumultuous racket that is a pop group at full pelt, whilst recording technology in studio and home has followed an inexorable course from wax cylinder to the equivalent of having Def Leppard playing in your front room without the stains.

I know acoustics are subtle little devils – whatever they are – but how come listening to the noisiest, nastiest and niggliest music in the world on a half-decent hi-fi feels like having your ears gently coated in honey, whereas the same music played at a gig produces an effect comparable to having them syringed with caustic soda?

There appears to be more to this than room size. Could it be that live events still demand a ritual of self-flagellation that began more than two decades ago with the birth of 'The Pop Festival'? Could it be that bands on tour get so bored they need to amuse themselves and their entourage by strafing the punters of each town they visit? Or is it just that the tired old dogma of rock'n'roll and its associated mythology of rebellion provides a convenient excuse not to research and develop live sound technology, not to improve facilities, and actively to sell people a long way short of a good night out?

Incoming Data

Compiled by Simon Trask

A4 on the Floor

Latest addition to Korg's 'A' range of signal processors is the A4. Designed specifically with the guitarist in mind, the new processor comes in a pedal-board format, like the



company's budget A5 Series units.

Using a specially developed 52-bit Korg DSP chip, the all-digital A4 provides compression, distortion/overdrive, three-band EQ, pitch shifter, delay, chorus/flanger and reverb effects operating in series, with 21-bit A/D conversion and 18-bit linear D/A conversion. Other features of the new processor are a built-in chromatic tuner and MIDI compatibility.

Available in the shops from December, the A4 is set to retail for £349 including VAT.

For more information, contact Korg UK at 8-9 The Crystal Centre, Elmgrove Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2YR, Tel: 081 427 5377, Fax: 081 861 3595.

Spiritual Guidance

New from Harman Audio are two packages for Soundcraft's Spirit Auto mixing console. The Spirit Pac consists of Steinberg's Spirit Auto software and MIDEX key expander/multi-MIDI-output unit together with a custom-made padded bag designed to house the Cubase key, Spirit key and associated software disks.

The Spirit Sync Pac, meanwhile, replaces MIDEX with MIDEX+, which features full SMPTE read/write capability for synchronisation to a tape machine.

The Spirit Pac is priced at £663, Spirit Sync Pac at £744. The Spirit Auto software can also be purchased on its own for £399. All prices include

VAT. Full technical support is provided by Harman's 'Steinberg Helpline'.

For more information contact

Harman Audio, Unit 1B, Mill Street, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5DD, Tel: 0753 576911, Fax: 0753 535306.



The Expanding PCM Universe

Courtesy of the SY77 PCM.EX memory expansion kit from German company Musitronics, Yamaha SY77 owners can now double their synth's onboard ROM sample memory. The additional 4Mb memory, which fits inside the synth, provides 143 new samples - 36 instrumental (piano, Rhodes, guitars, basses, strings, brass etc), 36 synthesiser, 61 drum/

percussion/FX, eight digital waveforms and two wave sequences.

The kit comes complete with a ROM card containing 128 patches which utilise the new samples, so you can take advantage of them straight away.

A TG77 version of the PCM.EX should be out before the New Year, while versions for the SY/TG55 are

scheduled for the New Year. An introductory price for the expansion kit has been set at £299 including VAT.

Also new from Musitronics are two PCM cards for the Roland U Series, D70 and compatibles. The Voice card features 39 sounds including Mellotron, various choirs and solo voices, and a few spoken words (such as "Go!", "Yeah!" and "Dance!"),

while the Analogue card provides 41 sounds including Jupiter, OBX, VS and Xpander pads, basses, leads, strings and brass patches.

The cards are available now at a cost of £69 each, inclusive of VAT.

For more information contact AMG at Hurst Lane, Privett nr Alton, Hants GU34 3PL, Tel: 0730 88383, Fax: 0730 88390. >>>

Electronic NOISE

New from Essential Publications, the team responsible for the *Destination Jarre* fanzine, is *Cyber Noise*, a 16-page magazine dedicated to covering all styles of electronic music. Issue One is available now, featuring articles and/or discographies covering former Tangerine Dream members' solo recordings, Die Warzau, Front 242, Kraftwerk and Erasure. Also included is the first piece in a projected series covering artists signed to Mute Records, and a news section.

Issue Two will be out in January. Also available from the same team is *The Unofficial Jean-Michel Jarre Biography*, a book which contains around sixty A4 pages of information, text and pictures covering every important aspect of the French musicians' career to date. Included are a complete worldwide discography and a run-down of all his performances, together with information on the one-off *Music for Supermarkets* album and rare Jarre recordings from the early seventies.

For more information, contact Graham Needham at 75 Lavernock Road, Penarth, South Glamorgan CF6 2NY.

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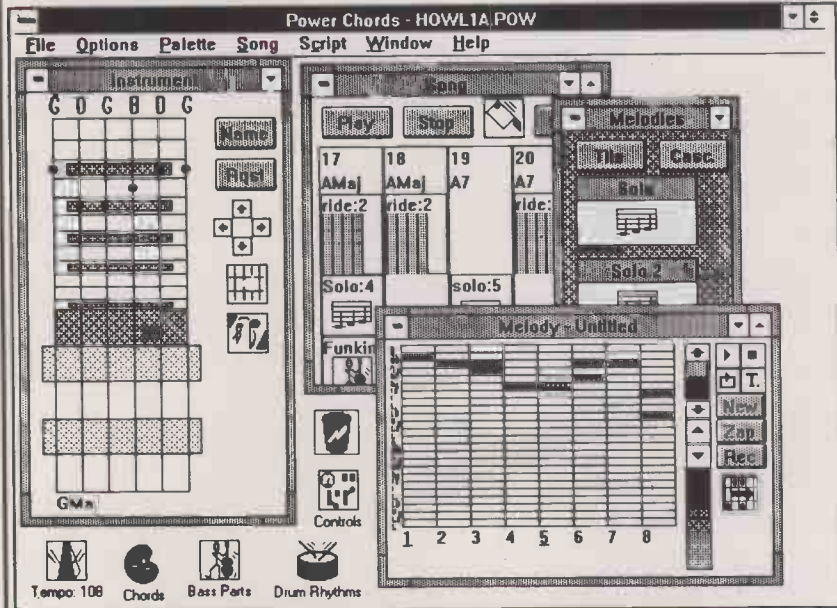
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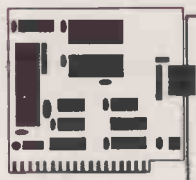
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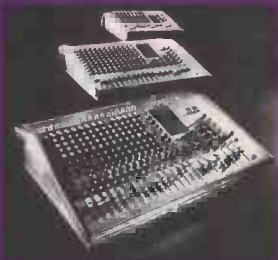
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CORD CHANGES

Exclusive UK distribution of German company Dynacord's Professional Music Products is now in the hands of Shuttlesound. The Surrey-based company are promoting the Sub600 Active Sub Bass speaker unit (featuring an 18" Gauss loudspeaker and a 500 watt processor-controlled amp-lifier), the CLS222 Compact Rotor System (simulated Leslie cabinet effect from a 1U rack-mount unit) and the PSX range of Processor Controlled Powered Mixers (8:2, 12:2 and 16:2 versions, with a 200-watt onboard monitor amp on the latter two).

For more information contact Shuttlesound Limited at 4 The Willows Centre, Willow Lane, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4NX, Tel: 081 646 7114, Fax: 081 640 7583.



Dancing in France

If over an hour of rap, acid, industrial, funk, techno, house, new jack swing and raggamuffin samples on one CD sounds like your *tasse de thé* the imaginatively-titled Dance Series 2 sample CD from French company MegaMidi could be right up your *rue*.

Included on the CD are 360 loops and 40 Song Kits. Each Song Kit has its own drum and percussion loops,

bass lines, vocal riffs, guitar and synth licks, and effects.

Dance Series 2 is available by itself for £55 or packaged with Dance Series 1 for an inclusive price of £99.

For more information contact AMG at Hurst Lane, Privett nr Alton, Hants GU34 3PL, Tel: 0730 88383, Fax: 0730 88390.

On The Tube

Incorporating patent-applied-for Hughes and Kettner tube technology, the Tubeman is a new four-channel tube amp expander/recording amp/pre-amp which has been designed with versatility of use firmly in mind.

Courtesy of Line Out, Recording Out and Instrument Out sockets on its rear panel, Tubeman can be used as an amp expander on stage, as a recording amp in the studio, as a floor pedal on stage, as a practice amp at home, and as a full-featured preamp anywhere. Measuring just 8½ x 5 x 2¼ inches, the unit has also been designed with portability in mind.

A four-channel selection switch lets you flip readily between jazz, funk, blues and rock sounds; equally accessible are controls for gain, master level, three-band EQ, and mid-boost on/off.

Tubeman is priced at £269 including VAT. For more information, contact UK distributors John Hornby Skewes & Co Ltd at Salem House, Parkinson Approach, Garforth, Leeds LS25 2HR, Tel: 0532 865381, Fax: 0532 868515.



MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Act One: The Honeymoon Begins...

Following six months of discussions with Alesis, and extensive testing by their own engineers, Fostex have announced their intention to support Alesis' S-VHS digital audio recording format, as used on ADAT. The two companies have signed a licensing agreement which will see Fostex bringing out a fully ADAT-compatible tape machine in the first quarter of next year.

"After careful evaluation of the specifications and design of the format, Fostex has decided that the S-VHS tape medium and ADAT technology offers a superior recording format for today and into the future," says Fostex Vice President of Marketing, David Oren. He continues: "Fostex examined all of the available tape formats and chose S-VHS because of its superior storage capacity for digital data, and because of its broad availability.

Unlike 8mm and other formats, S-VHS is readily available in all world markets. Furthermore, S-VHS has almost four times the tape surface of 8mm at standard speed and over 11 times at the higher speed that ADAT operates at. This results in a more robust and reliable recording format."

Alesis are understandably well chuffed at this development. Quoth Russell Palmer, President and Chief Operating Officer at Alesis: "We are very excited by our new relationship with Fostex and expect it to further reinforce the ADAT format as the worldwide standard for digital multitrack recording."

Clearly there's some strategic manoeuvring going on here against Fostex' traditional rival, Tascam – who are set to launch their own eight-

track digital audio tape machine, the DA88, in the New Year, using Video 8 tape as the recording medium together with a proprietary transport mechanism.

Following the launch of their digital tape machine, Fostex will also

some while to come, common sense suggests that Fostex' new products will support the Proprietary Multichannel Optical Digital Interface protocol developed by Alesis and already implemented on ADAT. This would allow multitrack



be entering the digital audio workstation market with products from their recently-formed Fostex Research & Development subsidiary in the US (now home to a contingent of ex-New England Digital employees). With tape- and disk-based digital audio recording systems looking set to co-exist for

digital audio data to be transferred in the digital domain between tape- and disk-based systems. There again, companies, like politicians, aren't always well-endowed in the common-sense department.

For the moment, the happy couple deserve congratulations – but will it all end in tears? Stay tuned...

» Index of Possibilities

With CD-R (recordable compact disc) increasingly being used in studio, broadcast, post-production and mastering applications, the CD-R Indexer from HHB Communications Ltd is a timely product which should find wide application.

Compatible with the Marantz CDR1 and other Philips-based CD recorders, the Indexer aims to smooth the



transfer process between DAT and CD-R by automating the conversion of Track Start ID markers on DAT to track increment flags on CD – usually, flags have to be entered manually after recording from DAT to CD has taken place, a time-consuming and laborious task which introduces the

possibility of operator error. Indexer can also compensate for 'lateness' in the positioning of ID markers on DAT tapes, which can occur when a DAT machine's audio detection circuitry has a slow rise-time.

Applications of the CD-R Indexer aren't limited to recording from DAT to CD-R, however. The unit also permits manipulation of status bits within the datastream, one application being to 'flip' the consumer/professional flag which normally prevents direct digital recording from a professional to a consumer DAT machine.

The CD-R Indexer costs £699 excluding VAT.

More information from HHB Communications Ltd, 73-75 Scrubs Lane, London NW10 6QU, Tel: 081 960 9010. Fax: 081 960 1160.

TECHNOLOGY ON COURSE

Starting next February, the London College of Music will be running a Diploma in Music Technology course at Thames Valley University in London. The course will provide students with practical experience of musical technology and prepare them for careers as recording engineers, producers, keyboard technicians,

MIDI programmers and the like. To this end, visits, seminars, workshops and studio location work will form part of the course, and leading music industry professionals will teach and advise at all levels.

The Diploma is being supported by the British Record Producer's Guild and the Incorporated Society of

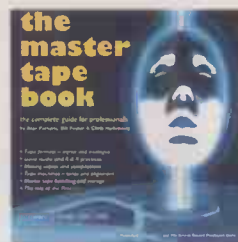
Musicians, and also has the endorsement of leading instrument manufacturers like Korg, Roland and Yamaha – Korg, for instance, will be providing a Wavestation A/D, and their product specialist Phil Macdonald will be assisting in a teaching role.

For further information contact Thames Valley University at St Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RF, Tel: 081 579 5000. Fax: 081 566 1353.

Reeling in the Years

Described as "a definitive guide to the creation and management of audio master tapes", *The Master Tape Book: the Complete Guide for Professionals* is a new book available from the APRS (the Association of Professional Recording Services).

Written by Alan Parsons, Bill Foster and Chris Hollebhone, and with a foreword by Phil Collins, the book includes sections on good studio and A&R practices,



analogue and digital tape formats, tones and alignment, master tape handling and storage, and the role of the producer.

The Master Tape Book is available by post (price £15 plus £2 for postage and packing) from the APRS, 2 Windsor Square, Silver Street, Reading, Berks. RG1 2TH. Tel: 0734 756218, Fax: 0734 756216.

MAKING ADVANCES

New from Ensoniq is the ASR-10 Advanced Sampling Recorder, a keyboard sampler which succeeds the company's EPS-16 Plus sampler. The ASR-10 features true 16-bit linear sampling and utilises 64 x oversampling Delta-Sigma (one-bit) technology. Sampling can be in mono or stereo, with a choice of 29.76 or 44.1kHz sampling rates available.

The ASR-10's standard 2Mb of sample RAM gives 20.5 seconds of mono or 10.3 seconds of stereo sampling time at the higher rate. Longer sampling times can be accommodated by upgrading the ASR's memory to a maximum of 16Mb using standard, inexpensive SIMM chips.

The new sampler comes fitted with a high-density floppy disk drive. However, if you want to avoid countless disk-swaps when saving large amounts of sample data, you'll probably want to fit the optional SP-3 SCSI Interface and invest in an external hard drive. Ensoniq will also be providing the DI-10 Digital Interface for anyone wanting to transfer sample data in the digital domain between the ASR-10 and, say, a DAT machine.

At the heart of the new sampler is a new custom oscillator chip which has allowed 31-note polyphony and hardware envelopes to be implemented. In keeping with Ensoniq's traditional adherence to the work-station



approach on their keyboards, the ASR-10 has an onboard 16-track sequencer and built-in 24-bit effects processor. The effects section provides 47 algorithms, many of which have been derived from the company's highly desirable DP/4 Parallel Effects Processor.

EPS and EPS-16 Plus owners tempted to upgrade to the new instrument will be glad to know that it's compatible with their sound library.

The ASR-10 is available now, while a rack-mount version, the ASR-10R, is scheduled for release in January.

Prices: ASR-10 £1999; ASR-10R £1999; SP-3 SCSI Interface £TBA; DI-10 Digital Interface £TBA. Quoted prices include VAT.

For more information, contact UK distributors Sound Technology at 17 Letchworth Point, Amor Way, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 1ND, Tel: 0462 480000. Fax: 0462 480800.

Reaching a CLIMAX

New from Masterbits is the fifth Climax Collection sample CD, which is devoted to the violin. Featured are 486 standard audio samples (302 sustains and 184 attacks) together with 25 banks of data-streamed S1000/S1100 samples for direct digital transfer via the samplers' IB104 interface.

The CD's data section includes 10 banks (166 samples) at 29kHz for samplers with less memory, 14 banks (387 samples) at 44.1kHz, and one 16Mb bank featuring 11 Programs.

Climax Collection 5 costs £45 including VAT, while all five volumes can be bought for an inclusive price of £190.

For more information contact AMG at Hurst Lane, Privett nr Alton, Hants GU34 3PL, Tel: 0730 88383, Fax: 0730 88390.

Powerful new tools for creative people



The **JW-50** is a 61 note GM/GS music workstation offering an unbelievable 445 sounds, 24 voice polyphony and 16 part multitimbrality. The keyboard includes a 49,000 note sequencer that can save/play Standard MIDI Files for live performance/sequencer compatibility on its own internal 3.5" disk drive, as well as having new intelligent groove/pattern creation facilities and automated mixdown functions.



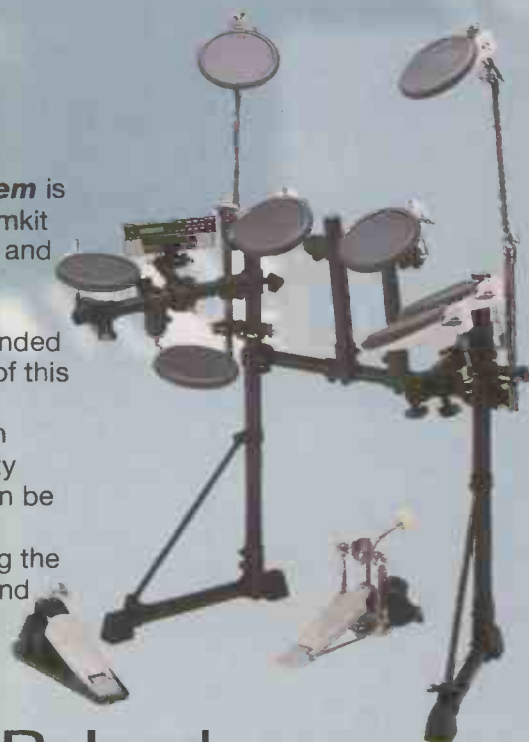
The **JV-30** is a highly affordable 61 note GM/GS keyboard offering 24 voice polyphony and 16 part multitimbrality. It's packed with 445 high-definition PCM multisampled sounds, 128 of them with nine different drum sets being user definable. All tones can be quickly edited in real time using the JV-30's three dedicated 'Edit Palette' sliders for easy operation.

The **ep-9** entry level digital piano offers an unparalleled degree of musical expressiveness, thanks to its eight realistic acoustic piano sounds, full 88-note keyboard, 28 voice polyphony, built-in speakers, four song music recorder and digital reverb/chorus.



The **GR-1** is the latest floor-standing guitar synthesizer from Roland, offering exceptional player response, excellent pitch tracking capability, 200 RS-PCM sounds, easy editing, digital effects, MIDI, and four track sequencing. The GK-2 pick-up can be easily mounted onto most guitars (no screws required), whilst preserving the unique subtleties and individual variances found in different guitar playing styles.

The **Total Drum System** is a new 'pad' based drumkit offering the sort of feel and dynamic response that acoustic drumming techniques have demanded for years. At the heart of this superb system is the electrifying **TD-7** which contains 512 CD-quality drum sounds which can be triggered by up to nine external pads, including the unique Roland hi-hat and bass drum controllers.



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King

Though often regarded as the preserve of the recording magazines, the work of the producer is of critical importance to all those involved in music – particularly when it's the work of a producer like Calum Malcolm...

An air of sobriety permeates a rather gaunt Victorian schoolhouse in the village of Pencaitland, a few miles south-east of Edinburgh. But for an incongruously flashy car parked outside, you'd think it was abandoned. This, however, is Castlesound Studio, and both car and studio belong to Calum Malcolm, the quiet man of Scottish pop and the unsung genius behind nearly two decades' worth of contemporary music with a distinctly regional flavour.

Building on early successes as a local engineer, Calum has produced a chain of idiosyncratic acts from The Blue Nile to It's Immaterial, and has been the natural choice of a generation of Celtic musicians looking to place their traditional forms in a modern setting.

He first opened a studio around 1974, a small 4-track in Edinburgh, and slowly ascended through 16 and then 24 tracks as word spread. "It grew because there weren't many other studios around, not because it or I were any good, particularly," he says, self-effacingly, in his gentle Caledonian murmur. In the late '70s, a change of location was prompted by prohibitive city rents: "This place was empty, just a typical old school. I eventually found out who owned it, bought it and converted it – pretty much as you see it now." What you see now is a calm and restful studio environment, somewhat darkened by the years, but on the brink of refurbishment to allow in more of the light from the surrounding East Lothian skies.

The control room, in which Calum sits with a reviving mug of tea and a faint air of the laird, stands at the end of a long corridor between one very large live room, which runs along the length of the corridor, and a smaller but still generous room which today contains a solitary amplifier and a boom mounted mic. "The design has lasted quite well," he muses. "I re-did this room a couple of years ago, but it's basically the same shape. You can't really go wrong with a decent building, where the rooms are a half-decent shape. You'll get a decent sound when it's like that, so it doesn't really matter. It's when you try and cram a studio into a basement or some other tiny space that they don't really work."

PHOTOGRAPHY: James Cumpsty

of the Castle

"Good playing areas have always been important for me, and I have to say that the most important thing in my background would be musical as opposed to technical, although obviously I've had to pick a lot up as I go along. I had no training as such, I've just been interested in music right from the beginning, and I've tried to keep that in the front of my mind."

A Mitsubishi digital machine arrived two and a half years ago, before which the studio was standard analogue 24-track. "24-track was fine, there are some good machines, but some of the stuff I was doing at the time was quite atmospheric and empty, with a lot of silent passages and very quiet moments in the music, and I had Telcom noise reduction. That was the best system until Dolby SR, but it still had some problems. So at that point I could have bought another 24-track machine with Dolby SR, which all costs quite a lot of money really, so I went to Mitsubishi.

"I had a good relationship with them, even though I'd never bought anything off them. The people there were actually quite pleasant, and that makes a difference. Obviously in the end people are just trying to sell you stuff, but nevertheless there's an acceptable face to that – and they provided it.

"It seemed a good enough machine; it had a few more tracks, and it really wasn't that much more expensive than buying another 24-track plus 48 tracks of SR, so I went for it. I still have a bit of trouble with digital things, but I'm definitely not a purist – people do think that, but I'm not – I just think that there are limitations with the sound of digital stuff. Providing you accept that, it's OK. I also found that there were quite a lot of limitations in analogue multitrack recording: it's just a bit wider than a cassette, really, isn't it? A 2" tape is only slightly better than cassette width, so it's not that brilliant anyway. It tends to compress a bit, which is OK if you want that sort of effect, but if you don't, and you just want to get back off the tape what you put on, it's not very good.

"So I thought well, a Mitsubishi gets rid of all that stuff, and it may not be quite so satisfying deep down but recording multitracked music is not a pure form of making music, anyway. I don't really care if it's not perfect. If I want to make something 'perfect' I'd do it straight to 2-track analogue, like one of those old jazz records. Those are still the best sounding records, if you want something that's really alive and exciting to listen to. They'll beat all the multitrack stuff hands down, I think.

"I don't really care about the digital/analogue thing – they've both got their pluses. Although the thing about digital is that it's dead easy, you can't really go wrong. You get more or less what you put on. If you're dealing with synths it's a digital source anyway, half the time, so it doesn't really matter. I stick everything on tape – it's too risky not to. I like it all to be in one place at one time.

"No matter what anyone says, I've yet to find any sequencing package anywhere that can guarantee perfect timing every time you start the tape. Maybe nine times out of ten it will lock up, but the tenth time it could be a fraction out, and it's infuriating. I just want it all to be in the same place at the same time, then it's one less thing to worry about when trying to get all this..." (he gesticulates vaguely at the studio) "...put in its place".

Pragmatism is at the core of Calum's being. While displaying the mildest of manners, his patience is in shortest supply for those tools of the trade which put up the greatest barriers to getting the job done. "The most useful part of a sequencer, as far as I'm concerned, is to be able to put ideas down quickly – then you can quickly join them together later. The ideas are there and you haven't used up track space on the tape, you're not worried about wiping a track and losing something that you might find in the mix which might be good. It's on the sequencer, and if you need it you can get it.

"Quantisation, and all that other side of it, that's fine for some things, but it's not necessarily a great thing. It's not easy to program these days without too much flatness and precision, and I know a lot of people – including myself – who get round it by programming it all out; but it takes ages to do that. You can be much better off with a decent drummer. I still do a lot of sampling, but I do love live music. I like the sound of a drum kit – or making it sound different, not necessarily like a drum kit.

"I love the feel of somebody half-decent playing an instrument, it makes a big difference. It has a lasting power, you don't get sick of the record after the third verse. It'll stand the test of time a bit more, I'm absolutely convinced of that. An awful lot of music these days has got a lot of impact initially, it immediately grabs your attention, but once you've heard it a few times you think '...next'. You want the next >>>

**Interview by
Phil Ward**

"I love the feel of somebody playing an instrument. It has a lasting power, you don't get sick of the record after the third verse. It'll stand the test of time – I'm absolutely convinced of that"



» thing, and then the next – and you try and figure out why that is. On a lot of older records, the things you still listen to, you always hear something a bit different; it's never quite the same each time. You never remember the feel exactly all the way through, whereas once you've heard the first four bars of a sequenced record, that's the feel for the rest of it."

The enduring qualities of Calum's own recordings, of course, owe much to his sympathetic blending of traditional musicianship and modern technology. A case in point is this year's solo debut *Máire* by Máire Brennan,

provider of the haunting lead vocals on a brace of hit albums by Clannad. Calum co-produced the album with Irish musician Donal Lunny. "There was a good balance of technologies on that album. All the percussion was played. We used Nigel Thomas, who's an old friend. He's the principal percussionist with the London Philharmonic, and was with the London Symphony Orchestra before that, and he's really fantastic. I like his ideas, he's a nice bloke. He's joined me on quite a few projects over the years, and he's able to play with precision, so you don't have to rely on computers to sort it out.

"And there are also lots of synths and stuff. I played most of the basses and synths on that record, and we had a great combination, I thought, of the two areas. There are weak points to it, of course, but there are some good moments with Nigel playing along with Donal Lunny – who's a cracking bouzouki player and also a great bodhran player. He can play that as a bass, as well, which he did on a couple of tracks, because he can pitch it so well. Some of the stuff came together very well, I think.

"Maire and I spent a couple of weeks doing all the songs through, with just me doing all the music and her doing vocals, most of which was discarded later. That was purely preparation; all I could do was play it on keyboards, and what we did was get arrangements down and a basic structure on tape for people to listen to. We couldn't do it as a live ensemble; it was impossible to get everybody together at the same time. But I tried to get as much acoustic stuff on the record as I could."

Calum, it seems, is in demand as a remixer, too, his brisk efficiency suiting the production-line methods of contemporary pop. Earlier this year, Greg Kane of Hue & Cry was the stunned beneficiary of a complete album mix finished in five days.

"I have to say, I always do it in that time. I hate spending »»

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February 1992 Issue

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“There is a thread running through Celtic music. You can see connections between U2 and Simple Minds, for instance. Whether they influence each other, or ever have done, I don't know. But there's obviously a sound which is purely down to traditional Celtic music”

►► a long time mixing, I always think there must be something wrong. I usually mix twice in very quick succession, or even three times. I like mixing on my own, just to get my own ideas straightened out the way I think it roughly should be, and then getting the artist to come and tell me what's wrong with it, what they would like, where I've gone off the rails.

“This Amek RN console is quick, and it's got a computer which I like, too – it's the best system I've used. I think flying faders are good as well, but for me an SSL is a bit slow. I know they're better these days, but this system seems very, very quick, and it's highly repeatable as well. I've got my own method of writing things down that aren't automated, just bits of code I write out, which means that no matter how complicated the mix, I can get it back up into the console in about 20 minutes. And then just comparing it back with a half-inch I can make sure it's exactly where we were. It's so fast to do that now, I tend to do mixes very quickly. Deliberately not take them to what might be their final conclusion, and then get everyone's input to see what they think. Then I'll get it all back up and do what needs to be done.”

Another pop act within Calum's orbit is Liverpool duo It's Immaterial, currently exchanging new DAT-recorded tracks in the post with the producer of their *Song* album of a couple of years ago. That album was sadly overlooked (*tragically overlooked, I'd say – Ed*), but it was a subtle masterpiece in the art of creating a sense of space within a multitrack recording. “I like space, yeah,

I've always been fond of space. I think it's just correct orchestration in the first place. Pure arrangement; getting the right instrument, the right kinds of sounds which create their own space.

“Reverb's important, but not that important. I don't go in for fancy reverbs, actually. I'd probably like a Lexicon, but it doesn't matter anyway because I can't afford one. A 480L – what's that, about seven and a half million pounds?

“So I just have these things; the Klark-Tekniks, they're fine, the old AMS is OK, too. Probably my favourites are the two EMT plates; I really do like them. I've got a transistor one and a valve one, and they do sound totally different. Probably not because they're valve and transistor, but just because they're different tensions. One's very bright, one's very warm and dull sounding. They're great because they've got so much resolution; they never fizz or die away, or ring, or do anything funny – they just sound really spacey. I suppose, probably, a bit of it is that – now you mention space – they're superb for percussion. A lot of people don't bother using them, they're so big and cumbersome. Although plenty of people still have them.”

The Máire Brennan album is a fine example of the empathy between Celtic flavours and contemporary ambient music, which Calum Malcolm is perfectly placed to interpret. There's something about the windswept imagery involved which is easily evoked in the modern studio. Or to put it another way, there's nothing like a synth pad for a bit of the old Scotch mist. Calum also mentions Capercaille, Simple Minds and Runrig as exponents of a poppier version of this hybrid, and identifies the drones in traditional Celtic music as being a key link.

“There is a thread running through Celtic music. You can see connections between U2 and Simple Minds, for instance. Whether they influence each other, or ever have done, I don't know. But there's obviously a sound which is purely down to the traditional Celtic music – that's all that is. And there's a format, a form of music which is written down and understood. And so, of course, with people growing up and being subjected to that kind of music it will have an influence that will rub off on them and emerge later when they start writing pop songs.

“There must be an element of that which happens all over the world. There's a thread running right through Europe as well, of course, right through to Eastern Europe, and there are very strong musical connections between the Celts and Brittany, Cape Breton in North America, and middle Europe. There is a very consistent sound, which you can also pick up in many types of modern classical music. And Rumanian, Hungarian and Czechoslovakian folk music have all got this exact same thing going on. It's drones, and certain shapes; the way these shapes are used. There's obviously a big connection and it must spill into modern music.”

And is it this that distinguishes Scottish pop? “The Scottish pop scene has always been vibrant. It comes into focus now and again and then it goes out of focus – but it's always there. Just like the North-West. There's possibly a certain amount of

Checklist

Calum's own selection from the artists he's worked with over the years...

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BIG COUNTRY
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MAIRE BRENNAN (CLANNAD)
LOST SOUL BAND
DARLING HEART
STEVE GIBBONS BAND
BARRY HUMPHRIES (DAME EDNA)
CAROL KIDD
POLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
CHRISTINA BRUNO
STOCKHOLM ART TRIO

rebelliousness involved, wherein people want to be different, want to be independent. I doubt whether people would consciously write to be like that, but that's the effect, subconsciously, I'm sure."

To many, Calum Malcolm is synonymous with Glasgow trio The Blue Nile, whose two seminal albums *A Walk Across The Rooftops* and *Hats* he produced in 1984 and 1989. Responding to an enquiry as to further collaborations, Calum is circumspect... "Well, possibly. I spent some time with Robert recently, and I spoke to both Pauls on the phone, and in fact we were talking about equipment, trying to figure out what to do. The last time we spoke about recording, I said what's the point in going into a studio? They really are very capable people, and studios are very expensive. So I said why not just buy some equipment and do it at home – the bulk of it, at least, and then come and finish it off, mix it, or add things that you can't have at home. I think that's the right way for them to record.

"Too often, especially on the last album, we spent a long time trying to recreate really crappy, but perfect kitchen demos, the feel of which eluded us, and which I think did elude us in the end. I still prefer the kitchen demos. It's a very hard thing to get back. Paul Buchanan comes up with the ideas and performances, and it's one definite sound, whether it's just him playing the guitar and singing the thing, he creates a sound. To try and recreate that is just impossible. It gets squeaky clean, disjointed, disembodied. If anyone would benefit from just having a mic stuck in front of them, it's The Blue Nile. It would sound awful but it would have something very very special."

Recording at home would put The Blue Nile in the company of many other innovative '80s songwriters in search of new openings. Mention has already been made of Calum's DAT correspondence with a pretty much housebound It's Immaterial. The Nile's Paul Moore is apparently interested in hard-disk recording systems, but Calum is sceptical. And it's not just a case of 'you take the high tech and I'll take the low...'

"I've been trying to put him off, because I've had quite a lot of experience with them. I've invested a lot of money in a Spectral Synthesis system – which is superb, very good – but they're not right. They're brilliant for people doing film work, brilliant for synchronising video and film stuff together, usually packages from SSL or whoever – that's great, that's the future, I love that idea. But, to record music on, they don't make much sense, because what do you do once your disk's full? You back it up, and how long does that take? Can you really afford the optical disks you'll need? If someone pulls the plug and your signal disappears down the earth line, are you going to be happy about that? Wouldn't you rather it was on a bit of tape so you could just switch the machine on again and it would still be there?

"I think they're a dead loss. They're grossly unreliable, still. They've got to wait. One of these days they'll suss it out and it will be better. They'll have to get cheap backup. They'll have to be able to load things in very fast, like changing a tape. I've

got two systems, in fact – I've got a Hybrid Arts system as well. I use the Spectral for all my sampling; it's up-to-16-track, it does work, it doesn't crash, but I use it as a way to manipulate the digital audio on the Mitsubishi, not as a separate recorder."

Maintaining spontaneity is the goal of Calum's no-nonsense approach, and he agrees that there may be a danger in the almost limitless rearrangement possibilities of the latest sequencers. Here's what he would do with your demo, were you to find yourself in the enviable role of Castlesound client...

