

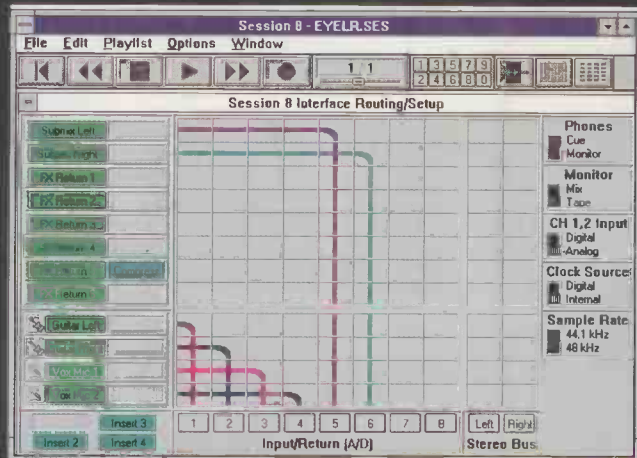
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THE MUSIC TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

Issue 85
Nov 1993



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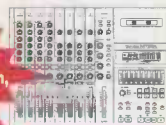
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the first place

I was intrigued, recently, to learn of a solution to the problem viewers will face when finding themselves with over two hundred TV channels beamed into their homes via cable and satellite. Acknowledging that even the most experienced remote control 'zappers' will be unable to cope with the sheer breadth of choice confronting them, media pundits envisage the system being placed under the control of a computer being capable of analysing your viewing habits and constructing a 'profile' of your personal preferences which it will use to preselect programs for you. Leaving aside the difficulties this will cause for families (presumably we will all need our own personal TV sets), and the vaguely disturbing notion that our choices will be being made for us (the more game shows we watch, the more will be given), the MeTV scenario, as it is referred to, is, nevertheless, an interesting solution to a problem which lays only a few years into the future.

Sadly, no comparable solution has yet been devised to make life easier for musicians faced with the daunting prospect of choosing from many hundreds of sounds produced by even the most basic hi-tech system. My own set up is (deliberately) quite modest: a synth, a sampler, two sound modules, a drum machine and a couple of effects units. Yet I estimated recently that I had somewhere in excess of 6000 individual sounds available to me. Unfortunately, less than 20% of these could be considered 'readily' available - ie. at the touch of a button. Running through ten or twenty sounds on a sampler can take many minutes: loading a new bank of sounds into my synth may take a quarter of an hour or more. None of which would be too much of a problem were there any way of guaranteeing the suitability of the selected samples or presets. But without an accurate indexing system, loading sounds can be a pretty hit and miss affair - and very time consuming. It's a problem which threatens to engulf many musicians and, as Brian Eno has often pointed out, is a real distraction from the business of producing music. Unlike Eno, I happen to believe the effort is worth it. Though tedious and frustrating, finding a sound which complements perfectly a piece of music is immensely satisfying, and is the reason I work with synths and samplers and not electric guitars.

Nevertheless, someone really needs to address the problem of cataloguing and indexing sounds. For many, the solution to non-programmability is having so many presets at your disposal that you don't need to spend time tweaking parameters. But without ease of access, it's no solution at all.

Nigel Lord

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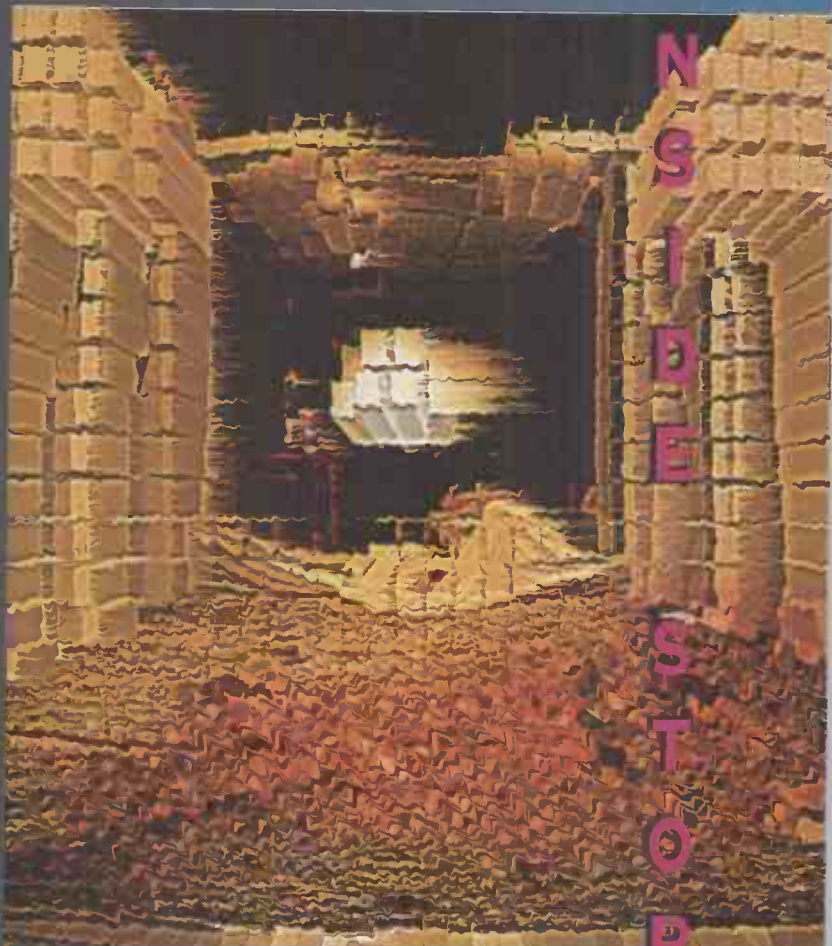
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Old gear, new gear, people who use gear... All life (human and otherwise) is within these pages.

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There's No Substitute For Quality

That's always been our philosophy at AMG, and it's a philosophy we're certainly maintaining with our new Producer Series Sample CDs. We've gotme absolute stonkers on the way over the next few months so hold onto your hats! Vince Clarke's CD has been universally well received, not only by purveyors of pop but also the dance fraternity. KLB's CD is going to re-write the rules for Drum Loop CDs, and Global Trance Mission is simply something else. With the most avidly awaited sequel ever - Megabass' REMIX! 2 - in the tubes and ready to fire! But be warned this is just the beginning - there's more on the way.

Volume Eleven Vince Clarke, Lucky Bastard

This collection features new sounds created especially by Vince using the mountain of classic analogue synths in his Amsterdam Studio. A former member of Depeche Mode, Yazoo, The Assembly, and now Erasure, who better to produce the **ULTIMATE ANALOGUE SAMPLE CD?** Synths featured include Roland System 100, Minimoog, Moog, Prophet 5, Prophet 700, ARP 2600, Moog4, Sequential Pro One, Korg Poly Fusion, VCS3, Serge, Obie, Xpander, and more. It features hundreds of constantly evolving synth sequences so you can either grab chunks or extract single sounds for the ultimate in user-defined creative sampling. There's a selection of multisamples along with many samples from Vince's last 'fantasmagorical' World Tour. Perhaps one of the most unique features of this CD are the drum loops Vince has created using only synthetic analogue sounds, all the loops are broken down for ultimate flexibility so you can easily create your own custom loops using these unique sounds. Just about every record he's ever done has been a hit, and this is no exception. Demand is bound to be high, so avoid disappointment and place your advance order now and get this CD before everyone else has it!

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Volume Twelve - Keith Le Blanc's Kickin' Lunatic Beats

This volume sets new standards for drum sample CDs. It features a wide range of styles including Hip Hop, Funk, Jazz, Rock, Reggae, Swing Go Go, Fusion, Cyberpunk, etc. After starting his career as in-house drummer with Sugarhill records, working on such classics as Grandmaster Flash & Melle Mel's 'The Message', Keith has gone on to lay down the beat for James Brown, REM, The Rolling Stones, Annie Lennox, Seal, 808 State, Malcolm McClaren, Bomb The Bass, ABC and many more. He has also moved into writing, production and remixing, working with such artists as Charles & Eddie, Malcolm X, Living Color, The Cure, NIN, and many more. He also found time to create the unique sound of Tackhead with Doug Wimbush and Adrian Sherwood. The superb performances featured on this CD were recorded at Orinoco and The Aquarium so, as you can imagine, the recording quality is absolutely state-of-the-art. Aside from tons of choice grooves (all bpm-ed as always), we've included a comprehensive set of matching single hits so you can create your own. Not that there's much chance of you doing that for a while, because after you hear these Kickin' Lunatic Beats you're going to be using them for years to come. Killer Drummer, Killer Studios, and Killer Production. These are beats that just won't quit!

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Volume Ten - Megabass REMIX! Sample CD

Our latest release from leading mixers Megabass, specially designed for professional remixing, megamixing, and DJs in addition to anyone making dance music. Megabass have mixed Madonna, C&C Music Factory, 49ers, Altern 8, The Shamen, Black Box, 2 Unlimited, and many more in addition to their own hits and exclusive mixes for Radio 1, Kiss FM, Capital and the Mastermix DJ service. "If you're looking for instant gratification, stop here...this CD is faultless...It's another dance workstation, but fresher than most, and offers a generous helping of relevant dance/pop crossover ingredients...I enjoyed it immensely, and so will you." - SOS, April 93. "Perfect for the most vicious dance track...there are enough useable samples included on this CD to fit into any kind of track...9/10." - Future Music, April 93. "It takes something special to stand out...Remix! is something special...inherent versatility which makes Remix! an essential studio accessory...just too funky to ignore...a rhythm track programmers dream...for sample addicts the world over, it's much, much more than a quick fix." - H&S, April 93. It features Impossible to get, Bangs & Whooshes, Rave & Techno Samples, Massive collection of Vocal Hooks, MC Samples & Shouts, in-demand techno and rave breakbeat loops to funky and weird loops, Plus loads more.



Volume 7 - Neil Conti's Funky Drums from Hell

Prefab Sprout's Neil Conti has provided the groove for such diverse artists as David Bowie, Annie Lennox, Primal Scream, and Thomas Dolby. The combination of funky drummer, top engineer, Daniel Lazerus, and Metropolis' mega-bucks studio has resulted in the most funky, stylised, classy loops ever recorded. "The playing is immaculate...a controlled looseness in the playing...the snare drum sounds like a snare drum should...Definitely the best live drumming CD." - SOS, Feb 93. "...this compilation represents the

coming together of everything that has been learnt about drumming in the last thirty years - loud performances, impeccable recordings, skilful tuning and above all, the value of the groove...I can recommend this CD wholeheartedly...If these funky drums are from hell, the Devil still seems to have all the best music." - MT, Mar 93. "drums breaks with real attitude sure to become classics. specially extracted single hits to customise breaks plus a selection of much sought after hi-hat patterns.



Volume 6 - Norman Cook: Skip to my Loops

Aside from being Beats International's main mover, Norman is one of the UK's most successful remixers - James Brown, Fine Young Cannibals, and Double Trouble, to name but a few, have all had the treatment. 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. Over 70 minutes of samples. Certainly the classiest dance sample CD - by miles.



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

There's no better percussion CD on the market than this. Danny and Miles have worked with the likes of Tina Turner, PSBs, Dire Straits, The Beloved, George Michael, and Julia Fordham plus countless others. They're two of the best there are and this CD's production quality shows them off to their best effect. Don't be fooled, this CD is ideal for almost any music, pop, dance, ambient, new age, it'll add a bit of class to anything it touches. You can't be serious and not have this one. "as good as the best in the Synclavier library...inspirational...It's some credentials are impressive... 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.

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Volume 5 - Pete Gleadall's Samplography

Few artists have influenced the path of modern pop music more than George Michael and the Pet Shop Boys. Whenever those guys go into the studio they take Pete with them. Why? Because he knows what it takes to make a hit single and he has a sound library built specifically for that purpose. This CD features 1400 of his best samples, 'everything you need except loops'. "Put simply, the sounds on Samplography are fantastic...leanest and meanest...designed to slot straight into the mix...Their genesis was in the studio itself, and it shows." - H&S, Dec 92. "Samplography tells the story of 1980s pop music as seen through the S110's of Pete Gleadall...this set is one of the cleanest I've heard." - SOS, 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, brass, FXs, Sub-basses, and more! There's even a 15 Meg S1000/1100 data section.



Volume 8 - JJ Jeczalik's Art of Sampling

The Art of Noise virtually invented sampling, this CD gives you access to the sounds that inspired a generation of samplers and placed JJ at the cutting edge of innovative sampling. JJ was also part of the Trevor Horn production team that delivered such masterpieces as ABC's Lexicon of Love and Frankie Goes To Hollywood's Relax and Two Tribes. All the best sounds from JJ's Fairlight libraries are on this CD - over a decade's worth of

PROVEN HIT MATERIAL. "For a collection of odd noises and useable instruments, this CD is ideal...a refreshing change." - Future Music, April 93. "Nice to see serious samplers being catered for...seriously classic...classic...well atmospheric...Quirky...Slice Of Sampling History." - SOS, March 93.

Volume 4 - Coldcut's Kleptomania!

Coldcut can always be found at the cutting edge of dance music. They launched the careers of International Stars Lisa Stansfield and Yaz. This CD has been widely acknowledged as being one of the most original and inspirational of it's genre. Get this CD and get ahead of the crowd. "Coldcut's samples are rare, wicked and packed into the terraces...the quality of the music content is very high...quite brilliant, and definitely a joy to listen to...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! ■ Mad a scratches, FX, Robot Vox ■ Full collection of drum & perc samples ■ Hits, Stops, Breaks, Synth & Bass samples ■ BEYOND DESCRIPTION - HIGHLY USABLE! ■ Over 1165 Samples. Over 73 minutes



Volume One - Pascal Gabriel's Dance Samples

The Final Act of a series of... if you haven't got it yet, where have you been? His work with Bomb The Bass, S-Express, EMF, Inspiral Carpets, and many more has established Pascal as one of the UK's most original and innovative producers. "Pascal was one of the first producers that we could go to...you couldn't leave out Pascal...extremely hard and stable...no matter what kind of track you were making, you can always count on Pascal to get it...he's a real professional...a real pro." - Future Music, Dec 91. "off-beat, over-the-top, and hard-hitting. Better still you don't get it...it's a hard-hitting...useful and versatile...a gem." - SOS, Dec 91.

Volume Three - David Ruffy's Drum Samples

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No consolation prize!

If ever you were in any doubt that the computer games market generates Big Bucks, a few cool statistics about the martial arts console game *Mortal Kombat* will set you straight. Yes, *Mortal Kombat*. Even if you're not a Gameboy (or girl), chances are that those two words will have stirred some dim memory lurking within your cranial depths, such has been the blanket nature of the ad campaign. Meanwhile, the console freaks among you will no doubt already have the game and be well on your way to thrashing the almighty evil one, Shang Tsung!

So, how big are the bucks we're talking about here? Well (get ready for this), in its first week of release (September 13-19th) *Mortal Kombat* took a staggering £15 million pounds in UK sales! Put another way, half a million copies were sold across the UK in a single week; since then, weekly sales have levelled off to around half that figure! In fact, *Mortal Kombat* sold even more quickly than *Sonic II*, the previous benchmark for the computer games industry.

Acclaim Entertainment, the London-based company behind the game, set out to create a cultural phenomenon through the power of advertising – and that is precisely what they have done. *Mortal Kombat* has outsold nearly all other forms of entertainment in Britain this year, with only the film *Jurassic Park* grossing more – and, ironically, *Mortal Kombat* is currently outselling the *Jurassic Park* game by nearly four to one! I say 'ironically' because Acclaim's advertising campaign for the two months preceding *Mortal Kombat*'s release consisted of screening a 30-second ad spot before every showing of *Jurassic Park* in every cinema across the country – a fine example of well-targetted advertising.