"The way I've worked with demos recently – and I'm doing this just now with It's Immaterial – is to take the demo in whatever form, DAT, 16-track 1" or 8-track or whatever, and just copy it exactly onto the Mitsubishi, and that's where we start. Print an analogue-to-digital copy onto a reel. They're just versions of the songs, just as relevant as what we do at the end, probably more relevant in many cases. I've done that successfully now over quite a few albums, it really works. Maybe we don't use anything from it in the end, but the feel is always there. You never lose that. You never have to put the old cassette on and ask 'where did we go wrong?' You can't go wrong; it's there in the first place. That's provided the arrangement is correct in the first place.

"There's a danger that's hit me several times: you've got so much flexibility you can lose sight of your aims. And if you spend too much time on a piece of music, which I think is also bad, you get bored, just as anyone would get bored with anything, and you just start changing it for change's sake. You'll go back and throw away perfectly good things, just in order to hear new things – and because it's so easy to do it. You end up recording at least two albums, and the first was perfectly good. It's certainly happened to me before. Some things may get better, but undoubtedly some things get worse."

At Castlesound, most things are getting better, and the diary gets ever fuller. Now involved in an A&R and production role with a new label started by Bruce Findlay (ex-Simple Minds manager, who now manages The Silencers), Calum appreciates the basic time and labour-saving benefits of technology more than ever. "Sure. That's why I've surrounded myself with things which are quick and easy to use. I don't ever want to be held up. It's lovely for that – I don't run out of tracks, I can slave up the Atari, I don't run out of anything. I like being able to get things done.

"The current album I'm working on has been paid up to the last day, it's four weeks exactly and it's done, it's finished. We'll just do the last few overdubs today, have a week off and start mixing. That includes rehearsals and everything.

"That," says Calum Malcom, pragmatist, "is sensible". ■



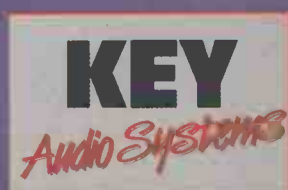
Castlesound Equipment List

Console: Amek RN 56-channel
Automation: Amek Supertrue
Digital recorders: Mitsubishi X850 32-track; Technics SV360 DAT; Sony TCD10 Pro DAT; Sony F1; Hybrid Arts Digital Master hard disk recorder/editor; Spectral Synthesis hard disk recorder/editor; Hybrid Arts ADAP with 30Mb hard disk
Analogue recorders: Otari MTR90 II 24-track; Lyrec TR55 1/2" 2-track; Lyrec TR55 1/4" 2-track; Ferrograph SP7; Revox A77; 2-track Dolby SR noise reduction
Monitors: Linn Products 3-way active main system; ATC SMC20 and AR18 nearfield monitors
Microphones: B&K 4003s, 4004s, 4011s, 2812s; Neumann KM86; Schoeps CMC50s; Electrovoice RE20s; Beyer M201s; Calrec CM1050s; AKG C61s; Shure SM58;
Massenburg microphone amplifiers and EQ
Outboard: EMT 140 stereo valve reverb plate; EMT 140 stereo transistor reverb plate; AMS RMX16 reverb; 1580 DDL1; 220 phaser; Klark-Teknik DN780s; Alesis Midiverb II; Yamaha D1500 DDL; SPX90 II; Neve 33609; 2254A; Amek CLO1s; A&D SO1s, F300s, Autopanner; Orban De-esser; Drawmer 201 gates
Sequencing/synchronising: RTL Event SMPTE/MIDI clock; Hybrid Arts SMPTE-Track sequencer on Atari ST; Audio Kinetics Pacer synchroniser
Instruments: Bechstein 8'6" piano; Mason & Hamlin harmonium; Kawai K1; Roland JP8; Casio CZ3000; Roland TR606; acoustic drums

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MIDI by example

Part 4

Integrating a drum machine into your MIDI system – step by step...

Text by Vic Lennard

Before entering into the 'fun' of getting a drum machine and sequencer to play in time with each other, let's first take a look at how we incorporate a drum machine into a basic MIDI system.

Until recently, when dedicated modules started to appear on the scene, the usual way to get your percussion sounds was to buy a drum machine, ignore its internal programming system, and link it up to your sequencer. To this end, there are three ways of working:

1. Playing the drum sounds from the drum machine's own pads (where these exist) and recording the pad hits on the sequencer.
2. Inputting drum notes directly, in step-time, to hardware sequencer or to a drum grid editor on a computer sequencer.
3. Playing the drum sounds via an attached MIDI keyboard and recording the key presses on a sequencer.

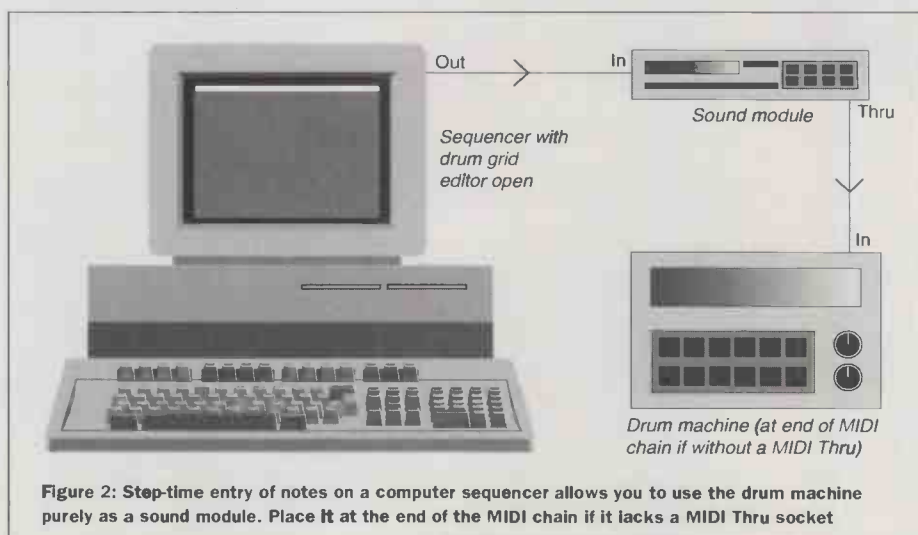
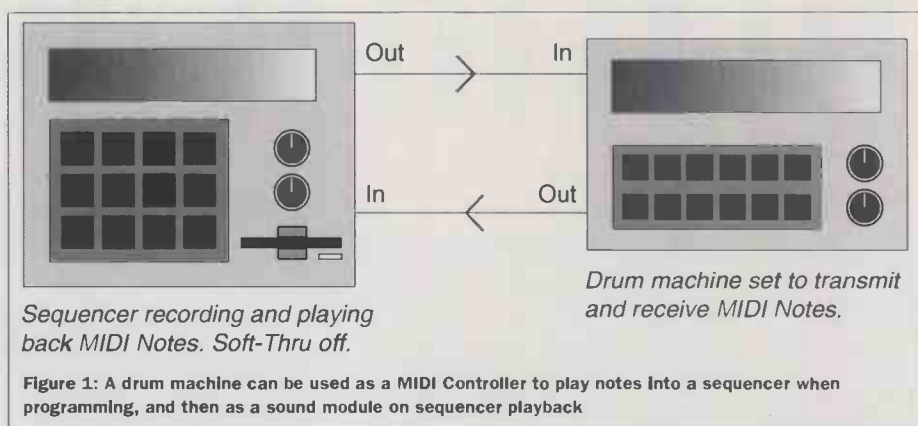
Irrespective of how you choose to work, various settings have to be made to get the system up and running. Beginning with playback from the sequencer: you need to ensure that the MIDI receive channel of the drum machine is the same as the transmit channel of the track on the sequencer and that the drum machine is set to receive and recognise MIDI Notes. Each of the drum

machine's sounds will be allocated to a particular MIDI Note number, a list of which should appear in the back of the drum machine manual.

To work via the drum machine's pads requires a two-way link to be established between the drum machine and sequencer. The MIDI Out from the drum machine connects to the MIDI In of the sequencer, which effectively means that the drum machine is acting as a MIDI Controller: hitting the pads sends MIDI Note messages to the sequencer.

To complete the link, the MIDI Out from the sequencer needs to be connected to the MIDI In of the drum machine so that the drum sounds can be heard when the sequencer plays back (Figure 1). However, it will also be necessary to turn off the sequencer's internal 'soft-Thru' MIDI function, otherwise you'll hear the drum sounds twice every time you hit a pad; firstly from the pad itself and secondly from the MIDI Note returning via the sequencer.

Using a drum grid editor on a sequencer to



MIDI GLOSSARY

A couple more commonly used terms for your MIDI glossary...

Local Control

A synthesiser can be viewed as two distinct items. There's the keyboard which transmits MIDI information, generated by the playing of keys and/or the pressing of buttons. And there's the internal sound generator which creates the actual sounds that we hear.

Local Control Off effectively splits the keyboard from the sound module so that they can be treated as separate entities (see **diagram**). This is very useful when used with a sequencer and configures the system as it would be using a master keyboard and an expander.

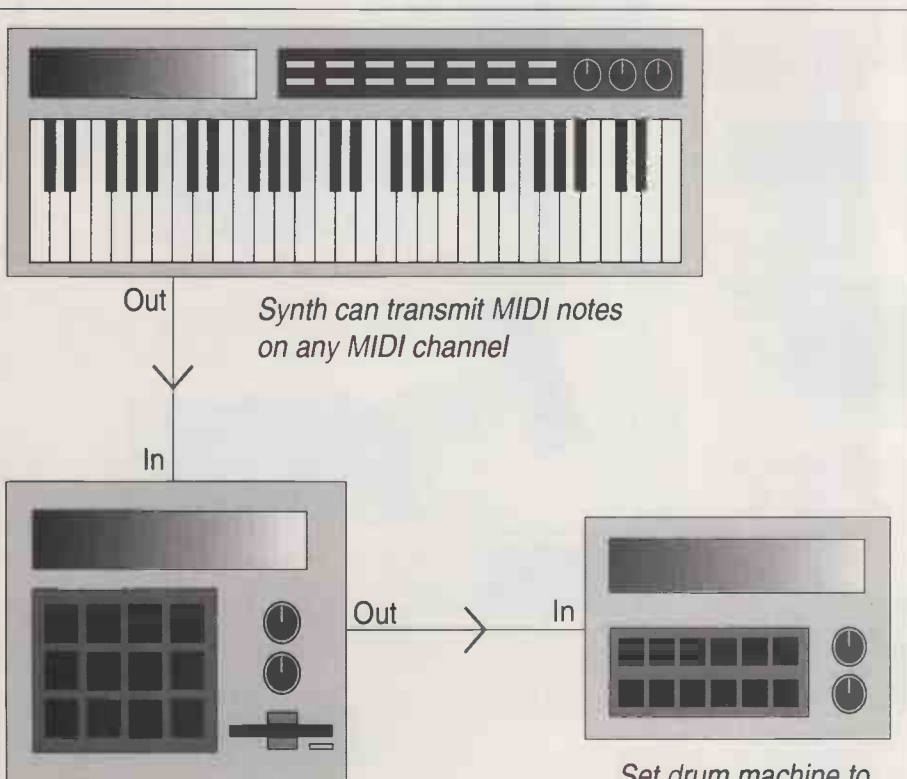
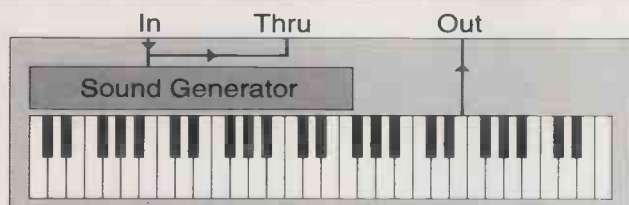
If the synth is multitimbral, you can ignore the MIDI transmit channel of the keyboard and simply set the MIDI channel of the current sequencer track to that of the sound you want to hear. Turning Local

Control off is usually possible from the front panel of the synth, although some require a special MIDI message to be sent to them from a sequencer.

Running Status

The first part of any MIDI message tells the receiving device what kind of message it is: Note On or Off, Program Change, Pitch Bend – and so on. If, for example, you have a whole host of MIDI Notes, all on the same MIDI channel, the first part of each of them will be the same. So why, after the first MIDI Note has been sent, bother transmitting it?

This is the reasoning behind Running Status. If the first part of a MIDI message is the same as the first part of a previous one, then it can be dispensed with; the receiving device will know what to expect. This reduces the amount of MIDI information being sent from one device to another – a kind of data reduction system, if you like. All MIDI devices have to be able to recognise Running Status when receiving MIDI information, but do not necessarily have to transmit it, although most will if they are outputting large amounts of data – particularly sequencers and MIDI mergers.



Set MIDI channel of current track to the receive channel of drum machine. Soft-Thru on

Set drum machine to receive MIDI Notes

Figure 3: With the correct settings, a sequencer connected between a synth and drum machine can record all key presses as you play the drum sounds.

trigger the drum machine simply involves making sure that the MIDI Note for each instrument on screen matches up with the sounds in the drum machine. Connection-wise, only the MIDI Out from the sequencer has to be connected to the MIDI In of the drum machine, so that the latter can receive notes as they are played back from the sequencer. If the drum machine is lacking a MIDI Thru port, remember to place it at the end of a 'daisy chain' MIDI arrangement if that's how your system is configured (**Figure 2**).

Playing the drum sounds via a MIDI keyboard is often a good option, especially if the drum machine pads are on the small side. Connect the MIDI Out from the keyboard to the MIDI In of the sequencer and the MIDI Out from this to the MIDI In of the drum machine (**Figure 3**). Notes sent by the keyboard to the drum machine are received by the sequencer which, by use of its soft-Thru facility, are re-transmitted to the drum machine. Make sure that the soft-Thru function is turned on (otherwise received notes will not be sent from the MIDI Out of the sequencer) and that the MIDI channel of the current sequencer track matches the MIDI receive channel of the drum machine. ■

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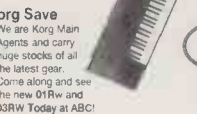


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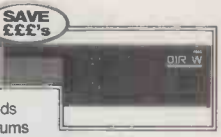


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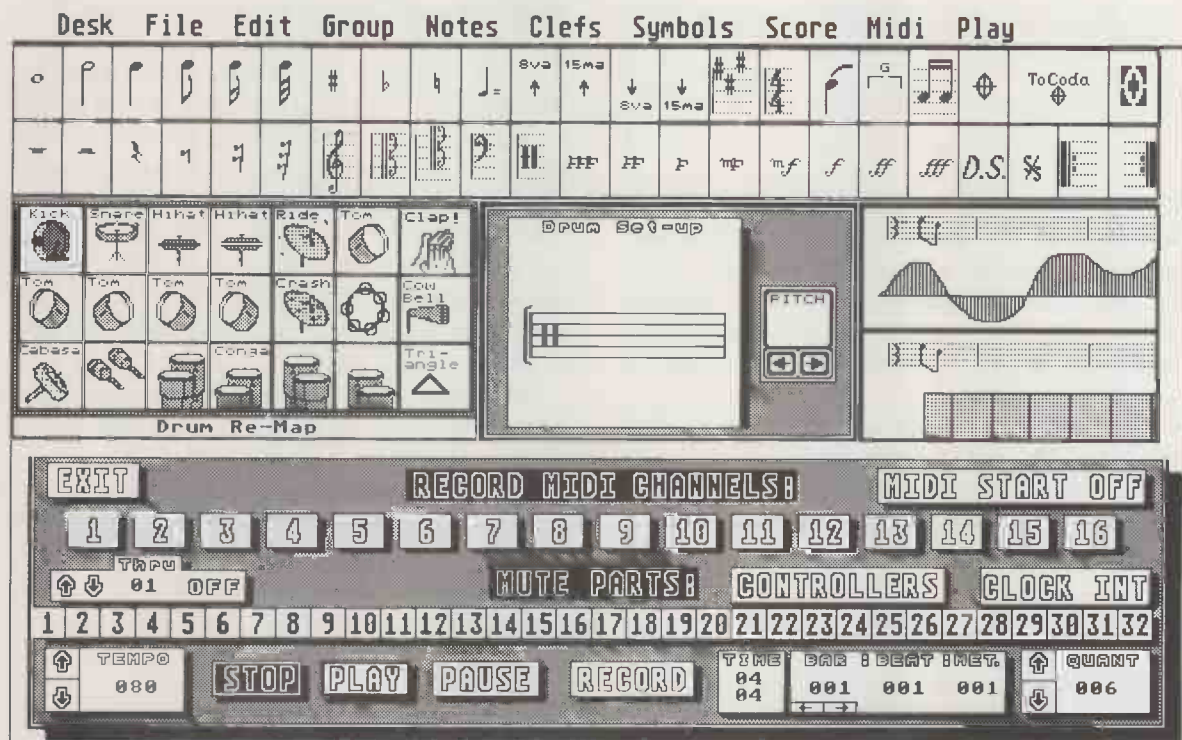
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Vivace Software

For the Atari ST



Helping you to put the music back into MIDI, this new sequencer from Desert Software should settle a few scores...

We seem to have got to the stage in reviews of ST sequencers, where opening remarks about the sheer number of currently available packages have become almost as tiresome as much of the software itself. So it may seem rather 'optimistic' for any company to decide to launch another. Unless, of course, it has something genuinely new and innovative to offer. Enter Vivace...

Pronounced 'Viv-atchy' from the Italian, rather than 'Vivace' from the, er... Anyway, it comes from Desert Software, it has been written 'by musicians for musicians' and it attempts to recreate, on screen, the process which a musician goes through when creating a score on manuscript paper.

But although music-based rather than MIDI-based, Vivace does have certain 'conventional' sequencer attributes. It has 32 tracks (staves, actually) which are used for the score -

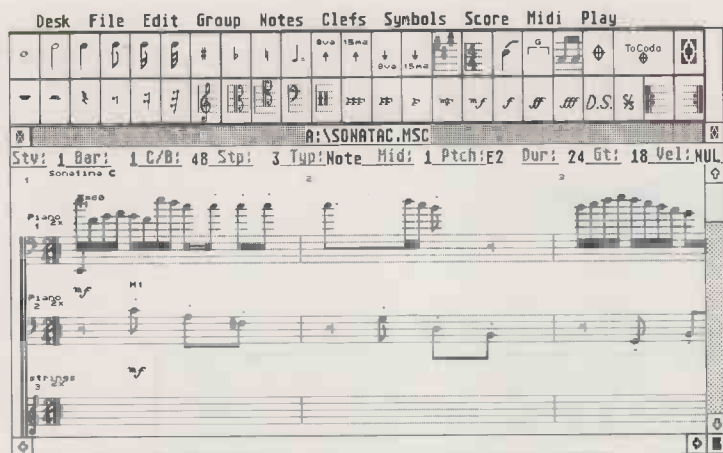
the notes, dynamics, key signature, and so on. A further 49 tracks are used for other types of data: there are two sets of tracks for each MIDI channel which look after controller information and pitchbend, 16 tracks to handle volume information and one track to take care of the tempo.

The main screen opens to show four staves marked off with bar lines. You can display up to five of these at once and re-order them so you can compare and edit non-contiguous staves. The program's operation tends to rely more on the ST's keyboard than the mouse, which, being a GUI-type person, didn't altogether suit me, although I do admit that keyboard control is faster - once you know which keys do what.

A Status Bar at the top of the score window gives you lots of information about the music being entered (see 'Entering Data'). It is also used during editing. While entering notes it displays the staff and bar number (bar numbers also appear above the bars), the clocks per beat, the number of clocks from the start of the bar to the current cursor position, the type of event (note, rest, dynamic and so on), the default MIDI channel, and the pitch, duration, gate and velocity of the note to be entered.

The clocks per beat are calculated on a 24 clocks per quarter note basis which would seem to be the resolution of >>

**Text by
Ian Waugh**



the program – no other resolution figure is mentioned. Die-hard sequencer users and MIDI buffs may argue this should be higher (and perhaps it should) – it gives a resolution of one clock to a 1/64th note. But remember, we're working with music 'as she is written', not necessarily as it is played. And in practice – given the ethos of the program – it works well.

The gate time (for those not weaned on analogue synthesis) is the 'on' time or the period a note actually sounds for within its duration. A quarter note, for example, would have a duration of 24 clocks. A normal gate setting gives it an on time of 18 clocks, a legato setting 23 clocks and a staccato setting 12 clocks. You may alter the default gate time of these three articulations, selecting the settings from the Notes menu or from the keyboard. If the gate time goes into staccato territory, a dot appears above the note which is just one of the ways in which the score reflects the music data.

When a note is entered, it has a null velocity. You can apply dynamic markings ranging from ppp to fff (press D and adjust with + and – keys) to any note. Following notes will still have a null velocity setting, but will play at the velocity of the most recent dynamic. This means you can insert and adjust velocities throughout a piece of music without having to individually alter each note. The default velocity values of each of the dynamic markings can be set, too.

Similarly, crescendo and decrescendo 'hairpins' can be entered on the score and start and end velocities stipulated which will be assigned to the notes.

E editing is fairly comprehensive, but can take a little getting used to. You can delete the last note entered by pressing the backspace key, and cut, copy and paste notes by dragging a box around them and selecting the required function from the menu (keyboard shortcuts available, too, of course).

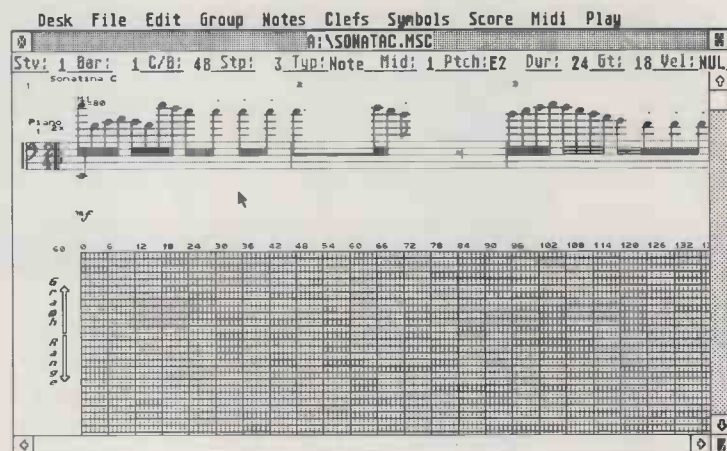
You can insert a note by pressing the Insert key – of course – but pressing it twice takes you to Super Edit mode.

Here you can step about the score and edit the parameters of individual notes (using the ST's keyboard, not the mouse). The Status Bar highlights the note parameters – MIDI Channel, Pitch, Duration, Gate and Velocity – and you can change them with the up and down cursor keys.

Block edits can be carried out on groups of notes by dragging a box around them. Grouped notes may be beamed and you can even beam across bar lines and beam irregular note groups – although all beams are straight; there are no slopes. It's possible to flip stems, tie notes (only of the same pitch, of course) and form notes into odd time groupings. These have to be entered as two figures – the number of notes in the group and number of notes they are to be played in the time of. For example, a triplet would be entered as 3/2 (although it is displayed as 3:2). Special keys are assigned to triplets, quintuplets and septuplets.

It is possible to enter nonsensical values such as beaming four notes and giving them a 7:5 grouping (well, it has no critical faculties) although you will be alerted to your folly by a horrendous scrunching up and evening out of notes at the end of the bar.

You can insert key changes and time signatures and also clefs – including a drum clef and a staff re-mapping function



which lets you define the MIDI pitch that each *actual* pitch (on the staff) represents, although there is only one drum-notation note head.

Vivace can respace notes after a time change – in fact, it'll take care of note spacing automatically, which is superb. Not all scorewriters do this, yet to my mind it is one of the most basic and essential functions of a computer-based scorewriter. Why have a dog and bark yourself? – as they say.

There's a reasonable compliment of symbols – repeat bars, tempo marking, 8va octave signs, segno and coda signs – although not everything is covered. Trill and arpeggio aficionados, for example, will be disappointed.

The MIDI Graph editor is our old friend the grid or piano roll editor renamed for Vivace. It pops up below the staff and shows you one bar's worth of data at a time. You can drag notes around and alter their parameters in boxes on the left but, alas, the notes on the staff don't change until you quit the editor and you've an excellent chance of

Entering data

To enter a score, you insert the key and time signatures from the Score menu. You have to type these in – G#m and 3/4, for example – and entries are 'case sensitive' – g#m will not be accepted. Each staff can be named and assigned a MIDI channel although this can be overridden on an individual note basis.

To enter a note, you select a duration value using the numeric keypad. You can toggle between notes and rests, and pitch is selected with the cursor keys or by clicking on the staff with the mouse (you can't drag notes up and down the staff), and pressing Return to enter the note. To enter a chord, you don't step on to the next note but simply select another pitch and press return again. What happens if you press return without stepping on or selecting another pitch? The program enters a second (and third) note of the same pitch.

Single MIDI events can be entered into the score, too: sustain, volume, program and mode changes, for example, and also a three-byte MIDI event of your own.

MIDI events appear as a little 'x' above the notes but, unlike MIDI channel changes, aren't always that obvious on the score.

botching the display. In fact, if the quantise setting is really too severe for the score it is possible to inadvertently quantise a bar simply by entering and exiting the editor.

The Controller Graph editor – as you might imagine – lets you edit controller information such as aftertouch, modulation, pitchbend and so on. Of the two tracks allocated to each MIDI channel, the first can have up to 30 sets of controller information in it plus pitchbend. The second, however, can only store one type.

Data appears as vertical lines below the on-stave bars so you can see exactly which notes the data applies to. It's easily edited and you can draw the data into the editor with the mouse – ideal if your synth lacks a pitchbend or modulation wheel. You basically have to work on a bar at a time, but the way the data is displayed makes editing very precise.

As well as clicking and tapping notes into the score, you can record them from a MIDI keyboard in realtime (but not in step-time). Vivace can record a score on up to 16 instruments or from all 16 MIDI channels simultaneously.

Before doing so, it's necessary to call up the Transcribe Where? window in which you stipulate which MIDI channels should go to which staves. You do this by dragging from a set of numbered MIDI 'plugs' to one of the 32 displayed staves – cute. You can also split the transcription across two staves and define the split point.

From this window it's possible to copy a staff to another staff, append a staff to itself (not as painful as it sounds), change the order of the staves and clear a staff. During recording, you must select the MIDI channels which will be recorded (allowing you to filter out any which are not required). You can set a record quantise value, although this is in clicks and rather 'numeric' (a setting on six, for example, is 1/16th notes).

After recording, the music is transcribed and appears on the staves along with dynamic changes, staccato and legato signs. It's an excellent system, although if you've dabbled with sequencers you'll know that what you see on the staff is rarely what you think you played. Steadily, evenly and carefully is the way to do it and you'll probably find it easier to record in sections, checking each one as you go. Having said that, because Vivace is linear based, working this way means you will have a certain amount of copying to do afterwards to put a complete score together.

It's possible to filter out controller information during recording if you wish and you can also remap controllers, allowing you to control volume, for example, with a modulation wheel.

The Control screen which pops up above the play and record window contains a set of sliders used to control volume, pitchbend, modulation and tempo. You can record any changes you make into the score in real time and there's a velocity overdub function for changing velocities. Individual tracks may be muted and there are indicators to show incoming MIDI data.

I don't know about you, but I'm always fascinated by

these mixer screens and I love to see the sliders move during playback (...still a kid at heart). Anyway, you can switch to play from within the Play and Record window using familiar tape transport controls, muting and soloing any of the tracks as you wish.

There are also playback options from the main staff window where you can select the range of notes which are to play and loop them. Internal or external clock synchronisation may be selected and this, of course, means that you can use Vivace with an external drum machine or sequencer.

The manual is well illustrated and includes a tutorial section. Although it could be better ordered, it is still reasonably easy to follow. That said, it endeavours to explain MIDI using hex, which for a program aimed at the musician rather than the computer buff seems a bit odd, especially as most sequencers shield the user from hex anyway. Vivace does, too, so why worry the user with it in the manual? Could do with an index, too.

The full title of the program is actually Vivace Module 1. Module 2 will be a printout option and will probably cost around £90, while Module 2, a MIDI file converter will be about £15-20. Both should be available by the time you read this. However, if you want to print out your score and/or handle MIDI files, it does mean a considerable additional outlay which pushes the overall cost of the program over that of most dedicated scorewriters (of which there are already around 10 on the ST) and dangerously close to that of sequencers with built-in scorewriting facilities. Plus, as it stands, the program doesn't support phrase marks and music symbols such as trills and fermatas (although these may be in Module 2).

As one who has waded through the vagaries of many sequencer and music programs, I would have also preferred operation to have been more mouse-based than keyboard-based, with more numeric adjustments and edits possible using the rodent. After all, that's one of the reasons you use an ST and not a PC. However, as with all things, a little use breeds familiarity and the mouse is employed quite effectively in certain areas.

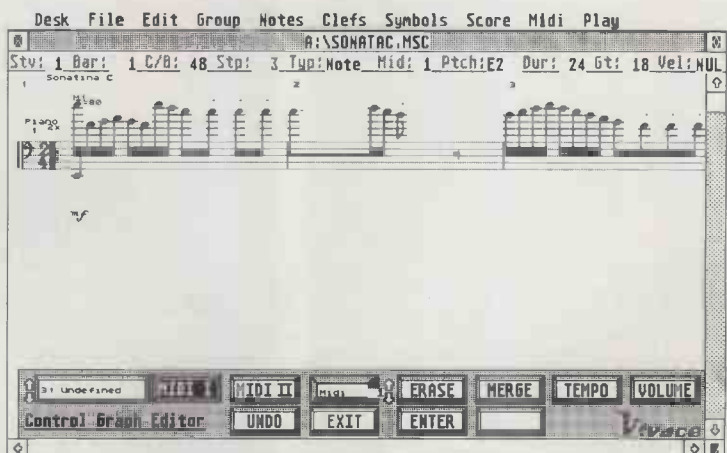
ST

Requirements

Vivace requires 1 Mb of RAM and a high-resolution mono monitor. It uses a dongle for protection – nothing unusual in that – but this one plugs into the second joystick port. Apart from having a general dislike of dongles, I'm sure most users will prefer this as it leaves the cartridge port free for other dongles which might be required – for a voice editor, for example.

Update

Since this review was written Vivace has been updated and several areas have been tidied up. There is now support for desktop accessories and mouse gadgets. There is also increased use of the mouse so you can do more things with it rather than having to use the keyboard. Graph edit is not limited to one bar and double clicking on a note lets you pick it up and move it around the score. The Graph and Controller Edit options are now in a moveable window and a post-quantisation function is available by selecting a range of notes. The manual is being updated, too.



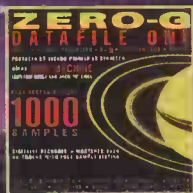
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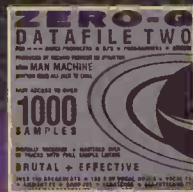
THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE DANCE SAMPLE COLLECTION AVAILABLE
DATAFILE 1 features over '60' breakbeats • 100's of vocal hooks/fx
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killer snares and bass drums • Techno/Sci-fi beats + pieces • Scratches/fx
• Horns • Stabs • Gtrs • Synth dance pads/leads • Over 100 original vocal drop-
ins • Sci-fi speech + fx • Oriental vocals + instruments • Ambient fx • House
and rap percussion • Many more unique and off-the-wall fx.

"Incredible! the only word needed to describe the greatest sampling tool
ever released to the public!" (Dance Music Report - USA); "Unreservedly
excellent...the most comprehensive dance sample resource currently in cir-
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really works" (Home Studio Recording)



DATAFILE 2 features another 1000 samples including '100' more breakbeats
• 100's more vocal hooks ad libs + vocal fx • Kraftwerk style electro percus-
sion • Basses including Juno 106 and SH101 • Guitar breaks + fx • Ambient fx
• Drop-ins • Scratches • Tons of Sci-fi/techno gems • house/rap percussion
• Complete human beatbox • Dub + Sub basses • Automotive fx + horn blasts
• Film atmospherics • Industrial percussion/fx • Italo house piano • Roland R8
and Alesis HR16B kits etc. etc....too many to list.

"The same combination of rawness, cheekiness and honesty which made Datafile 1 so
appealing...it compliments Datafile 1 very effectively" (Music Technology);
"All the raw material needed to assemble house or techno tracks to a very
high standard...given Ed Stratton's ear for what really works, the Datafile
CDs are an essential purchase if dance music's your game." (Sound On
Sound)



DATAFILE 3 features another 170 new breakbeats/fills • Special collection of
breakbeat intros • 80 moog type percussion sounds (great for techno)
• Weird and unusual percussion, including a kit of excellent drums created
by mouth!! • Tons more vocal ad libs and hooks • 17 new oriental/ethnic
vocals • Tons of SFX suitable for house production • 44 analogue basses
plus another 30 TB303 techno basses • 30 stabs • jazz/orch/house • 11 guitar
breaks + guitar FX • 85 Science-fiction FX and Sci-Fi loops • absolute clas-
sics these! • 13 Sci-fi vocals • 12 Synth pads • 13 soundtrack atmospherics
• tons more drop-ins/one offs. **REVIEWS** "Why spend loads of money and
countless hours searching for your own samples when someone with an ear
for credible material and a proven track record has already done the
hard work for you?" (Streetsound - USA).

**This collection of 3200 samples is essential for dance producers
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**ONLY available from Time+Space. A brave attempt to genuinely
rival the power and flexibility of the 3 Zero-G CDs.....**

**REVIEWS: "A happening product... very comprehensive...
Buy! - no question!" (Sound on Sound).**

"All you need for serious hardcore dance" (Future Music).

The X-STATIC GOLDMINE double CD package contains the same number of
samples as the Zero-G Datafile library - mostly as good as the Zero-G samples & yet
99% without repetition. Like the creator of Zero-G, the guys who produced this price-
less production weapon really understand dance sampling production techniques and
have a deep passion for all things house+techno.

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TR909 (variations on each sound), TR727, TR606, CR78, CR8000, DR55, Rhythm 33 &
Rhythm 77, Kraftwerk-style Perc., Roland R8, Loads of kicks, Snares & Percussion lifted
from records (mix perfect with loops from records), ref. tone, 3 demo songs/

THIS IS WHAT YOU'LL FIND ON CD 2 128 Vox Samples, 112 Basses, 16
Bassline loops, Hits, Chords, Bleeps, Piano dits, 128 Synth FX, Drop-Ins, Weird
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the free CD, which will be sent to you as soon as we have stock. Offer limited
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East-West ProSamples 5

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by top USA producers David Frangioni/Rich Mendelson

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(Review Music Technology, UK).

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any sequencer from an optional midfile disk so you can change
individual samples in a loop; change the tempo without changing
the pitch; cut and paste loops together etc. Some loops were even
created by heavy industrial machinery!

MORE REVIEWS:

"Get hold of this CD - If your music will stand up to the weight
these breaks will bring to it, you really do owe it to yourself." (Music
Technology, UK). "An education in itself... a hands-on insight into
how the pros do it... lives up to expectations... pristine quality... a
chance not to be missed." (Sound-on-Sound, UK). "A hard fist-full
of deadly loops & hard-edged percussion to give your tracks attitude"
(Future Music Magazine, UK)

The reaction from top USA users is equally ecstatic...

"These sounds are great! They will save people a lot of time...an
indispensable library of sounds for anybody serious about dance
music" - JEFF LORBER (Karyn White, Paula Abdul, Pebbles,
M.C.Hammer, U2 etc.) "Crisp, Hard Hitting, Punchy, Great Variety,
always something appropriate, I love the stuff!" - FRED ZARR
(Madonna, Whitney Houston, Debbie Gibson, Samantha Fox etc.)
"These sounds have balls." - JOHN KHIEL (Creative director -
Soundtrack Studios N.Y.) "Some of the greatest dance loops I've
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Gibson etc." - JEFFREY SMITH

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rately - PLEASE STATE ATARI OR MAC): £10. CD-ROM:
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NOW IN PRODUCTION - DANCE / INDUSTRIAL II.

What we've heard of it so far is sensational - every loop will have a
MIDI file - should be out by Christmas.

ON THE PLANET

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PAUL HARDCASTLE

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including Dance Producer of the Year, Remix of the Year, the Ivor Novello Award, and many more, and he's produced and mixed successes by Barry White, Ian Dury, D Train, Phil Lynott, George

to name a few. He's even written many popular TV themes including Top of the Pops, Saturday Night Live, Supersense, Wet Hot, and the Holiday Programme.

features of this CD is the powerful collection of analogue synth loops

for techno. Imagine spending ages getting a good raw synth sound and then coming up with a murderous 2 or 4-bar techno riff with that sound that works in an irresistible way against the beat. Now do

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"LOOPING" CD (£29.95) - Lobby new German dance CD. Plenty of cred sounds, 250 superb quality stereo loops, construction sets, Hi-hat & FX loops, vocals, scratches, fun effects, natural/electronic/industrial percussion, subsonic waves, fills, ambient FX, techno beats, garage sounds, flanging sequences, etc etc. REVIEWS: "Excellent stuff... different... get in there quick!" (Sound-on-Sound, UK)

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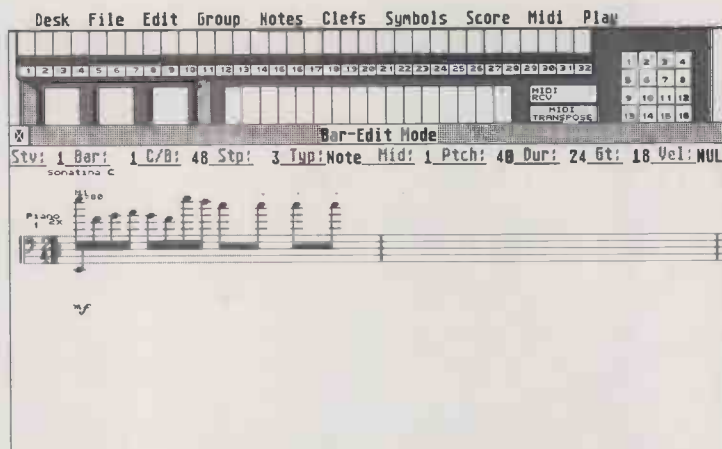
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APPRAISAL *Vivace Software*

▶▶ Even so, occasionally you get the feeling that some areas of implementation could be a bit more consistent. A small example: the drum map box is controlled entirely from the keyboard and you have to exit by pressing Return. By contrast, most other parameter edit boxes have an OK box you can click on. Similarly, when alterations are made to the screen, it redraws completely rather than just updating the area under change. It's nit-picking perhaps, but all these things contribute to the 'feel' of the program.

Where Vivace really scores (no pun intended) is in taking a musical approach to sequencing as opposed to the usual MIDI-based, numeric one. As such, it breathes a refreshing breath of air into the sequencer market without completely forsaking at least some of the MIDI conventions many hi-tech musicians are used to.

Particularly impressive is the way it allows you to create a score from scratch, directly onto the screen, complete with



many of the musical nuances you find on printed music – plus a few you don't.

If you are first and foremost a musician who likes to work with the dots and who has studiously avoided sequencers because of their (real or imaginary) numeric and computerate bias, this could well be the sequencer for you. You can try before you buy by investing £3 in a demo disc. ■

Info

Price:

Vivace £199 inc. VAT and
£2.50 p&p

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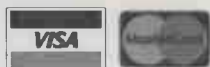
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PHOTOGRAPHY: James Cumpsty

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Simon Trask

With sampled sounds, digital effects and an on-board multitrack sequencer, the SQ16 shouts it loud and proud – a home keyboard's place is not (necessarily) in the home...

Auto-accompaniment keyboards have long been derided by synth players for their 'playalongsong' ethos, dated accompaniment styles and inferior sound-generating technology. Yet, in truth, this kind of keyboard has been doing a lot of catching up in recent years, and nowadays the more sophisticated ones can stand proud alongside their synth brethren.

Yamaha's latest keyboard, the PSR-SQ16, is a case in point. One of the most sophisticated 'home' keyboards currently available, it has all the ingredients required of a contemporary workstation instrument: a 61-note velocity-

sensitive keyboard, a wide range of sampled instrumental sounds, 'drum kit'-style arrangements of sampled drum and percussion sounds, digital effects processing, an onboard multitrack sequencer, MIDI connections and a built-in 3.5" disk drive.

Other features which show the SQ16 to be a thoroughly modern instrument are a General MIDI patch configuration mode, the ability to sustain sounds across patch changes, and the ability to read/write sequences in Standard MIDI Files format. This latter feature allows sequences to be transferred via disk between the SQ16 and a wide range of sequencing packages running on Atari ST, Apple Macintosh and PC-compatible computers.

At the same time, being a keyboard rather than a synth, the SQ has built-in stereo speakers and an auto-accompaniment section – in this case one which offers 269 styles divided into three types of accompaniment: full (100), part (100) and rhythm (69). Full auto-accompaniments provide Intro, Main, Fill1, Fill2 and Ending sections, with A and B Variations in each case (one accompaniment is 'fuller' than the other). The Part accompaniments omit the Variations, while the Rhythm accompaniments consist only of Main rhythm patterns – the idea being that you can copy the

patterns into the SQ's sequencer and use them within your own music.

This crossover between the preset and the programmable is characteristic of keyboard instruments these days. The SQ16 allows you to copy entire Full and Part accompaniments into its 16-track onboard sequencer, where you can edit them to your taste. You can also store edited accompaniments into any one of eight *programmable* accompaniment memories, where they can be used in the same way as preset accompaniments. No longer are you confined to the styles provided by the manufacturer.

Another significant feature of Yamaha's latest keyboard is its 56-voice polyphony, which puts many a synth to shame. In fact, this polyphony is divided equally among two banks of Voices (patches), meaning that any one Voice can be played with at most 28-voice polyphony – still a very reasonable figure by today's standards.

Yamaha's AWM sampled sound technology, already familiar to synth players from the SY series instruments, lies at the heart of the PSR-SQ16. However, it's not the latest, cleanest generation of AWM technology as used on the company's recent workstation synth, the SY85.

The SQ16 has what I would term a 'gutsy' sound, with plenty of punch and body where needed and a certain amount of noise where, according to your taste, it may or may not be needed. Noise is particularly noticeable on a number of the basses in their lower range, but when they're used in ensemble this doesn't detract from their effectiveness. In a similar vein, to my mind the SQ16's clunky acoustic pianos are more effective in ensemble than they are as solo instruments. Brass, synth and pad sounds are among the most effective sounds on the SQ16, while overall the guitars are much less successful. The keyboard really scores with its drum and percussion sounds, however; these have a strong contemporary flavour to them, with plenty of vitality and 'attitude'.

SQ16 rhythm tracks really leap out of the speakers and grab you by the scruff of the neck. Clean and polite they are not. Drop a funky synthbass and a punchy orchestral hit over the top and you've got an aggressive, modern sound which doesn't conform to traditional notions of what auto-accompaniment keyboards sound like.

Similarly, the SQ16's accompaniments stomp all over the styles traditionally associated with 'home' keyboards. The Full accompaniments do include a small March & Waltz section which provides traditional 6/8 marches, polkas and Viennese waltzes, but these seem a mere afterthought on Yamaha's part. Categories such as Dance & Pop, Funk & Soul, Jazz & Swing, r'n'b and Carribean demonstrate clearly where the SQ16 is 'coming from'. More specifically, the PSR's auto-accompaniment styles include dixieland, boogie woogie, fusion, disco, house, soul ballad, gospel, pop shuffle, heavy metal, rock 'n' roll, Cuban pop, soca, calypso, hi-life... You get the idea. But are they any good? The answer is a resounding yes. The 'world' rhythms in particular fire on all cylinders.

As usual on auto-accompaniment keyboards, the accompaniment follows the harmonies you play in the lower half of the keyboard. In Single Finger mode, you select one of four chord types by playing the root note (for a major chord) or the root note and the black and/or white note to its left (for minor, major and dominant seventh chords); in other words, you don't actually need to have any knowledge of chord structures. With Fingered 1 mode selected, you play the actual chords; the SQ recognises 17 chord types, but nothing beyond seventh chords.

Fingered 2 is slightly more sophisticated in that it recognises chord inversions and puts the appropriate note in the bass. Incidentally, you can drop out all parts except the rhythm at any time simply by playing three consecutive notes on the keyboard; to bring the parts back in again you just play a chord.

A function known as Note Processor allows you to select harmonisations or rhythmic effects to be applied to the notes which you play in the upper part of the keyboard. Harmonies give you a choice of open and close chord voicings – with or without strumming – while the rhythmic effects (which can be synchronised to the tempo if you want) provide pan and polyphonic echo, tremolo and glissando at various rates.

Using the 16 Keyboard Channel buttons located centrally on the SQ16's cluttered and initially rather bewildering front panel, you can quickly assign any one Voice to the keyboard, or layer anything from 2-16 Voices to create some amazing composite sounds. A two-way keyboard split can easily be created, with user-programmable splitpoint, and you can record into two sequencer tracks using this split texture – for instance, record bass and piano parts together. As you can record multiple tracks at once, layered textures are also easy to record. You can record into the sequencer from an external MIDI source, so, for example, you could record rhythm parts from a set of electronic drum pads.

Each Keyboard Channel can be assigned a Voice (or be set to Local Off ie. it will play via MIDI only) together with settings for Volume Level, Pan Position, Effect Depth, Vibrato Depth and Fine and Coarse Tuning Amounts. Beyond this, sound programming is not part of the SQ16's world.

Using the keyboard's onboard sequencer you can record your own music from scratch, or you can use the auto-accompaniments and simply record a melody line on top. Track nine can be used to record just your left-hand chord voicings – from which the SQ will derive its

harmonies. Alternatively, you can record an auto-accompaniment into tracks 10-16, in which case the actual notes generated for the accompaniment are recorded. You can then go in and edit any aspect of the accompaniment, and drop individual parts in and out on playback using the >>

Voices

Bank 1

Acoustic Piano (9)
Electric Piano (6)
Acoustic Guitar (5)
Electric Guitar (29)
Mallet (3)
String Ensemble (3)
Synthesiser (19)
Bass (15)
Split Voice (15)

Bank 2

Acoustic Keyboard (7)
Electric Keyboard (6)
Bowed Strings (6)
Plucked Strings (6)
Brass (14)
Reed (16)
Pipe (7)
Chorus (1)
Orchestra (2)
Drum Kit (9)
Drum Kit w/Gate (9)
Percussion (5)
Percussion w/Pitch (7)
Others (1)

Preset

accompaniment styles

(Full, Part and Rhythm types)

Dance & Pop	Latin
Funk & Soul	Carribean
Rock 1	Country & World Music
Rhythm & Blues	March & Waltz (Full only)
Rock 2	New Age
Jazz & Swing	

►► Sequencer buttons. Accompaniments recorded in this way can become user-created accompaniment styles or provide the basis of your own songs.

The sequencer provides both real-time (Rewrite, Overdub and Punch In/Out) and step-time recording options, and has a not particularly generous maximum record resolution of 48ppqn. Both forms of recording have been straightforwardly implemented. Sequencer edit functions provided are Quantise, Velocity Offset, Transpose, Clear, Copy, Cut, Paste and Insert, all of which can act on any range of bars within the selected track. Editing operations can also be limited to a note range. All in all, you get a generous degree of editing flexibility for an onboard sequencer, whether on a synth or a keyboard.

In the keyboard market the PSR-SQ16 ranks as one of the most powerful, versatile and flexible instruments available – in a number of ways it even better some more expensive keyboards (including Yamaha's own PSR-6700 flagship). Features such as 56-note polyphony, General MIDI and Standard MIDI Files support, a 16-track onboard sequencer and a built-in disk drive all put the SQ16 at the forefront of keyboard design, while its sounds and accompaniment styles give it a welcome contemporary character far removed from the traditional image of the 'home' keyboard.

Effects

Dry	Pan
Room	Reflection
Hall	Early
Plate	Reflection
Church	Gate
Stage	Reverb
Metal	Reverse
Single	Gate
Delay	Feedback
Delay L.R	Reverse
Stereo	Reverse
Echo	Distortion

With its somewhat cramped and cluttered front-panel layout, the SQ16 isn't the most approachable of keyboards, but it's definitely worth persevering with. If you're a musical and/or a hi-tech novice, keyboard

workstations are an ideal starting point – and none more so than the SQ16. You can start out with some instant gratification by playing around with the accompaniments, then gradually progress through creating your own styles to your own songs, and begin exploring the wider MIDI world. And with Standard MIDI Files song storage you can move on to a computer-based sequencing package at a later stage, safe in the knowledge that your songs can be imported into the sequencer.

Finally, if you're not sure whether a keyboard or a synth would be your best bet, compare what the PSR-SQ16 and the SY85 (reviewed MT November '92) have to offer and see which approach you prefer. ■

The Spec

Keyboard: 61-note, velocity sensitive
 Voices: 177 instrumental plus 23 'drum kits'; General MIDI Voice configuration mode
 Polyphony: 56 voices (2 x 28)
 Sequencer: 16 tracks, 48ppqn resolution
 Auto-accompaniment styles: 269 preset plus eight programmable
 Disk Drive: 3.5" Double Sided Double Density; Standard MIDI Files read-write capability
 Connections: Aux Out (L/Mono & R), Aux In (L & R), Pedals (1, 2), MIDI (In, Out, Thru, Remote Keyboard)
 Speakers: (12cm plus 5cm) x 2
 Amplifier output: 8.3 watts x 2
 Dimensions: 953mm (W) x 428mm (D) x 165mm (L)
 Weight: 11.5kg

Info

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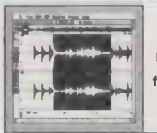
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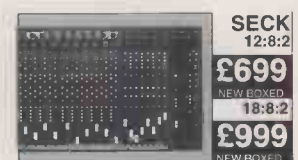
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Roland S750	£704

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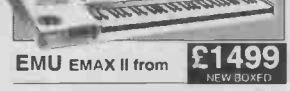
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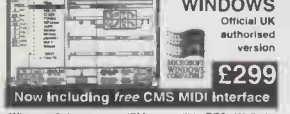
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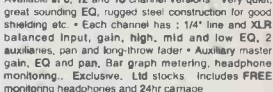
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Few bands command a genuinely multi-cultural following; none do so on the same scale as Kraftwerk. The name was once synonymous with a kind of Teutonic caricature: robotic, efficiently industrial, and nicely ironic to an English-speaking audience who would hear it and imagine patchwork quilts, see it and come face to face with the chimneys of the Ruhr valley. The vapid automata suggested by this caricature represented the very antithesis of soul, and yet the name Kraftwerk is now revered among house, rap and funk aficionados from Chicago to Sheffield.

The key word in unravelling this conundrum is, of course, technology. Anyone who shares an interest in its musical applications ultimately is led back to the pioneering ideas of Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider, heirs to the Stockhausen legacy and co-founders in 1968 of Organisation – an electronic music duo later to evolve into Kraftwerk.

British pop groups of the late '70s and early '80s could thus draw on seminal albums like *Autobahn* (1974), *Radio-Activity* (1975), *Trans-Europe Express* (1977) and *The Man Machine* (1978), as economic changes brought synthesisers within their reach, while the more syncopated rhythms of the single 'Tour De France' (1983) and the album *Electric Cafe* (1986) served a similar purpose for a new generation of dance acts. Whatever the style, in using musical technology it always seemed that Kraftwerk provided the model.

But there is a consistency to their music which also explains their wide appeal. Unlike contemporaries Tangerine Dream, they write melodies – 'ditties' even – they program strong beats, and they always have done. The shuffling beat of 'Autobahn' offers an early hint; and it was a track from as early an album as *Trans-Europe Express* that Afrika Bambaataa used to such historic effect on 'Planet Rock'. Meanwhile, any no-nonsense pop audience in the world can appreciate the lilting tunes and lyrical simplicity of songs like 'Neon Lights' and 'The Model'.

Through it all, Kraftwerk have stuck to their task. From analogue synthesis to digital (and back again); from tape loops to sampling; from CV/gate to MIDI; through progressive rock, new wave, new romantics, hip-hop, house, techno and ambient new age – these enigmatic German geezers dressed as lab technicians have quietly twiddled their way through the years unfettered, safely ensconced in their Düsseldorf 'Kling-Klang' studio. The single-mindedness of their vision is, as ever, the stuff of true originality.

In the interview that follows, founder-member Ralf Hütter talks to Mark Sinker. The transcription, exclusive to *Music Technology*, offers many fascinating insights into the mind of one of music's most elusive of heroes, the figurehead of a fanatical cult following and the mainstay of a very singular musical genre. This is the man, not the machine – PW

arts & KRAFTS

Interview by
Mark Sinker

What has been the most significant technological development during your career?

"I think this must be the availability of the first monophonic synthesisers, because before that it used to be these big machines from Bell Laboratories or Government radio stations. Being able, as an individual musician – an independent musician – to get your hands on some of this electronic gear. I think that was the most significant change, around the late '60s. And now the next phase, the digital technology, everything becoming more modular, this is the next big step."

Did you yourself have any access to synthesisers before that?

"No. And I remember the first monophonic synthesiser I bought was the same price as a Volkswagen. So that was the choice to make. I think that's a very good comparison, because the synthesisers were giving freedom of movement to musicians."

Did those machines offer more freedom than today's, in that they were free of presets?

"Yes, they would give you just a three-page typewritten guide, saying 'this is the oscillator, this is the filter' – and that was it. Then you would go home and fiddle around and turn knobs; there were no pre-programmed sounds in it because it was all analogue – the whole range. I don't like today's pre-programmed sounds so much; we always work on them, if we use them at all. We never really find anything that comes from other people's ears that we keep. We always turn knobs, that has been a continuing priority. We used to design our own synthesisers as well. In those days we had sequencers built, because they were very rare. Only the very big Moog modular systems had sequencers. And then we would take drum boxes and re-design them with our engineers and electricians into a playable form, and adjust these with the sequencers, and those to tape, so that everything was synchronised."

Is Kling-Klang in a state of constant change?

"Sure, we call it the electronic garden, because it is continually regenerating, and is now completely modular so that we can pick out certain units and replace them. And what we did was we kept all our old synthesisers from all the different phases, in storage, because they were of very little value once they were superseded, but today we have all this old analogue equipment back in place! It's really very good. Moving over to digital has in no way superseded analogue, especially as very often digital technology is only used to sample analogue sources, whether it's re-sampling old sounds off the original tapes, or from sound sources.

We have always considered any sound source. It's just sound. Kling-klang is the German word for sound, so we have always had a fascination for sound."

Where do the themes of travelling and movement stem from – as in Autobahn and Trans-Europe Express?

"That came from the early days of touring in Germany. We would be continuously moving. We live in this big industrial area on the Rhine-Ruhr, and we would be going to the next city to play there and coming back at night, travelling through that landscape at night. From this came the idea of doing a song, and so we would tune the synthesisers to sound like motor horns. Also on the artwork we would have road symbols, or a Volkswagen. So it was personal experiences, worked into the music."

Apart from movement, much of the imagery you employ, especially on the video screens on stage, shows a vision of the future from the past – from the '40s and '50s, not a contemporary futurism.

"Well, what we were very much considering was the simultaneity of past, present and future today. I think visions and memories synchronise together, and I think certain things from a little way back look more towards the future than things which are pseudo-modern today. The real modernism may be somewhere else, a different way to what we think is modern."

Did you have any early training in improvisation?

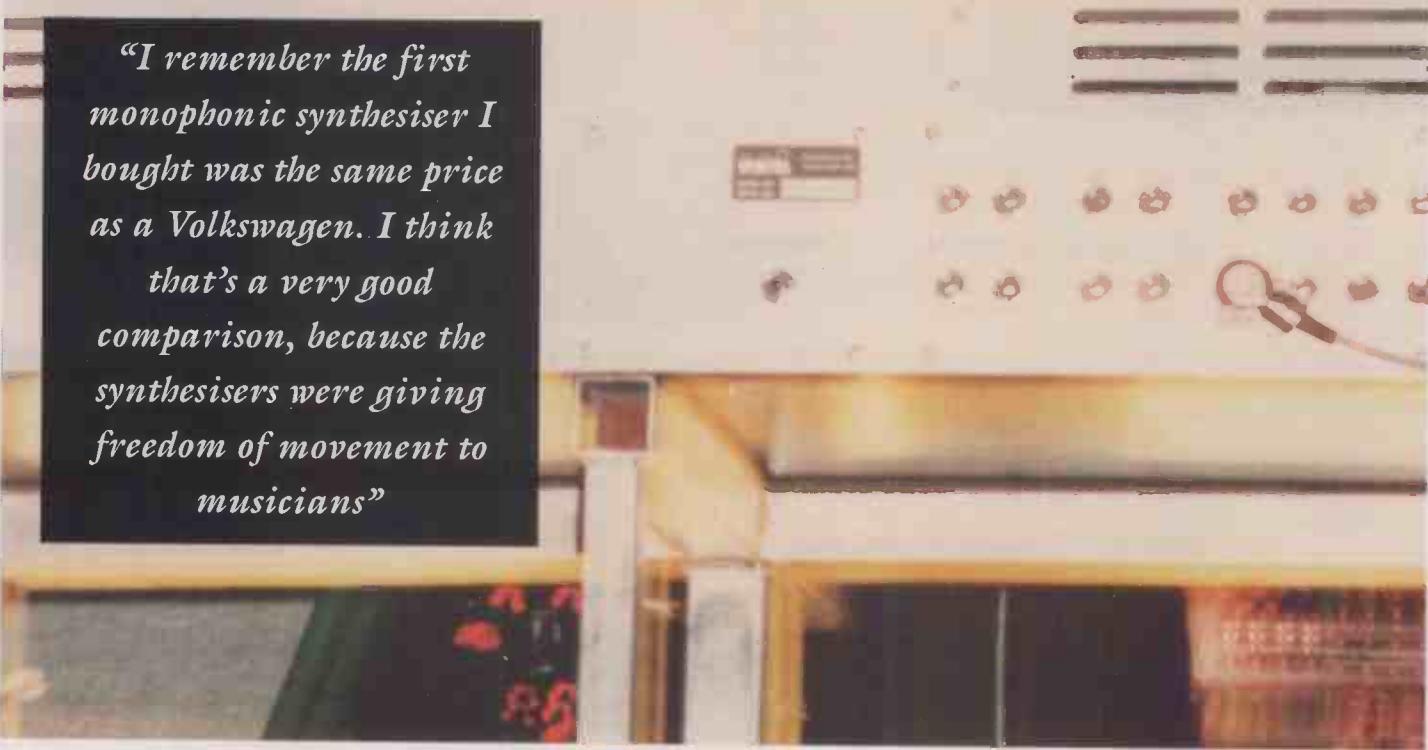
"No, we were trained in classical music, but we left that behind and got into the whole situation in post-war Germany, asking 'what is our music, what is the sound of post-war Germany?' That was the question. Then I met Florian at some improvisational courses in the late '60s, at a very open time when people would meet on University music courses and quickly get into improvising. From there we set up our Kling-Klang studio in 1970, to have a base, with a little Revox machine and echo loops – very simplistic equipment.

"That was a time, in the late '60s, when everything came into question, especially in Düsseldorf. We would see people like Fluxus and Josef Beuys on the art scene, and we were fascinated by Happenings and especially the music involved with them. So we worked with a couple of independent artists who wanted sounds, creating sound patterns. It was a very open scene, with nothing really decided. We took it from there.

"There was no big music industry, like today, no structure and so there was nobody to tell you which way to go." >>



"I remember the first monophonic synthesiser I bought was the same price as a Volkswagen. I think that's a very good comparison, because the synthesisers were giving freedom of movement to musicians"



» A lot of the British 'progressive' bands of that time were interested in new sounds, but didn't seem to know exactly what to do with them...

"I think that was the situation here; there was already too much marketing and merchandising put into a structure through the music business. There was nothing like that in Düsseldorf, it was non-existent. It was a completely anarchic situation. And as you probably know, we did it in the Düsseldorf area, while in Cologne it was Can, other bands in Munich, Tangerine Dream in Berlin; it was all happening with different aspects coming from the different cities. We would meet at festivals, there was some knowledge of each other, but we came clearly from the Düsseldorf scene."

Technology has come to a point where it's not only creating sounds, but also a kind of space - a virtual space...

"Sure, when I read about this a couple of years ago, it was like a big development in the visual arts - but we have been doing it for 20 years, and especially when you see the show, you'll see that it's a virtual reality. We are real, but with the images we create other realities. There are no actual cars involved, but you can see them, hear them, maybe you can smell them, or trains or whatever. So music is a virtual reality, it comes to you and you actually enter a different space."

"Just walking around wearing a Walkman completely transforms your reality. That's

where musical developments were very much ahead of the optical. Music is in advance on this level because you don't have things across your eyes, you are still alert to your environment. That's also why music is so important in today's society; over the last 20 or 30 years its importance has been enormous – maybe even over-important, although it's hard for me to say that! Maybe music should just be one part of life."

It was, perhaps before the gramophone, and even after it, while it was still a limited luxury – but now everybody hears music all the time, everywhere...

"That's why when someone asks me about my top ten records I always include silence – turn off the record player and that is one of the most important sounds. And I hate all this zombie-like tranquiliser music, conditioning people in stores and in lifts and in all kinds of places, it's just pollution. We always call it pollution music, and it has to go, because we want to hear the real sounds – I want to hear the sound of the escalator, I want to hear the sound of the 'plane, the sound of the train. Good-sounding trains, for themselves, they are musical instruments. That muzak, that uninteresting music from uninteresting people, we have to stop it. Whenever we can, in America, we have these little wire clippers, so we can clip the cables wherever we see them... We want to make people aware of reality, by bringing out in our compositions the sounds of cars and trains, and ideas of the beauty of the sounds themselves."

There is a real sense of three dimensions on Electric Café, for example...

"You can make it three-dimensional with your imagination, and electronics are just perfect for this because of the sounds they propose. Rather than coming from a traditional instrument, which is always located in one place, you can place them in the mix and have them moving, and when that happens things like spatial alterations occur in your head. There is panning and there is also reverb for depth. You establish dimensions, something like a short reverb to sound very close, and something like a cathedral reverb to 'fool' yourself that it is very far away.

"Stockhausen has built this round building with speakers, where the audience sits in the middle and there is sound all around. There has always been panning and other devices in Musique Concrete, also."

The sounds themselves seem to have changed over the years, somehow becoming less 'noisy'...

"We've always used noise – music is organized noise – we haven't changed our attitude towards noise, but maybe with today's computer-generated noise and things like that, it's getting more 'bleepy', whereas before it was more physically concrete. But this is not intentional, it has just happened and it could easily change back... People always responded well to the 'noises' we used from the beginning, we always created an interest, whether locally or in the next city. So that was never a problem. In those days, I think the time was ready, people wanted to hear new sounds. Everybody was interested; we couldn't even do all of the things people wanted to hear, it was such an open-minded time. We definitely could have done more than we did."

What are the significant differences between tape-splicing and digital editing, apart from the new technology being faster?

"It's not necessarily faster. But you make final decisions when splicing, you cut the tape and that's it. When editing on the computer you can always go back. And with

On stage at Leicester Polytechnic Arena, 18th June 1992. Left to right: Ralf Hütter, Henning Schmitz, Fritz Hilpert, Florian Schneider.



Recommended Listening

Albums

as ORGANISATION:
Tone Float (RCA, 1970)

as KRAFTWERK:
Kraftwerk (Vertigo, 1972)
Ralf & Florian (Vertigo, 1973)
Autobahn (Vertigo, 1974)
Radio-Activity (Capitol, 1975)
Trans-Europe Express (Capitol, 1977)
The Man Machine (Capitol, 1978)
Computer World (EMI, 1981)
Electric Café (EMI, 1986)
The Mix (EMI, 1991)

Singles

Autobahn (highlights) (1974)
Radio-Activity (1975)
Trans-Europe Express (1977)
The Robots (1978)
Neon Lights (1978)
Pocket Calculator (1981)
Computer Love/The Models (1981)
Showroom Dummies (1982)
Tour De France (1983)
Musique Non-Stop (1986)
The Telephone Call (1987)
The Robots (remix) (1991)
Radio-Activity (remix) (1991)

tapes you have so many splices and bits of tape you can't always remember where your piece of music is! It gets over-complicated. With computer programs it's all in the memory, and the machine lets you recall instantly. It's like an expansion of your own memory, whereas tape is an expansion of your memory but you can't always remember where your memory is! Philosophically that's very interesting, I think."

Everyone has the idea that you spend all your time working in the studio, but your actual output is not that prolific...

"No, only when it's finished, when we actually wait to make new steps or developments. We'll put something out only when it's possibly relevant for us or for other people. *The Mix*, for example, was old material but it was working to digital for the first time. The last album was from the mid-'80s and was half and half – still recorded on analogue tape with a couple of pieces of digital equipment involved. And now the recording is completely digital, with the studio set up for a modular console and re-programming, and putting all our sounds onto digital media.

"Everything was working OK, and we thought 'let's do 'Autobahn' – right, how does it go?!' And we listened to the record, which we hadn't heard for a while, and we said, 'no, let's do it differently'. So we mixed it around, digitised the recordings – the original tracks – and as a documentation of this part of the work in the studio we put out *The Mix*. It's a mix of our developments – then and now – with a lot of literal studio mixing involved – channels, sequencers, tracks.

"That's how we remember the music, also – we never write anything down. We read music, but not very well, and we don't really care because you can't write down our music anyway. Notation is a restriction on music. It's for the museum. I was always bored when I had to read these notes; it's nothing, it's just paper. Notes on paper. The sound is what interests me. And how we do it. Very rarely we would make a little motif, to denote a certain sound, but that's it. Just so that we would not forget, not for others to read. And sometimes we forget anyway, which I think is also very important, because if it comes back to you from the different stages of memory, if it reminds you of itself, then maybe it's something very strong."

On stage, how much is pre-recorded, to the extent of being unalterable?

"It's not pre-recorded, it's in digital storage. There's no tapes, it's all run from the computer. Effectively we can change as much as we like, cut off tracks, add tracks, mute, double. That's what we do – complete access. We can make any track longer, according to the gig. Certain things are written, but certain compositions can have a start point and be totally open-ended, with the programming running into a loop function. It can be however we want it.

"The only thing that's really written from start to finish is 'The Robots', with output from the computer to synchronise the actual robots on stage, so that their movements are all computer-controlled and they are always identical – very robotic. All the other compositions are just written as basic sequences. There is something

» similar to jazz in that regard, I think, like where they play any song, whether Miles Davis playing Cindy Lauper, or in the old days any silly Broadway song, and just take it as a 'flying carpet' for improvisation."

It's interesting that improvisational music really grew in significance as recorded music became available...

"At the same time as the magnetophone, yes, an important historical coincidence, perhaps, as the dependency on written music receded."

The magnetophone was invented in Germany before the war, yet not really used for music until after, and I've always been amused by the fact that it was Bing Crosby who introduced that technology to America, paying for these Telefunken models to be taken over there and put into research studios to see what could be done with them - effectively starting the modern recording industry...

"Probably his greatest achievement. Much better than his singing."

Has the wide availability of recorded music helped to make it less policed, more politically subversive?

"Well, it's not allowed in all areas, and not allowed in all countries, despite the technology. For example, we were not allowed in East Germany, and I can only assume it was because we were using their technology in a different way - because they had the technology, they had tapes, radio, cameras, but they used them for state security. They had to secure the state from their own people. A very strange concept, very Orwellian. We've haven't played there yet, hopefully this year. But we played Poland, for *Solidarity*, and in the end it does show the subversive character of electronics - it's uncontrollable."

Instead of there being one central broadcasting station transmitting to every citizen, it's kind of the other way round, with several stations for each person... or at least that's the potential.

"Yes, in the first place it's a possibility, so let's use it. But if they all play the Top 40 then it's the same situation again - although I don't think that's going to be the case."

Was it a surprise to you that your music was so successful in, for example, Chicago and Detroit?

"Yes, but we always had a strongly favourable reaction from black audiences in America, even before house and techno. I remember somebody took me to a club in about '76 or '77, when *Trans-Europe Express* was out, and it was some loft club in New York, after hours, just as the DJ culture was starting, when the DJs began making their own records, their own grooves. And they took sections from 'Metal On Metal' on

"That muzak, that uninteresting music from uninteresting people, we have to stop it. Whenever we can, in America, we have these little wire clippers, so we can clip the cables wherever we see them..."

Trans-Europe Express, and when I went in it was going 'boom-crash - boom-crash', so I thought 'oh, they're playing the new album'. But it went on for ten minutes! And I thought what's happening?! That track is only something like two or three minutes! And later I went to ask the DJ and he had two copies of the record and he was mixing the two, and of course it could go on as long as people were dancing...