Let's talk some more facts and figures. Advertising: \$10 million dollars has been committed world-wide, of which around £750,000 will have been spent on UK advertising by the end of the year. *Mortal Kombat* was given a simultaneous world-wide release on both Sega and Nintendo consoles. All in all it's available on five console formats: Super Nintendo, Nintendo Game Boy, Sega Mega Drive, Sega Master System and Sega Game Gear. Cartridge prices range from £29.99 to £59.99, with the £49.99 Mega Drive version by far outselling the others – apparently because this version has the full 'blood and guts' of the arcade original!

Inevitably, given the memory limitations of *Mortal Kombat*'s cartridge format, music comes a poor 15th to the graphics action. However, as we've pointed out in these pages before, the new generation of CD-ROM-based games are another matter altogether.

Perhaps your next album advance should be a CD-ROM advance...



Mortal Kombat: "martial arts superstar" John Cage does battle!

News compiled by Andrew Jones and Simon Trask

Spawny gets his prize!

Last month, the lucky winner of our Wavestation competition (MT, August '93) picked up his prize direct from Korg UK at their base in Harrow. Ian Colvin from Stanmore, Middlesex received his Wavestation after a tour around the premises.

The answers to the competition were:

1. The Wavestation is 1U high
2. The Korg M1 shares its name with a famous British motorway
3. The X3 is Korg's newest workstation



MT editor Nigel Lord can hardly conceal his joy at young Ian's good fortune as Korg's John Adams presents the prize.

Mastering the bass

The latest sample CD in the Masterbits Climax Collection, available from AMG, exhorts you to feel the bass. Volume 7, simply titled Bass, retails at

£59 including VAT and features sounds from many of the world's finest bass guitars, including Yamaha, Ken Smith, Alembic and Warwick. In total the CD contains over 500 bass samples. Fretless basses and a few synth basses are included, and single notes, chords, slaps, slides, 'dead notes', open notes and mute notes are featured, plus a few licks for good measure.

Also new from Masterbits is the Akai S1000/S1100 CD-ROM version of their *World Party* dance sample CD, containing over 400Mb of samples and featuring all the best samples from Masterbits' DAT-RAMs Vols 1-3. Price is £249 including VAT.

For more information, contact AMG at PO Box 67, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8YR. Tel: 0252 717333, Fax: 0252 737044.

A Towering presence

If you should get a chance to visit Tower Records at Piccadilly Circus in London, make sure you venture into the basement. Here you'll be able to get hands-on experience of The Vid Zone, an experiment in the interactive presentation of recorded music and, what's more, an experiment which could have a significant impact on music retailing.

The Vid Zone is a custom console based around an Apple Mac Quadra 840AV 40/500 with a 1Gb external hard drive, a Microtouch 14" touchscreen monitor and a 21" Trinitron TV. To navigate your way around the various Vid Zone screens, you simply touch the onscreen graphic buttons. In fact, the user interface is dead easy to operate – which of course it needs to be, given the circumstances of its use. The whole graphically-based presentation has a lively, energetic feel to it which positively encourages you to play around with the console.

You select your album by entering the Sky Room and touching any one of the digitised album sleeves which adorn a circular 'wall'. This takes you to another screen where you can make your individual track selections. You get a choice of 30 complete albums of music together with a single small-screen music video for each album (stored as digitised audio and video on hard disk). The Vid Zone also contains up-to-the-minute news, gossip and info, and a full *Time Out*-sponsored onscreen listings magazine of music events, previews and music venues which is updated weekly.

The Vid Zone was launched at Tower Records on October 1st with albums and videos from such artists as U2, Billy Joel, Jamiroquai, Manic Street Preachers, Cypress Hill, Rage Against The Machine, Beverley Craven, PM Dawn and, er, Cilla Black! In fact, here's a useful tip: if you want to disperse a crowd of onlookers, play the Cilla selection! Guaranteed to work or your money back...

For more information, contact developers Maya Media on Tel: 071 490 5231, Fax: 071 490 5247.

X3 packs it in



We asked, they answered (probably): the X3R from Korg

It may be just coincidence but in our review of the X3 (September's MT) we criticised the keyboard for having only two outputs and looked forward to a rackmount version. Well what's this? The X3R has all the features of the X3 (minus the keyboard of course!) and four individual outputs. Hooray, our prayers have been answered! It will sell for £1199. More from Korg, 8-9 The Crystal Centre, Elmgrove Road, Harrow, Middx, HA1 2YR. Tel: 081 427 5377 Fax: 081 861 3595

Spaced-out classics

Two new releases from Time + Space this month are aimed at those who want to add a classic touch to their recordings. *Classical Choir* features bass, tenor, alto and soprano voices, ensemble, clusters, sustained notes and syllables among others. It costs £149 for the CD-ROM. *Orchestra* is the second release, featuring various parts of the orchestra individually and together. It retails at £199 for the CD-ROM.

Moving slightly away from the classical genre, *Dance Industrial II* is also due for imminent release. It's the follow-up to East-West's critically acclaimed *Dance Industrial* CD and will retail for £59.95 (for a double CD).

More from: Time+Space, PO Box 306, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 3EP, Tel: 0442 870681, Fax: 0442 877266

Hot Toast

The Video Toaster video card and software from American company NewTek has long been a firm favourite with Amiga users – American Amiga users, that is. Thanks to Sony, who never manufactured a PAL version of the image generator chip used in the Toaster, NewTek's highly-regarded product – which is used by professionals and amateurs alike – has never been widely available over here.

However, all that could change with the introduction of the Prime Image StdCon/PCB card for the Amiga. This American card, distributed in the UK by London-based company Vortex Communications, provides timebase correction, synchronisation, and standards conversion of a composite or Y-C video signal from NTSC, PAL or SECAM to NTSC or PAL in composite or Y-C. At £1250 excluding VAT, it doesn't come cheap – but the dedicated video amateur and pro users will consider it well worth the asking price.

As well as selling the Prime Image board by itself, Vortex will put together complete Toaster packages. An example configuration consisting of Amiga 4000/040 (with 16Mb RAM, a 540Mb hard drive and a Microvitec 1440 monitor), Video Toaster 4000 card and software (the latest incarnation of the Toaster) and Prime Image StdCon/PCB converters (2 cards for input, one for reconverted output, and an 8-slot expansion box) will cost approximately £9350 plus VAT. Cheap at the price, some would say.

For more information, contact Vortex Communications Ltd at 75 The Grove, Ealing, London W5 5LL, Tel: 081 579 2743, Fax: 081 840 0018.

VIDEO TOASTER 4000 is your personal video switcher, character generator, paint system, effects and 3d animation system.

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Cyberseed setback

With just days to go, the cyberpunk multimedia event Cyberseed (previewed in last month's 'Scanners' under the heading 'Seeding the future') unfortunately had to be postponed. It seems the venue owners suffered a crisis of confidence/period of collective insanity and suddenly decided they wanted a lot of cash upfront.

With the enthusiasm of everyone involved still intact, organiser Brian Davis is now hoping to stage the event during November. For further information, contact him on Tel/Fax: 081 444 9600.



Sounds Of The City - 2

How does one enter - and survive - the current music industry? Who leads in the battle between creativity and technology? Is techno and rave simply unscrupulous splicing or does it have an underlying creativity which taps into the mood of the 90s? If these are the kind of weighty issues that keep you awake at night, you may be interested in an event taking place at University College Salford on Saturday 6th November.

Dubbed *Sounds of the City 2*, this is the second conference to take place at the University's Centre for Media, Performance & Communications and offers a range of forums and workshops and a "rich" line-up of guest speakers including a producer, a manager, a sound engineer, a club promoter - and a few musicians. Also in attendance will be *MT* Editor Nigel Lord, who'll be taking part as a member of the panel in the debate scheduled for late afternoon.

Obviously an event no right-thinking individual could afford to miss, tickets are £35 for the full day's events and the evening bash 'Life On Planet Groove' (Manchester's well-established jazz-funk night). Concessions - at the drastically reduced price of £5 per day - are also available. For further information contact: Anni Whiteley, Conference Co-ordinator, Centre for Media, Performance & Communications, Adelphi, Peru Street, Salford. M3 6EQ. Tel: 061 834 6633.

D50 classics

Sounds OK are now providing UK distribution for Sound Support's 'Classic Synthesiser Collection' for the Roland D50/550. This set of 84 sounds has been programmed to emulate old analogue synths, and uses only 'analogue' waveforms.

The Collection is available on Atari, Mac and PC downloader disks, priced at £28 plus £1 p&p including VAT.

Sounds OK also distribute the Metra Sound range of sound cards, sample disks and sample CDs.

For more information, contact Sounds OK on Tel: 0276 22946.

The end of DAT?

Could compact discs replace DAT tapes as the standard medium for onstage playback of pre-recorded material? As CD-R machines - and with them the cost of CD-R pressing services - steadily become more affordable, so the attraction of pressing up a limited run of CDs increases. At the same time, DAT machines are retreating into the niche pro market, with attendant price hikes, while CD players are, and will remain, inexpensive mass-market units - easily bought, easily replaced.

CDs become even more attractive once you realise they come ready-stamped with timecode which is transmitted via the digital outs on a CD player. With the addition of a suitable reader/convertor, you could slave a MIDI sequencer to compact disc - and run your MIDI music, mix and lighting sequences in sync with music on CD.

Cue the CDTC Timecode Reader/Generator from Dimension Audio. This 1U 19" rackmount unit will convert the CD timecode, which is accurate to 1/75th of a second, to all SMPTE/EBU formats and to MIDI Time Code - giving the crucial timing reference for MIDI sequencers with MTC read capability. Add a CD player with a coaxial S/P-DIF digital output (not an optical out) and you'll be up and running. Well, maybe. The suitability of CD players for onstage use has to be questioned - what about the possible problems of vibrations and knocks, for instance?

The CDTC doesn't come cheap, but there again for playback purposes the combined cost of a CD player and a CDTC unit compares very favourably to that of a timecode DAT machine. Price: £1495 excluding VAT.

For more information, contact distributors DFL Broadcast Ltd at Johnson's Estate, Silverdale Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 3BA, Tel: 081 813 5200. Fax: 081 813 5022.



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 DSP Effects Library (64 + 64)
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 Sound Patch Matrix (for DrumKit programming or special sound configurations)

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 Graphic Display: 240 x 64 pixels with neon backlight
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Scoring with Sibelius

Sibelius 7 is a new notation program for the Acorn Archimedes and Ax000 ranges which, claim its developers Sibelius Software, is unique in being an 'expert system': it has been taught hundreds of rules and conventions of music engraving, and constantly applies them to the music "so anyone can produce professional results without any specialist knowledge."

Developed and marketed by two composers, twin brothers Jonathan and Benn Finn, *Sibelius 7* costs a not inconsiderable £795 including VAT (£499 for educational users) and is available now. For further information, contact Sibelius Software at 4 Bailey Mews, Auckland Road, Cambridge CB5 8DR, Tel: 0223 302765.



Kurzweil meet the PC

PC music add-ons have long been looked down on by musicians as mere hobbyist fodder; however, a new generation of PC products emerging now could well ring the changes. Two new add-ons available from PC music specialists Digital Music exemplify this brave new world – one coming from the synthesis side, the other from the digital audio recording side.

Summit K2K is a compact module designed around the Kurzweil K2000 wavetable synthesis technology – and it costs just £399 including VAT! Jointly developed by AVM Technology and Young Chang/Kurzweil, its features include 6Mb of compressed wavetable sample ROM, over 300 CD-quality sampled sounds, 32-note polyphony, 16-part multitimbrality, 48 onboard effects algorithms, 18-bit DACs, amplitude and pan control for each voice, and compatibility with the General MIDI spec. Roland MT32 and Kurzweil SuperOrchestral patch maps are also supported.

Essentially, then, it seems that the K2K is a multitimbral playback module which utilises K2000 samples. That makes it of interest to more than just PC users, and it seems that the module can be utilised in a more general MIDI setting.

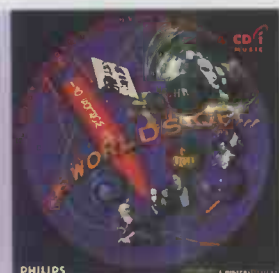
On the digital recording front, Digital Music have also been appointed exclusive EEC/European distributor for the Audio Canvas XA-16 Digital Audio Processor from Promedia Technologies, USA. This full-length add-in card for the PC can record directly to disk with 16-bit resolution at up to 48kHz sample-rate per channel, and play back stereo audio off disk. It utilises a Texas Instruments DSP chip and Crystal Semiconductors codecs (compressors/decompressors), and delivers a frequency response of 20Hz-20kHz, a signal/noise ratio of greater than 85db and a total harmonic distortion of less than 0.05%.

Audio Canvas comes packaged with a 4-channel software mixer and the Voyetra WinDAT editing software, and is available for a price of £495 including VAT.

UK and EEC/European dealer enquiries welcomed for both products.

For more details, contact Digital Music at 27 Leven Close, Chandlers Ford, Hants SO5 3SH, Tel: 0703 252131, Fax: 0703 270405.

CD-interactive music



Philips Interactive Media and record label Rhythm King have joined forces to produce *The Worlds of...*, the first interactive music title to make use of Philips' CD-i Digital Video technology, which allows up to 74 minutes of digitised video to be stored on a single CD.

Five Rhythm King acts are immortalised on the new title: CNN, Heaven West XI, Ugly, Sultans of Ping, and ©. The interactive aspect of the disc is based on a mix of music, film, fantasy and talk; more specifically, you can, for example, remix a CNN track using the 'mixer' at the bottom of the screen, cut up and randomise ©'s lyrics, and dip into interviews with members of Heaven West XI. Most bizarrely, with Sultans of Ping you are set the task of navigating your way through the tunnels of the Tokyo underground to a secret location where the band is interviewed by Radio 1's Mark Goodier!

Priced at £19.99, *The Worlds of...* is set for November release and will be among a series of CD-i Autumn releases to feature Digital Video.

Digital Video is available as a £150 add-on cartridge which fits into the CD-i player; the company's entry-level CD-i model is the £399 CDI210.

For more information contact Philips Interactive Media, Philips House, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HD, Tel: 071 331 1674, Fax: 071 580 6757.

Now's the time

From Friday 5th November to Saturday 4th December, the city of Nottingham will be playing host to NOW '93, an ambitious arts festival currently in its fifth year, which is being programmed and presented by Contemporary Archives and sponsored by Becks.

NOW '93 aims to combine "new technologies, club culture, music, theatre, dance, video, film and visual art operating at the cutting edge of Britain's cultural industry", with particular emphasis being placed this year on showcasing exciting developments in video and mixed-media art forms.

One of the festival's highlights will be **Rhythms of the Globe**, a continuous 36-hour multimedia event billed as "a post-rave culture artwork that maps out new possibilities for the arts for years to come". Taking place in a disused railway station from 12 noon on Friday 3rd December till 12 midnight on Saturday 4th, this combination of dance performance, installation, gig and party will provide a "virtual environment" of projected computer and video images and a soundtrack

created live by percussionists from around the world alongside DJs (including Nottingham's own DIY sound system) and sound sculptures. The music and visuals will be accompanied by a dance performance choreographed by Julie Hood from Michael Clarke's dance company.