"This was a real development, because in those days you fixed a certain time on the record, under twenty minutes a side in order to get the print into vinyl. It was a technological decision to say how long the song would last. We always used to play different timings live, but there we were in this after hours club, and it was ten minutes, twenty minutes of the recording, because the vibe was there."

Do you consciously go from one 'concept' to the next with each album?

"Not really; we sometimes have several concepts, loose ideas to work on, but we never have very much unreleased material, just a couple of test tapes maybe; not really

Re-organisation

Following a few changes in the Kraftwerk orbit, long-time band members Wolfgang Flür and Karl Bartos have left to form Electric Music with other former collaborators. Still based in Düsseldorf, Electric Music are rumoured to be working with OMD's Andy McLeskey, and have already completed an EP with Sheffield's LFO to be released on Warp Records. There is also an album with Information Society on Tommy Boy Records, and a remix of Afrika Bambaataa's 'Planet Rock'. With collaborations also suggested with 808 State and William Orbit, it seems that Electric Music are set to carry the Kraftwerk tradition into wider areas, and an album is promised for Spring 1993.

Meanwhile Hütter and Schneider were joined on last year's tour - to promote *The Mix* - by Fritz Hilpert and Fernando Albrantes, although Albrantes was replaced by Henning Schmitz for three UK dates this year, at The University Of East Anglia, Norwich; Leicester Polytechnic Arena; and Manchester's G-Mex Centre. The latter was a Greenpeace anti-Sellafield campaign benefit gig, also featuring B.A.D.II, Public Enemy and U2, for which Norwich and Leicester were low-key warm-ups. This flurry of activity raised hopes of a new Kraftwerk album, but there has been no news to date.

like somebody sitting on a song collection. It's only recently that we've realised that we have a catalogue; we would just go into a concept very deeply and then put it out. They're done over quite a short period of time. The rest of the time we work on the studio, or on visuals, getting things together. We're now involved in the multi-media aspects of music, very much. We've always 'seen' our music, but in those days we couldn't do anything about it. Now we can put words on a screen, create images - like on 'Autobahn', just a simple signpost - any way to illustrate the music."

You were in the right place at the right time, but is it harder now for bands to get into a position like yours, where so much is available to you?

"I think we predicted that electronic music was going to be the next phase in popular music - *volksmusik* - and people said it was crazy, very elitist, intellectual, and we had to say no, this was everyday music - cars, noises, microphones picking up music for everybody. In those days everybody had tape recorders for parties, to record your own sounds from the radio. But with today's technology you can do more, with little drum machines, synthesisers, basic computer programs. At Kling-Klang we have a lot of equipment because we have developed over a long period. But starting today on the technological side would be easier, I think. But it's still down to ideas, to deciding what are we going to play, what are we going to do with this stuff?"

And what are you going to do next with this stuff?

"What we're doing now is on diskettes, the music is not even fixed. We send it over to here, or to friends in New York, and what we are doing is also music from different places at the same time, by hooking in and syncing up by modem. Data transferring between computer workstations - when this really happens the music will come pouring out, I'm sure."



Acknowledgements

Special thanks must go to Andrew Slego, Ian Calder and Paul Wilkinson for their help in the preparation of this feature. An excellent Kraftwerk fanzine entitled *Activität* is available from Ian Calder at 108 Cummings Park Crescent, Northfield, Aberdeen AB2 7AR, where you can also send ideas and information about the band. A special Kraftwerk convention is planned for Blackpool on 21st February 1993: details from Paul Wilkinson, 80 Poulton Old Road, Layton, Blackpool FY3 7LJ.

SAMPLING.... A NEW DEFINITION



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The incredible user-friendliness of the SO1 also allows you to sample your own sounds without hassle; pianos, guitars, strings, drum loops, all can be made without complication.

All this adds up to a very usable sampler that is quick, easy and convenient to use. When you combine the features with a sound quality that will reproduce everything from the deepest bass to really sparkling highs, you have a sound module that will never go out of date. And the price? A very modest £699. Define your own sounds on the new Akai SO1.

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Replay 16

Sampler for the Atari ST

Text by
Ian Waugh

With the second-hand market about to be flooded with cheap, redundant STs, Microdeal have just thrown a lifeline to potential Falcon buyers by releasing a professional, 16-bit sampler guaranteed to give their old machines a new purpose in life...

You could be forgiven for thinking that Microdeal have cornered the market in samplers for the Atari ST – largely because they have! Hot on the heels of ST Replay VIII, Replay Professional and a dozen other Replay variants comes Replay 16.

It breaks new ground in the world of computer-based samplers because it's the first low-cost 16-bit sampling device for any home computer including the Amiga and the PC (and of course, there's no low-cost anything for the

Mac!). But is there room for another computer-based sampler? Well, not only can Replay 16 produce excellent quality samples in its own right, it can also edit those from external samplers. Interested? Then read on...

The box contains an L-shaped sampling cartridge, a spiral-bound manual and four disks which contain three programs and a set of samples. Like the other Microdeal samplers, Replay 16 was developed by AVR and the programs – Editor, MIDI Play and Drumbeat – will be familiar to most Replay owners, though all versions of the software have been updated. They will run in any resolution from medium to high and will work with any 'official' resolution and graphic enhancement board.

The cartridge has mono phono In and Out sockets plus a level control to set the recording level. The sound can be output from the ST's monitor or through the cartridge Out to an amp and speaker (or your hi-fi) – although MIDI Play, Drumbeat and samples played at a high speed can only be output through the cartridge.

The Editor is where existing Replay users will see the greatest changes. It's also the most important part of the package. The new software adopts a windows and icons approach. This is not used by many programs and certainly few on the ST. As well as the menu bar, there are icons on the desktop which you can move around the screen and click on to activate. I love it!

The program furnishes you with options on a 'need to know' basis – a little like your agent. Functions which are not available at any particular time are either not shown or greyed out.

When loaded, samples appear as icons on the desktop. These can be opened into windows which may be resized and repositioned. A sample window shows the sample's filepath, its type and resolution. This goes so far as to tell you how many pieces of sample data are represented by one screen pixel! Below this is the length of the sample on view in the window, followed by the total sample length (either in seconds or memory units) and the sample speed.

When you select New Sample from the File menu, the Editor creates a new file for it on disk. You can open an 8-bit or 12/16-bit sample file in mono or stereo (you can't actually record in stereo but you can process stereo samples) and you can set the sample length in seconds, samples or frames (useful for film and video timing). The



Editor main screen (A) with sample in mid edit showing lots of luvverly icons

program defaults to a sample length of one quarter of the free memory.

The secret of getting a good sample is to get as much signal into the machine without overloading the input. The Record Control panel displays the incoming waveform and you adjust the level control on the cartridge until the peaks are just short of the upper and lower limits. Then you cross your fingers and click the sample button.

Pre-Sample records incoming material in a loop until stopped, thereby allowing you to select what you want to sample *after* the event. Don't you wish life was like that? The Set-Frequency menu houses two powerful functions. One lets you assign a different Play/Record speed to a sample and the other will actually Re-Sample it so it plays at a different speed.

A RAM indicator gives a visual indication of how much RAM is free. Clicking on it provides a more detailed description of the samples in memory. You can get info about samples which are on disk here, too. Tape transport type controls record and play samples and move through them.

Anyone who has dabbled with any kind of sampler will know how difficult it is to produce good loops. To help you out, Replay 16 has a Join function which butts the end of the loop against the start of it at the highest resolution – so you can see how close the two points match in order to minimise clicks and glitches. You can also scroll through both sides of the sample manually and, with the Snap buttons, move straight to the next point where the sample crosses the centre line – the quietest part of the sample.

I confess I was a little disappointed not to see an automatic loop function – this is something that computers are good at, after all, and it would have been nice to be able to play the sample from the Join window. As it is, you have to select some likely loop points, exit the window, try it and then go back for another attempt.

I found I was quite successful at looping complex samples – including some Gregorian chants – although more pure sounds such as pan pipes invariably produced

a click even after fine tuning by hand. So I introduced it to the delights of Fade Looping and to my amazement found that this produced an excellent pan pipe loop.

You can define 10 samples as a Set which will load in one operation. A Set contains info about where the samples are on disk, not the samples themselves. Samples can also be played from a MIDI keyboard although this is basically to test them at different pitches.

Revolutionary resolutions

The two sampler specs most often quoted are the sampling rate or frequency and the resolution. The sampling rate describes how *often* samples of a sound are taken. The higher the rate, the more samples will be taken in a given time and therefore the more accurate the digital representation of the sound will be.

The resolution is the accuracy or *fineness* of the measuring scale. For example, you'll get a more accurate indication of the length of an object if you measure it to the nearest inch rather than the nearest foot. The earliest samplers only had a resolution of 8 or 12 bits. Most current systems are 16-bit. The 8-bit resolution of many computer-based samplers is generally considered too coarse for professional use. Even 12-bit resolution is audibly inferior to 16 bits.

Talk about sampling rates and we get involved with Nyquist's theorem. This basically states that to reproduce accurately a certain sound you must sample it at twice its highest frequency. CDs use a rate of 44.1kHz, which is more than double our accepted threshold of hearing. However, if you are sampling sounds with predominantly low frequencies you can often get good results by sampling at lower frequencies.

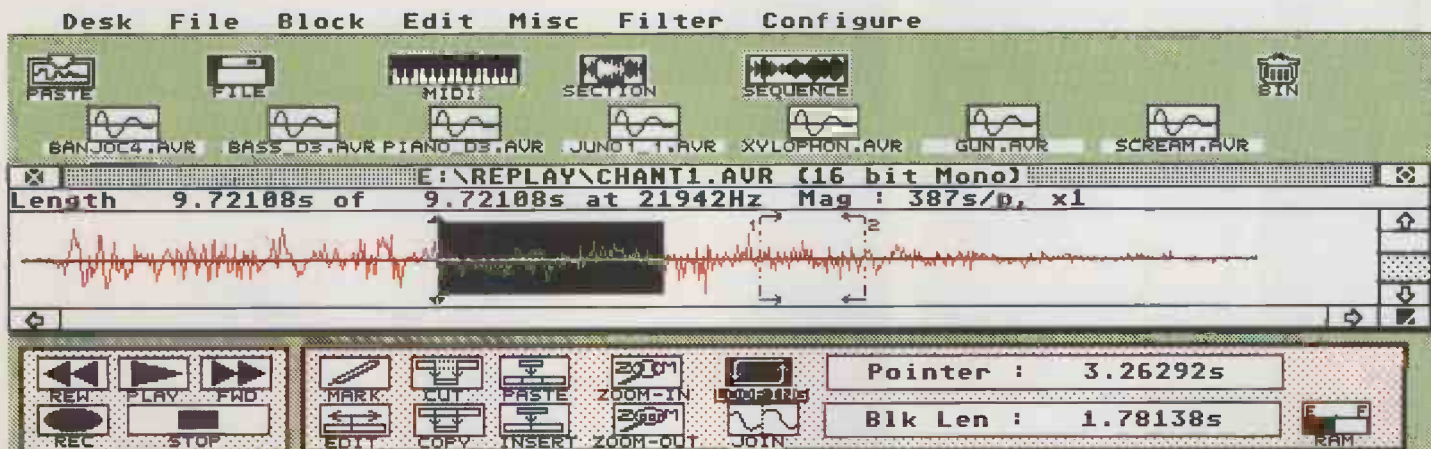
In case you're wondering why all samplers don't sample at the highest possible rate and resolution it's because they need the hardware to do the job and the higher the spec, the higher the price. Also, the more data you have, the more memory you need to store in. And to be fair to all concerned, there is a bit (sorry!) more to manufacturing a sampler than simply high rates and resolutions.

Replay 16 offers 16-bit sampling at sample rates from 5.5kHz up to 50kHz. At best, the quality is up to pro standards.

The samples themselves are a touch noisy when played outside their original tuning. The Editor doesn't apply filtering on playback – unlike the MIDI Play program.

There's a simple sample sequencer which will play samples in, er... sequence. It can be used to trigger complete samples or sections of them defined using Blocks. It works rather like a cue list and includes 'wait' instructions.

The SFX section houses reverb, echo and flange effects which can be applied directly to the sample. The Filter menu offers FFT (Fast Fourier Transform – the famous 'mountains' display) plus Fast and Slow Filter options. Use FFT to see which part of a sample you want



Editor main screen (B)

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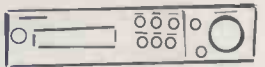


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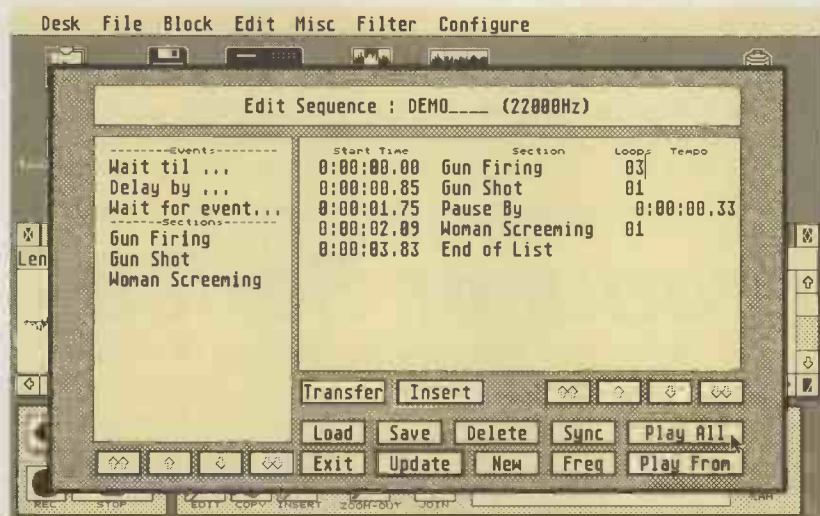
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The Sample Sequencer in the Editor – Sound FX for you favourite cop movie

►► to filter and then one of the filter options to do the business. The Slow filters are slow but accurate, the Fast filters are fast but less accurate. The manual contains several helpful explanatory pages about digital filtering but warns that a slow filter on long samples could take hours. That's my kind of program – time for the pub!

The File menu includes useful options such as Rename File, Delete File and Format.

All things considered, the Editor software is excellent, although I did experience a couple of lock-up problems – intermittent, of course, like all good problems should be. However, recent news from AVR is that an update has been produced which fixes the bugs.

Unless you get your jollies stashing disks of digital data under your bed, you'll want to play the samples you have created/edited/nicked. With MIDI Play you can play the samples from a connected MIDI keyboard or external sequencer.

The program can hold up to 128 samples at once – RAM permitting, which thankfully, can be loaded in one batch. Each sample can have its own Speed, Pitch, Volume, Pitch Bend and Loop characteristics and can be assigned to a range of notes – although the system is only four-note polyphonic. You can store up to four different keyboard configurations at once using any mix of samples in memory.

The program assumes that the lowest note in the keyboard assignment will be the pitch the sample was recorded at, so you must retune the sample if you want to play lower notes. You can assign Equal and Just tuning temperaments to the samples, too!

The program looks at the sample's header to see if there are any MIDI assignment details in it (which you would set up in the Editor). If not, it assumes it is a non-pitched sample (such as a drum) and simply places the sample in the keyboard map without altering its tuning.

If a sample isn't looping properly, you can call up a waveform display which shows the sample and the loop points. There is also a Join display rather like that in the

Editor, and – what's this? – an Autoloop function! Actually, it's similar to the Snap function in the Editor, but it tries to match up directions of the waveform's slope when you move the cursor – not just select places where the sample crosses the centre line. Works pretty well, too.

The more samples you play back at once, the more the computer's processing power has to be split and the lower the playback quality. You can select the number of voices – from one to four – that you want to play in order to maximise the quality and a Filters option helps

Stereo samples and sample dumping

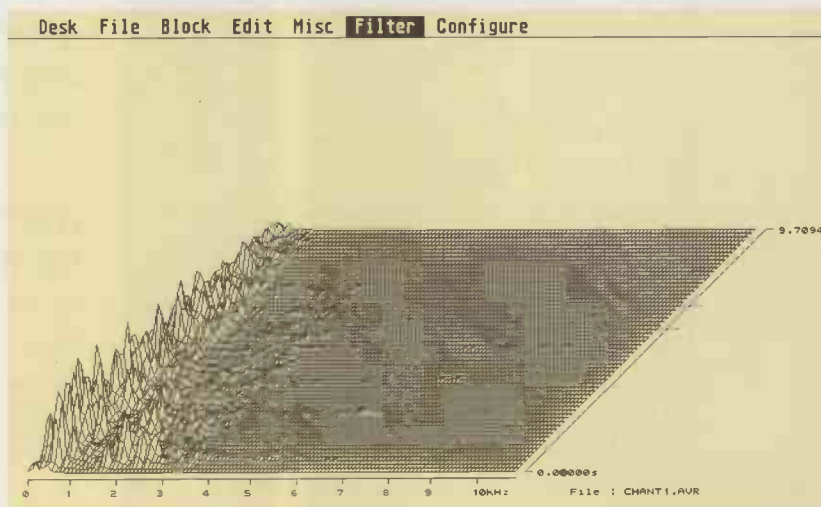
Replay 16 is a mono sampler yet it has lots of stereo options. It can load stereo samples and convert mono samples into stereo ones – and vice versa – although it can't record in stereo. The mono to stereo conversion process simply involves creating two identical channels from the mono sample which you can process individually.

Replay 16 supports MIDI Sample Dumps. You can transfer samples from a stand-alone sampler, edit them and dump them back. You can hear the results of your editing immediately through the Replay 16 cartridge. You don't have to continually transfer the sample back to the sampler to hear what a mess you've made of it! The downside is that you can't edit any of the external sampler's special settings such as envelopes and effects. Also, Replay can only handle one loop while many samplers have several or divide their samples into various sections.

As most samplers only have a restrictive LCD on which to do your editing (the Roland S-series samplers being a notable exception), it could prove easier to use Replay 16 for basic sample editing and finish off the program in the external sampler – although it's obviously not as flexible as dedicated sample editing software. The manual includes a button - press by button - press account of how to transfer a sample between Replay 16 and an Akai S1000, and AVR offers to modify the software for customers who are having problems with the MIDI Dump facility. Can't say fairer than that!

reduce aliasing. This is very noticeable with the filter switched off although a certain amount of noise is still noticeable with the Filters on.

If you're using the samples as part of a larger arrangement, perhaps with other instruments, the First Law of Layering will apply – the more sounds that occur ►►



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Pascal Gabriel is one of the leading lights on the current dance scene. He has worked with such well-known names as **Bomb The Bass**, **S-Express**, **Coldcut**, **Jimmy Somerville**, **Erasure**, **EMF**, and many more. This CD is different to any other available. It is NOT A COMPILATION of sounds from last year's records, but a resource of new sounds to help you make the HIT RECORDS OF NEXT YEAR. People are describing it as 'fabulous', 'fresh', and 'superb value'. In the past a library like this would take years to build-up and a huge amount of work and skill to achieve. Now it can be yours in days for only £49! - Why wait! ■ "If you were putting together a list of the top people involved in dance music, you couldn't leave out Pascal Gabriel...extremely varied and usable...no matter what kind of electronic music you produce you can actually imagine using just about all the sounds included. 9/10" - Future Music, Nov 92. ■ "...house gold dust...breaks new ground..." - MT, Dec '91. ■ "...off-beat, quite distinctive, and highly usable. Better still you almost certainly won't have heard them before...useful and memorable...a revelation...uniformly excellent...the basis for many a hit." - SOS, Jan, '91. ■ Used by Pet Shop Boys, Propaganda, and Technotronic ■ Loads of Drum & Percussion Loops & Breaks ■ Guitar Hooks and FX ■ Vocal Riffs & Effects ■ Hits, Scratches & Drop-Ins ■ Countless Snares and Kicks ■ Synth FX & Bases ■ Brass & String Hits, FX and Runs! ■ Film & Media Snatches ■ Orchestral Effects ■ And Much, Much, Much More! ■ Over 1000 Samples, 72:23 minutes



Volume 3 - Dancin' Dave Ruff's Drum Samples

There are a number of drum sample CDs on the market. Their quality varies, we felt they were all somewhat out of touch with current trends in drum sounds. This CD is the result of exhaustive recording sessions with top session drummer David Ruff and features modern acoustic drum sounds. Dave's worked with some of the best in the biz - **Sinead O'Connor**, **Mica Paris**, **Yazz**, **Nenah Cherry**, **Alison Moyet**, **Aztec Camera**, and **World Party** to name but a few. Not only does this CD feature what we believe to be the finest and most modern set of drum samples - but also some brand new loops that are really far too good to make so widely available. If you've a sampler and you ever use drums - you need this CD! ■ "Recording quality is very spacious and clean...one of the best sounding bundles of rhythms you're likely to hear...should be snapped up by rhythm-hungry sample owners straight away. 8/10" - Future Music, Nov 92 ■ "Recording quality is good...patterns employed cover a wide range of styles...He more or less has a beat for all seasons, including emulations of many commonly used breaks, and there are no copyright problems." - SOS, May 92. ■ Over 263 hits and 140 loops, 70:53 minutes ■ Snares, Kicks, Hats, Toms, and Cymbals ■ Performance Velocities - 4 or more! ■ Miking Variations ■ Modern Usable Drum Sounds ■ RSS Samples ■ PLUS over 140 brand new hot drums loops - too good to sell! ■ Live & Sequenced Loops! and Much More! ■ Superb value at Just £49!

Volume 4 - Coldcut's Kleptomania!

Coldcut are regarded by many as the UK's most innovative dance artists/remixers. Aside from their own successful recording career and **Kiss FM** radio show, many will know them for launching the careers of both **Lisa Stansfield** and **Yazz** - now established as international stars. Apart from one or two classics this CD once again conforms to our policy of placing originality as our top priority. If you're serious about making dance music you're sure to be on the look out for hot new samples to make 'The Music of Now', not a rehash of the past. As with our Pascal Gabriel CD - if you want inspiration, originality and the freshest sounds around. Look no further. ■ "Coldcut's samples are raw, wicked and packed into the terraces...the quality of the music content is very high...quite brilliant, and definitely going into my \$770...this CD represents another 'must have' for any serious dance enthusiast." - SOS, May 92 ■ The finest selection of ultra-rare loops ever compiled - over 400 unbelievable loops! ■ Male & Female Spoken & Sung Vocals ■ Coldcut's Exclusive - Hed & HPN Samples ■ Superb range of mega scratches! ■ Media snatches, FX, Robot Vox ■ Full selection of drum & perc samples ■ Hits, Stops, Breaks, Synth & Bass samples ■ BEYOND DESCRIPTION - HIGHLY USABLE! - Superb value at Just £49! ■ "Say Kids! What time is it?" ■ Over 1165 Samples, Over 73 minutes



Volume 2 - Danny Cummings' & Miles Bould's Rhythm of Life

This CD combines the highest possible recording quality with the finest performances you're ever likely to witness. Acknowledged by our professional customers as the finest sampling CD on the market. This CD shows why **George Michael**, **Dire Straits**, **Pet Shop Boys**, **Tina Turner**, **Julia Fordham**, **John Martyn**, **The Beloved**, **ABC**, and many more have chosen these guys to give them the groove. We presented them with 8 backing tracks and recorded their performances to multi-track, producing 49 tracks of dynamic, wide-ranging performances. After extensive editing and remixing, in some cases incorporating Roland's RSS processing, we have compressed these sessions onto one CD. Now you can give your productions the ultimate groove. Get this CD and get a taste of the best in percussion. There's nothing else in it's class. ■ "...as good as the best in the Synclavier library...inspirational...it's sonic credentials are impeccable...A connoisseur's product." - SOS, July 92 ■ "The production is superb: the recordings of the different instruments are outstanding and stereo panning is employed extensively...a very classy CD...for those who need access to a library of specialist percussion sounds." - Future Music, Nov 92. ■ Around 55 minutes of percussion grooves ■ Unparalleled performance and recording quality ■ RSS Samples plus Mixes ■ PLUS an extremely comprehensive collection of single hits and Much More! ■ Superb value at Just £49! ■ Instant Inspiration!

FREE CD OFFER!

NOW that's what I call Sampling!

AMG are proud to introduce the World's first compilation sample CD. This CD acts as an ideal introduction to the HitSound Producer Series that is respected Worldwide as the market leader. It is also a superb supplementary volume for people already successfully using Producer Series CDs as it features around 50 NEW samples from each of the existing Producer Series artists namely ■ **Pascal Gabriel** (Bomb The Bass/S-Express/Inspiral Carpets/EMF etc.) ■ **Danny Cummings & Miles Bould** (Dire Straits/George Michael/Pet Shop Boys/Tina Turner/Beloved/Julia Fordham) ■ **Dave Ruff** (Sinead O'Connor/Alison Moyet/Mica Paris/Neneh Cherry) ■ **Coldcut** (Lisa Stansfield/Yazz) ■ **Pete Gleadall** (Pet Shop Boys/George Michael) ■ **Norman Cook** (Beats International/James Brown/Fine Young Cannibals) ■ **JJ Jeczalik** - The Art of Noise ■ **Neil Conti** (Bowie/Level 42/Robert Palmer/Primal Scream/Thomas Dolby) plus a preview of the forthcoming ■ **Ian Curnow & Phil Harding** (Talk Talk/PWL) CD. Plus new samples from the **Pure & Old Gold Synth**, and **Guitar** CDs.

That means ■ Loads of **RED HOT** Loops ■ Hundreds of choice drums and percussion hits ■ Specially selected Synth Sounds ■ High quality Guitar samples ■ A huge collection of classic dance samples - vocals, FX, and loads more! ■ Absolute exclusives from proven artists plus specially recorded sessions by the finest musicians ■ All on one superb CD! As if this was not good enough we are actually giving this CD away FREE with every order*.

To get your copy of 'Now that's what I call Sampling!' simply order any product currently held in stock by AMG and we will supply your order along with your free copy of 'Now that's what I call Sampling!'. This offer is applicable against any sampling CD, synth card, software, expansion, etc. AMG reserve the right to reject any order. One one CD per household. Enjoy your CD!



Please call for a FREE copy of our new catalogue

"I can safely say that I've listened to EVERY sample CD out there and you guys are definitely doing the most creative, unique, quality work in the field." - Chief Sound Designer, Roland R&D, LA on the Producer Series CDs.

HitSound Budget CDs - £35 each or £70 for the set of three

Volume One - Pure Gold Synth ■ "...assorted pad and atmosphere sounds include some stunning textures, and these are complemented by a superb range of bass sounds, and some quite surprising, quirky sounds dotted around. All in all, a good mix of high-class bread and butter sounds with a hefty dose of sonic icing on top." - SOS, Sept 1991. ■ 490 of the best samples in Valhalla's International Gold Series from WaveStation, T-Series, D70, M1, VFX, SY77, SY55, D50 and More!

Volume Two - Old Gold Synth ■ "This volume is a (Gold)mine of glorious sounds that, whilst certainly biased towards dance music, should be useful to anyone with a sampler and a little imagination." - SOS, Sept 1991. ■ A huge collection of classic synths - ARP2600, Moogs, MC202, Octave Cat, MKS70, Xpander and many more! Superb synths, superb sounds all on one £35 CD ready to sample! 721 Samples, 63:44 minutes

Volume Three - Guitar ■ "...instantly useable...perfect for creating a basic 'instant rock guitarist' on your sampler...Things get even better...it's really just like having a good selection of records from which to sample useful snatches of guitar, but without all the other music happening on top." - SOS, Sept 1991. ■ "...devastating results...Handle with care: highly recommended." - Music Technology, Oct 1991. ■ Chords, Bends, Solos, Licks and Effects from Electric, Wah Wah, Acoustic and 12 String Guitars - Clean and dirty versions! 605+ Samples, 63:18 minutes - Just £35.

■ "Altogether or individually, the HitSound CDs offer good value for money...an excellent start in bringing a great selection of expensive-sounding and highly usable instrument sounds to anyone with access to a sampler." - SOS, Sept 1991.



Volume 5 - Pete Gleadall's Samplography

Pete Gleadall's worked with the very best - **Pet Shop Boys, George Michael, Aswad, Soul II Soul, Living in a Box, Sly & Robbie**, and loads more. Over 1400 of the most usable, high quality sounds you're ever likely to hear. ■ "Samplography tells the story of 1980s/90s pop music as seen through the S1100 of Pete Gleadall...this set is one of the cleanest I've heard. ☆☆☆ 1/2" - SOS.

■ This CD features great synth basses, pads and leads from MKS80's, various Moogs, Prophet V's, etc. but on top of this there are loads of really choice drums and percussion loops, a phenomenal collection of really kicking guitar samples, amazing string sections, hits, gospel choirs, house pianos, Brass, FXs, Sub-basses, and more! There's even a 15 Meg S1000/1100 data section. Apart from Loops - everything you'll ever need. All this for just £49 fully inclusive.

Volume 6 - Norman Cook: Skip to my Loops



Beats International's Norman Cook has remixed such household names as **James Brown, Fine Young Cannibals** and **Double Trouble** aside from producing a string of hits, including international number ones, in his own right. Along with Coldcut's and Pascal Gabriel's CDs, this CD completes AMG's unholy trinity of dance samples. A massive selection of tempo-grouped, totally devastating drum and percussion loops project this CD into totally uncharted territory. Loops range from 84 BPM to obscenely fast and are complemented by a sensational collection of vocal ad libs, FX, Basses, Drum & Perc. Hits, Guitar, Reggae, Flute, and Synth samples plus loads more. Pascal, Coldcut, Norman - Great, Smashing, Super. Each unique and perfectly formed volume complements the other - totally different, uniformly original. If you require the best - there's no alternative. ■ Over 70 minutes of samples ■ Just £49 fully inclusive. Certainly the classiest dance sample CD - by miles.

Volume 7 - Neil Conti's Funky Drums from Hell



Neil Conti may be familiar to you as **Prefab Sprout's** drummer but he is also one of the UK's most respected session drummers and a main mover, behind London's Backstage jam sessions at the Borderline. He has worked with the likes of **David Bowie, Robert Palmer, Annie Lennox, Primal Scream, Thomas Dolby**, and many more. ■ This CD was specially recorded by Daniel Lazerus at London's famous Metropolis Studios and features some of the most serious breakbeats ever recorded. ■ These drums breaks have real attitude and are sure to become classics. ■ The CD also features specially extracted single hits that you can use in perfect context to customise breaks for yourself plus a selection of much sought after hi-hat patterns to inject a human touch into any production. ■ Funky Drums from Hell should be available by the time you read this for just £49 fully inclusive.

NEW FROM MASTERBITS

Special Edition Orchestra CD - "☆☆☆☆☆" - SOS

MasterBits have just released the second of their Special Edition CDs which is packed with hard-to-get quality full Orchestra samples. In addition to a full range of multi-samples with varying velocities, this CD also includes a selection of impossible-to-imitate hits, runs, swells, etc. Samples are split between full string section and complete orchestra samples. "...from the first spine-tinglingly good orchestral strikes I was hooked. This is something else...Have you heard the sounds in the very attractive Proteus 2? This lot are in a different league...this selection deserves it's 5-star rating...you might already have the entire Synclavier library on optical already. Still, but you've not heard better strings than these. Not a toy." - Sound On Sound, Sept. 92. "MasterBits have turned out a 'real masterpiece'...top class." - Soundcheck, Germany. This CD was originally developed for the Synclavier but now is available on CD for any sampler for just £65 - So you needn't sell Grandma after all! Volume 1 - Klaus Schultze - Classic Synths, Ltd. Edition. - £75.

MasterBits Sampling Collection

Sampling Collection 500 - M1 - D50 - K1 - K5 - K1000 - MiniMoog - TR808 - HR16 - Linn 9000 - Plus! Sampling Collection 600 - MicroWave - T1 - Proteus - K4 - VFXsd - VS - Xpander - Plus! Sampling Collection 700 - WaveStation - SY77 - SY22 - TR909 - TR606 - Prophet V - Elka Synthax - Plus! Sampling Collection 800 - VFX - PX1000 - HX1000 - RB - Matrix 1000 - MKS70 - Plus! Sampling Collection 900 - Just Released! - Emu Percussion - JD800 - SY99 - 01/W - Plus loads more! Sampling Collection 1000 - Coming Later - Kurzweil K2000 - Extended JD800 - Plus! Each volume costs £29. Buy the set of five for just £125.

Volume 8 - JJ Jeczalik's Art of Sampling



JJ Jeczalik has pioneered the use of sampling in modern music. From his early work as part of **Trevor Horn's** team working on **ABC's Lexicon of Love, Frankie's Relax** and **Two Tribes, Pet Shop Boys** early LPs and of course his own successful career as a member of the **Art of Noise** - he has always worked at the cutting edge. Few will forget all-time classics like 'Moments in Love' and 'Close (to the edit)', Art of Noise's 'Beatbox' even topped the US dance charts. Throughout his career his work has been widely acknowledged as amongst the most creative of it's genre. His CD includes classic samples culled from his Fairlight library that have inspired a generation of samplers right through to new samples appearing for the first time. Loads of drums, percussion, ethnic instruments, orchestral, brass, synths, basses, and all those amazing quirky sounds that defy description are included. The Art of Noise are one of the most sampled bands ever - this library includes a few classics that confirm why, plus tons of new stuff that's going to help you stay as far ahead of the game as JJ always has been. Expect the unexpected - due for December release - £49.

Volume 9 - Ian Curnow & Phil Harding Sample CD - Coming 'Soon'.

Like it or loathe it - you can't ignore it. And Ian & Phil were an integral part of the PWL success story that no one could ignore. The fact that they know what sounds help make songs into hit records is unquestionable. We'll be presenting their sound library on one CD - these won't mean you sell millions of records, but they'll certainly help. It'll be out as soon as they can find a spare minute to give us their samples.

Volume 10 - Megabass Remix! Sample CD



This new CD by leading megamixers **Megabass** is specially designed for professional remixing, megamixing, and DJs as well as anyone making dance music. Megabass have megamixed for **Madonna, C&C, 49ers, Erasure, Black Box, 2 Unlimited, PSBs, PWL** and more in addition to their own hits and exclusive mixes for **Radio 1, Kiss FM** and **Capital**. It features impossible to get ■ Bangs & Wooshes ■ Rave & Techno Samples ■ Vocal Hooks ■ MC Samples & Shouts ■ raggamuffin samples ■ in-demand techno and rave breakbeat loops to funky and weird loops ■ Plus loads more. ■ All on one CD for £49!

COMING SOON - Absolutely Ambient CD and new Ethnic-Dance Percussion CD

MasterBits Climax Collection Volume 6 - Vocals Volume 2 - Coming Soon!

Too new to say exactly what's going to feature - but it should include Rap and Soul vocals specially recorded for this CD. Due for release in December or January, please call for more info.

MasterBits Climax Collection

Climax Collection Volume One - Just Vocals - 664 Samples - A range of vocalists and styles featured - from Motown to Opera! Sustained, Percussive & Freestyle Vocals.

Climax Collection Volume Two - Classic - 551 Samples - Orchestral samples recorded with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. Typically 3 performance styles from every instrument in the Orchestra, full range of pitches at intervals of a minor third.

Climax Collection Volume Three - Guitar - A wide range of guitar samples including HM and Soul. Single notes plus highly processed licks.

Climax Collection Volume Four - Grooves - 280 New House, Dance, Rap, Funk and Techno Grooves.

Climax Collection Volume Five - Violin - New! - 486 samples (302 sustains, 184 attacks) plus 25 banks of S1000 data streams that load directly into the S1000 via the digital interface, ready-to-use - like a CD-ROM! Banks are up to 16 Meg in size and save hours of work!

Each volume costs £45. Buy all five for just £200.

WHATEVER NEXT?

AMG have pioneered new sampling ideas in many ways, and now we're going to be the first to ask for your advice. We are about to embark on what we are sure will result in the most effective, original and inspirational sample library ever. But we'd like to make sure you're going to like what we're about to do. So please write to us, or fax us on 073088 390, to let us know exactly what you'd like us to feature. You can be sure our next range of CDs are going to be the best ever because they'll be exactly what you've asked for.

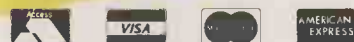
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Song mode in Drumbeat 16

at any one time, the less noticeable will be the shortcomings of any individual sound. In other words, any noise will appear less. Given the price of the unit, the results range from acceptable to excellent.

The Drumbeat program effectively turns the ST into a programmable drum machine. Samples created with the Editor can be loaded into any of 30 drum positions to make a kit.

Drumbeat uses the traditional drum-machine method of song construction. You can create up to 50 Patterns which may be chained into a Song, comprising up to 100 Patterns. It can hold 10 Songs in memory at once and play up to four samples at the same time. It can also sync with an external MIDI device as slave or master and a MIDI Note On command may be sent whenever a sample is played. You can connect a set of MIDI drum pads and assign samples to six separate pads each with three different velocity samples.

Song and Pattern construction is straightforward. You load in samples to form your kit, enter the hits on a grid in Pattern mode and link the resulting patterns together in Song mode.

Pattern mode includes Copy and Mark commands to help with editing, and you can tap in new hits while listening to playback in realtime. In Song mode you can specify how many times a Pattern is to repeat and there are Jump commands which let you create chorus and verse sections and so on.

The Drumbeat front end, although updated, is not quite as innovative as the Editor. A large menu is always at the top of the screen, which restricts the display area – you can only see 15 of the 30 drums on screen at once in Pattern mode.

Finally, the demo song provides an excellent example of what can be accomplished with the program. As drum samples are generally short, deficiencies in playback quality are generally barely noticeable. I was impressed.

Thankfully, there is only one manual, unlike the other Replays which had separate books for each of the programs. It's spiral bound and generally well written and illustrated, although the grammar could be

Blocks and edits

The Block menu controls the movement of sections of samples between themselves and the clipboard. The Block control panel at the bottom of the screen shows icons (when the required options have been selected) which duplicate many of the functions in the Block menu. They include Mark, Edit, Cut, Copy, Paste, Insert, Zoom, Looping and Join.

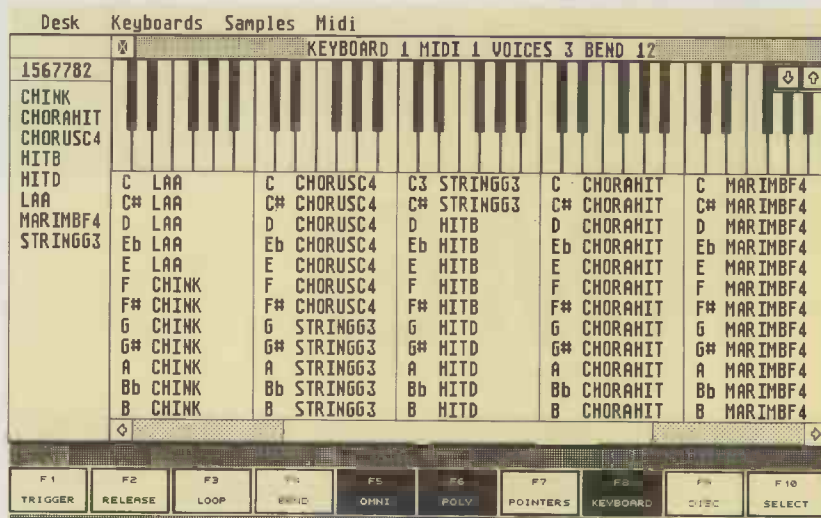
Block commands can be performed between samples of any format so an area clipped from a mono 16-bit sample could be spliced into a stereo 8-bit sample or the other way around.

The Edit menu houses many special processing functions. You can fade in and out by a controllable amount. Volume Edit will scan the sample for peaks and suggest the maximum amount by which the volume can be increased. A Slope command offers scaleable volume changes, useful for matching the ends of two dissimilar samples after they have been grafted together.

Reverse and Clear do as their names suggest. Fill will repeatedly paste the contents of the Clipboard into the sample area until it's full, while Overlay will superimpose one sample on another. Gap inserts a gap into the sample the size of the Block. Repeat works in a similar way but pastes the contents of the Block into the sample – useful for the infamous N-N-N-Nineteen effect.

Loop Fade is a very useful effect which can help smooth out glitches in hard-to-match loops. It fades a portion of the sample before the start of the loop into the part of the sample leading up to the end of it. I produced good results with this.

Channel Swap alternates the left and right data in stereo samples and channel Copy copies one channel to the other one. Cross Fade will gradually fade out data on one channel and fade it in on top of the other – and so too will Pan Image, but here you can set the percentage amount of the fade for both channels. You can also fade from right to left, left to right or from both channels to the other at the same time.



MIDI Play – samples can be assigned to any group of keys

Info

Price: Replay 16 £129.95
(or £79.95 trade in).
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Roland F8.....	£1550	POA	7x Keyboard Stand.....	£25	£23	Marshall 2100 100w valve amp head.....	£466	£466
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Roland E5.....	£390	POA	SOFTWARE			Marshall 2500 50w valve amp head.....	£387	£387
Korg 01/FD.....	£1795	POA	C-Lab Notator.....	£299	£279	Marshall 2501 50w valve 1 x 12 combo.....	£446	£446
Korg 01.....	£1695	POA	ROLAND R8/R8M Library Cards			Marshall 2502 50w valve 2 x 12 combo.....	£502	£502
Korg WS1 Wavestation.....	£1299	£1275	01 Contemporary Percussion.....	£45	£43	Marshall JCM900 Hi-Gain Dual Reverb		
Korg M1 Workstation.....	£999	£988	02 Jazz Brush.....	£45	£43	Marshall 4100 100w valve amp head.....	£498	£498
Novation MM10.....	£149	£139	03 Sound Effects.....	£45	£43	Marshall 4102 100w valve 1 x 12 combo.....	£618	£618
KEYBOARDS AND MODULES			04 Electronic.....	£45	£43	Marshall 4500 50w valve amp head.....	£451	£451
ZOOM 9002 Multi Effects.....	£259	£255	05 Jazz.....	£45	£43	Marshall 4501 50w valve 1 x 12 combo.....	£507	£507
ZOOM 9030 Multi Effects.....	£525	£499	06 Latin & Effects Percussion.....	£45	£43	Marshall 4502 50w valve 2 x 12 combo.....	£566	£566
ZOOM 8050 Foot controller.....	£189	£170	07 Mallet.....	£45	£43	Marshall 1960A/B 4 x 12 300w cabs.....	£351	£351
Yamaha FX500.....	£299	£289	08 Dry.....	£45	£43	Marshall SE100 speaker emulator.....	£305	£305
Yamaha FX900.....	£595	£599	09 Power Drums USA.....	£45	£43	Marshall 9001 valve comb.....	£404	£404
Yamaha EMP 700 effects.....	£440	POA	SOFTWARE			Marshall 9004 solid state preamp.....	£159	£159
Yamaha EMP100.....	£225	£215	C-Lab Notator.....	£299	£279	Marshall 9005 50 + 50 valve preamp.....	£537	£537
Yamaha R100 Reverb.....	£179	£169	ROLAND U220/U20/D70 LIBRARY CARDS			Marshall 1962 bluesbreaker combo.....	£579	£579
Alesis Quadraverb +.....	£335	£329	01 Pipe, Organ & Harpsichord.....	£45	£43	Marshall 5205 12w reverb combo.....	£118	£118
Alesis Midverb 3.....	£239	POA	02 Latin & Effects Percussion.....	£45	£43	Marshall 5501 bass combo.....	£98	£98
Alesis D4 Drum module.....	£399	POA	03 Ethnic Instruments.....	£45	£43	Marshall 5301 12w keyboard combo.....	£112	£112
Alesis Quadraverb GT.....	£459	POA	04 Electric, Grand & Clavi.....	£45	£43	Marshall MS2 Micro amp.....	£25	£23
Alesis Microverb III.....	£185	£179	05 Orchestral Strings.....	£45	£43	LANEY WORLD SERIES		
Art Multiverb LIX.....	£179	£159	06 Orchestral Wind.....	£45	£43	Laney 60w 1x12 reverb.....	£279	£279
Art Multiverb Alpha.....	£329	£299	07 Electric Guitar.....	£45	£43	Laney 80w 1x12 reverb.....	£294	£294
BOSS DRP II Drumpad.....	£55	£45	08 Synthesizer.....	£45	£43	Laney 120w 1x12 reverb.....	£319	£319
BOSS ME6B bass effects.....	£235	£220	09 Guitar & Keyboards.....	£45	£43	Laney 2x50w chorus 2x12 reverb.....	£424	£424
BOSS ME6 multi effects.....	£235	£220	10 Rock Drums.....	£45	£43	LANEY LINEBACKER		
BOSS ME10 multi effects.....	£560	£499	11 Sound Effects.....	£45	£43	Laney 30w split, reverb.....	£178	£178
BOSS SC50 Multi FX Unit.....	£375	£339	12 Trombone & Sax.....	£45	£43	Laney 50w split, reverb 1x12.....	£226	£226
BOSS AW2 Autowah.....	£63	£61	13 Super Strings (stereo).....	£45	£43	Laney 100w split, reverb 1x12.....	£274	£274
BOSS BF2 Flanger.....	£105	£99	14 Acoustic Guitar (stereo).....	£45	£43	Laney 120w split, reverb 2x12.....	£367	£367
BOSS CE5 Chorus.....	£63	£61	15 Super Brass (stereo).....	£45	£43	Laney 30w bass comb.....	£134	£134
BOSS CH1 Super Chorus.....	£76	£74	EFFECTS			Laney 50w bass comb.....	£218	£218
BOSS CS3 Compressor.....	£87	£85	Korg A5 Multi Effects.....	£229	£219	Laney 120w graphic bass comb.....	£313	£313
BOSS DD3 Digital Delay.....	£119	£117	Korg A5 Bass Multi Effects.....	£229	£219	Crate TD35 35w 1x12 + Rev. (Valve).....	£249	£239
BOSS DS2 Distortion.....	£63	£61	ZOOM 9001 Studio Effects.....	£249	£239	Crate TD70 70w 1x12 + Rev. (Valve).....	£339	£329
BOSS DS2 Turbo Distortion.....	£70	£68	ZOOM 9000 Multi FX + F/Switch.....	£285	£275	Crate G20 chorus 20w 2x6.....	£229	£219
BOSS FW3 Foot Wah.....	£76	£74	Power Supply.....	£20	£18	Crate G40 chorus 40w 2x8.....	£359	£349
BOSS GE7 Graphic EQ.....	£87	£85	KEYBOARD STANDS			Crate G130 chorus 130w 2x12.....	£499	£489
BOSS HM2 Heavy Metal.....	£63	£61	Ultimate Support Stealth Stand.....	£63	£60	Crate G40XL 40w 1x12.....	£219	£209
BOSS MT2 Metal Zone.....	£70	£68	7x Keyboard Stand.....	£25	£23	Crate SLP stereo chorus preamp.....	£239	£229
BOSS M22 Metalizer.....	£105	£99	3 Tier Keyboard Stand.....	£125	£120	Crate XP2 20w stereo power amp.....	£329	£319
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BOSS SD1 Super Overdrive.....	£68	£65	02 Latin & Effects Percussion.....	£45	£43	Marshall 6960 A/B 4 x 12 cab.....	£351	£351
BOSS FC50 Midi Foot Controller.....	£139	£135	03 Ethnic Instruments.....	£45	£43	Marshall Valvestate		
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Digitech DSP128P.....	£299	£279	05 Orchestral Strings.....	£45	£43	Marshall 8412 4 x 12 x 12 cab.....	£245	£245
Digitech DSP16.....	£199	£189	06 Orchestral Wind.....	£45	£43	Marshall 8240 stereo chorus 2 x 2.....	£439	£439
Digitech GS97.....	£395	£370	07 Electric Guitar.....	£45	£43	Marshall 8080 80w combo.....	£320	£320
DOD 7 band EQ.....	£65	£63	08 Synthesizer.....	£45	£43	Marshall 8040 40w combo.....	£259	£259
DOD Overdrive +.....	£39	£37	09 Guitar & Keyboards.....	£45	£43	Marshall 8010 10w combo.....	£185	£185
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Boss DR660.....	£299	POA	SOFTWARE			Marshall 5501 bass combo.....	£98	£98
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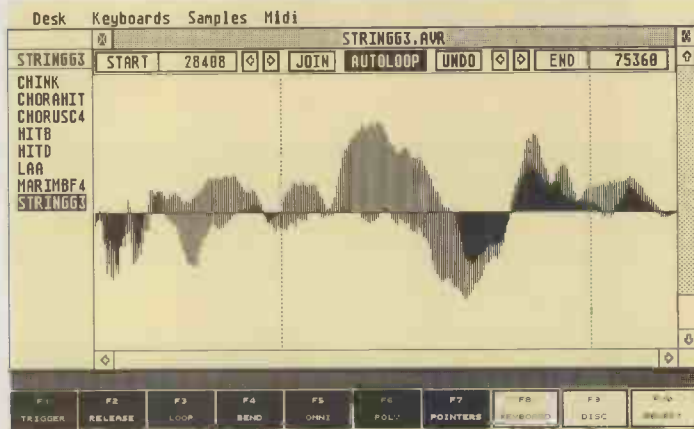
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FINANCE

► tightened up (ever heard of the possessive apostrophe, lads?). And there's no index. Tut! Tut!

But, for the price, Replay 16 is almost impossible to fault; it's accessible in a way that many dedicated samplers aren't. Indeed, having so much information presented to you on screen makes working with a conventional sampler seem like hard work.

The only superior 16-bit ST-based sampling package is AVR's own Pro-16, which will set you back another £170. For this you get wider bandwidth and a better signal-to-noise ratio. But I must say I was impressed by



REPLAY6: The Autoloop sk1 instructor in MIDI Play matches the slopes

Breakthru

Early computer-based samplers were only eight-bit and their quality couldn't quite match that of stand-alone instruments. They were used largely for games and demos and no-one really minded not being able to play them alongside a MIDI sequencer.

Now that 16-bit-quality samples are available, however, wouldn't it be nice to incorporate them into your MIDI sequencer? Well, with Gajits' new Breakthru sequencer – a demo version of which was given away free with last month's *MT* – you can. It's a heavily-updated version of the popular Sequencer One Plus and it can play 16-bit samples alongside MIDI tracks.

To accomplish this it employs a trade-off similar to the one in MIDI Play – the fewer the number of samples you play at one time, the better the quality. However, in a mix, any slight sample noise is likely to be lost.

Breakthru is available from Gajits at: I Mex House, 40 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DE. Tel: 061 236 2515/4. Fax: 061 236 4044.

And there's a £39.95 discount to existing Sequencer One Plus users who wish to upgrade.

the quality of Replay 16 system – particularly when playing back samples as one-shots from within the Editor. True professional results.

Drumbeat produced knockout results, too. However, you need to choose your samples carefully and do a trade-off between the number of voices and the sample quality in MIDI Play.

Having read this far and taken a squint at the price, you may already be reaching for your chequebook or flexible friend, but wait... there's more. Microdeal in their infinite and all-consuming benevolence are offering an upgrade deal to existing Replay sampler owners. Believe it or not, if you have any of the range of Replay samplers, you can buy Replay 16 at cut-price! Yep, yours for only £79.95. ■

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CM AUTOMation's new MX816 is a breakthrough in terms of **affordability**, **simplicity** and **quality**. It brings MIDI controlled mixing & muting into everyone's reach for the first time. It's unique memory features allow it to be used in the **studio or live** with equal success. The MX816 can be programmed and controlled by any MIDI device and then used independently if desired. ■ High quality dbx VCA system ■ Separate receive channel for patch change ■ 8 or 16 channel versions, easily upgradable ■ Channel mute assignable to key number ■ Compatible with any MIDI sequencer ■ S/N better than 95dB ■ No need for expensive custom wiring ■ Frequency response 10Hz-30kHz +/- 1dB ■ Mute & Max buttons for easy manual control ■ Dynamic range better than 106 dB ■ 100 internal memories to store and recall snapshots ■ Noise level better than -95 dB ■ 28 internal pre-programmed autofades, up or down ■ All outputs in phase with inputs ■ Groups of 8 channels are summed to produce mix/send out, in addition to each channel's in/output. ■ The MX816 comes in three versions: 8-Channel - £345, 16-Channel - £579 and an 8-Channel Expander for the 8-Channel unit for £235.



Double Dutch's SAM-1 Sample Expander for Korg M1, WaveStation, M3R and T-Series

This new expander fulfills a range of important functions: ■ Primarily it is a **sample expander that allows you to inject half a Meg (Soon expandable to a full Meg) of your own samples into most Korg synths.** ■ It is also a **MIDI Data Filer** that allows you to save any SysEx info to disk, it even plays back MIDI Song Files! ■ Because it can load S1000, EPS, S330 and S550 disks and transfer samples via MIDI it can act as a sample converter - more formats will be supported in the near future such as Emax 2 and Prophet 2000. ■ The SAM-1 is available now for £649 inc. VAT but supplies are scarce so hurry, please call for more details.



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Editing Software for the Atari ST from EMC - Einstein Music Software

EMC's famous line of highly affordable easy-to-use editors has just been bolstered by the introduction of SY22/TG33, JX1 and Sound Canvas Editors. All are very easy to get into and make your synths so much easier to use. At just £55 they cost less than you'd expect to pay for a RAM card, so they're a cheap means of storage, an aid to editing, and the SY22 and JX1 editors also come with sounds.

Other Synths supported include - SY55, U20/220, D10 Series, K4, M1, M3R, Proteus 1/2, D70, JX1, D50, K1, VFX, OB8, LXP5, PCM70, etc. with programs being added all the time!

■ "Impressive...it's a competent, comprehensive program which can be highly recommended to anyone...it could well be selling for two to three times the amount - it really represents excellent value for money. Buy it before they read this and put the price up." - Music Technology SY/TG55 Review, May 91.

■ SY/TG55 Editor/Manager - £55 ■ K4 Editor/Manager - £55 ■ SY22/TG33 Editor/Manager - AVAILABLE NOW - £55 ■ U20/220 Editor/Manager - £55 ■ LXP1/5 Editor/Manager - £55 ■ D10/20/5/110 Series Editor/Manager - £55 ■ D70 Editor/Manager - £89 ■ M1/M3R Manager/Combi Editor - £55 ■ Proteus 1/2 Editor/Manager - £75 ■ Please call for full details and prices! ■ All programs run under M.ROS and SoftLink and require a hi-res mono monitors and at least 1 Meg (except the K1 Manager) of RAM.

Musitronics D50/550 Expansions

If you own a D50 or D550 then these expansions are bound to interest you:

M.EX - Multi-Timbral Expansion offers ■ 8-tone multi-timbral operation with dynamic voice allocation ■ Additional MIDI transmit channel ■ Loads of new parameters ■ Optional 128 patch memory expansion ■ £199 or £245 with additional RAM

Speed System is an optional extra for the M.EX that makes your D50/550 run up to 40%+ faster. Quicker responses from keyboard or over MIDI are now possible. The Speed System costs £45.

PCM.EX offers ■ 50 new waveforms including 3 complete drum kits and new piano waves ■ Accessible in addition to existing waveforms ■ £245 (not available for D550)

D50 Power Pack offers ■ M.EX with RAM ■ Speed System ■ PCM.EX ■ Usual price £535 - Special offer price £399

HOT PRICES on Hard Disks

Here are some very competitive prices for a full range of Hard Disks. Remember all prices include cartridges (where applicable), cables and VAT.

Squest 44 Meg Removable - £399

Squest 88 Meg Removable - £549

128 Meg Optical - £1099

256 Meg Optical - £1499

600 Meg ISO Optical - £2399

1 Gig (1K Meg) Optical - £2499

850 Fixed HD (10ms access time) - £1299

ALSO COMPETITIVE PRICES ON MEDIA WITH HDs

All HDs are free standing. All can be racked on request - please call for more info.

JUST RELEASED!

Musitronics SY 77 PCM.EX Expansions

This new expansion for the SY77 adds 4 Meg of new PCM samples doubling the total PCM memory to a staggering 8 Meg! It also comes complete with a double bank ROM card of new programs that utilise these new PCM waveforms. A wide selection of new PCMs are featured 130+ in all - Keys, Strings, Brass, Synths, Drums, TR Drums, Percussion, Basses, FX, and more. The PCM.EX for the SY77 is available now for £299 fully inclusive - for a limited period (have you seen whats been happening with the DM), please call for full details.

COMING 'SOON'!

Musitronics TG77 and SY/TG55 PCM.EX Expansions

A similar expansion for the TG77 also adds 4 Megs of new PCM samples doubling the total PCM memory to a staggering 8 Meg! The SY/TG55 version will also add 4 Meg taking total memory to 6 Meg! Each also adds a new bank of programs that utilise these new PCM waveforms. Specs are almost identical to the SY77 version. Prices TBC, please call for the latest information.



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

Why waste your money on a 2-bus mixer when you can get the new 1642 4-bus mixer from DOD?

The 1642 boasts 16 line and 8 balanced mic inputs. High-precision, monolithic preamps ensure ultra-low noise and distortion, and extremely-high input bandwidth.

The console may be used as a 16X4 for recording or a 16X2X2 for sound reinforcement. For recording, four

	DOD 1642	YAMAHA MV 1602	TASCAM M-1016	MACKIE CR 1604
Bus	4	2	2	2
Discreet mix bus out	4	2	2	2
Mic Inputs (Bal)	8	8	8	6
Line Inputs	16	16	4 Stereo	16
Phantom Power	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Sends	6 Pre or Post, configurable.	2 Pre 2 Post	2 Pre 4 Post	1 Pre/Post 5 Post
Sub groups	2	2	None	None
Console convertible	Yes	No	No	Yes
Solo to mains	Yes	No	No	Yes

discrete outputs (Sub 1, Sub 2, Left and Right) can be assigned, or each input may be routed through the 2 sub groups to the mains. That means the 1642 delivers more sound options than any other mixer in its class.

Each channel in the 1642

our new 1642, that we'll back it with a 2-year warranty.

If you want a killer mixer for a low fare, don't miss the bus. Check out the 1642 from DOD.



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Comparison based on information from the 1992 Music & Sound Buyer's Guide.

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Swift Halves

OCLI VDU Antiglare Screens

Text by Vic Lennard

Next time you find yourself sat in front of a computer, turn sideways so that you can see the screen out of the corner of your eye. Unless you're working with a particularly high quality monitor with a fast refresh rate, you will probably see the screen flickering. This, along with the inevitable glare from a reflective glass surface can lead to eyestrain, fatigue and headaches.

Monitors also emit a certain amount of radiation and discharge static electricity (try running your fingers over the screen after it has been on for a while) - the effects of which are still open to debate, but for many are often the cause of dry eyes and a smarting sensation after many hours of sustained work.

An EEC directive, to be legislated on by member countries before the beginning of next year, states that Visual Display Units (VDUs) must be free from reflections and glare, and produce screen images free of flicker and instability. Businesses are going to have to choose between buying new monitors or fitting filter screens - the latter being a far cheaper option.

A number of manufacturers have developed filter screens of one type or another, but it is very difficult to find any which will deal with the combined effects of glare, radiation and flicker. Recently, however, the US company, OCLI, launched a range of filters as part of their Professional Plus series which will do just that. Constructed from toughened glass with their own HEA (High Efficiency Antireflecting) coating on the front surface and an electronically conductive version on the rear, they completely eliminate static electricity by the connection of a thin cable from the frame of the glass to a convenient equipment earthing point.

The HEA coatings also ensure that ambient light passing through the glass is greatly reduced, so limiting reflection, and also eliminating screen flicker and filtering out radiation.

There are various different models for flat and curved frames along with a universal version called 'The Multiguard' which flips down over the screen. Special models are also made for Macintosh screens which fit tightly around the front face of the monitor. GND, the UK distributors, are currently offering hefty discounts with prices around the £90 mark - inclusive of postage and packing and covered by a lifetime guarantee.

Having used one of these for some weeks now, I can honestly say that the results are staggering. No more headaches or dry eyes - symptoms which I had, in the past, put down to working long hours. How effective they will be for you is rather difficult to determine; it will depend on how prone you are to the ill-effects in the first place and, of course, how much time you regularly spend looking at a screen. But with technology seemingly pushing us further and further towards permanent residence in front of a VDU, an OCLI screen could, quite literally, be just what the doctor ordered.



Info

Price: Profile (with rubber surround), £135.12 RRP; special offer to MT readers, £89.17. Multiguard (hinged model), £116.32 RRP; special offer to MT readers £82.07. All prices inclusive of VAT, p&p, cleaning fluid and cloth.

More from: Gary Moberley, GND Distribution. Tel: 071 267 3236, Fax: 081 885 5265.

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I Wonder Why.....Curtis Stigers	Respect.....Erasure
Stars.....Simply Red	Big Area.....Then Jericho
When you Tell me You Love Me.....Diana Ross	Faith (In The Power of Love).....Rozalla
Black or White.....Michael Jackson	Looking for Linda.....Hue and cry
You to Me are Everything.....Sonia	mary's Prayer.....Danny Wilson
When a Man Loves a Woman.....Michael Bolton	Waiting for Star to Fall.....Boy Meets Girl
Wonderful Tonight.....Eric Clapton	Tears of a Clown.....Smokey Robinson
American Pie.....Don Mclean	Eye of the Tiger.....Suervivior
Wind of change.....The Scorpions	Love changes Everything.....Michael Ball
Salt Water.....Julian Lennon	Missing You.....John Waite
Everything I Do.....Bryan Adams	Lvoe to Hate You.....Erasure
Promise Me.....Beverly Craven	Stop.....Erasure
Holiday.....Madonna	Your Song.....Elton John
Real Gone Kid.....Deacon Blue	West End Girls.....Pet Shop Boys
Smooth Operator.....Sade	Can't Stay Away from You.....Gloria Estefan
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Roland JV-880



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It's all down to the sounds. It doesn't matter how good the facilities are, it's the quality of the sounds on a multitimbral synth which determine how worthy it is of your consideration. And this is one area where Roland have excelled over the years. The fact that many keyboard players won't bother to edit the presets appears to be coming part of the design ethos of many new instruments – give 'em good sounds to begin with and you'll keep them happy. Making a synth easy to edit is just a bonus.

In appearance, the JV-880 looks very much like any other Roland 1U rackmount – from the D-110 onwards. Black case, blue and white lettering, a decent-sized display and a couple of card slots – one for PCM wave data and the other for a RAM card. The sonic architecture is straightforward: seven melody parts or 'Patches' (128 preset and 64 user) – each of which can be a combination of up to four Tones – and one Rhythm part for a 61-instrument drum set (of which there are three). Take all eight Patches together and they constitute a Performance, of which the JV-880 has 32 preset and 16 for your own efforts.

Sound creation is somewhat limited with only 129 waveforms (including 46 percussion instruments), but quality, for most people, is preferable to quantity and the JV-80 waves are very good. The bass sounds have the requisite balls, while the high-frequency content shows that waves have been recorded at a decent sampling rate.

The keyboard version of the synth, the JV-80, has various user-definable sliders, but being rather awkward to fit on the front panel of a 1U rackmount(!), Roland have replaced them with a small data knob which is very precise in feel, a doddle to use and has the extra facility of changing values by ten if you push it in. It's nice to see that Roland have finally done away with their unfriendly increment/decrement buttons.

In terms of facilities, the JV-880 is pretty much identical to

the JV-80 (reviewed in *MT*, May 1992), but has an extra pair of outputs – labelled Sub Output – for taking dry sounds to an effects unit while the internal reverb and chorus operate on the main outputs. Sounds can be previewed by pushing in the volume knob which gives you four different notes on subsequent presses. Nice idea this, especially as you can change the pitches via the System menu.

On the Patches front, there's a lot of doubling up of Tones to give a full range of frequencies. For instance, 'Real Pizz' uses three Tones: two of Upright Bass panned right and left, and Pizz – an octave higher panned dead centre. 'Brass Sect 2' also uses three Tones, although one of these is a simple synth sawtooth wave. The results are very realistic, but using such Patches reduces the polyphony substantially as the JV-880 only allows for 28 voices to be used at the same time. This is, perhaps, one of its major drawbacks.

Included among the Waves are various sound snippets which are used to great effect in many Patches. For instance, 'Jazz Organ 2' uses an organ click to provide a realistic Hammond-style sound, while many of the guitar Patches use two Tones – the second one being the same as the first, but delayed until the key is released and with a very short decay to reproduce the effects of a guitar note 'accidentally' retriggering when the finger comes off the string.

Analogue Feel is a parameter worthy of closer attention. It makes the pitch of a note alter in an unpredictable manner and, as a common parameter, acts on all Tones within a Patch. Natural instruments come across as being that bit more realistic, especially string-based sounds.

The limitation of 129 Waves is overcome by the addition of the optional SR-JV80 expansion board which fits into the JV-880 via a plate on the top of the unit. This comes complete with 224 new Waves and 145 Patches, but while the Waves can be immediately accessed, Patches have to be loaded into the user bank – although they can be previewed in situ. Adding the cost of one of these takes the expanded JV-880 to a price of just under £1000 at which point it meets competition from the likes of Yamaha's new TG500 which also happens to offer 64-voice polyphony.

However, I stand by what I said earlier: in the final analysis it all comes down to the sounds and in this respect, the JV-880 scores highly. It's a most impressive synth and one you should even find easy to edit... ■

**Text by
Vic Lennard**

Info

Price: JV-880 £749, SJ-JV80 £229, SO-PCM1 PCM cards £59, M-256E Data card £61
More from: Roland (UK) Ltd, West Cross Centre, Brentford, Middx TW8 9EZ.
Tel: 081 568 1247.
Fax: 081 847 1528.

Fostex DCM100

MIDI Mixing System

Text by
Nicholas
Rowland

Does Fostex's new system represent a triumph of MIDI over mixing – or is it a couple of knobs short of a session..?

It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it. And that applies as much to the design of hi-tech equipment as it does to clawing your way up the star system on Broadway. Take the Fostex DCM100. Here we have an 8:2 line mixer doing exactly what you'd expect most other small 8:2 mixers to do – handling up to eight stereo or mono signals and mix them down to stereo. Features? Volume, Pan, EQ, and Auxiliary Send control and Mute button for each channel. Two Effects Send/Returns – both stereo with EQ on the returns. Master Volume control and – well, there are some other bits and bobs we'll touch on a bit later.

But as far as its basic mixing functions go, the DCM100 holds few surprises. In terms of how it does it, this little baby is altogether a different barrel of pomegranates. Where other analogue mixers are controlled by the riding of faders and twiddling of potentiometers ('knobs' to you, mate) the DCM100 feeds entirely off bytes of MIDI data. We're talking total MIDI control here... not just a few piddling MIDI mutes bolted on to a conventional desk. Volume, Pan, EQ controls, Auxiliary Send and Return Levels... the whole caboodle.

To say that this makes the DCM100 a rather useful tool for followers of the 5-pin DIN is an understatement on a par with a description of current Government policy as a bit muddled. In short, the DCM100 is the affordable mixer which the MIDI sequencer-based studio has been waiting for. Hook it up to your computer and you can control fades, panning and EQ just as you would manipulate parameters on a synth or call up patches on a sound module or FX box.

Indeed, with the right front end, the DCM100 provides the first affordable ticket to the world of totally automated realtime mixing. OK, so many sequencers have mixer pages which allow you to directly control the volume and panning of your instruments without the need for any intervening hardware. But there are problems with this approach – quantisation noise, truncated envelopes and clogged MIDI busses to name but a few of the more painful.

Because it's essentially a conventional analogue mixer controlled by MIDI, the DCM100 avoids many of these inherent problems. It also makes it much more versatile since (and I know this is rather obvious) you can use it with non-MIDI instruments as well. In fact, the beauty of the DCM100 is that it is not merely a mixer for the MIDI-compatible.

One of the side effects of digital control which works to everyone's benefit is that it comes complete with its own

programmable memories. Up to 100 mixer patches (which Fostex refer to by the much more evocative name of 'Scenes') can be stored in the DCM100's internal memory and recalled at the touch of a button. That's got to be good news for anyone who's ever spent the wee small hours working on a mix only to discover the next morning that their mother, their kids or those little green people that follow them out of the pub every night, have completely reset the desk.