Meanwhile, in another area of the building, advertising images from Prague, Johannesburg, San Francisco, Lisbon, Minsk, Harare and other global locations will be received live via an international computer network and processed and displayed in a collage which will evolve over the 36 hours of the event.

The venue is the Low Level Station, London Road, Nottingham, and admission will be £5.50 (£3.50 concessions) on the door only - except for the peak period of 10pm to 2am, for which advance tickets are available.

On a related note, there will also be a workshop weekend featuring dance, percussion, DJ skills and video technology at some point during the festival (contact the NOW '93 box office for further details - see below). Also potentially of interest to *MT* readers is **Future Realities**, one in a series of Monday lunchtime 'discussion events'; taking place on 8th November, this will consider what effect new technologies such as virtual reality, electronic imaging and communications networks will have on our concept of theatre.

For further information, write to: The Box Office, Nottingham Playhouse, Wellington Circus, Nottingham NG1 5AF, or Tel: 0602 419419 (box office, Nottingham Playhouse), 0602 482626/482525 (box office, Royal Centre) or 0602 419741 (box office, Victoria Centre).

Where console meets workstation...

In the fast-moving and increasingly global world of hi-tech business, where rapidly-evolving computer and communications technologies are constantly upsetting the balance of power, companies who want to stay (ahead) in the game are having to forge strategic alliances. Witness, for instance, the PowerPC alliance between erstwhile arch rivals Apple and IBM.

The latest example of alliance fever is a joint venture between console giants Nintendo and high-end graphics workstation company Silicon Graphics; this will see high-powered graphics hardware from the latter used to generate 3D worlds in a Nintendo console scheduled for release in 1995. Nintendo get specialised graphics technology without the cost in time and yen of having to develop their own, while Silicon Graphics will earn royalties on sales of the console. Smart, eh?



Now '93: bier or be square

1.3 x Akai 3000



The introduction of v1.3 software for Akai's 3000 series samplers brings a number of new features to the range - many implemented as a direct result of suggestions made by users. Key new features are as follows:

Disk mode now includes new Find and Tag functions for easier file access, while Edit Sample mode adds a new Cut function for automatic trimming of samples and a new Quality control which allows you to achieve higher-quality resampling at low bandwidths. Edit Program mode adds new 'analogue-style' LFO features such as a Random waveform and a Retrigger function.

V1.3 software for the CD3000 has some special additions: a new Auto Pause function automatically Pauses the CD each time the CD3000 finishes sampling, while a new Auto Naming function automatically creates new names for successive samples.

The new software is available free on disk. All you have to do is send a blank S3000-formatted disk (stating which sampler you own) to: Toni Rutherford, Akai UK Ltd, Haslemere Heathrow Estate, Hounslow, Middlesex TW4 6NQ.

Roland throw down the gauntlet

Roland UK have announced a new competition designed to encourage the use of General MIDI by musicians, keyboard players and computer music enthusiasts. The Roland Sound Challenge competition, as it is known, will net the lucky winner £2000 worth of Roland products, of his or her choice.

So what do you have to do to be in with a chance of winning? Simply, submit a piece of music, no more than 5 minutes in length, as a sequencer file or a Standard MIDI File on 3.5" floppy disk. The music must be recorded using a GM/GS sound source; this needn't be a Roland instrument, but it's worth bearing in mind that song entries will be judged by Roland UK using an SC7 sound module to play back each sequencer file on.

There are two categories to choose from: Original (ie. best original piece of music) and Arranged (best arrangement of a well-known piece of music). The ultimate winner will be chosen from one of these categories, while three runners-up will each receive a pair of new Roland MA-20 self-powered speakers.

Entries must be submitted by 14th January 1994, marked 'Roland Sound Challenge'.

For an official entry form and more details regarding allowable sequencer file formats and the information you must supply on your disk in order to qualify for entry, contact Roland (UK) Ltd at Atlantic Close, Swansea Enterprise Park, Swansea, West Glamorgan SA7 9FJ, Tel: 0792 310 247.

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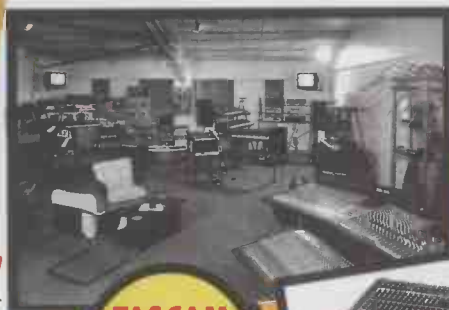
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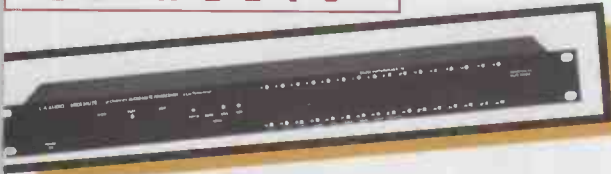
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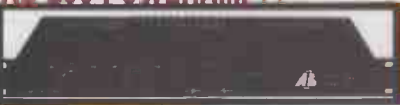
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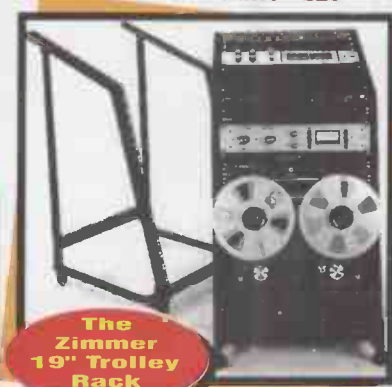
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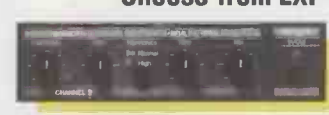
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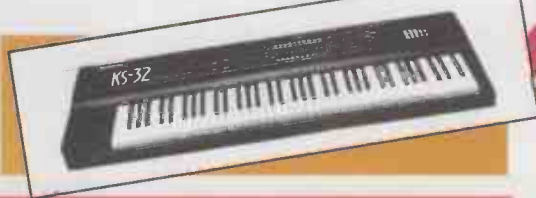


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elektricity

Since leaving Kraftwerk in 1991, Karl Bartos has sought to establish more open links with the wider electronic music community. Forming a new band with Düsseldorf musician Lothar Manteuffel, Bartos realised this ambition through a guest appearance by Andy McCluskey on Elektric Music's debut album *Esperanto*, as well as in studio collaborations with English counterparts Electronic, Sheffield's LFO and Ryuichi Sakamoto. Phil Ward finds the former Kling Klang percussionist enjoying this new found freedom...

"Music is a whore," says Karl Bartos. Really? Well, these new found freedoms post-Kraftwerk certainly seem to have loosened his tongue. It's no secret now that Karl began to feel a sense of frustration within the ivory tower of Kraftwerk's Kling Klang studio in Düsseldorf, the place where some of the most influential music of the 20th Century has been concocted. It wasn't just the rate at which the band worked – releasing two new albums in 10 years, one of which was a collection of remixes. It was also the lack of contact between the creators of this music and an outside world that was, and still is, obsessed with it.

What he means by this outburst is that music is a damned seductive little minx that will just as readily try and sell you something as reveal some cosmic truth. It may seem cynical, but it actually reflects a continuing concern with the mechanisms of consumer culture. These are the themes which pervade much of Kraftwerk's output, and Elektric Music's first album *Esperanto* doesn't let up, with its familiar, regimented analogue bleeps and thuds harbouring messages of communication breakdown, materialism and media overload.

Mind you, if you want cynicism, just ask Karl about current fashions in the pop media for rootsy, acoustic showcases peddling an image of unelectronic simplicity whilst in fact depending entirely on dishloads of cosmic technology. "MTV's *Unplugged* is a lie," he'll say. "If you want 'unplugged', unplug your TV set..."

Quite. With its broadcasting themes, *Esperanto* picks up where *Radioactivity* left off, and is full of opinions of this kind. Significantly, the development is from radio to TV, from aural to visual. The first track, indeed, is the starkly titled 'TV'.

"The songs are like 'pictograms' of our information society," explains Karl. "Sight is the most powerful sense. For this reason visual images are much more believable than music – they have less abstract, emotional impact, but appear more objective, more 'true'. That is the power at the heart of television."

In a departure from Kraftwerk's researching and reporting approach to modern culture, Elektric Music take the opportunity to introduce more of an element of satire – of oblique warning.



Karl's albums with Kraftwerk

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)

"I still think that kids should learn how to just *listen*, to train in apprehending what is happening when music occurs, and not just to get completely absorbed in this visual information culture"

"A sampler is nothing; it's like a radio, a receiver and transmitter. It makes no sound of its own. It's a storage medium, and it's just convenient for us on stage"

"I still think that kids should learn how to just *listen*, to train in apprehending what is happening when music occurs, and not just to get completely absorbed in this visual information culture. I think in technology, there is no doubt that visual and musical information are coming closer together than ever before, but it would be a shame if the purely audio senses were forgotten."

Later in the conversation, I become living proof of this slippery slide into perceptual confusion by expressing an interest in seeing how the promised Elektric Music live shows will sound.

"There you are," comes the response. "You say yourself – 'see how it sounds'. It's in the language already."

Because of the Kraftwerk legacy, Elektric Music occupy a very interesting position in the development of, well... electric music. Something about the very nature of synthesisers has always led them to be associated with some kind of 'futurism'; with some notion that they represent what's just around the corner when in fact they pretty much sum up what's happening there and then. Kraftwerk themselves enjoyed this irony, and repeatedly had fun with a kind of technological nostalgia – the way previous generations' visions of the future look to us now. However, this did not stop the band from acquiring, and then exploiting, a reputation for being several steps ahead.

And so it is with Herr Bartos, who has lost none of that sense of pioneering enquiry into the state of things. Even though, at times, his band may sound a little nostalgic for a previous generation's synthesiser music, he's anxious to remain at the cutting edge when it comes to subjects for his songs.

"The Düsseldorf artist Josef Beuys once said that when you talk to someone, you must always be saying something they don't understand. What he meant was that you must surprise them. It's no use if the person you are trying to communicate with turns away and says, oh yes, don't bother to continue, I've heard what you're saying before..."

The continuing association between synthesisers and futurism is, of course, an association between *analogue* synthesisers and futurism, founded during the first wave of those strange new devices. The advent of digital methods has scarcely dented this image, and for Bartos and Kraftwerk, good thing too.

"When we made *Computerworld*," reveals Karl, "we didn't have any computers! It was all still analogue. The cutting edge is not a piece of equipment – the cutting edge is in here..." He taps his head. "It's in the imagination. William Gibson wrote *Neuromancer* on an old typewriter."

Neuromancer is Gibson's 'cyberpunk' classic, the book which fostered a new, more nightmarish image of technology in the mid-'80s. For Kraftwerk, the job in hand was to research the emerging culture of computer technology, but then to create their own interpretation of it – a vision, not just a showcase for its shiny new toys. That would have been too literal. Just as the images of ageing technology had placed a distance between the band and their principal subject, so too the use of analogue to 'celebrate' digital ensured a meaningful creative offset.

This is still true. Analogue synths are more popular than ever, and are still used by artists as diverse as Mixmaster Morris and ATR to evoke the heralding of some new era. As for Elektric Music, the aesthetics of sound are, without doubt, voltage-controlled.

"Ralf made a big mistake when he bought a Synclavier. Sorry, Ralf..." says Karl, referring to an event after *Computerworld* which marked the beginning of long periods of silence from the group. That silence, which in the long run so frustrated Bartos, has a wry analogy with the reasons he so disparages such an instrument:

"A sampler is nothing; it's like a radio, a receiver and transmitter. It makes no sound of its own. It's a storage medium, and it's just convenient for us on stage. In the studio, we use mainly analogue sounds, with samples used only in the same way that we once used tape. So on tour, it's easier to load the analogue sounds into the sampler, because analogue synths are bulky and they go out of tune. And in the studio, it's easier to edit digitised sound than it is to cut up bits of tape and splice them together again. But to regard the sampler as a source of sounds is very misleading, and to base your music on these sources, especially when they are complete, pre-existing segments of somebody else's music, is very strange. Why take a page of Shakespeare's works and jumble them up? You are a writer – you wouldn't do that, would you? Start at page one with your own words.

"Sure, it's great to manipulate sound almost infinitely like you can with an Akai S1000 – but the medium itself is so clear that it's almost invisible. Which reminds me of a very good quote – I can't remember who said it. It's that technology, as it gets more and more perfect, is getting smaller and smaller, and soon it will disappear..."

Which is why, I guess, you have to keep using imperfect, bleepy old keyboards in order to be heard properly. *We like* the very sound synthesisers make. So does Karl. Let's face it, if music is a whore, analogue synths can swing those hips... ●

Esperanto is out on East West Records.



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(Clue: try Scanning the pages of this month's MT)

2. What do the initials RSS stand for? (Clue: It's about Time you found out)

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New ROM

Everything you need to know about CD-ROMs – and then some. Ian Waugh says read my pits...

Life's hectic in the fast lane, isn't it? Just when you start to get to grips with analogue synthesis along comes digital synthesis. Just as you're settling in with your new tape machine, along comes digital recording. Just when you've bought a removable hard drive for your computer or sampler, along come CDs.

Not your common or garden audio CDs, of course, we're talking about CDs holding samples, computer programs, games, graphic images and even photographs and movies. All these can be stored on a (fairly) normal CD but to access them you need a CD-ROM drive. The ROM in this case stands for Read Only Memory; CDs are a one-way street – you can only get data off them, you can't put it on. At least not yet (see the Orange Book section under Reservoir ROMs).

CD-ROM technology is virtually the same as

audio CD technology – there's just a bit more of it, that's all – and it is fast becoming the storage medium of the future. Why? Because although cheap to produce, CDs can store large quantities of data. How large? Well a single CD can hold over 550Mb of data – that's about 300,000 pages of text or around 800 double-sided floppies.

Did I say it's cheap, too? Yes, you've heard it before and here it is again – CDs are unbelievably cheap to produce, typically 50p-£1. You can buy budget CDs for £2.99 and CDs on the front of magazines are now commonplace. Are publishers doing it at a loss? Certainly not: the high price of conventional audio CDs is totally down to the greed of the record companies – ask the artists!

Many CD-ROMs, however, still sell at

a premium. This is partly because the medium is relatively new (and new things always cost more), and partly because new markets are generally small. But vendors also price their goods at levels they think the market will stand. It's a basic principle of commerce and as applicable to musical equipment as it is to soap powder.

There are, however, some distributors who are pricing more sensibly and so attracting more buyers into the market – which can only be a good thing. Many CD-ROMs cost no more than a game – £30-£40 – and there are even cheaper ones around, so don't be put off because some are expensive. There are moves, also, to reduce the price of sample CD-ROMs



which typically cost two to three times more than their audio equivalents.

Some software distributors are actively encouraging the use of CD-ROMs – after all, it's far cheaper to produce a CD than half a dozen floppy disks. IBM, Apple and Microsoft distribute operating system updates on CD-ROM and several companies now release CD-ROM versions of their software including Microsoft's Works for Windows and Lotus 1-2-3. The CD-ROM version of Corel Draw contains an extra 10,000 clip art images and 200 fonts.

CDs have another big advantage for the seller, too: copying them is quite impractical. The cost of 800 floppies or a 600Mb hard disk required to copy a full-length CD is likely to be many times more than the cost of the CD itself! Of course, you can bet your life that sooner or later the yo ho ho squad will hole up somewhere with CD-ROM duplicating equipment and get to work. But the fact

antics



Mitsumi LU-01

remains, CD-ROMs are not something you can copy and pass onto your mates. At least not without a CD recorder which currently costs around three grand.