The cost? Sold to the man at the back for £750 – less the cost of a pint of Kronenbourg to wet the head of your new arrival. Actually, for this amount you'll be toasting the purchase of not one, but two bits of gear – the DCM100 itself (£449) and its other half the Mixtab (£299). In case you're wondering which is which, the DCM100 is the boring-looking, 1U rack-mountable box affair, while the Mixtab is the thing that actually looks like a mixer.

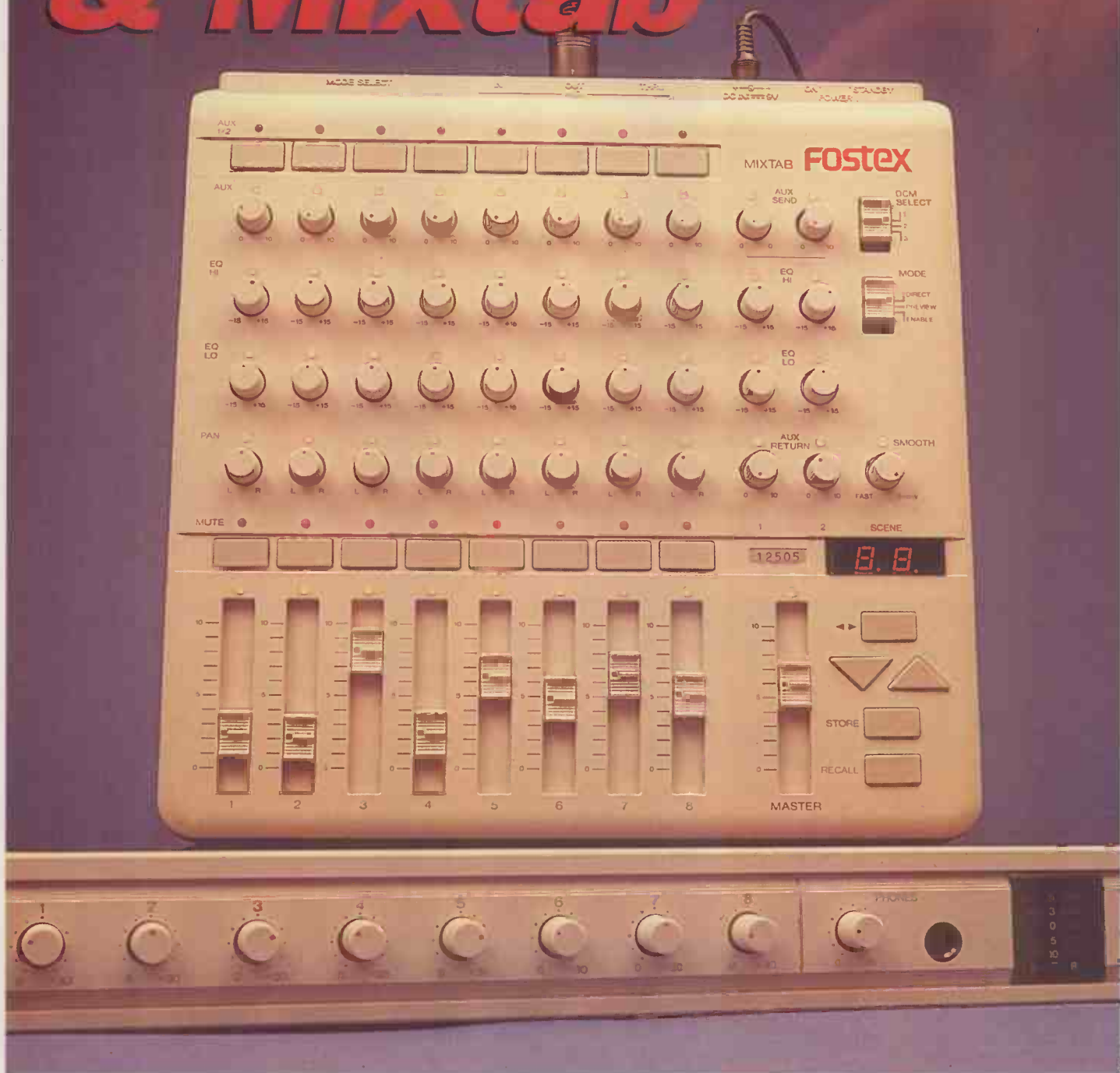
It's the DCM100 which is really the brains of the pair. The Mixtab functions as a dedicated, real-time MIDI programmer/controller. If you like, it's the physical manifestation of the DCM100's features, albeit laid out in the familiar form of a conventional mixing desk. You don't actually need the Mixtab to control the DCM100, providing you have another device that can output MIDI control and program change information. But personally, I'd recommend laying out the extra dosh to complete the set. It makes the DCM100 much easier to use, particularly as the Mixtab has several features you'd be hard put to find on non-dedicated controllers.

We'll look at the DCM100 as a solo prospect a bit later on, but for the moment we'll concentrate on the combined package. The first thing to note is that while the Mixtab looks like the mixer, all audio leads are in fact connected to the DCM100. Connections to the Mixtab are strictly MIDI (not counting the 9V power supply). Both units have the usual MIDI In, Out and Thru ports and since the information flows both ways, both Ins need to be connected to the corresponding Outs for them to be on proper speaking terms.

In case you're still puzzled as to precisely what MIDI information we're talking about, let me spell it out. The DCM100's functions are manipulated by MIDI control change messages (misprinted as 'massages' in the manual – no missus, don't titter). Only one standard controller number is used – #7 – for the Master Volume control. Other parameters make use of controllers 16-51 and 66-81. That's vital information when choosing to control the DCM100 by means other than the Mixtab since the assignment of controller changes to the mixer's functions are fixed.

Scenes (ie. combinations of controller data) are accessed by patch-change information. The MIDI transmit/receive channel for both units is set using the somewhat low-tech method of varying combinations of four DIP switches on their respective back panels. Three further DIP switches control various MIDI

& Mixtab



Photography: James Cumpsty

functions, such as whether the DCM100 dumps all its settings to the controller device on power up.

You also have to mess about with these when you want to set up a single Mixtab to control three different DCM100s. There's a switch on the Mixtab's front panel which allows you to easily swap between them, providing you've set the DCM100s to transmit/receive on consecutive MIDI channels. Interestingly, one of the DCM100's DIP switches selects the way it interprets control messages in respect to the volume faders. One setting gives you a straight linear relationship between decibels and MIDI data values. The other gives you an analogue fader curve, which more closely mimics the effect of conventional analogue mixers. In practice, this is the one that sounds smoothest.

Inputs & Routing

Audio connections are all 1/4-inch jacks. Eight stereo channels = 16 inputs. Mono signals are also catered for – just use the channel's left input only. The same stereo/mono option also applies for the two effects send/return loops, signals to which are sent post-fader. Inputs are trimmed using rotary controls on the DCM100's front panel. The input range is -30 to 0dBV... in other words, strictly line inputs only – a bit of a bummer if you're one of these old-fashioned hippies who still insists on having vocals in your music. A mic pre-amp would have to be the solution here.

Trim levels have to be judged partly by ear since there are no visual indications to assist you (such as clip LEDs), although some help is afforded by the two bargraph meters on the DCM100, which indicate the stereo mix output levels. You can add a stereo signal from a second mixer (another DCM100, for example) directly to the stereo output via the Stereo Buss In facility. Each of the auxiliary loops also has a corresponding pair of Buss In jacks. These allow a second mixer or other instruments to share effects units with the DCM100.

▶ **A**part from the Master Stereo outs, you'll find details of the DCM100's inputs and routing in the accompanying box. What you won't find is any mention of the monitor mix output. That's because there isn't one. And here we come across the DCM100's first (and as it happens, not the last) serious limitation. The nearest thing you get to a monitoring system is a headphones socket on the front panel. This simply duplicates the master stereo out, although it does have the luxury of its own volume control. It's quite useful for mixing down at three o'clock in the morning without disturbing the neighbours (or those little green people), but that's about it.

Another serious limitation is the EQ circuitry – which on all channels and the two auxiliary returns is a basic two-stage affair. Hi offers you cut and boost of up to 15 dB at frequencies above 10kHz. Lo offers +/- 15 dB at frequencies below 1200 kHz. There's no mid-range EQ – sweepable or even static. For many people this could well knock the DCM100 out of the running as a mixer which will answer all their needs: most of the troublesome frequencies encountered when recording exist in the mid range.

Another major weakness is the fact it only has two aux send/returns. Most non-MIDI desks at this price would have four (and for that matter some or all would be switchable between pre- and post-fade). Not only that, but on closer inspection you realise that you can't actually route signals from each of the channels to both aux sends at the same time. It's a strictly either/or option. This not only limits your creativity in terms of use of effects, it also means you can't realistically use

one of the auxiliary sends for monitoring purposes.

On the plus side, the DCM100 is an exceptionally quiet mixer – although, on paper at least, its spec isn't really anything out of the ordinary by today's standards. Frequency response weighs in at a commendable 20Hz to 20kHz at +/- 1dB – while signal-to-noise ratio is quoted as 78dB/WTD and crosstalk 70dB at 1kHz. Of course, Fostex know a thing or two about mixer design anyway. But I suspect that the DCM100 also benefits from the absence of 'moving parts' from its design (and by that I mean the knobs and sliders which are part of the physical circuitry of conventional desks). The bit with the moving parts is, of course, the Mixtab, but remember that this is only there to output MIDI data and doesn't affect the audio signals.

The Mixtab's moving parts operate in one of three ways: Direct, Enable and Preview. The first mode, as the name might suggest, allows real-time control over the DCM100 in much the same way as you would operate a conventional mixer. The Mixtab transmits MIDI control data as soon as any of the controls are moved. And just to confirm that this is indeed what's happening, the moment you so much as turn a knob or slide a fader, a small LED above it lights up in orange.

One of the potential problems of MIDI control is that when you make a lot of substantial changes to the settings very quickly, you're likely to generate too much MIDI controller data for the system to handle – leading to a discernible time lag in its response. Happily, the Mixtab avoids this with its Smooth function, which 'thins out' the MIDI data generated by the Mixtab to help the DCM100 keep pace with its demands.

Once you've got that killer mix, just hit the Store button and the current Scene is written to the DCM100's memory. This side of things really couldn't be much simpler; there's a couple of triangular increment/decrement buttons to select patches (0-99), plus a rectangular one to toggle between the tens and units on the Mixtab's two 8-segment LED Scene number display. Scene recall is just a tap of a button away. I was interested (and relieved) to note that the recall of Scenes is instantaneous with no audible glitching, even if the new Scene involves considerable changes in the values of many parameters.

As you can appreciate, whenever you call up a new Scene, there could well be considerable discrepancies between the new parameter settings and the actual position of the knobs on the Mixtab. For example, let's assume you've got the Mixtab's master fader set to zero, yet in the scene you've just dialled up on the DCM100 its value is five. In Direct mode, as you moved the fader back to five, the volume would initially drop to zero before climbing back up to five again. This might not be a problem if you're just setting up a series of mixes for storing as Scenes. But it's not the sort of effect you want in that crucial live mix. Here's where the Mixtab's Preview and Enable modes come in.

Switch to Preview and as soon as you call up a mixer scene, the LEDs on the Mixtab start blinking to let you know wherever there's a discrepancy between the recalled settings and those on the board. In fact, blinking is too simple a word for it. This is intelligent blinking, this is. From it, you are given clues as to the nature of the discrepancy. Basically, the lights flash green when the Mixtab's control is set lower than (ie. to the left of) the DCM100 setting, red if it's higher. The faster the LED blinks, the closer you are to the recalled value. When the blinking thing stops blinking altogether, hey presto, you've hit the nail on the button. ▶▶



Computer Control

Most programs have either MIDI mixing or MIDI management pages which will give you access to the DCM100's functions. And if you happen to possess one that doesn't, then there are plenty of standalone MIDI manager packages covering all major hardware platforms which will do that particular job for you. They are pretty inexpensive – indeed a number are in the public domain – so you're not going to break your bank manager's heart. In fact, given the tumbling prices of Atari STs, for the price of a Mixtab you could set yourself up with a complete hardware/software system dedicated entirely to controlling the DCM100. While this may seem an extravagance, ask yourself how easy will it be to work on mixer settings while, say, running a sequence, on your existing hardware/software set-up? A highly specified package like Steinberg's Cubase which offers multi-tasking will present - no problems. But not all packages (or hardware operating systems) will enable you to do this so easily. Maybe the idea of a dedicated computer is not so silly after all.

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» Think of it a bit like hi-tech hide and seek ('cold, warm, warmer, hot, very hot') and you'll get the idea. I must say that while in theory it should be child's play, in practice I found it a bit tedious trying to decipher what all the flashing meant. Basically I found myself just twiddling the knobs until the LEDs changed colour, then by backing down a bit I quickly hit the point where Mixtab settings and DCM100 values matched. (By way of an aside, I should also mention that by twiddling all the knobs, you can get every single LED on the Mixtab to flash, which makes it an ideal substitute for Christmas fairy lights.)

While you're fiddling about like this – remember we're still in Preview mode – the Mixtab is not actually transmitting any MIDI data. The idea is that once you've matched the settings you can then switch to Direct mode to make further changes to a mixer scene before saving it. Enable mode is a kind of half-way house. Again, it relies on intelligent blinking to tell you where the discrepancies exist. As before, once the settings match, the LED goes out. But move a 'matched' control again and it will light up orange to show you that the Mixtab has started transmitting MIDI data and is now altering the DCM100 settings.

Operating in this mode, particularly on critical real-time mixes, requires you to keep a careful eye on the little blinkers. If you overshoot, you can end up with changes in the mix that you didn't really intend. It's also a fairly slow way to work if you're trying to carry out a complex mixing manoeuvre. Aside from these quirks, getting to grips with the Mixtab involves no great readjustment of your world view. After all, barring one or two controls, it's laid out like a conventional mixer and it functions like a conventional mixer. If no-one had to know it involved the devil magic of MIDI, there'd be no need to tell them.

But what about life sans Mixtab? This is quite a difficult question to answer, since how well the DCM100 functions solo is largely dependant on the capabilities of the controlling device(s). Clearly, its most natural partner is the software sequencer which, in theory at least, should make it even more flexible. Rather than simply jumping from Scene to Scene you can record fades, pans, etc, in real time then 'play' them back as part of the sequence. The only potential problem is that the more MIDI gear you're controlling from the one sequencer, the more MIDI information needs to pass down the MIDI cables. And this means that if you're running a complicated sequence, changing synth and FX patches and mixing via MIDI, you can all too quickly turn your techno jam session into a jam more akin to the M25 at rush hour.

There are other ways to control the DCM100, of course. Many

workstations and master keyboards have controls which can be programmed to send out just about any MIDI data you want. There are also controller devices like the JL Cooper FaderMaster which are, in effect, a collection of MIDI sliders which do the same kind of job. All these will certainly tell the DCM100 to do what you want it to do. But in general you'd find that working the desk in this way could well prove rather tedious, as you switch backwards and forwards between the various channels and controls.

While music-by-MIDI and traditional recording techniques are not quite regarded as the unholy alliance they once were, there are still a lot of holes to be filled. The DCM100 goes a long way towards filling one of these holes. Its undoubtedly one of the biggest steps so far towards making the marriage of MIDI and audio one of pleasure as well as convenience. The technology itself is not new, but never before has it been put together in a single package with a singularly affordable price tag.

Quite simply, in the league of MIDI-able mixers, nothing comes this cheap. And many desks which come more expensive don't actually offer as much MIDI control as the DCM100, being equipped with only fairly rudimentary MIDI muting facilities. The DCM100 is also expandable. The Mixtab gives you easy control over three units, but you can chain up to eight DCM100s together to create an automated 64-track desk.

Without doubt the DCM100 gives your data bytes more of a run for their money. And even if you don't know one end of a MIDI cable from another (...think about it), with the friendly Mixtab hooked up that shouldn't matter. The real drawback is that the DCM100 is not half as good a mixing desk as it should be. For considerably less than the DCM100/Mixtab combo you could be the proud owner of a totally conventional desk with better EQ, more auxiliaries and the ability to handle a bigger range of inputs, not to mention monitoring facilities. For some, the prospect of MIDI and memories just might not be enough to balance the DCM100's rather basic facilities. And certainly, if you were into serious session work, there's no way that the DCM100 could act as the sole mixer in a studio. However, it's not where you start, it's where you finish, as another old Broadway hoover's delight goes. I'm pretty convinced that the DCM100 is only the beginning. One day – and it's not far away – the kind of compromises involved here simply won't be an issue. The real question is whether you choose to jump in now, or hang on until the son or grandson of the DCM100 arrives. The choice, as ever, is yours. ■

Info

Price: DCM100, £449;
Mixtab, £299. Prices
inclusive of VAT.

More From: Fostex UK Ltd,
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Western Industrial Park,
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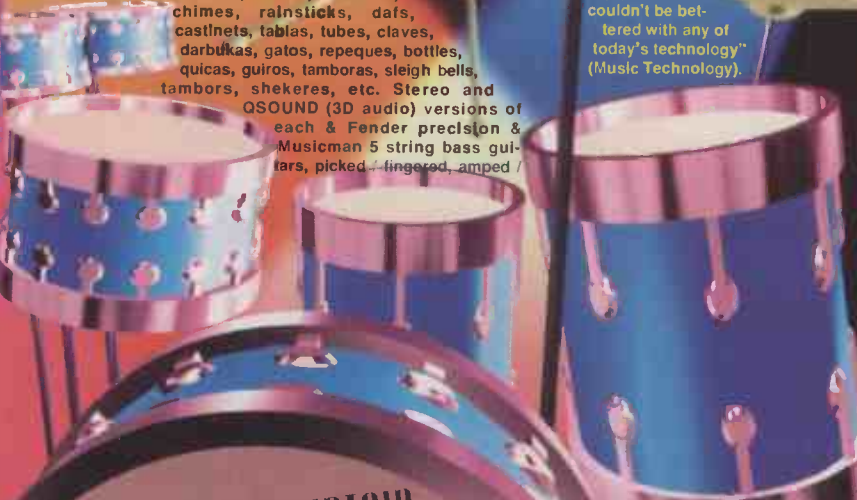
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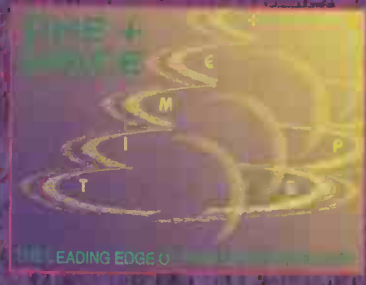
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Interfacing The Past



For those who would indulge their passion for vintage synths, sequencers and drum machines, the journey 'back to the future' is fraught with difficulties – incompatibility, non-standardisation and plain, downright awkwardness. But help is at hand...

"Dear E&MM,

I've tried unsuccessfully to sync a Roland MC202 from the Trig Out of a Boss Dr Rhythm Graphic. What's the problem? And is there an interface I could buy to solve it?"

Clare Newman
Bristol.

That *cri-de-coeur* from the December 1984 edition of *MT's* fore-runner *E&MM* is typical of many technical queries from that era. In many ways it was the hi-tech version of the kind of

letters that appeared in the problem pages of the tabloids. For: *Dear Marge, I'm having trouble with my boyfriend...* read: *Dear E&MM, I'm having trouble with my interfacing.*

But if you were around in the early days of mass-market synthesiser production, you'll know that the biggest frustration of all was that there was just no affordable way of playing a synthesiser in the same way you would a piano or an organ – that is, with more than one finger at a time.

The second biggest frustration was that whenever you tried to overcome this limitation by hooking up a sequencer that ran several synths to produce polyphonic lines, no two pieces of

Text by Peter Forrest

gear from different manufacturers could ever be guaranteed to work together. In fact, you couldn't even guarantee compatibility amongst products from the same manufacturer if they were of different periods or product divisions (like Boss and Roland in the 1984 letter).

Then along came affordable polyphony, and, even more importantly, the widescale adoption of MIDI as an interfacing standard. Nowadays, with the move to General MIDI, things are set to become even more simple and problem-free. But just when manufacturers were expecting a pat on the back for really giving the punters what they wanted... what happens? A collection of awkward buggers start saying, "That's all very well, but..."

It's really convenient to be able to hook everything up 'just like that' and assigning similar types of patches to particular memory slots does prevent any sequence from ever sounding as ghastly as some of mine do (with old-fashioned MIDI) when I've forgotten to save the patch numbers and been too lazy to write them down. But... doesn't it all sound a bit the same?

And of course there are the other awkward buggers who will still claim that dense MIDI sequences somehow lack the crispness of timing of a good old CV/gate sequencer. Some of this can be put down to technostalgia; an aberration that can easily be cured by an hour or two spent trying to find the leads to sync a Moog Prodigy and a CR78 to an SCI sequencer, and run the whole thing with an M8 micro-composer. And yet... while Vince Clarke is obviously a bit of a maverick, going out gigging with his massed analogue sequencers and his cage of anachronistic goodies, if you look at almost anyone who's making waves in music today, they've all got a soft spot for the old gear; and in some cases the soft spot is the size of a mutant marshmallow.

Part of the reason for this is simply that old stuff (when it's up and running) makes you feel good. Just like there's no comparison between playing a tonewheel Hammond through a vintage ►►



Korg's KMS30 MIDI synchroniser

► Leslie and any (even the finest) imitation, there's no comparison between having a disk of great 808 sounds (or having samples of them in your drum machine) and having a real 808 under your fingertips, in all its splendid awfulness.

Whatever the reasons, let's assume that you might, at some time, hanker after something from a bygone age to slot into your sleek MIDI system – just to humanise it a bit, or simply because it's nice to occasionally buy something that doesn't depreciate faster than the pound against the Deutchmark. First off, let's consider sequencers and drum machines. What they need, as a bare minimum, is a synchronisation system. A drum machine can, of course, also be controlled by your MIDI sequencer in much more elaborate ways, but let's say that you're actually quite keen to work within the limitations of its original design – which isn't always as daft as it may sound.

Assuming you want to connect it up with the minimum of hassle and expense, let's look at the alternatives open to you (bearing in mind that the most straightforward things are not always the cheapest!). The simple solution is to go to a specialist firm like Kenton Electronics to get an internal MIDI interface fitted to each piece of gear you want to hook up. Problem solved. They seem to have MIDI'd up practically every electronic instrument under the sun at sometime or other. Examples of drum machines include Linndrums, Roland CR78's and 808's, and Simmons SDS5's, and the good news here is that (presumably because there's nothing like pitch-bend and modulation wheels to make interfacing complicated), it's a fair bit cheaper to fit MIDI to a drum machine than it is to a polyphonic synth.

Kenton's price for the 808 is £188 – and that includes a lot more than just the sync function we could actually get away with. For instance, programmable MIDI in and out channels, velocity response on MIDI in (or at just two levels if you want to be a purist and stick to the 808's original accent system), and all setups and MIDI note assignments memorised in non-volatile RAM. The bad news is that if you have a lot of stuff to sync up, the £188s start adding up to considerably more than the actual buying price of all but the most sought-after old drum machines and sequencers.

There's also the small point that in fitting a MIDI interface, no matter how professionally, you're still mucking about with a rare vintage machine. Remember that all electronic music equipment from before the DX7 is genuinely rare compared with the DX7, HR16, SPX90, M1 – and anything from the present era. Whether that

bothers you or not depends on how long term a view you take, and on how precious an artefact you think your piece of gear actually is.

There are other ways of doing it, and they almost certainly work out cheaper. The trade-off, of course, is that they may well be much more of a fiddle to organise.

There isn't a great deal of current equipment which fits the bill; but Kenton themselves have bowed to public demand and produced a MIDI-to-CV converter which has a wealth of sync facilities as well as being able to send pitch control voltages to two separate monophonic synths. This little box (retailing at £176.25) has switchable gate and S-triggers on each channel, and DIN Sync 24 and arpeggio clocks out. (The Kenton internal mod on the 808 also includes the ability to run DIN sync from the 808 while you're slaving it to MIDI – very useful for the purposes envisaged in this article.)

But for those puzzled by expressions such as DIN sync, gates and S-triggers let's go back to the beginning...

The earliest sequencers used DC pulses to control the note-on timing of the music they were sequencing. Should have been straightforward enough, but it wasn't. For one thing, there were disagreements about the level of signal required; for another (and this was much more crucial),



Garfield Electronics' Doctor Click Mini Doc and the superlatively diminutive Nano click

some manufacturers opted for positive and some for negative pulses. Moog, as the originators of modern synthesis, might have expected other manufacturers to follow them with their negative S-trigger, but of the major manufacturers that emerged, only Korg did anything similar, and even their negative pulse was incompatible with Moog. Almost everyone else plumped for a positive pulse, which meant that a little box was called for if you wanted to sync up, say, a Multimoog to a Roland sequencer.

Responding to this, mags like *Music Technology* were always ready with a useful article and circuit diagram to help their readers overcome the problems. But as far as I know, Korg were the only commercial manufacturer at

the time to put together a dedicated interface box so that Korgs could sync to Moogs and/or Rolands. That was the MS02, which used to cost a bit under £100 – but probably didn't sell well, even at that price.

Gradually, over the next few years, the Roland/Arp CV/gate standard became the accepted norm in mass-produced equipment and was adopted by the majority of manufacturers of synths with arpeggiators. Then Roland and Korg introduced a new system of synchronisation. This was DIN sync, which foreshadowed MIDI by its use of five-pin DIN plugs, and went some way towards being a reliable and effective synchronisation system – except that Korg chose 48 beats as their time-base, while Roland opted for 24!

In any case, most other manufacturers didn't go along with DIN sync, and stuck with positive trigger voltages for their sync signals. This wouldn't have been so bad had there not been even more variation in the time-bases that they chose. Drumulators and MemoryMoog Plus sequencers, for instance, used 24 clocks per beat, while Linn and Simmons used 48 and machines like the Fairlight used 384! In practice, you could sync a Fairlight to a Drumulator – but unfortunately, the Drumulator pattern would finish in a sixteenth of the time of the Fairlight's! Great for bizarre speed machine effects, but not much else.

It was obvious that something needed to be done, and in the early eighties a Californian firm called Garfield Electronics stepped bravely in. They produced a box which converted all these different time-bases, and DIN sync signals, so that everything could talk to everything else – and at the same speed, too!

Their first product was called Doctor Click. Buy this rather chunky piece of gear, and at a stroke you could solve practically all your sync problems, and could also set up some amazing cross-rhythms and syncopations. Even awkward customers like the Oberheim DSX, and Roland's MC4, CR68 and CR78 fell instantly into step – well, they did once you'd hunted through the manual to find which timebase to select.

There were two channels available, which was at least better than one; and although there was no DIN sync input, the potential was there for elaborate manipulation of trigger timing with things like a pulsewidth variable Gate Out and a Time Lag Out – as well as invert and mask facilities, and a whole lot more besides.

The trouble was, such sophistication didn't come cheap. In Britain, a price-tag of almost £1500 meant that only top studios and programmers could really consider them. So the next move was to strip out the more esoteric elements of the Doctor Click, re-package it in 19" rack size, and sell it for half the price, under the name, 'Mini Doc'.

The Mini Doc came out in about 1984, and proved another success; although you lost much of the amazing versatility and creative possibilities of the original, you actually gained a great deal in ease of operation, and most importantly, in the ability to run virtually any number of different sequencers, arpeggiators and drum-machines at the same time.

The Mini Doc had individual outputs for each of the time-bases, so you could keep all your gear permanently wired to it, and run it all simultaneously. As a bonus, you could still produce superb arpeggiator polyrhythms with the Invert switch and 11-position Rotary Clocking Rate control – triplets included.

But Garfield Electronics hadn't yet finished the process of miniaturisation and simplification and went on to produce a third member of the 'Click' family not long after. Somehow they missed out 'Micro' and went straight to Nano Click – the real baby of the bunch – with an external power supply, and only four output and four input sockets – each handling DIN sync, 24, 48, and 96 pulses per beat.

All three products are solidly made, well-conceived, and are currently going for a fraction of their original selling price – if you can find one. But, as the astute amongst you will have spotted, they have one little omission: no MIDI. You're going to

need another box to make the crucial link from (or to) MIDI.

Candidates that spring to mind are the Kenton box already mentioned; the excellent Roland MPU101 MIDI/CV interface, which can be configured to send a trigger in time with MIDI (but then, unfortunately, loses all its brilliant CV capabilities); the new dBm EXCV, and Korg's more elderly KMS-30 MIDI synchroniser.

Just as in a previous era, Korg were the only major manufacturer to produce a much-needed interface; the MS02 had been unique in the late seventies, and in the mid eighties they did it again with the KMS-30. But before I get too lyrical about it, we need to look at the circumstances which led to its development and which certainly didn't merit quite so much praise.

About this time, Korg produced a series of mould-breaking products all within a few months of each other: the world's first genuinely cheap polyphonic synthesiser, and the world's first genuinely cheap digital drum machines – the DDM 110 and the DDM 220. I remember them well.

After a break from buying any new products because they seemed (and were!) so expensive, I splashed out on a Poly 800 and a DDM 220. Surely this was going to be it: a complete music system which would revolutionise my music without breaking the bank. It came as a bit of a shock to

realise that the Poly 800's sequencer was MIDI, but the DDM 220 was DIN sync, and that they had no intention of talking to each other.

In fact, I was so pissed-off by this that even when the KMS-30 became available shortly after, I couldn't find it in me to spend the £140 to sync the two instruments up. A shame, really, since the KMS-30 is one of only a handful of products to be worth almost as much now as it was new. The reason is simple. If you want to synchronise MIDI to DIN sync or vice versa – the KMS-30 does it, no fuss, no bother. Two MIDI outs, and two SYNC outs, independently switchable between the Roland and Korg standards provide all the control that is needed. Of course, you need something like one of the Garfield boxes to talk to anything that doesn't use DIN sync, but the KMS-30 still provides the vital link.

There are other ways, though. There are just a few products from the early days of MIDI whose manufacturers were considerate enough to spare a thought for the past as well as the future and were prepared to face the extra expense of including pre-MIDI connections in their MIDI machines.

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well as MIDI, and do it multi-timbrally – and simultaneously. Trouble is, as an expander rather than a controller, it wouldn't be much good for our purposes. The same applies (in part) to the Roland MC4 sequencer's OP8M interface, which did include a MIDI connection, but only MIDI out. This is fine if you want to have the MC4 as the heart of your system, but there can't be many Vince Clarkes in the world!

Better for our purposes would be the Roland MSQ700 sequencer, which was probably the first industry-standard MIDI sequencer which also had the decency to include DIN sync in and out. The bizarre fact here is that these sequencers are scarcely more expensive second hand than a little KMS-30. And they do pretty much the same job and give you a limited, but great, 8-track sequencer as a bonus.

They also sync up (and send note information) via the DCB interface that Roland were pioneering before MIDI wiped the floor with it. Not a great deal of use unless you happen to have a synth like a Jupiter 8 or Juno 60, but if you do... it certainly comes cheaper than having a MIDI retrofit.

Any other ways of synchronising on the cheap? Well, I see no reason why any drum machine with both MIDI and DIN sync ins and outs shouldn't at least do the basic job of getting MIDI to talk to the previous generation of equipment – and that list

includes SCI's Drumtraks, Yamaha's RX11 and RX15 and Roland's TR909, TR707 and TR727 drum machines – though of course you may need another box to turn the DIN sync into the right trigger pulses to control a particular piece of gear. In the vintage sequencer locker, so do the Roland MSQ100, a stripped-down MSQ700 without DCB, and the French sequencer from 1985, the Poly-Midi 1.

Returning to dedicated sync boxes, the Roland SBX80 SMPTE/sync box has both MIDI and DIN sync connectors, and also a fully variable trigger out socket. And its little brother, the SBX10, may miss out on the SMPTE functions and the totally variable trigger setting, but does everything else really well.

There are perhaps only two pieces of gear that can rival the original Doctor Click and Mini-Doc for versatility and comprehensive facilities – and beat them by including MIDI. One is the Doctor Click 2, which came out in 1985 specifically to cater for MIDI. In its 2U rackmount form, it has very much the same implementation as the Mini-Doc (rather than the Doctor Click), with a fantastic range of input and output connectors. Most of the inputs are, fairly logically, on the back where they are most likely to be of use in permanent installations. The outputs, on the other hand, are



The Roland MSQ700: pick of the bunch

on the front where they can be readily changed.

The other piece of gear is the Bokse US-8, which came out in 1986, and was apparently made in Britain despite its foreign-sounding name. This unit really justified its title of Universal Synchroniser; I remember it as an excellently designed 1U 19" rackmount, with an air of solidity, and five inputs and nine outputs mounted (for accessibility) on the front panel. This made it of particular use in the studio where it could be quickly and easily set up to provide a range of different sync requirements. Certainly, it ranks equal first with the Doctor Click 2 if you want to make use of pre-MIDI sequencers, arpeggiators and drum machines.

Myself, I've still got a lot of time for the original Doctor Click and Mini-Doc – maybe because if you are going to sync up that cuddly ol' analogue stuff it's nice to have something similar to do the job. That still leaves the MIDI connection to worry about, and although the KMS-30 is small, neat and efficient, I think I'd go for the MSQ700. Sometimes being interesting is as important as being efficient. ■



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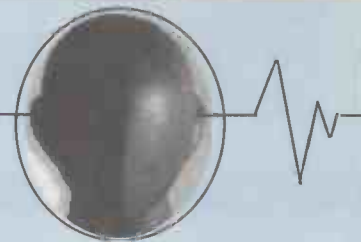
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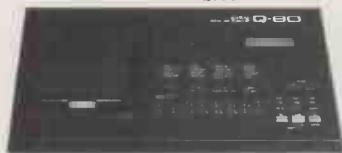
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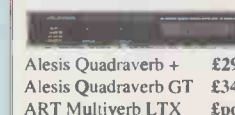
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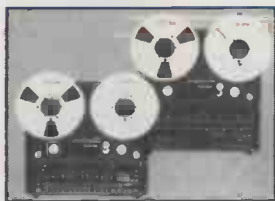
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Technically Speaking

Technical Questions Answered by Vic Lennard

Q *Ghost in the works or what! My old Prophet 5 is acting in a most unsynthly manner. Over the past six months, various sounds have been changing overnight – I know what they sounded like in the afternoon but the next day some of them were totally different. About three weeks ago, I turned it on and there were no sounds at all. What the hell is going on?*

N James
Gloucester

A The answer, I'm afraid, has little to do with the supernatural and more to do with the lithium battery inside your synth which backs up the patch memory during powerdown. This battery has a finite life of around five years or so, after which the voltage starts to drop. When this occurs, because not all of the data is properly supported, changes start to take place. In other words, parameters get altered and the sounds change for no apparent reason. Once the voltage falls below a certain value, the battery is useless and all of the internal sounds disappear.

Replacing the battery isn't the easiest of tasks as it requires the opening up of the synth and the removal of two circuit boards. The lithium battery is soldered in place and installing a new one is awkward because if you short circuit the contacts you run the risk of destroying the battery or severely reducing its life. I strongly advise you to let the professionals do the job. If there is no qualified service centre in your area, call the Synth Service Centre on: 071 586 0357 – who can also reload the original sounds for both the Rev 2 and Rev 3 models if you happen to need them.

Q *I am an enthusiastic and ambitious keyboard player in desperate need of some expert advice. I have a Kawai K4, Roland Juno 106, Technics SX-K700 and an Alesis SR16 drum machine.*

My problem is this: In the past I have rushed into the MIDI scene with a great deal of haste and not enough thought. Consequently I have regretted the decisions I have made – particularly as far as computer sequencers are concerned. I have suffered for too long with the limited abilities of the Spectrum and Commodore 64's MIDI

packages – almost to the point of depression.

I have a friend who briefly demonstrated the capabilities of one of the C-Lab packages, which impressed me, but unfortunately my friend moved away before I had the opportunity of using it myself to see just exactly what it had to offer. Also, he didn't tell me which C-Lab package it was, so I am still a little confused as to what Notator, Creator and so on actually do.

Could you please tell me exactly what the different C-Lab packages have to offer so that I can make a decision I won't regret.

Patrick Lanigan
Pershore

A C-Lab Creator and Notator are essentially pattern-based sequencers, which means that you construct a song in much the same way that you would with a drum machine. Pattern one might be the intro, pattern two the first verse and so on. There are 100 patterns in all, each of which offers 16 tracks, and you can copy tracks, or parts of tracks, from one pattern to another. This allows you to create a pattern for a verse and then re-use part of it in another pattern later in the song.

If 16 tracks aren't enough – which is possible as you could use an entire pattern just for the drums, with each instrument assigned to a separate track – there is an Arrange mode which lets you use up to four patterns at the same time. This effectively means that you can have up to 64 tracks running simultaneously, which should be enough for most of us.

Notator has the same sequencer functions as Creator with the addition of a musical scoring facility which lets you edit in standard notation and print out the score. While the score editor shows you the note information for the sequence, it also allows you to enter text, lyrics and a variety of scoring symbols.

The bottom line is that if you want to edit in notation or need to print out a score, go for Notator. Otherwise, Creator is your man! For more information, contact Mark Gordon at Sound Technology on: 0462 480000.

Q *I have a niggling problem which I can't sort out. My system is a Roland MKB-200 master keyboard, an ST running Steinberg Cubase, and various sound modules including*

a Roland U-220 from which I use the drum sounds. I use the keyboard to play the drum sounds and work section by section on Cubase, looping as I go, and find that after a while the sounds start to cut out. I've tried everything, but the only thing that sorts the problem out is using a drum machine in its place and I don't like the sounds!

Jim Cabine
Chelmsford

A Many Roland keyboards implement a MIDI message called All Notes Off which has the express purpose of shutting down any hanging notes that occur within the sound module. If you like, this is a bolt and braces approach to ensuring that notes do shut off when you take your fingers off the keys.

Every time you lift all of your fingers off the keyboard, the Note Offs for the keys you've released are sent out, followed by the All Notes Off message. As you are looping on a sequencer and recording as you go, lots of All Notes Off messages are being sent and so are shutting off the notes that you are currently playing. The more tracks you record, the worse it gets.

There is an easy solution. Go to MIDI Filters in the Options menu and set one of the Controllers to 'AllNoteOff'. This will prevent the All Notes Off message from being recorded. As for why your drum machine doesn't behave in the same way, it simply doesn't recognise the All Notes Off messages!

Q *I recently read in a music magazine – sorry, it was one of your rivals! – that the way to prevent a Roland JX-3P synth from receiving MIDI notes on all channels at the same time was to buy an Anatek Pocket Filter and insert this in line with the MIDI cables. The trouble was, the recommended unit cost nearly £90. Is there no easier or cheaper way of doing it? I would be grateful for any suggestions.*

Neil Beresford,
Telford

A When you turn a JX-3P on, it defaults to operating in Omni On mode, which means that it responds to notes on every MIDI channel. Yes, there is an easier and a cheaper way of preventing this. In fact, it'll cost you absolutely nothing! Turn the JX-3P off, connect the MIDI Out to the MIDI In and turn it back on. The JX-3P will have reset itself to operate in Omni Off mode and will only respond to MIDI information on MIDI channel 1. Admittedly you can't alter this channel, but that's better than shelling out ninety quid on a filter, I think you'll agree. The moral to the story? If you want the right answers ask the right people...

Got a problem? Vic has an answer.

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Hands On

OnSTAGE

Software For Atari ST

Playing
LIVE



For many musicians taking a computer on stage is still the stuff of nightmares. But with some well-designed software (and a little hardware) on your side, it might just be alright on the night...

As soon as technology solves one problem, it causes another. Or so it seems. For many musicians, sequencers can be more powerful tools than multitrack tape recorders and enable them to produce professional results in the proverbial cupboard-under-the-stairs. First-generation sound quality every time. The problem, of course, is playing live.

Though neither method has much to recommend it, there's something that bit more 'immediate' about playing to a sequencer than playing alongside backing tapes. The punter may not appreciate the lack of tape hiss or the rapport you've built up with your 'band' – but you certainly will. Of course it means carrying your synths and expanders around with you, possibly with a separate mixer and the

inevitable signal processors, but what price art and perfection?

The decisions get harder to make, however, where software-based sequencers are concerned. Musicians have never been keen to subject their computer, monitor and possibly hard disk to the rigours of the road. And perhaps in response to this, the market for hardware sequencers did perk up a bit. Then dedicated units appeared – MIDI data filers.

But is this extra hardware expense really necessary? Hands On think not. And to support their belief they have developed OnSTAGE as a means by which you can take your Atari ST 'on stage' and use it like a dedicated data filer – without a monitor.

There are three programs on the disk. One simply switches the LEDs on and off to ensure they are working. The second is the OnSTAGE edit program from which you set up the files and parameters, and the third is the playback program which you use live.

The edit program is actually a very sophisticated file organiser. The screen shows four banks – A to D – each with eight slots and each holding a song title. Fill them all and you have (I'll save you digging out your calculator) 32 songs. This is known as a 'set'. (Software that uses established >>

Text by
Ian Waugh

Computer Keys

The function keys 1-9 load sets 1-9. All the song data is loaded into memory at once, so playback is instantaneous. (F10 will immediately cancel a load set command). Playback is controlled from the numeric keypad, the top four keys – '(', ')', '/' and '*' – are used to select banks A to D. This also illuminates the relevant LED on the display unit. The numbers 1 to 8 are used to select a song and begin playback. Pressing '0' stops playback, '.' is used as a pause button and Enter to continue. You can also adjust the tempo on the fly with the '+' and '-' keys.

►► musicians' terminology? That must be a first – Ed

The procedure for creating a set is very simple. You highlight a slot in a bank and select 'load song' from the File menu. The program works with standard MIDI files so you can use ones you've created in your own sequencer or MIDI files from third parties (or Hands On themselves). The disk contains short extracts from twenty Hands On arrangements for you to practice with.

You can easily change the order of the songs in a set by clicking and dragging them around the bank slots. Double clicking on a title reveals extra information about it and lets you alter the tempo and set MIDI Thru on or off. Drag a song to the track window on the left of the screen and its individual tracks appear. Here you can set the tracks' MIDI channels and program change numbers. You can also mute tracks, which could be useful with third-party MIDI files for muting the melody or lead break, for example – unless you decide to mime. You wouldn't, would you?

Double click on a track name and up pops another window which lets you mute it, change its MIDI channel and initial volume, adjust its relative volume and velocity, and transpose it. These changes only affect playback from within OnSTAGE – not the file itself. But why have all these parameters if you are going to use files you have already created and set up? Well, you can fine tune a song here without reloading your sequencer and, dare I suggest it, use OnSTAGE with third-party MIDI files – even if you don't have a sequencer. You can't edit the note data but you can edit the playback parameters.

The 'About OnSTAGE' info box (accessed from the Atari menu) tells you how much song space you have used and how much memory is free. The main screen has 'tape' type transport controls so you can check that the songs playback okay and also adjust the tempo. A timer tells you the elapsed time and is particularly useful for timing a spot.

(More muso-speak? – Ed.)

When you've organised a set to your satisfaction, you save it to disk. OnSTAGE doesn't actually save all the song data with each set file – rather, it saves a file which tells it where to find the songs along with a list of any performance changes you may have made. This is both quicker and more efficient.

The playback program only occupies 20K of disk space so you have almost 690K for song data – a little more if you use an extended disk format. It makes sense to save the set and songs onto the same disk if you can. As you will probably have realised, however, if you only have a 1Mb ST, you won't be able to save all the song data onto one floppy. To help get around this, there's a set overlay function which will not delete a song from a bank unless the incoming set also has a song in that slot. This lets you build a set containing only songs in bank A, for example, and overlay it with one which only has songs in bank B – and so on.

The program will also work with a hard disk, although unless you have amazingly large and complex files there should be no need to lug a hard drive around with you. A

reasonably complex song file will probably be between 50-100K. There is also a fast set mode which only loads the song names and not the song data. This is useful if you simply want to reorganise a set, but do so without loading all the songs.

In use, you must boot the playback program from a floppy disk – copying it to create as many working disks as you need. It's a little time consuming, but there are advantages to saving your songs on a working disk rather than a blank one – as we'll see in a moment.

The program will boot from a hard disk if you copy it to your Auto folder, but it has been designed not to run with any other software and if you want to use a hard disk, it might be a good idea to use one dedicated to OnSTAGE. If you have a monitor connected, you will see a text display of the banks and songs which helps you familiarise yourself with the program before going monitorless.

If you wish, you can control the program from your MIDI keyboard. You can define the keys which will be used to control playback, change banks and select songs. You must also specify an Activate key which must be pressed while performing any of the remote functions. Choose it carefully

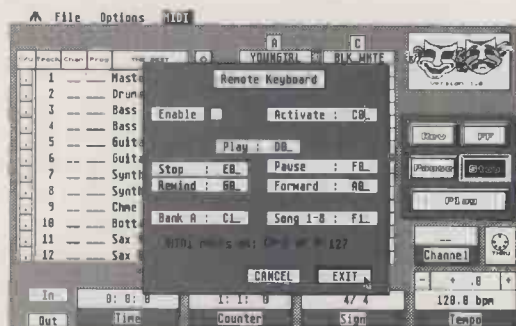
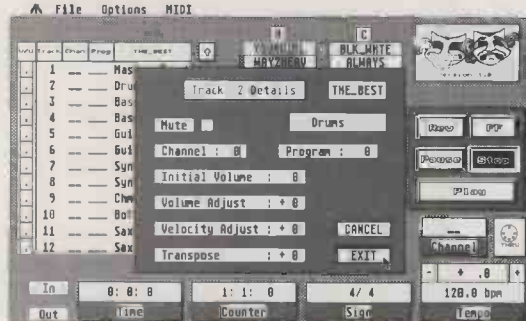
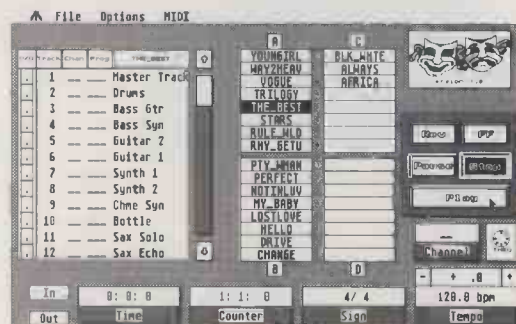
The hardware

So how on earth do you know what's going on? Well, the package includes a small black box which plugs into the ST's parallel port and a series of eight LEDs tell you what the program is doing. The LEDs are large and bright enough to be seen across a darkened stage providing your roadies aren't giving it what-for with the pyrotechnics and smoke machines.

Four of the LEDs are labelled Status, MIDI In, MIDI Out and Play. Status tells you that OnSTAGE is up and running and the MIDI LEDs indicate MIDI activity at the ST's MIDI ports. The Play LED acts as a metronome and flashes in time to the output – the flash to indicate the first beat of each bar being slightly longer than the others. The other four LEDs are labelled A, B, C & D and represent the banks from which songs can be played.

Info

Price:
OnSTAGE £99.95 plus P&P.
Price inclusive of VAT
More from:
Hands On MIDI Software
3 Bell Road
Cosham
Portsmouth
Hampshire PO6 3NX
Tel: 0705 221162
Fax: 0705 382865



or you may find yourself at the start of another song during an inspired bout of improvisation.

The program will merge incoming MIDI data with the song data it's transmitting, so you can use the same instrument(s) for playback and for any live playing you may be doing on top. To ensure continuity, it's possible to load a new set while a song is playing.

An Autoplay function will automatically step through and play all the songs in a bank – useful for seque-way sets (sic) or for instrumental music during the bingo in the intermission! You can also activate a clock send which will control a drum or another sequencer.

OnSTAGE is reset proof. If you accidentally press the reset button on the back of your ST, the song data will remain intact and the program will re-appear after doing a few housekeeping chores. Clever. To accomplish the task, however, there must be a working disk containing the program in the drive – and that is why it's a good idea to save your songs onto one. You may have to suffer the ignominy of the dreaded MIDI drone, but you can stop this once OnSTAGE has regained control of your ST by pressing the panic button – 'Esc'.

This reset feature may save you from the ravages of a spiky mains but obviously is no protection against a complete power failure. However, whereas most hardware or software sequencers would either crash or lie down and play dead, OnSTAGE at least gets you back up and running very quickly.

The manual is well written, well laid out, full of illustrations – and actually has an index. I could be picky and suggest a couple of areas be given a little more detail (such as the remote keyboard control section) but the program is well enough designed that I suspect few users will read much of the manual anyway. Do they ever?

Like many people, I suspect, I was genuinely surprised to find that I could use the ST without a monitor. We're so accustomed to the mass of information that a VDU supplies, working without one sounds like riding a bike down the street with your eyes closed (...don't try this at home children). However, the LEDs on the display unit keep you well informed. The only thing you have to remember – or write down – is the songs in the banks.

The weakest part of the system is not the software (which performed perfectly) but the ST itself. I know that STs had a reliability problem in the early days and I know musicians who simply will not take any computer at all on the road with them – full stop. For them it's the reassuring solidity of the hardware sequencer or a MIDI data filer.

But ST reliability has improved and I know musos who already tour with an ST, monitor, et al. And if you already have an ST why not use it on the road as well as in your studio and save a few hundred big ones on the cost of a data filer to boot?

Well, that's the pros and cons of the system. The decision, as ever, dear reader, is yours. But if you're happy about taking your ST on the road, OnSTAGE will serve you very well indeed. ■

Torque T225SK Stereo Keyboard Amp

Text by Ian Masterson

Here's an interesting little product for all those who like to simply plug in their synths and play. The Torque T255SK is a 25+25 watt stereo keyboard amp with a built-in 3-channel mixer; the sort of thing that would be ideal for use in studio practice sessions, a personal writing suite or even a good ol' pub gig. The unit comes in three parts: a central amp/mixer and two speaker boxes – all of which would fit very neatly into a small flightcase for portability.



This is largely due to the small size of the speaker cabinets, which measure a paltry 340x205x290mm. Of

course, this does restrict the size of the venue you can use them in; don't get any ideas about filling Wembley Arena with throbbing bass.

The amp unit is modelled along the lines of a small integrated PA unit with three channel inputs, all using stereo 1/4" jacks and controlled by individual Gain knobs. Channel three will also function as a mic input with the aid of a switch to select low impedance. The mix of the three stereo signals may be adjusted by means of Master Volume and Stereo Balance controls and there's a three-band EQ section with controls for Bass, Middle and Treble. Should you feel the need, it's also possible to use an effects unit with the amp; this can be patched in using the stereo loop jacks.

The front-panel lineup is completed by a single stereo line output, which could be useful for committing things to tape. The most noticeable feature on the back panel is the strangely massive neon power switch – surely this is overkill? – which keeps company with three mono jacks; one for each of the speakers, one for slaving the amp in stereo.

Once you've familiarised yourself with the hardware, using the amp is simply a matter of plugging in the speakers (leads are included, but are not of heavy-duty construction) and lining up your various inputs. Simplicity itself. But how does it sound?

Well, much as it looks, really – tough but small and a little 'boxy'. Naturally, the speakers represent the weak link in the system; one cannot help but wonder what could have been achieved with just a few more square inches of cabinet space. But all things considered the sound is acceptable enough – providing you're not using any 'extreme' synth patches. It would certainly make an excellent practice outfit, easily carried and yet flexible enough to cope with two or three keyboards. And for anyone who has a session at the Dog 'n' Duck with their DX7 and a mic, it could well be ideal. ■

Info:

Price: 2 x 25w £266 inc. VAT T250 SK 2 x 50w £350 inc. VAT.

More from: Barns and Mullans Ltd. 155 Greysinn Road London WC1X 8UF

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Stage Coaching¹

Out of the computer's disk drive crept hundreds of tiny green creatures covered in slime. The monitor sprang to life revealing pictures of hideous, contorted faces laughing and cackling. I felt the sweat pouring from my head, my hands were cold and sticky. Then I woke up and remembered the gig we were playing that night...

Text by Vic Lennard

Sequencers; what would we do without them? Well, for those attempting to recreate on stage, songs which have been written in the studio, the answer would involve tape machines or employing an awful lot more musicians.

Modern sequencing programs incorporate facilities with the express purpose of keeping a 'live' feel to music recorded on a computer. For example, the resolution of current Atari ST sequencers is around four times that of earlier programs, so musical nuances are faithfully preserved. Consequently, computer sequencers are more than capable of recreating the live feel imparted to recorded music. The real problems start when we

attempt to take this kind of sequencer on stage.

But is there any need? There are many standalone sequencers which are quite self-sufficient and therefore ideal for use on stage.

Not all are suitable. The cheaper ones tend to use a tape interface for the saving and loading of songs (rather than a disk drive) and invariably have insufficient memory to hold an entire set-worth of material. The consequence of this is that songs have to be loaded mid-set using a slow and often unreliable means of data transfer. Though possible, no one would recommend it.

Some older sequencers have a built-in disk drive, but instead of standard floppies use Quick Disks. These are so named because

they can load the entire side of a disk in a few seconds – the trade-off being that they hold very little data. From a live point of view, they have three main disadvantages: only one song can be saved per side, disks have to be physically turned over to access the second side, and they are quite expensive and difficult to get hold of.

Given that each Quick Disk can hold a maximum of two songs, you could end up with something like ten or twelve disks sitting on top of your keyboard – with all the attendant problems of making sure you select the right one and being equally certain it is inserted the right way up. For many, this is the stuff of nightmares when it comes to live performance.

By contrast, modern hardware sequencers are usually equipped with built-in 3.5" disk drives. And whilst still, perhaps, having ►►

► insufficient capacity for an entire set, have the advantage of much faster loading times.

All of the above assumes that the sequencer used live is also the one being used to record the songs in the first place. But if it isn't and a computer-based sequencing program is the mainstay of the recording set-up, the problem of transferring song data from one system to another rears its ugly head – so how about using the original computer system live?

It's a simple fact of life that most computers are not designed for the rigours of live work. The first problem is one of internal protection; the action of being shaken about in the back of a car or van can easily lead to



Elka CR-99

memory boards being dislodged or damage occurring to disk drive heads. Drop most computers once and you won't need to worry about problems with loading song disks – you'll be too busy trying to find a repair shop!

A second problem lies in a computer's susceptibility to radio frequency (RF) and electrical field interference. Place a monitor near power lines which are carrying pulses from a lighting box and the result is likely to be screen interference in the form of moving/shuddering lines which make it impossible to read numbers and letters. Thirdly, few computer sequencing programs are designed for live work and so the facilities necessary for use on stage are not usually implemented. These include the ability to have more than one song in memory and the facility to load one song while playing back another.

It is certainly possible to record songs on a hardware sequencer and to use that sequencer live; many of you probably do. However, the reduction in price of Atari,

Amiga and PC clones (the latter running software under the Windows environment), has led to the majority of sequencer users opting for a computer-based program. Consequently, a possible solution to our problems is to use a computer-based sequencer for recording songs and a hardware sequencer or MIDI playback module for live work. Songs recorded on most computer sequencers can be saved in MIDI File format, a generic method of saving song data for reloading into another program even on a different computer. There is a possibility that the live sequencer may not be able to load MIDI File format song files, and if this is the case songs will have to be transferred by a MIDI Out to MIDI In link between the computer and live sequencer. Obviously this process can be fairly time-consuming, but once done, the files can be saved to the sequencer's own disk drive and then reloaded in the normal way.

As regards the sequencer itself, there are two types of device which can be used. The first are straightforward hardware sequencers, but problems like insufficient memory and delay in loading songs mentioned earlier are also true here. The second type are MIDI data playback modules or MIDI data filers as they are often known. A popular example is the Alesis Datadisk which can record MIDI data and play back directly from disk so preventing any substantial delays from occurring between songs.

As it is not actually designed for the purpose of playing live, it cannot playback MIDI Files and doesn't allow you to pause in the middle of a song. On the other hand, Datadisk is a 1U rackmount which has been



Roland MC-50

built for mobility and so would be quite at home in a stage environment. It's broadly similar in design to the slightly cheaper Elka CR-99 and both can be used to store sounds and patches from synths on their built-in 3.5" disk drives.

The Roland MC series of sequencers now

have the MRM software which enables them to read MIDI Files directly from a DOS-compatible disk – including Atari ST disks. This is an interesting alternative, but possibly a little expensive when one adds up the cost of the sequencer and MRM software. However, the MC series is robustly built and a favourite among professionals for live use



Yamaha MDF2

(Go West used to use a pair of MC500 sequencers for the keyboard backing).

Yamaha's new battery-powered MDF2 is a perfect example of a multi-purpose device which will fit the live bill as it can play MIDI Files from DOS-compatible disks and does so directly from the disk, so preventing delays between songs. The only possible problem is that it can only handle format 0 MIDI Files which means that you have to mix down each song onto a single track on your sequencer before saving to disk. Roland's Sound Brush SB-55 could also be considered; like the MDF2 it will play any MIDI Files, again directly from disk.

Unfortunately, both units only have a single MIDI Out, so if your studio sequencer system is using a MIDI port expander, a degree of data re-jigging might be necessary.

There is one other possibility which is worth considering – a product which you will find on review elsewhere in this issue. Hands On MIDI Software have an Atari ST package called On Stage which allows you to use an ST live without the need for the monitor – in many ways the most vulnerable part of the system. The software lets you organise up to 32 songs into four banks of eight each and control their playback from a MIDI keyboard, while a small box plugs into the printer port and uses LEDs to allow you to monitor the current situation. It also has the advantage of supporting a custom MIDI port expander which gives you the availability of 32 MIDI channels. But don't listen to me – go read the review for yourself... ■

On The Beat

Text & Example by Nigel Lord

One of the difficulties of writing rhythm tracks in isolation – ie. without the bass instrument(s) which will ultimately accompany them – is that there's often a tendency to fill all the 'holes'. Whilst working well on their own, patterns tend to sound overblown when placed in the context of a mix.

Though apparently quite busy, this month's example leaves plenty of space for other instruments to flesh out the rhythm – provided the bass and snare drum voices are chosen sympathetically. By this I mean selecting contrasting sounds – dry & light and ambient & heavy – for each pair of instruments.

Outside of this, things remain pretty flexible and your further experimentation will – as ever – bring its own rewards. ■

PATTERN : 1a		TEMPO: 95-115BPM		
SOUND	1	2	3	4
Cisd HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Open HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cabasa	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cowbell	◆	◆	◆	◆
Light Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Heavy Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Hi Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Tom Tom	◆	◆	◆	◆
LightB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
HeavyB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
TIME SIG: 4/4	BAR 1			

PATTERN : 1b		TEMPO: 95-115BPM		
SOUND	1	2	3	4
Cisd HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Open HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cabasa	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cowbell	◆	◆	◆	◆
Light Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Heavy Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Hi Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Tom Tom	◆	◆	◆	◆
LightB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
HeavyB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
TIME SIG: 4/4	BAR 2			

PATTERN : 1c		TEMPO: 95-115BPM		
SOUND	1	2	3	4
Cisd HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Open HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cabasa	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cowbell	◆	◆	◆	◆
Light Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Heavy Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Hi Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Tom Tom	◆	◆	◆	◆
LightB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
HeavyB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
TIME SIG: 4/4	BAR 3			

PATTERN : 1d		TEMPO: 95-115BPM		
SOUND	1	2	3	4
Cisd HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Open HiHat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cabasa	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cowbell	◆	◆	◆	◆
Light Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Heavy Snare	◆	◆	◆	◆
Hi Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Conga	◆	◆	◆	◆
Low Tom Tom	◆	◆	◆	◆
LightB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
HeavyB/Drum	◆	◆	◆	◆
TIME SIG: 4/4	BAR 4			

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Big in Vegas

With a new band, a compilation album and a hit single, Terry Hall's life is starting to look interesting again – damn it..!



Interview by Phil Ward

“There aren't any bands I'd go and see any more,” laments Terry Hall, staring glumly into his cappuccino. “Not a single one.” The diffidence is studied. Notwithstanding Vegas – a glamorous new liaison with former Eurythmic Dave Stewart, a hit single (‘Possessed’) and a major album push by RCA in the offing – he prefers to present himself as yesterday's man. After an ‘explosive’ entry into the pop business with The Specials, he has maintained, rather than built, a career around various aggregations of mates, from Specials fallout, The Fun Boy Three to The Colour Field and recent collaborations with Ian Broudie and The Lightning Seeds. Vegas is just such an outing, combining his deadpan style and sharp lyrics with a friend's musical ideas – as if they'd accidentally found a guitar behind the sofa. And, almost to his surprise, it just so happens that people are still interested...

“Maybe we will do some gigs ourselves, but it's a bit early. I don't really know. Because I've done a lot of gigs, I can't really go and see something and see it the way I did when I was 16, before I'd done anything. Like, when I go now I think, ‘Mmm... wonder who's doing the catering?’”

The flippancy is Terry Hall's way of maintaining his own identity in an industry based on hype and forgeries. As a defence mechanism, it's impregnable. Ironically, the songs on *Vegas* betray a range of emotions at odds with the shrinking violet sitting in a café-bar in the West of London. Set against Dave Stewart and Olle Romö's pulsing and heavily programmed backing tracks, Terry's voice really sings, with a

passion that will surprise those who remember the understated delivery of songs like ‘Thinking Of You’. How on earth did it all happen?

“Well, it was in January of this year. Last year I signed to BMG Publishing, and I was sort of on the verge of doing a solo album. I was um'ing and ah'ing about it for a long time, and my new publisher also publishes Dave. He suggested that we should get together, just to see what would happen, really. So I talked to Dave around Christmas, and Dave had been asked to write a song for The Ramones, so he said d'you fancy coming over to France and we'll write one together. I agreed and went over in January for three days. We wrote a song – and it was shit. But we enjoyed each other's company.”

This is typical. Whenever life threatens to sound a little bit too exciting, like going over to France to write a song for The Ramones, the temptation to bring it all back down to earth kicks in like a boot.

“Dave had some ideas that had been knocking around for, like, two years, just sort of bare tracks and stuff, and he asked me if I'd like to try writing some words for them – just to see what would happen. So I did that. And then we started recording it all. And we made an LP.”

And you can't ask for a clearer description than that. In fact, a lot of the melodies on the said LP (only Terry Hall could say ‘LP’ and mean it) seem to grow organically from keyboard phrases within the backing track...

“There was a lot of stuff in place, yeah, an incredible amount already there, because it had been programmed and

messed about with when Dave was on tour with The Spiritual Cowboys. That's all they were doing, for ages. I just got it and wrote words to it, really. With Ian (Broudie) and The Lightning Seeds' stuff it was different; we sort of wrote with an acoustic guitar, and we didn't really realise that we were writing songs because we'd known each other for a long time – and that's what happens, sometimes.

"With Dave, it had all been very heavily programmed, and when it came to mixing it I was listening to things I'd never heard before on tape, there was so much stuff on there. Then it was just a question of dropping things out. When I first heard the tracks, there were a few top line ideas, and there were some without any ideas. And we wrote three songs afresh, as we were recording. Actually that was back to the guitar: me and Dave humming away, and Olle (who did all the programming) listening to what we did and programming it. I don't get involved in that sort of thing; all I do when I go into a studio is check that the mic's at the right height. The good thing about being a singer is that once you've got a mic stand you're away."

Some songwriters resist the idea that a 'proper' song can be brought forth using clicks of a mouse, preferring to wait until the whole number can be rattled off Dylan-style before embarking upon what they would essentially call post-production. Not so Terry Hall...

"It's not really harder to write to a backing track. In fact, it makes it easier because that's half the job done. It all depends on who you're working with. I mean, I've sat down with people with an acoustic guitar and it's been the most boring day of my life, but it all depends on the people involved. What Ian did with the second Lightning Seeds album (*Sense*) was really good, sort of similar to Electronic, but Electronic's songs aren't so poppy and strong – although I like them."

The most boring day in Terry Hall's life: now there's something to muse over – coming as it does from an expert in *ennui* and a man whose prize possession is a satellite dish. Of course, it wasn't boring to work with Ian Broudie and his acoustic guitar, but it's already becoming a slightly blurred memory...

"Ian produced stuff for a band I was in a while ago. I can't remember what band it was – probably The Colour Field. That was when I first met him, about seven years ago, or something. And when I was writing for this possible solo album, I made a list of people I would like to write with, and he was on the list. Can I have another cappuccino, please?" A waitress has arrived. Neither Vegas nor The Lightning Seeds have yet exhausted all the ideas from what has been, by Terry Hall's standards, a pretty stout burst of activity, helped by liberation from that perennial creative block, contractual obligation.

"No, I've still got about 14 songs which are just there, but it's a question of, like, what do I want to do with them? They're still there; they just don't go away, really. I wrote most of them with a lad called Craig Gannon, (formerly in The Smiths) in Manchester, and we were going to form a

small band. Very small. Just the two of us. We demo'd a lot of stuff, and it was all sounding really good. You know, pop music. And Broudie was going to produce it. But then I snapped up an opportunity to get off Chrysalis; that was more important, really, than recording the album.

"With me and Jerry (Dammers) and The Specials, they really wouldn't let us go. Jerry made one album in eight years, and they still wouldn't let him go. I tried quite a few ways. I thought of doing it an illegal way, which is just saying 'let me

"Dave had been asked to write a song for The Ramones, so he said d'you fancy coming over to France and writing one together. I agreed and we wrote a song – and it was shit. But we enjoyed each other's company"

off', but then when Chrysalis got into a bit of a mess it was a good time to approach them and say, look, I'll ease the mess and go. EMI took over, and I found out in November that Jerry had been released, so I just got in there straight away and played, like, thick git, and made them feel really sorry for me till they said, all right we'll let you go then."

Once gone, Terry could begin a new era of collaborations, so far with one friend signed to Virgin and one friend signed to RCA, and not a legal wrangle in sight...

"It only started last year. When you're with a record company for 13 years, the identity changes such a lot. When we signed to Chrysalis, there was Blondie and a few other good things – and it was a good label to be on. 13 years on and it's, like, Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine, and you think 'I don't understand what that is, really'. You just don't feel like making a record on that label. And it's weird, because you don't want to be there – the way you didn't want to be at school, or something. So you try other things, and the obvious thing was to write with other people and not just record myself.

"I'm not signed to a label, at the moment, which is fantastic, for me, because I can do exactly what I want. Like, stop the interview, I don't want to do it. Do you know what I mean? If you feel in a good mood and you feel like doing things, you can, but if you don't, you can't. It's a bit weird; I'm in a band with Dave, he's signed to this label, and I'm not. It makes it a bit strange to be the singer and not signed – it's usually the percussionist. But it's good. Everybody's happy about the situation."

Terry sips on his cappuccino. "I learned two chords on the guitar, once. I can't remember what they were, but they were good. They sounded really good, know what I mean? And they were really easy. Honestly I can't remember them, I just know they didn't hurt my fingers. But then I got a bit stropy. You know when you see Elvis Presley with a guitar, and he looks great, and you want to look like that? Well, I went like that (mimes hamfisted chord) and that chord was all >>>

» right, and I did the other chord, and that sounded good, but then, on another song, I didn't know what to play. And everything else I did was shit, because I didn't know what I was doing. So I stopped doing it. But I did an American tour with The Fun Boy Three and I had a guitar roadie for two chords. And I treated him like shit, because you should, really,

"I'm not signed to a label at the moment, which is fantastic, for me, because I can do exactly what I want. Like, stop the interview, I don't want to do it..."

shouldn't you? Isn't that what guitarists do? I just kept asking if it was in tune - 'are you sure this is in tune?'"

The guitar safely to one side, working with Ian Broudie and Dave Stewart has enabled Terry to discover at least some of the benefits of recording technology. This, at least, has been a qualm-free experience.

"Worrying about use of sampling is like worrying about use of notes, or chords. It is what it is, that's the way things have gone. There's been stuff I've recorded that's appeared here and there, but there it is, it doesn't bother me at all. I don't see why it should. It just bothers people who are greedy,

really. You've done something, it's finished, and it's gone. So somebody else is using that idea - well, I steal ideas all the time. Not with samplers, necessarily, but what's the difference? There's no such thing as originality. You can do this or do that till the cows come home, but it is down to actually selling it. Which is quite unfortunate, but you've got to be realistic, really.

"It's weird what people's reactions are when you stick a loop on a song; you just go like that (mimes nonchalant \$1000 trigger jab) and it changes it, and people go wow, this is really happening, or whatever. But it's just the same song."