Which brings us to the main drawback of CD-ROMs – the fact that they are a read-only medium. Some sources cite this as a reason why CD-ROMs didn't catch on more quickly – they have been with us for over five years – but I believe it was more to do with the price of CD-ROM drives. Even now a

'good' CD-ROM drive will set you back £400-£500 or more though there are several cheaper units currently on special offer for under £200. The difference? We'll get to that in a moment.

In order to know what you're getting for your money, you need to understand what makes a CD-ROM drive tick (or whirl) and what the specs mean.

CD-ROMs are slow. Most modern hard disks have an access time (the time it takes to find and retrieve a particular block of data) of about 20ms. But even a fast CD-ROM drive is likely to have an access time of around 300ms.

Even more important than the access time is the data transfer rate. This is the speed at which the drive transfers the data to the host device. As CDs are read-only, data is written onto them in the optimum order, unlike a hard disk on which a single file can be split into many sections and stored all over the disk – a process known as fragmentation. This helps speed up CD reads.

Most CD-ROMs also have a RAM buffer or cache which acts as a halfway house between

the drive and the host machine. As data can be read more quickly from RAM than from the CD, the buffer also helps speed up data transfer. Most CD-ROMs have a 64K buffer, although this does vary.

But even with both these features, single speed drives will only achieve a data transfer rate of about 150Kb/sec – which, incidentally, is the minimum MPC (Multimedia PC) requirement. By comparison, many PC hard disks have a transfer rate of 500Kb/sec, and some manage in excess of 1Mb/sec.

You may see a maximum data transfer rate or 'burst rate' quoted which will typically be 1.5 to 2.5Mb/sec. But this cannot be sustained for long periods so it's not a good figure to use in comparisons. In any event, if it's a SCSI drive, the transfer rate will be limited by the SCSI interface to around 1Mb/sec.

Many modern drives are multi-spin or double speeds and while this increases the data transfer rate it doesn't automatically double it in all situations. That said, the increase in speed is useful and certainly worth having if you can afford the extra.

The final area to consider is Kodak's Photo CD compatibility. In case you're not familiar with this, the idea is that you take a conventional film along to be developed in the normal way, but for an additional fee you have the photo images put onto a CD which can then be viewed on your TV or computer screen (with the correct playback equipment).

Given that a CD will typically hold about 100 piccies and that most of us don't run off anything like this number during our two weeks at Bognor, provision is made to record additional photos onto the CD in several stages – a process known as 'multi-session'.

CD-ROM – quick guide

- You can get started in CD-ROM for as little as £200.
- Although some CD-ROMs cost upwards of £100 there are many budget buys costing as little as £20.
- There are CD-ROMs on every subject imaginable – music, games, encyclopaedias, graphics, software, travel, science, literature, medicine, geography...
- CDs can store in excess of 600Mb of data. An equivalent hard disk would cost around £900.
- CD-ROMs are easy to use – they either have already installed software or you just pop them in the drive and access them like a normal disc.
- Current estimates suggest that there are over three million CD-ROM drives in use and the market is doubling every year.
- There are probably in excess of 6000 CD-ROM titles on the market and their numbers are arriving at the rate of 50-100 per week.



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► **S**o do you need a CD-ROM now? Well, if you're into multimedia, a CD-ROM is part of the MPC spec. And the quick and convenient access to large numbers of fonts, graphics and animation files does make it an essential add-on. You can, of course, also play audio CDs on a CD-ROM drive, so if you don't already have a CD player you could kill two birds with one stone – although you'll have to boot up your computer to play the CDs.

If you're into sampling, you can use the drive to load sample CD data into your machine. You might think that as data on a CD is stored digitally and sample data is also digital, you can transfer the data digitally. Not necessarily so. Data is transferred between a CD-ROM and a computer (for which they were primarily designed) digitally, but it has to be via a SCSI link or a similar bus. A sampler connected directly to a CD-ROM will not recognise a CD as it does not have the same format as a hard disk.

You need to transfer the data via a digital interface – but these are not always included as standard on samplers or CD players. The more up-market audio CD players have digital outs, but I've yet to see a CD-ROM similarly equipped (if you know of one, drop us a line). Also, the data on the CD needs to be recorded in a special digital format in the first place.

Of course, the vast majority of sample CDs are audio format and this can't be transferred digitally. There are still not that many sample CDs which include digital data and of those which do, not all have been entirely successful.

The moral of this story is that if you want to transfer digitally you'll probably need a separate audio CD player – and make sure that there are enough CDs with digital data to make it worthwhile. It's perhaps also worth pointing out that the transfer of data from a CD to a sampler via an audio cable produces a negligible loss of quality. The main advantage of digital transfer is a saving in time, not a preservation of quality.

And speaking of quality, if you want to play audio on a CD-ROM, it might be worth checking the audio specs. These are not normally included in adverts; playing audio CDs, it seems, is regarded as a bonus. You may find a signal-to-noise ratio of only around 80dB. Some manuals (such as the one for the Apple CD300) don't even quote audio specs. In any event, it's best to opt for a machine with proper audio outs rather than just a headphone socket – although this may not be an option on internal drives.

Given the vast array of CD-ROM standards and specs, which type should you go for? Well, as usual, that depends on what you want to do. If you're sure you won't ever want to put the family snaps on a CD there's no need to bother with a Photo CD compatible drive. And if you don't want to run QuickTime movies or if you don't mind waiting a few seconds longer for data transfer then you needn't go for a dual

Reservoir ROMs

For a product which has been in existence for a relatively short time, CDs seem to have acquired a bewildering number of standards – each given the name of a colour. These define how data is written to the CD and each has a slightly different format. As you've probably already realised, not all drives can read all formats, so it's important you buy a drive which supports the format you want to use.

Red Book – This is the original CD DA (Digital Audio) spec developed by Philips and Sony in 1984 which allows audio CDs to play on audio CD players. It has two layers of error correction which preserve the integrity of the audio data.

Yellow Book – This is the first CD-ROM format and was designed specifically for computer data. It supports the Red Book standard and has two Modes – Mode 1 for computer data and Mode 2 for compressed audio and video data. In the specs list at the back of a CD-ROM manual you will often see two sets of performance figures quoted, one for each Mode. However, the Yellow Book format does not directly allow the playback of audio data while reading computer data.

CD-ROM-XA (eXtended Architecture) – This is an extension of the Yellow Book standard and was developed by Philips, Sony and Microsoft. It has compressed audio and computer data interleaved on the same track so it can play audio and read computer data at the same time.

Unlike CD-i (see Green Book), XA discs can be played on any CD-ROM drive with a suitable interface. It's worth noting that the XA facility is a function of the firmware and some manufacturers who released non-XA drives offer an XA upgrade.

Green Book – This is Philips CD-i (Compact Disc Interactive), a proprietary version of the XA spec. It also allows the interleaving of compressed audio and video data, but it uses a different disc layout which will only play on a CD-i drive. Audio tracks, however, will play on a standard audio CD player.

The CD-i system works by means of a control menu which appears on screen during playback of the CD data, allowing you to affect its progress. The obvious application is in games, but musical versions are also cropping up giving you the opportunity to determine the order of various 4-bar loops or even remove the vocal track – karaoke style.

Latest developments include musical tracks with a selection of different mixes and various elements you can alter to produce your own mix. Plans are also afoot to produce interactive movies allowing the viewer to determine the direction of the plot.

CD Bridge – This seems to be an attempt to correct the last two Books! Again it was developed by Philips, Sony and Microsoft and allows a disc to be played on a CD-ROM-XA and a CD-i player. The best-known example of this is Kodak's Photo CD system, although this also includes some of the attributes of CD R...

Orange Book – This Book aims to set out the spec for the CD-ROM of the future, although there are still plenty of colours left for the big boys to wade through before anything becomes set in cement. It was put together by Philips, Sony, Kodak and others who met at Frankfurt and became known, reasonably enough, as the Frankfurt Group. It's concerned with allowing users to write to CDs and it has two parts:

Part 1 describes a CD-MO (Magneto Optical) which allows data to be written, erased and rewritten.

Part 2 allows data to be written once (WO), but not erased. Collectively they are known as CD R (Recordable). The ability to write to a CD in several stages – multi-session – is the principle behind Kodak's Photo CD and the companies hope this will bring CD-ROMs to the masses rather than restricting them to computer users.

The Orange Book could also improve access time by writing extra information in the directory and it may also allow a single CD to be read by Macs, PCs and other machines without the need for formats specific to a particular device. That, certainly for consumers and CD producers, is the ultimate goal. But one suspects it won't come about overnight.

High Sierra

The Colour Book specs deal with the way the data is physically written to a CD, so why not create a standard for reading the data? This was the thinking behind the ISO 9660 standard. Once realised, however, it was seen that a little more refinement was required, so a group of developers met at the High Sierra Hotel in Nevada (it's a dirty job but someone had to do it) to do some refining. The result was a, er... refined version of ISO 9660 which is in widespread use today – although some very early software can only read the original version.

The current software is Microsoft's MSCDEX extension for the PC which can read both formats. Mac CD-ROM software usually includes ISO 9660, High Sierra and Audio CD players.

But the bottom line is this: all current drives should come with up-to-date software and if you follow the installation instructions you shouldn't have any trouble reading any format. Many current CD-ROMs can be recognised by both PCs and Macs and may typically contain text, graphic images or music data.

speed drive either.

The greatest choice of CD-ROM drives exists for the PC market. But that's not the problem for Mac users it may at first seem. The Apple CD300, you see, is a double-speed Photo CD, multi-session compatible drive available at a very reasonable £323. And you should be able to pick one up for under £300 if you shop around – less if you want the internal version and have a slot in your Mac in which to fit it!

It has an access time of 295ms and a transfer rate of 342Kb/sec and comes with CD Remote for controlling audio CDs and Apple Photo

Access for reading Photo CDs. Incidentally, rumour has it that Apple is subsidising the CD300 to encourage the use of CD-ROMs. As of writing, it's probably the best buy for Mac users.

There's also the relatively new portable Power CD (£405 RRP) which you can carry around with you like a Walkman and annoy fellow passengers (although it's too bulky to be comfortable and it eats batteries). It's Photo CD and multi-session compatible with an access time of 550ms and a transfer rate of 175Kb/sec.

Both these machines make Apple's older ►

► CD150 look somewhat obsolete, but if you don't need all the bells and whistles, there should be some CD150 bargains to be had as dealers make way for the new models. Incidentally, many third-party PC drives can also be used with a Mac. This usually requires a special Mac interface kit. If you decide to buy one, make sure you get the correct drivers and software for it.

As for the PC itself, the choice isn't so clear cut. New drives arrive on the market quite regularly so it's really a question of seeing what's around and comparing prices and specs. One of the current bargains seems to be the Mitsumi LU005S at £175. It's multi-session, Photo CD compatible with a 350ms access speed and a 175Kb/sec data transfer rate. However, it's an internal model (you'll need a spare 5.25" drive bay in your PC) and you just lie the CDs in the machine rather than using a caddie.

Panasonic's CR-562B (£311 for the internal version, £464 for the external version) is available in AT and SCSI formats (an AT interface kit is another £81). It's a dual-speed drive, Photo CD and multi-session compatible.

The new Toshiba XM-3401 (from £493 for the internal version) is rather nice. It's Photo CD and multi-session compatible and has a fast 200ms access time with a transfer rate of 330Kb/sec (perhaps now you can see why Apple's CD300 is such good value!).

It also has a SCSI 2 interface which is rather interesting as SCSI 2 hasn't really caught on yet. Indeed, the question that has to be asked is how much faster will the drive work via SCSI 2? In most cases it will only make a small difference to the performance of current drives and it means having to budget for a SCSI 2 interface, too. However, manufacturers are

developing CD-ROMs with greater capacity and faster transfer rates. To make the most of a faster transfer protocol the drives themselves need to be faster.

If you're wondering why there is such a disparity in the price of drives, check the performance and the extras. The cheaper ones are probably not dual speed (the Mitsumi is single speed). Some may only have a small buffer (the Mitsumi has 32K) and there are various dust seals, double dust protection mechanisms and automatic lens-cleaning mechanisms to consider.

PC users also need to check the drive interface. SCSI drives are probably the most common (SCSI lets you daisy chain several devices from a single SCSI card) but some drives use a local bus which, though often cheaper than a SCSI card, will take over one of your card slots. Swings and roundabouts. Incidentally, some people may claim that local bus is faster than SCSI. It may well be, but current drives usually can't yet take advantage of the extra speed.

To sum up, if you want a CD-ROM for multimedia purposes, check that it is XA compatible. If you want to read Photo CDs

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CD technology - how it works

A CD is a CD is a CD. They all work in the same way. The discs are made from a plastic/metal 'sandwich' onto which data is encoded in a spiral pattern as a series of pits and raised areas known as 'lands'. The two states represent binary data - a series of 0s and 1s - the base numbering system with which all computers and digital technology work.

We're talking small here. You could fit over 100 CD tracks into one floppy disc track; a pit is about one tenth of a micrometer deep. Light from a laser is directed into the grooves and is reflected back according to whether it hits a pit or a land. This coding is read and converted into data for processing by the internal circuitry of the CD player.

In order to preserve the integrity of the data there are two levels of error correction built into an audio CD and three into a CD ROM. Losing a little audio information from a CD is unlikely to be detectable by the human ear, but losing some computer data could prevent an entire program from working. CD-ROM error correction techniques can currently read one error in 10,000 bits and recreate the missing data with almost perfect accuracy.

make sure the drive is multi-session. Although all XA drives can read Photo CDs not all can read multi-session discs. Because the directory is written to the CD in several stages, some discs may be able to read the first set of pictures, but not subsequent sets. Another thing the adverts sometimes don't make clear... ●

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instrument sounds on earth, as well as the great classic analog and digital synth sounds that have made Peavey a world-class leader in keyboard products. In addition to the new instrument waveforms, the SI now includes all new drum and percussion samples like brush drums, rap drums, and ethnic percussion. And if that weren't enough, with the use of the optional GM program card, the SI is made General MIDI compatible. So if old-world technology has you grounded, see your Peavey dealer today for a test flight. The DPM SI takes you to a whole new world.



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State of Independents

Time to Play

Nottingham-based dance label Time Recording have built up a strong reputation for releasing quality club tracks. But, as they tell Simon Trask, they're also setting their sights beyond the dancefloor...

You know where you are with a Time record. There again, you don't know where you are with a Time record. In their 18-month history the label have demonstrated an ability to combine reliability with diversity, a sense of consistency with a sense of adventure. How many other dance labels, for instance, would venture to bring in composer Michael Nyman and bhangra outfit Station K on remix chores?

Time Recording are based in the Square Centre, an artistic complex in Nottingham which grew up around Square Dance studios (recently renamed Square Centre studios); today the complex also houses another dance label, Strictly 4 Groovers, together with the DiY sound system and the Venus Agency DJ pool.

"Time really started more by accident than by design," recalls label manager Chris Allen. "Some of us had been in the studio involved in sessions as producers, engineers, and management and A&R representatives, and we really liked the way the whole place worked. It was much more to do with enthusiasm and the fact that we were all just around, than any distinct plan like 'All right, he's managing director and this is what we're going to do in the first year.' We still don't have any great business plan for the next five years!"

"We're very much one of a new breed of label where the staff, the artists and the producers are often the same people in various combinations," says Dave Thompson, Time's licensing and

promotions man – who, as if to prove his point, is also one half of label recording artists and in-house production/remix team Sine. "We now have two in-house 24-track studios and a video editing suite, so we can keep things on a fairly spontaneous level. Many of our earlier releases were a case of going out clubbing and then stumbling back here and working in the studio for 12 hours, and the results were often worth putting out."