Much in Terry's world is 'weird'. He acts like a man bemused by his own success. But you also get the impression that everything he says is absolutely genuine. "I didn't get involved with Ian's recording at all, I just co-wrote the songs and did some backing vocals. But it just happened because we know each other, and our families know each other, and we just ended up in the studio. It wasn't planned or anything. I got more involved with Dave's recordings. Like, we did this session in Paris with players from the Paris Opera. One of them did that violin solo on 'Possessed'. I can't remember who - I was asleep or something."

You see - life getting a bit too interesting again... "It was a bit weird, that, because we recorded the album in the South of France, and it was really pleasant and sunny, and there were kids around and everything. Then we went into this basement (Studio Grandes Armées, Paris) and my head fell off. When you're down there working you don't see anything."

Look, Terry, do you actually enjoy recording? "No. But if you want to be on the record, you have to do it. Well, you don't really have to do it. Work that one out."

Talk of production techniques and songwriting themes really doesn't cut much ice with Terry Hall. He has that magnificent apathy which has its roots in punk nihilism, and the sulky cut-the-crap disdain for hypocrisy which was such a highlight of those 2-Tone days. As with the best writers from that era, the superficially blank gaze is really a piercing stare.

"You do what you do and you know what you know, and all I know is my tiny, boring existence. What I do from day to day is watch television and play with my kids. So that is what I write about. And I like television, I like every form of television. I like satellite TV; I've just got a dish installed, and it's the most fantastic thing ever. If you don't get one, you've got four channels, and if you get one you've got, what is it, 18 channels, and it's just fantastic. You can watch anything, and you can watch all day and all night. It's full of shit, but what's wrong with that? Shit's good, really.

"If I write a song, I just write about what I know, it's really simple. All I know is all I know, and I don't really want to know anything else. I don't want to know what's happening in certain countries; I don't feel qualified to write about homeless people, the way Phil »

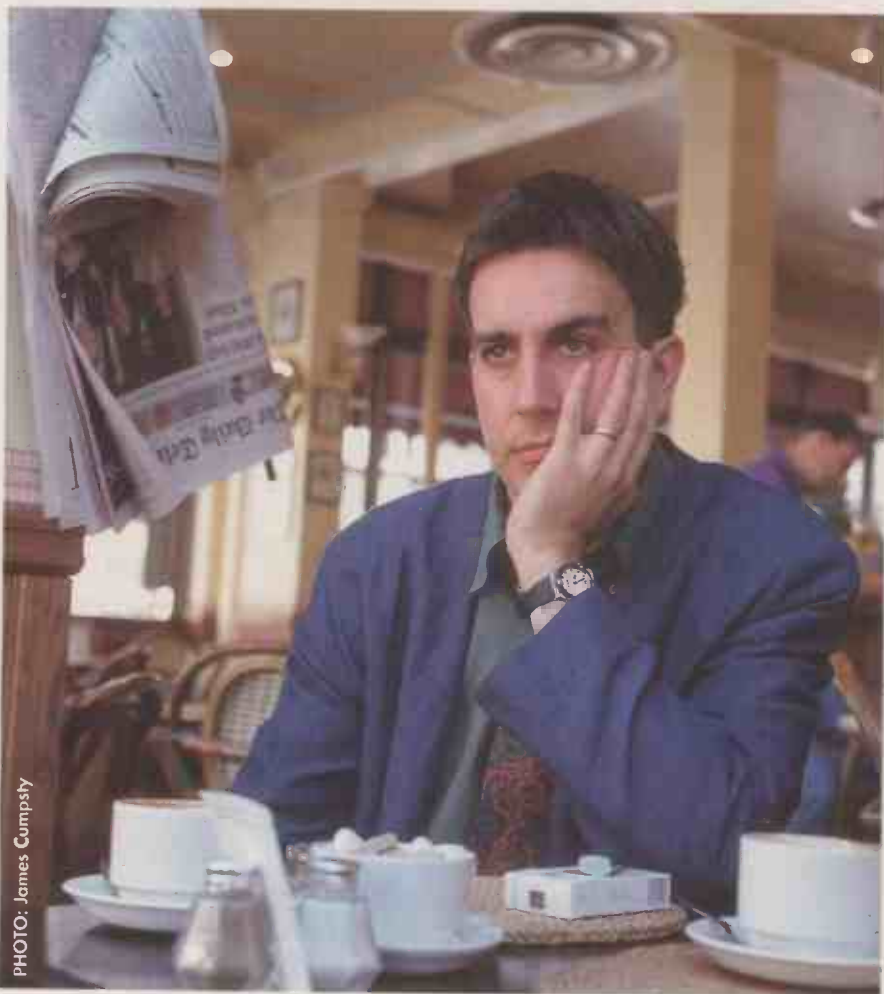


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► Collins does – he’s obviously had it rough, you know, sleeping with his head in a bass drum down Waterloo Station. What’s the point in lying? I don’t want to save the rain forest. I’m sorry, but I really don’t.”

Well, you’d be unlikely to save it with a song... “You won’t save it with a song, no. A long time ago we wrote a song called ‘Ghost Town’, and we thought we were going to stop every inner city riot in Britain. But we didn’t. The Beatles wrote about girls. That’s a good subject.”

Speaking of girls, Terry’s duet with his Vegas partner’s wife Siobhan Fahey on the song ‘Walk Into The Wind’ is the first time they’ve appeared together on record since Bananarama joined The Fun Boy Three for the 1982 hit ‘It Ain’t What

You Do It’s The Way That You Do It’. His response to this frankly’ trivial observation is typically ingenious: “Well, you know where we recorded the album, at Dave’s place – she lives there. So I met her again in January after, what, nine years. Still the same, really. Same thing.”

“With recording, it’s what happens on the day, on the hour, and a lot depends on who’s around. If you’re arguing about everything and you’re trying to make a record, you’re just not going to enjoy it. But if everybody’s really happy – painfully happy – you just enjoy it.”

These studio-oriented collaborations all seem terribly grown up. Do you miss being in a band? “Well, I feel like I am in a band, but it just happens in a different way. It is usually friends who say ‘let’s form a band’, but this

was, like, a band who said ‘let’s be friends’. It wasn’t like Dave doing everything. He played very little. I mean, he had a lot of the ideas, musically, but there was Olle and Manu (Guiot) as well.

“There’ll always be bands, even if the shape of them changes. A band I really like is XTC. But I don’t really know where they stand, now. They’re a great band, in any form. Maybe they’ve been going through weirdness with Virgin, I don’t know. When XTC release an album I’ll go out and buy it straight away. I won’t even read any reviews, or anything, I’ll just go and buy it. It’s obvious from their record sales that they do get a bit swamped. But it shouldn’t stop you, really. I wrote some songs last year with Andy (Partridge) for my solo album, and they’re fantastic. I know it’s weird me saying this, but you know when you write a song and you think ‘that’s fantastic’, it just strengthens your identity.

“But it’s still the same thing, underneath. There’s a band called Suede, who I don’t know, I’ve never heard, but you get the feeling that there’ll always be bands like that who’ll always play, always get a deal, I don’t know, maybe because they’re talented, or whatever. Things change on the surface– cars look different from the way they used to. You’ve got to be prepared to go with the flow, a little.”

Going with the flow of Terry Hall’s consciousness is a treat. As the froth on the cappuccinos subsides into bewildered dregs, Terry takes one more stab at the heart of the matter. As usual, it ends up on his sleeve...

“Realistically, you grow out of saying ‘let’s form a band and go and play lots of dirty shit-holes’. You just think, why? But, like, when you’re 16 or 17 those shit-holes look like Wembley, they look fantastic. You can put up with such a lot when you know nothing else. I’ve slept on a table for three weeks, and I don’t really want to go back to that stuff. And when you get married and have kids, you get really boring and dull. In a nice way.” ■

Recommended Listening

Albums

WITH THE SPECIALS:

- Specials (2-Tone, 1979)
- More Specials (2-Tone, 1980)

WITH THE FUN BOY THREE:

- The Fun Boy Three (Chrysalis, 1982)
- Waiting (Chrysalis, 1983)

WITH THE COLOURFIELD:

- Virgins And Philistines (Chrysalis, 1985)
- Deception (Chrysalis, 1987)

AS TERRY, BLAIR & ANOUCHKA:

- Ultra Modern Nursery Rhymes (Chrysalis, 1989)

WITH VEGAS:

- Vegas (RCA, 1992)

SOLO:

- The Collection (Chrysalis, 1992)

Singles

WITH THE SPECIALS (on 2-Tone):

- Gangsters (1979)
- A Message To You, Rudy (1979)
- The Special A.K.A. Live! (EP, 1980)
- Rat Race (1980)
- Stereotype/International Jer Set (1980)
- Do Nothing (1980)
- Ghost Town (1981)

WITH THE FUN BOY THREE (on Chrysalis):

- The Lunatics (Have Taken Over The Asylum) (1981)
- It Ain’t What You Do... (with Bananarama, 1982)
- The Telephone Always Rings (1982)
- Summertime (1982)
- The More I See (The Less I Believe) (1983)
- Tunnel Of Love (1983)
- Our Lips Are Sealed (1983)

WITH THE COLOUR FIELD (on Chrysalis):

- The Colour Field (1984)
- Take (1984)
- Thinking Of You (1985)
- Castles In The Air (1985)

AS TERRY, BLAIR & ANOUCHKA:

- Missing (Chrysalis, 1989)

WITH VEGAS:

- Possessed (RCA, 1992)





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Demo Takes

Artist: JON RUSH

Venue: Home

Equipment: Korg M3R; Kawai K4; Roland MKS100 sampler; Cutec 4-track; home-made noise reduction; Alesis MMT8; effects pedals; Yamaha R1000 reverb; Aiwa cassette deck, acoustic guitar.

Steadfastly poppy songs from Bristol's answer to Howard Kershaw, or is it Nik Jones? Can't remember. Anyway, look, the point is that the standard of 4-track demos as performed by the readers of *Music Technology* continues to rise. People like Jon Rush are autonomous little units of songdom, with a smattering of pocketable gear that creates a sound frighteningly close to that of early New Romantic albums in terms of sonic range and clarity. If this carries on there will be no recording studios left, and society as we know it will break down into paranoid isolation, random violence and looting. So just watch it.

Jon's drums are a bit splatty, to be honest, and the patches could do with a bit of tweaking to put at least a small amount of distance between the listener and the preset, because although those nice people at Korg and Kawai are terribly clever and all that, it's almost become a point of principle that sounds - timbres, tones, tintinnabulations - are as much the province of originality among modern musicians as melody and rhythm. This can be a bit unfair on songwriters like Jon, but whatever publishers and the like may say, they are as influenced by the over-familiarity of sounds as any other industry professional. But then, is this home taping thing a hobby or a career move?

Contact: Jon Rush, 32 King Road, Bristol BS4 2LS

Artist: BRIAN ROBSON

Venue: Home

Equipment: Not supplied

Far be it from me to make cheap jokes at Manchester United's expense, but I have a nagging feeling that Brian should put the 'y' back in his name and get back into training. Since abandoning Old Trafford's midfield he appears to have been busy putting together this motley collection of "tongue-in-cheek protest pop songs", which combine a veritable amusement arcade of synthy bleeps and plops with a voice of distinctly thespian quality. Like Michael Crawford in a Wardour Street pinball dive.

The ineptitude of the recording suspends belief. A ghostly voice hovers, completely

detached, above a vague conglomeration of dull, cheap sounds, indistinguishable from one another except that you suspect the lower register to represent bass and drums, and the rest to be the chords. The "protest" in the songs turns out to be a series of satirical but unscanning insights delivered with the practised comedy enunciation of the Music Hall, clearly the product of a deranged troubadour. It's certainly a very unusual and uncommon use of (presumably) MIDI-synchronised backing tracks, but in this case rarity confers no value. Bring back the piano and the ukelele, at least.

Contact: Brian Robson, 091 286 7838

Artist: WATCHMEN

Venue: Home

Equipment: Yamaha MT2X 4-track; QX3 sequencer; Sony 55ES DAT; K870ES cassette deck; Alesis Quadraverb; 3630 compressor; HR16 running D4 drums; MEQ230 graphic EQ; Shure SM87 mic.; Boss BX16 mixer; NS50 & NS2 noise suppressors; RPQ10 pre-amp/EQ; C150 compressor; Roland D10; JX3P; MS30 monitors; Kawai K4; K1R; Pioneer hi-fi amp; Award Sessionmaster guitar pre-amp.

Andy King and Brett Green, who are Watchmen, day and night, program all the sequenced parts and print them onto tracks 3 and 4 of the MT2X, leaving tracks 1 and 2 for guitar and vocals.



Sometimes, however, four tracks of MIDI are recorded and mixed down onto the DAT - lucky fellows - and fed back onto tracks 3 and 4 as a stereo pair. Brett also feels that the DAT adds a little sparkle to the submix, and is sceptical of synchronisation - preferring to keep a printed master which captures the sounds in one easily accessible place regardless of changes in equipment and so on.

Their strengths are in hooky keyboard riffs, which pepper the songs with attractive, glossy phrases. The Alesis 3630 also does sterling work in compressing the total mix into a smooth and even finish, and is rapidly emerging as a contender for Most Useful Gadget in the 1992

home recording Oscars. The trouble is, with the heavily distorted guitar (especially on 'Aching For You'), the high, modulating strings (which don't half sound like the old Roland RS09), and the romantic, blues'n'soul vocal, it sounds like Simple Minds and ABC rolled into one. In other words, ten years old. Now, we could have the Jon Rush conversation all over again, about familiarity and originality, or we could just leave it by saying Watchmen have a considerable local reputation and a damned good time with their impressive collection of gear. Which do you think?

Contact: Brett Green, 0202 601164

TAPE OF THE MONTH:

Artist: JON MOORE

Venue: OFP Music

Equipment: Korg T1; Yamaha V50; Tascam 644. Not on tape: Yamaha SY77; Seil Cruise; guitars; effects; 80486 PC awaiting imminent purchase of Cadenza software.

This Jon is a composer of soundtrack music for theatre and AV use, 'AV' being Audio-Visual and meaning the sorts of stings and epic logo-accompanying bursts found in the twilight world of conferences, launches, promotional videos and State openings of Job Creation schemes. On these proceeds he has released a couple of albums, one "pseudo-classical" and one "a kind of Vangelis meets Tangerine Dream type thing". Surprisingly, among the tracks sent to Demo Takes, I hear neither Mozart nor Edgar Froese, and I'm glad Jon himself mentions the word 'library' in relation to one track, because this is ideal library music. Library music is simply mood music available off the shelf - pick a mood needed for your AV production, find the appropriate CD and rent it. Now, the question is, where does library music stop and independently valid 'New Age' or ambient music begin? Brian Eno would probably jump for joy if you suggested that his albums were mere shelf fodder, whereas other composers might bristle at the suggestion that their work should be available only by the yard, as it were.

There's no doubting the professional quality of Jon's recordings, and I for one enjoyed listening to them for their own sake, although the drums in 'Day By Day' are too low in the mix and sound pegged on. If the kit felt too intrusive, might not the toms, snare and bass drum have been replaced by more subtle percussion - same parts, softer timbres? There's some gentle

conga and claves in 'Voyage III' which work so much better, although admittedly this is an altogether softer track, with a gorgeous, contemplative guitar. 'Nullarbor' impresses, too, because the percussive accents, though strong, are kept to a minimum and divided between a stentorian tom-wallop and a repeating metallic marimba figure. Occasionally, the main synth line is disproportionately bold, undermining the hypnotic effect of the whole, but it's good stuff and there *are* instrumental music labels out there - with wide distribution networks among osteopathy practices the Home Counties over - who would love it.

Contact: Jon Moore, 83 Christine Avenue, Worcester WR2 5ST

Artist: STRANGE BUT TWO

Venue: Home

Equipment: Tascam 488; Alesis Quadraverb; Atari 1040 STE running C-Lab Notator and Unitor; Korg DSS1, M3; Washburn guitars; Ozark mandolin; Realistic PZM microphone; strong black filter coffee & Old Holborn rolling tobacco (sic)

Congratulations must go to Strange But Two for the best insert photo Demo Takes has seen in a long, long time, starring the Ozark mandolin and a nifty mirror shot of partners Jamie King and

Simon Parkinson. Such a domestic vignette provides a fitting illustration for these homely, crafted songs, conceived in much the same vein as those of Frazier Chorus, but with a touch more dynamic clout along the lines of Danny Wilson or Prefab Sprout. It's a shame the execution of the recording doesn't quite match the quality of the cover, but let me say immediately that the problems are purely



technical, and that the material, as written, is excellent. Melodically and chordally the songs are solid and engaging, although the arrangements are a little too fussy at times, with florid little arabesques of flutey synth and slightly hustled drum fills. Less might well have been more for Strange But Two, particularly as there appear to be some noise and flange problems which I normally associate with excessive bouncing. Which is a mystery, if - as implied by the equipment list - the C-Lab sequences were synchronised with the tape during mixdown with Unitor.

There are many layers of sound, so - having only one sampler and one synth - maybe Jamie and Simon printed the different patches onto the

multitrack, and used Unitor to lock everything together during the overdubs. If so, there is certainly a link between the problem of overdoing the MIDI flourishes and that of sound disintegration. Anyway, the best sounding songs are 'Like A River' and 'Paradise Postponed', while a couple of them really needn't be there at all (there are eight on this tape). The boys have a little joke in their biography about pretentiousness, a touch over-defensively as these are actually feet-on-the-ground treatments of classic head-in-the-clouds subjects; they may just have a slightly rose-tinted view of how much technology can do for them at this level.

Contact: Jamie King or Simon Parkinson, 0202 476761

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PREMIATA FORNERIA MARCONI

The World Became The World (1974)

Apocalyptically inverse title betrays apocalyptically bad mid-'70s prog rock album from Italian musos anxious to emulate heroes in the UK who played concerts, not gigs, and had Sibelius intro tapes to prove it. Opening track 'The Mountain' kicks off with 600-piece male choir slicing through 12-tone shambles like an entire Welsh valley taking the piss out of Pavarotti on a Friday night. Segues effortlessly into 12/8 guitar/drum/mellotron workout from an original rococo design by Bernini. Lyrics by Pete Sinfield, the man responsible a year later for 'I Believe In Father Christmas'. Soft, acoustic passages provide 'light and shade' and an opportunity for enlightened parents to say "this bit's nice".

Much space left in musical arrangements for lengthy cadenzas in which each member of band showcases individual warehouse of related instruments. Thus: guitarist overdubs SG, acoustic, lute, bouzouki, sitar, koto, ukelele; drummer plays kit, tymps, glockenspiel, gong, timbales, castanets etc, etc. To paraphrase the old joke: when harpsichord stops... moog solo.

Devotees of Adolfo Celi's transcendent performance as The Pope in *The Borgias* appreciated slick annunciation of PFM's vocals, revelling in the subtle twists given to Sinfield's rich poetry by pasta-driven Italian molars. I always wondered what the hell the descendants of Dante made of lines like "Lady dancing on a tulip, let me be your next cigarette". PW



HURRAH! BOYS HURRAH!

Braces were a significant development of the mid-'80s. Not only did they convey a rustic, slightly boyish charm, but they also held up roomy trousers essential for deep, foraging pocket excavation so beloved of a generation rapidly becoming disillusioned with any kind of musical instrumentation at all. Thatcher was in her second term of office: the miners were on the defensive and Maggie Philbin had steered *Tomorrow's World* out of its post-Baxter Ionic phase into a period of crowning Corinthian glory. What need was there to actually play, in this market-led nirvana of opportunism?

Haircuts were evolving slowly out of punk's gel jamboree. Those who fully embraced the resurgent lumberjack ethic pointed the way with a series of sensible and downright suburban barnets, while others trailed behind through the borders of fashion, along the very edges of pop's multifarious fields of endeavour - dragged, indeed, through hedges. A mood of optimism prevailed, and names like The Roaring Boys, Sigue Sigue Sputnik - and Hurrah! Boys Hurrah! - rang loud and true down the avenue of free enterprise. left at the traffic lights of fate and straight on down the dual carriageway of total and utter oblivion. PW



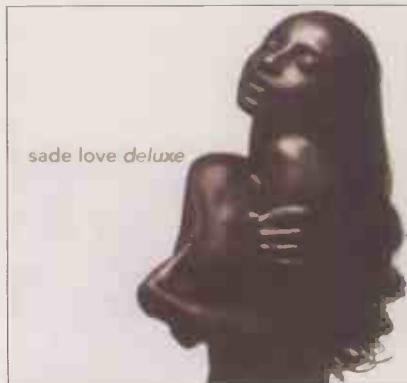
Out Takes

Reviews by Dan Goldstein and Phil Ward

SADE

Love Deluxe (Epic)

Some people can't seem to forgive Sade for the success of her first album, as if to blame her for the programming policies of Lift & Restaurant Background Music (International) Ltd, or whoever it is. Me, I always thought at least *Diamond Life*



beat the hell out of James Last and Mantovani, and frankly the sooner they start playing *Love Deluxe* in my local Sainsbury's the better.

Where this album scores over 1988's *Stronger Than Pride* is in seizing the opportunity to beef up the rhythm tracks, as suggested by the remixes of 'Paradise' that have marked the time between then and now. In particular, 'Feel No Pain' and 'Cherish The Day' benefit, not raves by any means but weightier, glowering manifestations of the old Sade spirit. There is also a wider range of melodic and timbral ideas, in which the erstwhile Flamenco frippery has been replaced by such elements as choppy Les Paul (as on 'No Ordinary Love') sonorous strings (on 'Pearl') or the 808ish drumbxx pattern under 'Bullet Proof Soul'. 'Mermaid' is an adeptly programmed ambient chill-out sort of a thingummyjig, and everywhere else the voice... well, the voice is maturing beautifully. Personally I hope the next lift she and I are together in breaks down. **PW**

MADONNA

Erotica (Maverick/Sire)

PRINCE & THE NEW POWER GENERATION

(Paisley Park/Warner Bros)

Take two established icons of Eighties pop, hand them both a multi-million dollar cheque which sets them up for the rest of their lives, and what do they do? Sit back on their laurels, turn out album after album of predictable drivel to keep the masses happy, then throw a handful of obscenities into the mix – just to emphasise that they're still capable of causing 'trouble'?

It's a depressing scenario, I admit. Happily, in the case of Prince and Madonna, there's no

question of anyone sitting back – on laurels or on anything else, for that matter.

Madonna, especially, is making better music than ever. Forget the book and the photo sessions and the scandal and the hype; she's still a damn fine singer and a damn perceptive songwriter. And now that she's rid herself of New York session musicians and their over-fed egos, she shines out like never before.

Replacing the session boys on *Erotica* are producer Shep Pettibone, programmer Tony Shimkin and a stack of the highest possible tech. Their contribution is a breathtaking set of sparse and highly original loops, over which Madonna croons, kisses, and generally has fun. From the disquieting title track to a Hurley-esque reworking of the Bingo-hall standard 'Fever', there's scarcely a let-up in the outpouring of creativity.

Alas, the same can't quite be said of Prince's latest. Over-long, over-worked and over-ambitious, it lacks the sureness of touch that makes *Erotica* such bliss. And, while Ms Ciccone has substituted a five-pin DIN for her muso entourage, the Minneapolis midget is becoming ever more reliant on the extended guitar solo and the bombastic brass riff to pad out his arrangements.

The precious Prince knack of somehow contriving an irresistible groove from apparently



incompatible sounds is evident on some tracks, most notably 'You Sexy MF', 'The Continental' and the current single '7'. Otherwise, it's too much pomp, not enough pop.

Still, at least he's trying. If somebody waved a \$100million contract in your face, would you be able to say the same? **DG**

THE PRODIGY

Experience (XL)

"I want it to be like a concept rave album... taking my inspiration from the old Pink Floyd albums." Thus spake Liam Howlett in May's issue of *Music Technology*. In this regard as in many others – including the rummage through other '70s rock albums and tons of reggae for inspiration, and the avowed love of twiddling analogue controls on old synths – Howlett is the very embodiment of the spirit of rave, 1992. While others chill out, Prodigy are still on the dance floor, willing the party to

continue and helping themselves to any of the, er, cider and crisps that are left.

Dub is one of the strongest influences, at least in the form the tracks take on this album, with the Roland TB303 Bassline lurching in and out of focus as the fingers poise over the mute buttons. But make no mistake – accelerating and frenetic rave beats are what Experience is really about, and Howlett's unusually musical sense of timbre and structure is just an added bonus. **PW**

Plastic Max...

A quick guide to what's been cooking in the MT kitchen this month. We really must start buying food.

THE TYRREL CORPORATION

North East Of Eden (Cooltempo)

Concise, politically correct pop against a dancefloor backdrop.

NINE INCH NAILS

Broken (TVT/Interscope)

More searing riffs and pummeling blows from hammer-wielding Trent Reznor.

NEW FAST AUTOMATIC DAFFODILS

Body Exit Mind (Play It Again Sam)

Defiantly analogue recording of pointed, leaden songs swamped in raw guitar.

F.O.R.C.E. 'N' K. ZEE

Giant Steps (Circa)

Excellent rapped-up programmed grooves from production crew Ronin – who brought you the pirate DJ Wranglers ad – and young protégés. Newly independent from Circa, so I'm told.

ROGER ENO & KATE ST. JOHN

The Familiar (All Saints)

Part-recorded in Leningrad just before it became St. Petersburg again, and just as Land Records kind of pupated into All Saints Records, *The Familiar* has seen a few changes. Lots of strings, some songs and Bill Nelson at the helm.

BRIAN ENO

The Shutov Assembly (Opal/WEA)

Sergei Shutov is a painter who works to Eno's sonic soul laxatives – and this one's specially for you. Sergei. Brian Eno, by the way, is the brother of the famous Roger.

CUL DE SAC

Ecim (Capella/Rough Trade)

Rodentally reversed Midwest guitar band doodlings, somewhat arbitrarily smeared with whitish synth noise. Odd but intriguing.

RED SUN

Red Sun (Harmony)

Lush and spacious keyboard and mellow guitar meanderings with which to stop by the wayside, unwrap the Kendal mint cake and draw deep breaths of wonder at the sheer majesty of it all. Mixed by ambient expert Andy Falconer.

ULTRA VIVID SCENE

Rev (4AD)

Strong '70s feel to these fine songs, druggily murmured by Kurt Ralske and supported by airy and taut percussion/guitar backing.

DAVID CUNNINGHAM

Water (Made To Measure)

Ambient masterpiece by the man who gave us *The Flying Lizards'* version of 'Money'. The cheap and cheesy boxes of that era have long since been replaced by some serious schmutter, and Robert Fripp pops up again in session. Bespoke.



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ARP SOLOIST analogue synth, full original working order, possibly collectable £100 ono. Tel: 0302 771471, South Yorkshire.

CASIO CZ3000 mint condition. Steven Bate. Tel: 0690 710231.

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FOSTEX X26 4-track, as new, boxed, £180 or swop for Roland TB303 or Cheetah MS6. Justin Tel: 0222 733579.

MACKIE 1202 mixer. 4 inserts, 2 stereo auxs returns, amazing quality, 6 months old with 6 months warranty. As new, boxed with psu and manuals. £250 ono. Ian 0425 610602 Bournemouth.

TASCAM MSR16 1/2" 16 track recorder. Little use with manuals, £2800. Seck 18:8:2 desk, £500. Mike. Tel: 081 974 6950.

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TASCAM 238 8-track cassette, £725; Seck 12:8:2 mixer £425. £1100 for the pair (including dedicated loom). Both mint condition, under 10 hours use, manuals and boxed. Chris. Tel: 0926 613279.

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Breakthru is a 64 track professional quality MIDI sequencer with a difference. At the same time as it plays your MIDI instruments, Breakthru will play back 16-bit samples through a Replay 16 sampler plugged into your Atari computer! (If you don't have Replay 16, Breakthru can play samples through your monitor or V speaker, through the computers' DMA sound output sockets where available, or through the Microdeal range of 8-bit sample cartridges.)

In fact, Breakthru is a MIDI sequencer, a sample sequencer, or both at the same time and add to that a host of highly graphical and user friendly editing screens, unique and innovative features like Gajits' Diamond Drag note editing system, and an ease of use which might surprise you if you've not used Gajits' software before, and you'll see why we called it Breakthru!

For Atari ST/STE/MegaST/MegaSTE/TT computers • Mono and Colour Screen Modes supported • Minimum 1 Mbyte RAM Required • Up to 4 Sample Channels With Stereo Output Where Supported by Hardware • Sample Output Mono & Stereo 8-Bit Cartridges (eg. Replay & Playback), Atari PSG Sound Chip, or Atari DMA Stereo Sound Chip • Real Time Pitch Shifting of Samples According to Note Value • 16 MIDI Channels (32 with Breakthru Plus) • VU Meter Style Channel Display • 64 Music Tracks Plus a Control Track • High Resolution Real Time Recording From MIDI Instruments (192 PPQN) • Loop Mode, Overdub & Punch-In/Out Recording • Simultaneous Multi-Track Recording • Auto Count-in Facility • MIDI or Audio Metronome • Step Time Recording of Music Over MIDI or Using Mouse Entry • Track & Cue Sheet Screen (64 Tracks/64 Cue Points) • Sample Palette Page Loads AVR, IFF & Other File Formats • Step Editor Screen with Diamond Drag Note Editing

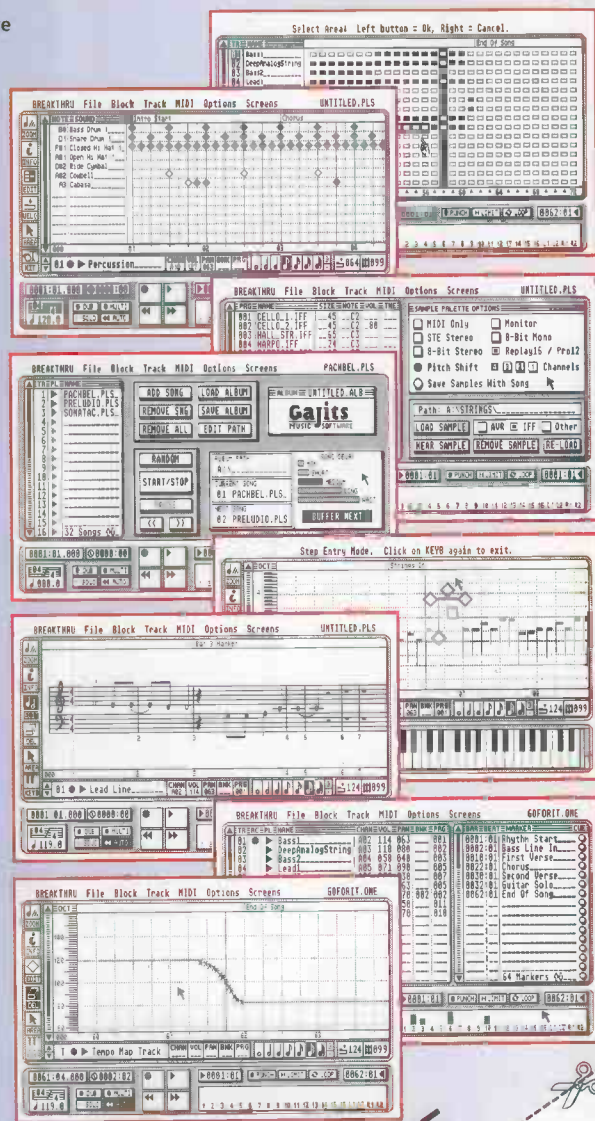
("... by far the easiest grid edit system I've seen..." Ian Waugh, Music Technology review of Gajits' Sequencer One Plus) • Insert Program/Volume/Pan/Control Changes Graphically at Any Point • Score Editor Screen for Conventional Music Display • Drum Editor Screen for Easy Drum Programming • Song Arranger Page • Tempo Map Screen for Graphical Display of Tempo Changes • CD Juke Box Screen for Chaining of Separate Songs • Flexible Quantize Options to Improve or Fully Correct Timing • Many Different Types of "Global" Operations (eg. Transpose, Strip) • Sends & Responds to MIDI Clock & Song Pointers (External Sync) • MIDI Filtering & Re-Map Options • Imports & Exports Standard MIDI Files for File Exchange with Other Programs • MIDI System Exclusive (Sys Ex) Handling to Backup Instrument Memory • Undo Last Operation Facility • Keyboard Shortcuts for Many Options • Supplied with a Selection of Pre-recorded Samples & Demo Songs • Telephone Helpline Support Included

Breakthru Plus has all the features of Breakthru, but is very handy if you have more than one MIDI instrument! A hardware interface is included with the package to provide an extra MIDI output socket. This simply plugs into the serial port of your computer.

If you are a registered user of Sequencer One Plus, you can obtain a substantial discount off the price of Breakthru or Breakthru Plus (see the order coupon).

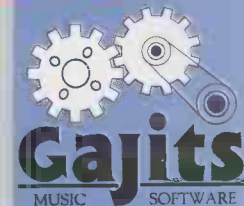
Replay 16 from Audio Visual Research and Microdeal represents a giant step forward in sampling technology. It plugs into the cartridge port of your Atari, turning your computer into a 16-bit sampler and sample replay unit. Unlike dedicated samplers, Replay 16 makes use of your computer's built in RAM, so it costs considerably less than its nearest rival. Replay 16 comes with all the sampling and editing software you will need to record samples at rates of up to 48 kHz (higher than CD!). You can record samples direct from a CD player or other sound source and then edit them with the most versatile software you can buy. A phono output socket provides a standard connection to a wide range of sound systems.

"If MIDI and sampling's your thing, this is a must." Clive Parker, ST Format.



See coupon or call the number below.

Gajits Music Software
I-Mex House,
40 Princess Street,
Manchester.
M1 6DE.



ORDER LINE 061-236 2515

ORDER NOW! Send letter or coupon to Gajits, I-Mex House, 40 Princess St., Manchester M1 6DE.
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I enclose my full Sequencer One Plus manual as proof of purchase and claim £39.95 discount against Breakthru or Breakthru Plus

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Prices include VAT & UK 1st class postage.
All trademarks acknowledged. Breakthru & Breakthru Plus UK release date 31.10.92.
Despatch normally within 3 working days, but allow up to 28 days. Credit cards are not charged until date of despatch. Products are sold subject to our standard licence agreement. E & OE.

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