"Tim [Andrews, studio owner and manager] was very into it because it meant that anything we did was good advertising for the studio," Chris adds.

"The whole thing does reinforce itself," confirms Dave. "As the label becomes established it benefits the producers and it benefits the studio – which then becomes a cool place to record, which in turn brings in outside people who may want to record for Time."

Time's releases combine a warm, uplifting New York-style club vibe with a blissed-out European trance sensibility, a rich, deep, enveloping sound with an attention to sonic detail which rewards repeated listening. A Time record typically works both on and off the dancefloor – a deliberate ploy from a label which wants to reach beyond the confines of clubland to a broader listening audience.

"From our very first release the listening element has been very strong," maintains Dave. "These things sound pretty hefty in clubs, but at the same time you can play them at home, you can play them on headphones. We've always tried to put in the kinds of layers and detail that reward that. It's a shortfall of a great deal of dance music that it doesn't stand up to being listened to at home; if it doesn't then there's no reason to buy it, and if people don't buy it then it isn't going to be around for much longer."

"We've become quite disillusioned with the way that dance music is going," Chris

adds. "There seems to be an increasing accent on making everything sound the same. Dance records are now appealing to a shrinking audience because people will listen to two progressive house records and they've heard them all, there's nothing else to listen to."

Dave sees the current glut of dance releases, many of which are white labels, as a big problem – not least for labels like Time who are trying to develop their artists.

"I like the fact that technology has made it almost universally possible for people to make records," he says, "but the result at the moment is that every third-rate DJ and every third-rate home

**Dave Thompson:
"The whole dance industry is in great danger of becoming a hobby for DJs to make records for other DJs"**

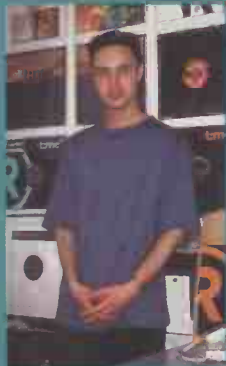
amateur is boshing this stuff out simply because they want to have a record out, not because they want to make music.

"Almost every UK DJ wants to put a track out, irrespective of whether or not they have anything to say. You find that however much hype a record gets, it may not exist in quantities of more than 500, 1000, 2000 – which really isn't worth doing. It's a hobby. The whole dance industry is in great danger of becoming a hobby for DJs to make records for other DJs. As a result, the shelf life of the average dance track is maybe two weeks. In two weeks it's almost impossible for a label to make enough money to pay the artist or to develop them, and as a result artist development is really being damaged."

Time's response to what Dave calls "the dead end of the whole white label thing" has been to put the emphasis on identity and value.

"As well as the music, people buy the concept of

● Licensing and promotions man Dave Thompson waits to hear his release date...



● Label manager Chris Allen posing with portable computer and St Ivel mug...





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● Inside the gatefold sleeve for Time Recording's forthcoming *Time 1001* compilation album. Copyright Designers' Republic, Sheffield.

something," Dave maintains. "We very much try to make sure with Time that you buy our taste, you buy our attitude."

"That's why our packaging is so strong and distinctive," adds Chris. "We've literally spent four months getting the packaging for our first compilation album right, because to us it's part of the ethos. We want people to know that we don't consider these to be just disposable tracks, we want to appeal to people's sense of 'Yes, this is worth buying because the people who made it took some time and some care over making it, they didn't just go in and bosh it out.' In a way that generates its own kind of success. I'm convinced that if people think you're doing what you want to do they will have more respect for you than if you're just trying to palm them off with something they want to hear."

Time's 12" sleeves are both consistent and distinctive in design, with their ® sign emblazoned - usually in glaring orange - on a black background. The label have adopted other deliberate ploys, too. For instance, from the outset they went with the idea of presenting their music in the form of a monthly EP, consisting of four tracks by various and varied Time artists, as a kind of 'magazine' - complete with a subscription option.

"We have calls from people just about the EP series who treat it like the next copy of whichever glossy monthly they get," Chris explains. "They actually say 'Is it coming out next Wednesday?'. It's kind of bizarre the number of calls we have like that. Which seems to show that people do view it as some regular document, which is appealing."

A third characteristic element of Time concerns their sound. Again from the outset, they have worked with Roland's RSS (Roland Sound Space) 3D sound imaging system - the sleeve of every Time record includes the legend "This record has been sonically sculptured in 3 dimensions using the Roland RSS system." In fact, RSS has become an integral if not, thankfully, an overstated part of their sound.

"As soon as we got it, everybody here fell in love with it," Chris recalls. "We've now settled down into constant use of it; we don't tell people

they've got to use it, it's simply used because the engineers here have got into the habit of using it and are now beginning to become aware of the kind of sounds that will actually work through it.

"We think the RSS is a very important piece of technology; anything which increases the detail that you can put into how the music is being expressed is no bad thing."

The label's next step is to release their first albums - a Time compilation and the first in a projected series of ambient/listening CDs. Originally these were to have been out by the time you read this piece; however, fearing that they would get lost in the usual pre-Christmas deluge, Time have put their release dates back to January and February respectively.

So, to close, how do Dave and Chris see their position at present?

"We've spent a year defining the label and establishing that, and we seem to have a fair reputation for quality and taking risks," Dave replies. "We're not part of any fashionable label clique, particularly - which is something we're eternally grateful for. We're under no pressure to go in any particular way, and we want to take that further, we want to have the label as something you turn to and automatically pay attention to, and within that the producers and artists arise."

The final word goes to Chris: "What we're doing is very important to us, that's why we're doing it. We're not doing it to make cash as such - as long as we're covering our overheads, we'd rather do what we want to do than have what we do fit with anyone else's plans." ●

An invitation from Time
You could go from reading about Time's records to being on one of them! The label are currently seeking material for their second ambient album - and have extended an open invitation to MT readers to submit tracks for possible inclusion. Or, as Dave puts it: "turn off the 909, turn up the delay and send us something to refrigerate to..."
The address to send your tape to is:
Time Recording
389-394 Alfred St North
Nottingham NG3 1AA
So what are you waiting for?!

- ### Time releases
- 1992**
- (all 12" vinyl double-packs except 0692 EP - single 12")
 - 0692 EP: Bounce: 'Round & Around'/Shimmer: 'Part One'/Symetrics: 'Full Tilt/Papa Beach: 'Feeling Freaky With...'
 - 0792 EP: Mad: 'Indiakinda'/Yukon: 'Demonize/Eat The Pig: 'Knots/Association: 'Ciao'
 - 0892 EP: I.P.G.: 'Family'/Mad: 'Life So Well/Kicking Back: 'Everybody's Got Something To Hide'/Gas: 'Particles'
 - 0992 EP: Tribal Technology: 'Life'/Mad @ Chris: 'This'/DiY: 'Excommunicate'/Symetrics: 'Shao-Lin'
 - 1092 EP: Smooch: 'Disco Heaven'/Nice Psycho: 'Love Me Love'/Zuloops: 'Ajaja'/Mad: 'Electric'
 - 1192 EP: Déjà Vu: 'Seduced'/Voodoo Warriors: 'Give It To Me'/Mad: 'Gravity'/Gas: 'Know Your Worth'
- 1993**
- 0193 EP: Moodswings: feat. Chrissie Hynde: 'Spiritual High'/C-Cat Trance: 'Hobb'/I.P.G.: 'Disneyland'/Unique: 'Don't Stop' (12" vinyl double-pack)
 - 0293 EP: Mad: 'Hollow'/Klicka: 'Bad Times'/Yukon: 'Do This'/Qubism: 'Teotihuacan' (12" vinyl double-pack)
 - 0393 EP: *Back in Time* EP - remixes by Back To Basics of 'Indiakinda', 'Ciao', 'Excommunicate' and 'Family' (12")
 - Time 1000: *Disneyland* EP - mixes of I.P.G.'s 'Disneyland' by Michael Nyman & SisterLove, I.P.G., Station K, Jack Lenin's Allstars and Poindexter (12"/CD single/cassette)
 - 0493 EP: Conquista: 'Conquista de Casa'/Voodoo Warriors: 'Limitless' (12")
 - 0593 12": Sine: 'Round & Around' - mixes by Sine and Coco, Steel & Lovebomb (12")
 - 0693 EP: Bad Data: 'Smoke Dope'/Sandmen: 'Restart' (12")
 - 0793 EP: *United States* EP - Chez Damier 'Give a Little Love'/Bluejean: 'B'z-wax' (12")
 - 0893 12": Symetrics: 'Anyway' (12")
- Forthcoming releases:**
- Time 1001: compilation of released tracks (due January '94: LP/CD/MC)
 - Emit 0094: ambient/listening' compilation (due February '94: CD only)
 - 12" releases from Michael Nyman & SisterLove, Station K, Sine.

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Keyboard Review — Simon Trask

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Warp Fact

Riding the Trans-Europe Express to Sheffield via Detroit, Rotterdam's Speedy J has been steadfastly pursuing his own ideas on electronic music. Simon Trask listens in...

One of the most original and intriguing albums to have emerged in recent months is Speedy J's *Ginger*. Released on Warp Records as part of the Sheffield label's ongoing 'electronic listening music' series, *Ginger* is the work of 24-year-old Jochem Paap from Rotterdam.

Jochem's involvement in music goes back to the mid-'80s, when he started out as a DJ – his 'Speedy J' monicker was acquired as a result of his fast scratching and mixing abilities. Inspired by the early house records coming out of Chicago, he began to develop his own music, expanding his mixing setup with drum machines and synths.

His first released tracks, 'Lift Off' and 'Take Me There', appeared on a twelve-inch compilation from Hithouse Records. He then struck up a relationship with Detroit's +8 Records after sending them a tape, and a number of releases on the label followed, including the *Intercontinental* and *Evolution* EPs.

With the track 'Pullover', first released on the +8 album *From Our Minds To Yours – Volume 1*, Jochem had both club and Top 40 chart success in a number of countries. A subsequent track on +8, 'Something For Your Mind', also became a massive club hit. At this point, Jochem decided to adopt the name Public Energy for his harder tracks and to use his Speedy J monicker for the more melodic, experimental music that he wanted to put out.

A chance meeting with Rob Mitchell of Warp Records at MIDEM led to some remix work for the label, then a couple of tracks as Speedy J on *Artificial Intelligence* (the album which introduced Warp's 'electronic listening music' concept), and most recently to *Ginger*.

On electronic sounds

"What interested me in dance music was always electronic sounds. I started getting into music when the first twelve-inches started coming out; I was a very big Arthur Baker fan, the twelve-inch remixes he did. Also I liked some new wave stuff, like Depeche Mode, New Order, because it had synthesisers in it.

Then I got interested in hip hop, and the first house things when they came out.

"Electronic sounds always have made a big impression on me. I'm very interested in sounds and sound, that's what inspires me for doing new tracks and new music. But to me, no matter how electronic it goes, music is still a thing of feelings, it comes from the inside, from the heart."

On sampling

"Most of the sounds I sample are not too much from records but more from my instruments; I try to reshape them and do different things with them. Also, I don't use too many breakbeats, it's not the main thing for me; when I do use them, I cut them up into really tiny pieces and try to make rhythms myself."

On presets

"I don't like to use presets all the time, because that starts to get boring, you know? Also, even though I have pretty much equipment for a techno or a house musician, I still don't have enough, so I try to get more out of it by mixing up sounds. I do use presets – everybody does – but I like it more when I hear one sound that I made myself than when I hear a sound that was already in the machine."

On the value of spontaneity

"It's very difficult to capture the human feel if you program everything, if you start recording and you just have to press Start on Cubase. I like to keep some kind of spontaneity, so sometimes I program parts to play all through a song and then I fade them in and out on the desk; that gives me some control over how the song builds, I can still touch it with my hands. I've always worked like that.

"I think that's what the early house and techno tracks were based on, that spontaneous, often accidental recording that makes it interesting and weird. If you listen to most of the Chicago and Detroit early stuff,

it's all edited things from live recordings, people pushing buttons, machines running and people manipulating them as they run.

"Acid Tracks', by Phuture, is just a drum machine and a 303, but it's the person that twists the knobs who creates the building feeling. Also with techno, people fade tracks in and out very aggressively on boards, twist knobs, manipulate synthesisers, and that makes it really live although it's electronic equipment. That's what it's all based on, I think. Music should always be a snapshot of a moment."

On major labels and major money

"The major companies, they are so big, the only thing they are doing is making money. If you want to join such a group of people, you should know that they just want to make money from you and nothing else. If you're an artist and one day a guy is at your door with a lot of money, it's easy to get carried away. You don't realise that you're signing your career away. That's the big trick, to be confronted with so much money, that makes people sign to majors. There are so many people who can't resist the temptation."

On Rotterdam hardcore

"My early records were at the base of the hardcore rave that emerged in Rotterdam; I didn't start it, but I was there at the



beginning. The 'gabber'* sound evolved from that really basic sound that I and other people did back then; it was very hard and very basic, and it just got faster and harder. I didn't want to go that way, because I didn't like it, so I decided to keep quiet for a while and work on an album in a totally different direction – and that became the album which is out now on Warp."

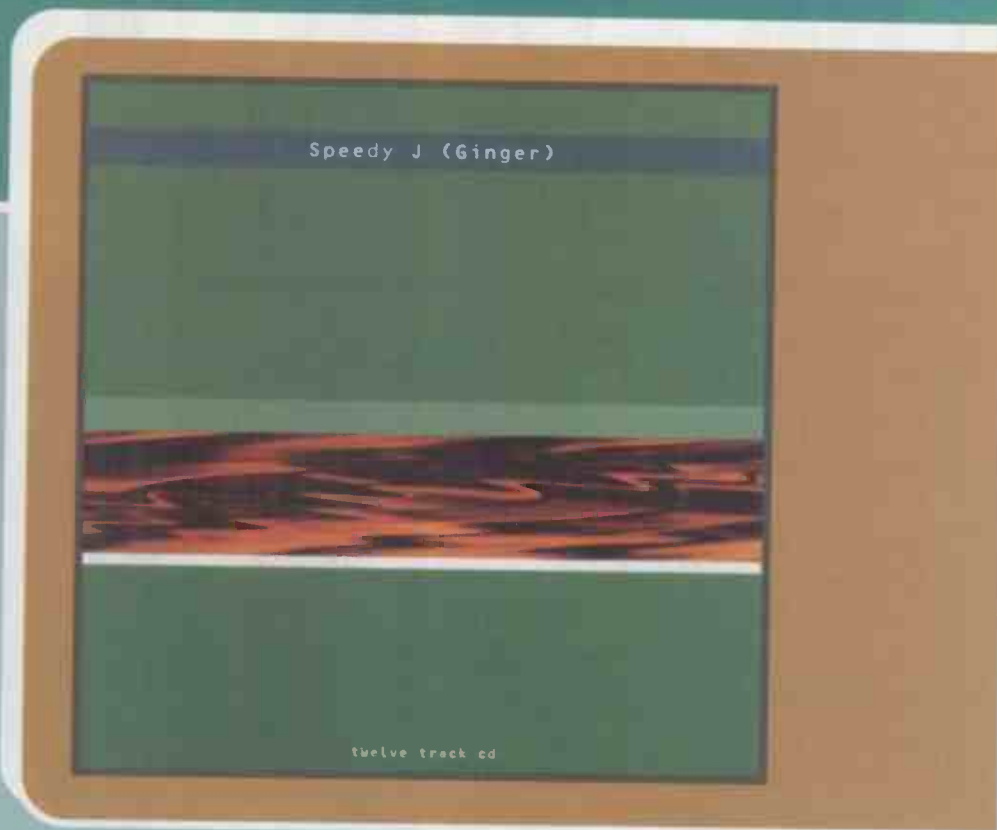
(* 'Gabber' is a Dutch word meaning 'pal', and 'gabber' music is associated with football hooliganism in Holland – ST)

On ambient music vs. electronic listening music

"What I did is certainly not an ambient album, in so far as you'd put it on and let it play; it's really to listen to. So I think 'electronic listening music' is a better name for it than 'ambient', because 'ambient' is really something for the background. Also, I think the electronic listening music that Warp is putting out is more coming from dance music than from the ambient music of the past. It's more that people are tired of the hard beats and the sample records, and really want to do stuff that's melodic; that's really where it's coming from, I think."

On Warp Records

"They always, from the beginning, were very electronic, and that's what I especially like about them. They're very well respected. They search for different things. Now Warp is pioneering electronic listening music, coming from dance music, but already people are imitating them; I think eventually everybody will be doing listening music!"



On music, computer graphics and video

"I am very interested in technology as a whole thing – not only technology in music but also technology in visuals. Before I got interested in music, I was busy with painting and graffiti, and if I hadn't got so involved in music I would have been right now at a school for visuals and media techniques, learning how to make computer graphics and videos. In fact, if it's possible I would still like to do it, because it interests me very much."

"I think in a couple of years with visuals it will be like music has become. Everything has radically changed in music with the accessibility of electronic equipment, and the same will happen with video and computer graphics as the equipment becomes really cheap." ●

On record

Recording as:

Speedy J (Warp, Sheffield; +8, Detroit)
Public Energy (Probe, Detroit)
The Melody (See Saw, Amsterdam)
Country & Westérn (Zebra, Amsterdam)

Current album:

Ginger (Warp)

Remixes:

Wild Planet; Bjork, Shámen
... with Rene van der Weyde:
Quadroponia, Meng, Syndicate, T99
... with Rene van der Weyde and Gijs Vroom:
Ya Kid K (Technotronic)
"and many other less well-known names."

Top gear

Alôsis: MIDverb
Akai: S1100, S3000
Allen & Heath: GS3 16+B mixer* (48+ channel on, mixdown)
Behringèr: compressor (x2)
Boss Pro: SE50
Ensoniq: ESQ1
Kòrg: A1, S3, Wavestation A/D
Rhodes: Model 660

Roland: Juno 106, MC202, NS50, R8, SH101, TB303, TR727, TR808, TR909
Sequential Circuits: Pro One
Tannoy: System B monitoring
Trident: compressor/limiter (x2)
Yamaha: amplifier, DX100, SPX900, TX81Z

Used by Jochem, Rene and Gijs: Roland DM80 hard disk recorder (8-track, 200Mb)

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Touching Bass

Part 10 of our series ventures beyond 4/4 into the realm of odd time signatures – dare you join the expedition? Text and examples by Simon Trask.

Music in 4/4 time is so predominant in Western popular culture that it's easy to forget (or ignore) the fact that other time signatures exist, too. If all our musical ideas come 'naturally' to us in 4/4, perhaps that's because our musical training, whether formal or informal, only teaches us to think in 4/4, while the music around us constantly reinforces the sense of 4/4 time as the norm.

With this month's examples, however, we're going to attempt to break out of the 4/4 strait-jacket. Put simply, they illustrate how a 2-bar passage of music in 4/4 time can be adjusted to fit other, odd-numbered time signatures – specifically, 5/8, 7/8, 9/8 and 11/8. On initial listening, these deviations from the 4/4 norm may indeed seem odd, as in strange, but just let each one loop away in your sequencer for a while and that oddness will begin to fade away. What you're left with is simply music with a different feel – a feel which is determined by the time signature and, of course, the rhythmic interpretation of that time signature.

To my mind, Examples 2-5 all have a more fluid quality than Example 1, and the reason for this is they're not in four-square 4/4 time. My favourite is the 11/8 example, but maybe I'm just perverse! I'm not going to get too analytical about these examples, because the key is to *listen* to them and gradually absorb, or internalise, their time-sense in an intuitive way. However, it's worth observing that odd time

signatures are made up of even and odd constituents, eg. 3 + 2 or 4 + 3. Exactly how you order these constituents is down to you – and there's nothing to stop you playing around with their order during a piece, or using different orderings in different musical parts; what matters, as always, is what sounds good.

To start out with you can just play the basslines if you want, but to get the full effect you really need to program in the drum and percussion parts; the pad part is the perennial icing on the cake, but it does serve to emphasise the change in harmony from bar 1 to bar 2, going from G major 9 to A minor 11 (the bassline has the 9th and 11th in bar 2). I've provided this change to make the length of each bar, and therefore the time signature, more apparent. In Examples 1-4 the bassline provides just a hint of Am7/D at the end of bar 2; however, in Example 5 this harmony becomes more pronounced with the bassline's greater emphasis on the D in the latter part of bar 2.

To conclude this month, let's say that you've absorbed the feel and sense of different time signatures to the point where you're able to create music that isn't in 4/4 time. Maybe people won't accept it. There are obvious problems where dance music is concerned: DJs might not (be able to) include it in a mix; people might not want to dance to it.

On the other hand, you just might be responsible for starting a whole new trend. ●

Ex1

Ex2

Ex3



Ex4



Ex5



GS Format/General MIDI compatibility

This month's musical examples were created using a Roland JV30 synth, which is a GS Format instrument. Consequently, if you own a GS instrument you can recreate them using the same sounds. Specifically, I used patch 51 (Syn Strings 1) for the pad sound, patch 34 (Fingered Bass) for the bass sound (with a modified filter cutoff setting of 39), and the Standard Kit for the drum and percussion parts. The percussion sounds from top to bottom of the staff are on note numbers 81, 80, 56 and 54, while the drum sounds from top to bottom are on note numbers 46, 44, 40 and 36 – in both cases using the Standard Kit.

Owners of General MIDI instruments can use the patch numbers and drum sounds indicated above, but of course these won't provide literally the same sounds.

Instrumental parts

Reading from top to bottom of Example 1, the four staves are: pad, bass, percussion and drums. I've omitted the pad part from Examples 2-5 for space reasons, but you can use it with all the examples – making appropriate duration adjustments to cater for the different time signatures, of course.

Reading from top to bottom of the percussion staff, the sounds you should use are: open triangle, mute triangle, cowbell and tambourine. Reading from top to bottom of the drums staff: open hi-hat, pedal hi-hat, snare drum and kick drum.

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STAR SYSTEM



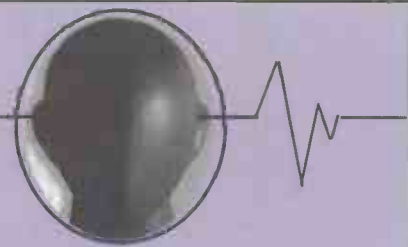
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A TO Z OF ANALOGUE

part 4

MT's exclusive guide to every analogue synth made. Included are keyboards, expanders/sound modules and the better known electronic pianos and organs. Not included are drum machines, standalone sequencers and effects units, vocoders and those guitar/wind synths which aren't regularly used as expanders in their own right.

Readers are invited to submit details of little-known instruments which may be of use in compiling the series and also to point out any mistakes and/or omissions if these occur. All contributions will be fully credited.

Compiled by Peter Forrest



Crumar
continued

- **ROADRACER** – Velocity-sensitive, 61-note electronic piano. 1978 – c.1982

Original price: £375

Target price: £40

- Three piano presets plus bass.
- Pitch control, vibrato speed and depth on front panel, underneath keys.
- Hawaiian guitar effects with pitch slider.
- Chorus effects.

- **ROADRUNNER I, II & III** – 61-note electronic pianos. 1977 – c.1983

Original price: c.£299

Target price: £30

Users include: Billy Preston, Mickey Virtue (UB40), Edgar Winter.

- Original Roadrunner identical to Roadracer with the exception of touch sensitivity.
- Roadrunner II featured re-designed panel, still three piano (normal, honky tonk,

clavicord) and one bass sound plus variable speed chorus.

- Roadrunner III featured different piano sounds – mellow, bright, and harps plus variable speed phaser.

- **ROADY** – 61-note electronic piano. 1979 – 1982

Original price: £349

Target price: £30 – £60

- Three piano sounds (including fairish Rhodes and harpsichord impersonations), vibes, bass, mixable and splittable (bass over bottom two octaves).
- Three separate outs.
- Lightweight for easy portability. (Hence the name?)

- **SPIRIT** – 37-note, 2-VCO monosynth with arpeggiator. Designed by one Robert Moog. 1983 – c.1986

Original price: £450

Target price: £100 – £150

- One of the last monosynths ever to go into production.
- Interesting but complicated and disorganised front panel, including ring mod, loads of LFO modulation possibilities, sample and hold, the arpeggiator, inversion of the ADSR envelope.
- Filters possibly strongest point – switchable 12dB/24dB, high-pass, low-pass, and band-pass plus overdrive control to help it sound like a Moog.
- Idiosyncratic terminology – shaper Y, red noise, etc.
- Three modulation wheels.
- Only one octave switch for both oscillators; but intervals may be set.
- Oscillator sync available as well.

Interface: ★★	VFM: ★★
Sounds: ★★	Character: ★★
Controls: ★★	Collectability: ★★
Memories:	Ease of use:

- **STRATUS** – 49-note string/brass/organ synthesiser. 1982 – 1984

Original price: £499

Target price: £60 – £90

- Slimmed down brother of the Trilogy.
- Strings, poly/brass and organ mixable.
- Single and multiple triggering switchable.
- Two independent oscillators. Invertable envelopes. Joystick modulation control.
- More 'synth' control than on previous multi-instrument keyboards.

Interface:	VFM:
Sounds: ★	Character:
Controls: ★★	Collectability:
Memories:	Ease of use: ★

- **STRINGMAN** – 61-note string synthesiser. c.1974 – c.1979

Original price: £406

Target price: £50

Users include: Keith Emerson

- Violin, cello, contrabass imitations – contrabass on bottom 17 notes.
- Vibrato amount and delay, chorus, 3-band EQ – mellow, medium, bright.
- Variable sustain and separate bass volume level.

Interface:	VFM:
Sounds: ★	Character: ★
Controls: ★★	Collectability: ★
Memories:	Ease of use: ★★

- **SYNTHEPHONE** – 37-note monosynth with breath control. 1982 – c.1984

Original price: £179

Target price: £125

- Controls on front edge, under keys.
- Breath controller has good expressive potential.

● **T3** – Two manual, 2 x 49-note organ with pedal board. c.1981

Original price: £1630

Target price: £140

• Shorter keyboards than Organizer T2, but, surprisingly, more expensive.

● **TOCCATA** – 49-note electronic organ. c.1981

Original price: £329

Target price: £50

- Eight presets to imitate the "eight most common" drawbar configurations.
- 4' and 2' percussion (variable volume) and key-click (single or multiple trigger).
- Two-speed Leslie imitations, including speed-up/slow-down.

● **TRILOGY** – 49-note poly/string/organ synth. 1981 – c.1983

Original price: £799

Target price: £90 – £120

- Unusual layout of controls – ADSR is down at left side of keyboard.
- Organ controls: four horizontal footage sliders, top left of panel.
- String controls: 8', 16' mixable, attack and release, tone.
- Decent sounds, including seven presets.
- Limited choice of waveforms – both oscillators the same – sawtooth, square, or mix.
- Joystick control: up/down for modulation, left-right for pitch-bend.
- Good, comprehensive LFO routing and control.
- ADSR invertable.

Interface:	VFM: ★★
Sounds: ★★	Character: ★
Controls: ★★	Collectability: ★
Memories: ★	Ease of use: ★★



● **SPIDER** – 37-note, 3-VCO monophonic synthesiser made in Holland. c.1982

- Sharply-angled rear panel like Minimoog.
- Good interface patchbay on top edge of panel.
- All white.

Davis

● **CLAVITAR** – Remote guitar-shaped 37-note keyboard for controlling monophonic synthesisers.

Users include: George Duke, Herbie Hancock, Patrick Moraz

Davoli

● **DAVOLISINT**

Users include: Sweet

● **DAVOLISINT B** c.1975

Original price: £232.

• Improved version of Davolisint, with "far more features, only slightly increased price".

● **SINTACORD** – c.1975

Original price: £280

● **SINTORCHESTRA**

Dewtron

● **GIPSY** – 37-note, 2-VCO monophonic synth. c.1973

Original price: £468

Target price: £40 – £180

- Vernier knobs for pitch, as in VCS3.
- Mahogany case with telescopic legs.
- Each oscillator has mixable sine, triangle and square waves.
- Separate LFO, with variable depth and speed; portamento; spring reverb; ring modulator.
- Only single AD envelope, routed to filter, VCA or VCO; very basic filter.
- Claimed to be touch-sensitive, but note the small print: "... by careful setting of attack and decay times so that light-touch playing results in sensitive sounds, and heavy playing gives bold, rich sounds".

Interface:	VFM:
Sounds:	Character: ★★
Controls: ★	Collectability: ★★
Memories:	Ease of use: ★

● **MISTER BASSMAN** – 13-note pedal board. c.1969

Original price: £27.30

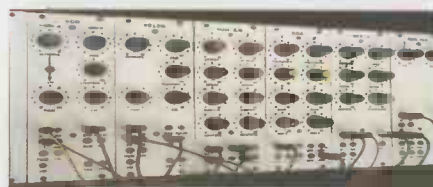
• Two tones: string/organ.

● **VC** – Audio module kits

Users include: Cabaret Voltaire

Interface: ★★	VFM:
Sounds:	Character: ★★
Controls: ★★	Collectability: ★★
Memories:	Ease of use: ★

Digisound



● **MOD 80** – Modular kit system.

Original price (eg, Voice Card): £112

Target price: £50 – £80

Users include: The Orb, Wavestar

- Kit built – thus very variable quality control on finished products, but easily repairable.
- Complex modular system with tremendous control possibilities.
- 9" x 3" modules include: VCO and VCLFO (13 in/out sockets each); Dual Envelope Generator – two ADSRs with gate, trigger and manual override; Dual Resonant Filter for elaborate and powerful band-pass filtering; Low and High VCFs; Dual VCA with 14 in/outs, and a lag processor/attenuator module (something often left out of more

famous and expensive modular systems).

- 9" x 9" modules include: complete 2-VCO Voice Card using Curtis chips.
- Uses mini-jack patch leads, with no need for screened cable.
- Easily interfaced with 1-volt/octave equipment, MIDI/CV converters, etc.

Interface: ★★	VFM: ★★
Sounds: ★★	Character: ★★
Controls: ★★	Collectability: ★★
Memories:	Ease of use:

Dubreq

● **STYLOPHONE** – Miniature, stylus-controlled monophonic 20-note instrument c.1968.

Original price: Unknown

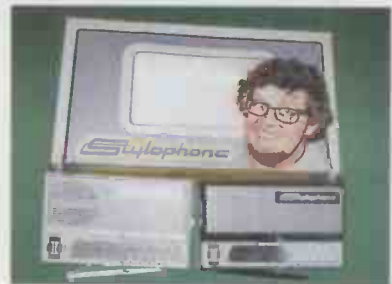
Target price: £10 – £25

Users include: Rolf Harris, The Herd, Rick Wakeman (David Bowie: 'Space Oddity').

- Rolf Harris used his on his television programme, subsequently endorsed it, and produced a demo record that was sold with it.
- It even made it to the Frankfurt Spring Fair 1969, where the makers were promising that treble and bass versions would be forthcoming.
- Organ tone, with or without vibrato.
- Built-in two-inch (5cm) speaker, and mini-jack output to external amp.
- Distinctive, particularly in the glitches between notes as the stylus goes from one segment of the keyboard to the next.
- Gijssandi a speciality.

Interface:	VFM:
Sounds:	Character: ★★
Controls:	Collectability: ★★
Memories:	Ease of use: ★

● **STYLOPHONE 350S** – Deluxe model with two



styli. c.1974

Original price: £49

Target price: £20 – £40

Users include: Rod Argent,

- Three presets, vibrato and decay
- Second stylus (used on left side panel of instrument) acts as modulator/re-iterator.
- Presets switchable to 2', 4', 8' or 16'.
- Much bigger (7" elliptical) built-in speaker.

Interface:	VFM:
Sounds: ★	Character: ★★
Controls: ★	Collectability: ★★
Memories:	Ease of use: ★

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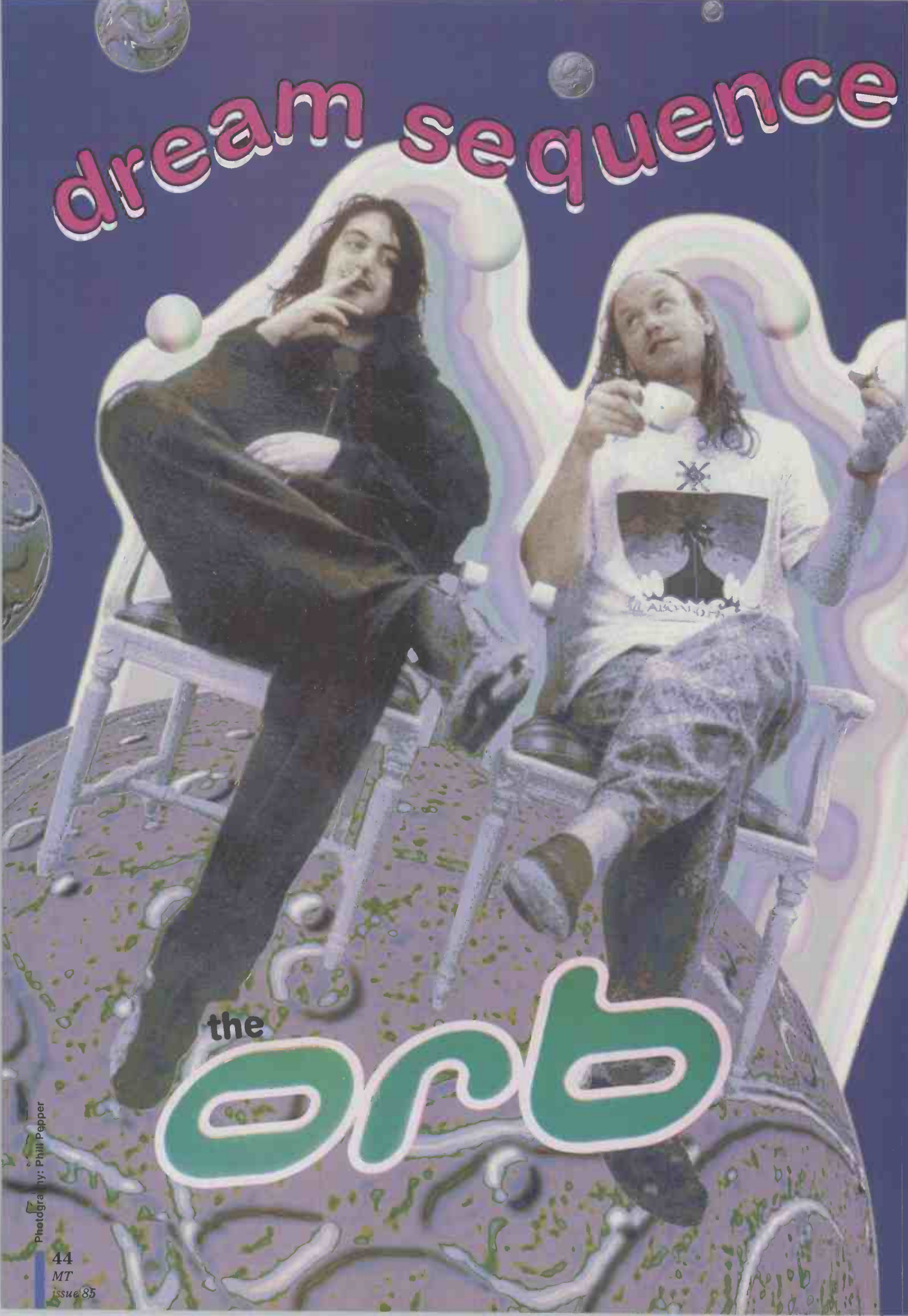
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dream sequence



the

orb

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44
MT
issue 85

Officially crowned as leaders of the ambient house scene in 1992 when their second album *U.F.Orb* entered the UK charts at No.1, 1993 sees The Orb's Dr Alex Paterson and Thrash on the one hand faced with the daunting task of producing a follow-up amidst a monumental record company legal wrangle, and on the other hand enjoying their biggest ever live shows. Jonathan Miller encounters the duo in the studio, where the red tape has been threatening to outstrip the Ampex stuff, while *MT* catches a recent outdoor Orb spectacular in Copenhagen.

The Orb continue to ride on a wave of success – or so it seems. Earlier this year they effortlessly completed another sell-out UK tour, premiering a vast amount of new material, but surprisingly have yet to release a record in 1993, an indication that all is not well. Rumours have abounded in the popular music press over the state of play between band and record label. When the band first appeared in *MT* in June 1991, they seemed very much at the vanguard of a new musical genre for the '90s. To some extent, this year's troubles confirm with a wry inevitability that this genre – the ambient music which The Orb helped to create – has indeed become big business.

But now the situation seems on the verge of resolution. The Orb are about to sign a new contract with a major label, in a move that will test both that label's flexibility and the band's ability to mature in a corporate setting. Taking a break from a remix session for the recently reformed Yellow Magic Orchestra, Dr Alex Paterson and Thrash are breakfasting late in the afternoon and ruminating on these events. At one stage, there were stories of The Orb's plan to release a total of six albums and then stop, so that in years to come listeners would only have a limited number of recordings to explore. Alex is keen to put this into context.

"That was said when we were working with *Big Life*. It was a 6-album deal and that seemed like the best way to get out at the time. Releasing six albums and then stopping is a concept which I think would work, but it was more a case of thinking do we have to put up with more of an unsatisfactory recording deal? We were just being outmanoeuvred all the time, having our goal posts moved to different locations on the pitch. We've now managed to get out of the deal, but at one stage we really felt that if they keep an injunction on us saying that we can't release anything as The Orb, then that will be the end of The Orb.

"I think we've got round that, and what we've got as ideas from this year alone amounts to

more than six albums, anyway. Seeing as we like to have total control over what we do, we want to become more of an album band as of old and not worry about having singles. It's an old thing that happened in the '70s, but doesn't happen so much now as most people still rely on hit singles to sell their albums. I suppose *U.F.Orb* charted at No. 1 through people being aware of the *Ultraworld* album, just as much as the 'Blue Room' single – which really was an album within itself anyway. Orb fans went out and bought it because they were used to what they'd been hearing.

"What's actually happened is that Wau! Mr Modo, the original Orb label, has actually reverted back into my hands as opposed to Youth and myself. When the new contracts are put together, Kris [Weston, aka Thrash] will then become a partner in Wau! with myself."

In a nutshell, the Sheffield-based Wau! Mr Modo Records own the copyright to The Orb's recordings, whilst *Big Life Records* were the exclusive licensees for the world. Wau! stands for What About Us!, Mr Modo being the assumed name of Alex's manager, Adam Morris. Meanwhile, *Weird & Unconventional Records*, the Wau! subsidiary to whom Steve Hillage's *System 7* are signed, is now the sole province of Youth.

Work is complete (bar mixing) on The Orb's third album, recorded at a friend's farm in Dorset where bass player Simon Philips was reputedly recorded in the middle of a field in the name of added ambience. When asked in what

way they see this album progressing from the previous two, Kris's reputation as a man of few words is confirmed: "Just exploring, really." With little difficulty, Alex expands on this. "It's more of a unique sound as opposed to something that maybe people can relate to. It's actually given birth to a sound of its own. Obviously, it's a progression from the second album, and if you listen to that one there's a hell of a progression from the first album. It's in the same sort of vein as the second album, but I think, as Kris says, we're taking the exploring side of it a lot further. Rather than just trying to sell the things that we've done on the second album, we're exploring and experimenting, which will be pleasing to people who buy our records

for that, as opposed to just getting the same old t w a d d l e again."

Session appearances by 'proper' musicians are the often-overlooked ingredient of Orb recordings, and one recent guest cuts a very familiar figure on the ambient scene.

"We've moved over to Robert Fripp, with whom we've done a rather long track. I can see this being a separate album myself, but we've got various ideas which the two of us have still got to talk about. They're positive ideas, so it's not as if we don't want to put it out, it's just a matter of whether we are going to release it as a long single or a normal album. I'd like to surprise people with it..."

It transpires that the track in question formed the spacey intro to recent Orb shows, albeit in a 25-minute edited form. The completed version is expected to be around an hour in length, substantially longer than 'Blue Room'.

"It's all about experimenting with things that have never been done before"

As appointed technical spokesperson, Kris is at first no more forthcoming about his tricks of the trade than about the new album. "Well, it's all outboard and overboard innit, mate!" for example, is his description of the role of the copious outboard equipment that shapes the Orb sound. However, he does let slip that he has had some custom equipment built...

"I've got one box so far. We call it a Tweeter Eater because it just destroys tweeters. It's actually a random and sweepable EQ device

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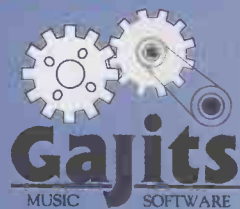
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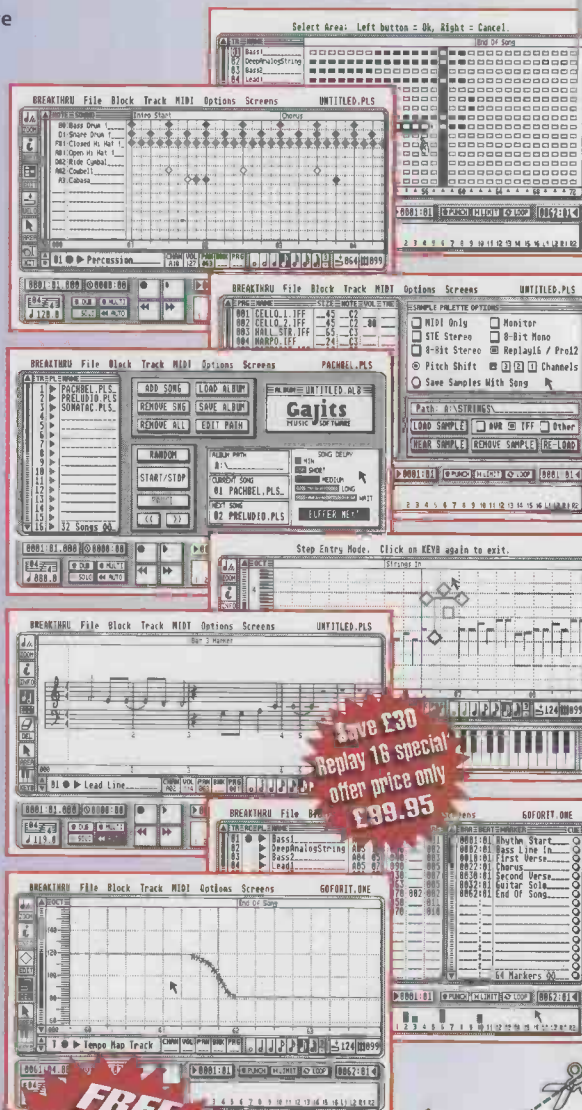
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with different filters and stuff, but it doesn't work properly yet. The geezer who built it is a bit of a nutter. He built me the box and then said he'd spent so much time thinking about it that he didn't want to do it anymore. Then he started ringing me up saying he'd done this other box when he hadn't even finished the first one!"

Is it possible, then, that Orb records could begin wholesale destruction of the great record-buying public's hi-fi speakers? "No," Alex assures. "The only thing we could do would be to give them a bass frequency to kill their goldfish..."

Kris confirms that the legal minefield surrounding sampling has curtailed the once rampant plundering of source material that helped launch 'ambient house'. "We don't do that so much anymore. It's more a case of getting samples and changing them round so you wouldn't know they were samples. We always create our own samples every time we do something. If we were going to do a drum track, for example, we wouldn't take any sounds into the studio. They'd all just be taken off synths, or whatever, and then I'd start mucking about with them on the sampler. I want Alex to get involved in it more and now he's starting to get to grips with the sampler."

Alex concurs. "After the amount of shit that we've had with sampling in terms of having to clear things, it's a godsend that Kris is here because he can easily disguise a sample with the S1100 now. I just like to feed him really weird noises to get off with. It's his way of having a girlfriend in the studio and he treats it like a big love affair! When I've seen people like Jimmy [Cauty] and Youth trying to get their heads around it and spending so much longer getting it together, it's obvious that Kris is a natural."

The Orb are self confessed non-musicians, although Alex claims to have once had a violin lesson. Nevertheless, they have amassed an impressive collection of vogueish analogue synthesisers, including a Minimoog, a Prophet 5, an Oberheim Matrix 12 and a Korg MS10 – whilst remaining somewhat scathing of their digital counterparts. At the time of writing, Kris is planning to buy an Oberheim 4-Voice, the company's first programmable polysynth dating from 1976.

"I spend all my money on synths, and have just bought a Digisound modular system which is amazing. Digital synths are shit. They've just got completely the wrong idea. Hopefully, when we get our own studio it'll be so much easier. We'll have all the time we need for experimenting. That's my ultimate goal and biggest aim in life at the moment."

It's something of a surprise to learn that an act like The Orb still don't own and run their own studio, but less of a surprise to discover that, in the current record company negotiations, correcting this particular oversight takes top priority.

"It's part of the deal with another record label," reveals Alex. "Without it, what's the point? We don't want to sound like we want to be pretentious pop stars and have loads of money, a Rolls Royce and champagne in the

Harbour lights

Transforming Trekroner island in Copenhagen's harbour into a giant showpiece for some all-night chill-out shenanigans featuring lasers, video walls and high-tech music may sound a bit like something a certain French synthesiser player might dream up, but mention his name to Dr Alex Paterson as he prepares to do exactly this and you get pretty short shrift. "One of his representatives met our agent in the pub one night," he recounts, "and said that Jean-Michel really wanted to do something with The Orb. And we said f**k off."

Now that really is unfair. Surely this one night festival of ambience and dub on an island fortress has at least a few parallels with Destination Docklands? "Look at it this way," explains Alex. "Do you want us to play the Brixton Academy for the 7th

time? The whole idea of doing one-offs is very appealing – it gives you a unique feeling. Everyone who's ever seen The Orb has probably only seen them at the Academy."

So Trekroner it is, and nobody mention Mont St. Michel. The Orb play two sets, one at sunset and another at sunrise, thus supplanting all the rigging ever mustered by man with a neat spot of cosmic multimedia. The castle itself has been transformed into a giant stage, graced by Orbular guests such as System 7, Dread Zone, Darren Emerson and DJ Lewis, while the outer reaches of the fortress conceal caverns full of alternative sound systems and candlelit chill-out rooms.

Alex's partner Thrash used to work on The Shamen's groundbreaking Synergy shows, and with The Orb's gigs now launching such a comparable audio-visual assault surely they create much of the music with a multimedia display in mind? "No," says Thrash. Not at all? "No." So you just get stoned and do it? "Well, that's about it, yeah."

Ah, well. At least the gig – or rather. party – lives up to expectations. As the opening bars of 'Towers Of Dub' emanate from the middle of Copenhagen's harbour and drift across towards the residents of the city, the sun, right on cue, goes down. Some lighting designer, that God.

fridge all the time. We just want our own studio. With Kris saying his ultimate aim is having a studio, I can see myself having a little label, doing a bit of producing and hopefully getting it right."

They've certainly got this whole ambient thing pretty right so far. Above all, it's an intuitive production process that Alex can explain only vaguely.

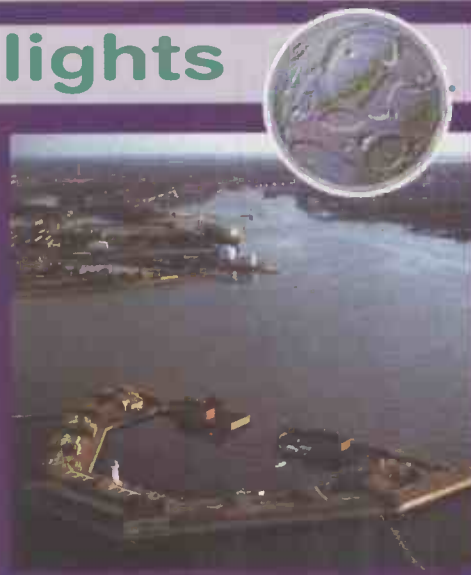
"Everything just falls into place. There's a start and an ending, but what we like to do with our records is make a start happen at the ending. There's not a pause until the record or CD finishes. That's the one thing that we've done throughout the albums that we've recorded. There is a start and there is an end, but within those boundaries we are free to do whatever we want. We kind of know when certain tracks are going to be used, and when to drop out things to fit in with other things along the way. It's like a verse/chorus-type scenario, but a different process. It's something that's

then put onto DAT and edited."

Kris lets a bit more slip: "There's less of that on the next album. I prefer to just do a mix straight off in one pass without any edits. I think edits can jumble things up. It's hard to do though, because you've got to get it right all the way through and if you f**k up you've got to do it all again!"

Temporarily unable to record under their own name, The Orb's attraction to the lucrative remixing market is hardly surprising. Credits in addition to Yellow Magic Orchestra include Primal Scream; Front 242; The Grid; Hawkwind and Mike Oldfield, whose 'Sentinel' single was remixed virtually beyond recognition.

"Sometimes people are shocked by our remixes," says Alex, "but usually in a nice way. The Mike Oldfield track was especially amusing. Kris wanted to take it all out, including the repetitive sequence. I was saying we've got to leave just a little bit of *Tubular Bells* in there for people to recognise, but he didn't care! I



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MIDI mute automation is provided on inputs, monitors, stereo returns, groups and auxiliary masters. The MIDI function is controlled on a central keyboard with adjacent LED display. Mutes may be written individually in real time or combined together as patches. A standard sequencer interfaced to the console will automate both methods of muting, providing dynamic recordings with the possibility of effects gating. In addition, other MIDI equipment may be controlled from the console using the external mode. A unique channel bus switch connects the corresponding group to the direct output of the channel enabling routing of alternative signals to alternative tape tracks without the necessity of repatching.

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► think Oldfield was quite happy with it because it gave him credibility, but we couldn't believe that they even copied our flippant artwork for its packaging as 'Oldfield Verses The Orb'.

"We've just been experimenting with live drums, and Kris wanted to put it onto Orb stuff, but rather than use it straight away we've tried it out on a remix and it's worked perfectly. We had a bloke from Yellow Magic Orchestra down last night, and I don't think he thought that we'd be using live drums on anything, but he went away quite happy. It's all about experimenting with things that have never been done before.

"Some of the outboard effects that we put over particular instruments are pretty 'orbified', like the Dytronic Cyclosonic Panner. When we first started using it we were getting four of them into the studio to do stuff like 'Backside Of The Moon'. Strangely enough, 'Backside Of The Moon' and the other track that we did on the first album with Steve Hillage are both the same track. One's with drums and the other's without, but nobody's ever noticed that they're from the same mixing session. That shows you what you can do when you put your head round a remix.

"To be honest, the main reason for remixing at the moment is that we need the money to support what we do, but if there's a good band that we'd really like to do and there's not a lot of money involved, then we'll still do it. If you're lucky they'll give you an 'additional production' credit. It's a standard working fee, but we just go one stage further than a lot of other people



when working on a remix."

The Orb's musical style naturally interacts with visual accompaniment - as can be witnessed at their concerts and on the *Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld* video. It would be ideally suited to television and film soundtracks, so have Messrs Paterson and Weston ever considered getting in on the act?

"We wish!" says Alex. "It's just a case of something coming up. Nobody's making any films in England at the moment, so it's a bit difficult. There's only something like five or six films being made a year in this country. I suppose we could always go to France. The French film industry's one of the most thriving industries in the world, along with the Indian industry. It depends on who's going to pay the bills at the end of the day..."

Although The Orb's music is very much a studio-oriented creation, it's also been successful crossing over to the live arena - as the Copenhagen outdoor spectacular demonstrates. "Playing concerts is the most important thing for us," confirms Alex. The Alesis ADAT system has given the band onstage freedom of access to all the component parts of the music, and like Orbital they conduct an exercise in live sound manipulation and mixing

according to their mood on a particular night. This complements Alex's DJing experience perfectly, and he still uses a Vestax CD-33 rackmountable double CD controller live, offering full mixing control over two CDs, together with pitchshift, pitchbend and forward and reverse scanning at 16 times normal playing speed.

Meanwhile, Kris' main responsibilities onstage include smoking, mixing and stepping on Alex's headphone leads. "The music's mainly from three ADATs on stage, with a couple of things running from the computer; plus live percussion; bass and samplers," he explains. "It gets quite confusing sometimes. The only time Alex plays any of our own records is when we're changing over the ADATs."

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techniques has not always been matched in the administration. It's those company wrangles, again...

"We've taken the show over to the United States once in 1991," says Alex, "but again let's just say that the dispute with Big Life has prevented us from doing a lot of things. We were supposed to be going over again in March this year, but they refused to give us tour support, as they did back here in October. They told me what was the point in going out on an 18-date poxy tour, but the fact is the UK tour was a sell-out. Then they turned round and said we should have sold more albums last year! I've got so stressed out about it because when speaking to lawyers and managers it's like we're not human. We're just figures in a bank account.

"We haven't even toured Europe yet, and that's just a great injustice, really. Not so much for us, but for the audience. We've had Germans coming over here to see us in London. It's a joke."

It's not all doom and gloom on the live front, however, as the historic Copenhagen show once again illustrates, as does the prospect of a full UK tour during November. It's a tribute to The Orb's achievements so far that advance ticket sales for this tour are as healthy as ever, even though no new product has appeared since the last one. And there's no doubting Alex's optimism for the ambient scene as a whole.

"As long as it doesn't start to become really

stylised and people have to conform to wearing certain clothes or something, then I can see it lasting for as long as people actually bother to go out and buy it and see it. At the end of the day that's the measure of whether it's working or not. You can have a great trade name, a great little logo and T-shirt, but if the music's shit what's the point? It might work for a few years, but then you get the likes of Bros with a 2-year life span. It becomes an image projected by the major record labels to get artists into the charts."

So what exactly does the future hold for The Orb?

"Certainly not to be advertised on bus stop shelters. We're just going to carry on as we are. As you saw with us live, there's four of us on stage, with Nick Burton on drums and Simon Philips on bass, and that's the live band. We've also got an Orb remix team. They'll all become part of it and we'll probably do an album together and live happily ever after!

"Really, we're just giving people a holiday from having to listen to shit music. It's escapist music. There's no other way to describe it. If people can't do anything other than sit in their front rooms listening to music, then at least escape with us." ●

Next month:
The Orb's lighting designer
Chris Craig talks to MT

Further information

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On record

Note that all The Orb's singles and their remix permutations are now deleted. However, German CD-single imports (on Logic Records) of the full 39.58-minute edit of 'Blue Room' and 'Assassin' are still available. *Aubrey Mixes: The Ultraworld Excursions* is a remix album of *The Orb's Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld* and was released and deleted on the same day.

Singles/EPs

Kiss (EP) – Waul Mr Modo, May 1989
'A Huge Ever Growing Pulsating Brain That Rules From The Centre Of The Ultraworld' – Waul Mr Modo, October 1989. Reached No.76
'Little Fluffy Clouds' – Big Life, November 1990
'Perpetual Dawn' – Big Life, June 1991. Reached No.61
'Blue Room' – Big Life, June 1992. Reached No.8
'Assassin' – Big Life, October 1992. Reached No.12

Albums

The Orb's Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld – Big Life, April 1991. Reached No.29
The Orb Peel Sessions – Strange Fruit, September 1991
Aubrey Mixes: The Ultraworld Excursions – Big Life, December 1991
U.F.Orb – Big Life, July 1992. Reached No.1

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Everyone using computers loses data some time or other. Ben Duncan examines ways of lessening risk and limiting damage.

Bad experiences with computers vary. But if you've used a computer for any length of time, my guess is that you'll have had at least one serious crash that has threatened a significant amount of work. Since 1986, I've used no fewer than four different computers in my work as a professional audio consultant and hardware designer. One out of the four hard disks has 'gone down', I've had one corruption of the boot sector, two failures each of video drivers and power supplies, and varying degrees of unexplained behaviour which were only cured by rebooting.

Ultimately, most of these events are caused by one of three things: power fluctuations, decaying solder joints, and components wearing out. The question is: what can be done to minimise the effects of these problems? And, given that they can't be eliminated completely, what's the best way of safeguarding your precious studio data from permanent corruption?

Computer hard disks are holding an increasing quantity of vital information – whether it be sample data or complete song

files. If lost, the former can, with time and effort, possibly be reconstructed. The latter, however, are very likely to be irreplaceable. In either case, loss is painful and costly, and if you're careless about how you use computers, it will sooner or later happen to you.

Not so very long ago, a nearby studio called me to say their hard disk had failed. Asked if they backed up their data, they said they'd last done this about six months ago, and sounded (judging by their tone of voice) satisfied with this: A local computer retailer had managed to rescue most of the data, but had informed the studio that they would have to buy a new machine (at an inflated price), claiming that the small, elderly 10Mb hard disk was irreparable. I pointed the studio in the direction of a more reliable dealer who could fit a new disk at a fraction of the price, but the delicate business of reclaiming their data from the other company remains.

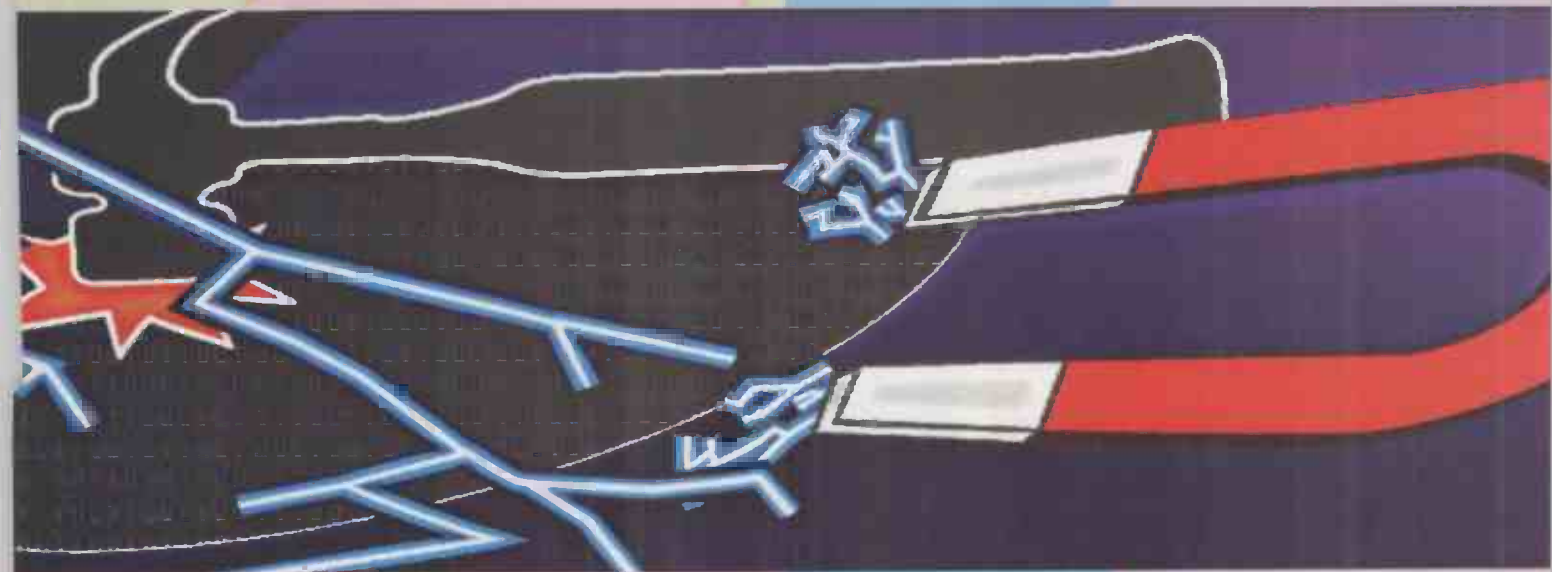
The moral? Find someone you trust to fix your computer before you have a major failure. If you can't, don't be panicked into heading for the nearest retail shop. Ask around and test the water. When you do decide to take a hard drive

in for repair or servicing remember: though most modern units are 'self-parking' some aren't and it's essential to park the disk before the machine is moved. An unparked hard disk is easily damaged by shock and mild g-forces.

As hard disks and the mains power that fuels them can fail at any time, regular saving of work as you create it, followed by backing up is absolutely vital. Work created in real time is usually only written to disk when you save it or close the file down; if the power fails at this point you will lose everything up to the last time you saved. So make sure it becomes second nature to save each time you pause to think or take a break, ideally at intervals of, say, 5-25 minutes, depending on how quickly new, volatile data is building up.

Thus far, you are protected against the relatively high chance of power failure, causing wipe-out (however momentary), but not against the longer-range disaster of hard disk failure.

Anyone who really values their work should



copy any new or altered data onto a floppy disk (or tape, or whatever) at the end of every session. As I work on only a handful of files at a time, I do this manually, using a utility to sort my files by date, before tagging and copying just the new ones.

If you're handling many files, software can be employed to automatically identify, then back up files changed since a particular date. Initially, daily backup (or even many times daily if the size of the file justifies it) is tedious, but it soon becomes instinctive and is always worth it.

The danger with both systems is that files can quite easily be missed. For example, a file's date could be wrong because the computer's internal clock relied on batteries which have failed, and you forgot to correct the date attribute of files used at that time. I once had a failure in the root sector of my hard disk. The key operating system files were restored, but the menu system I'd written was lost. This doesn't change often, so the last backup was over a year old. But it was a bad backup (doubtless made while some changes were being tried) and contained a number of bugs. Fixing it took time.

Much later, I found a newer, better backup that had been made, but it had been written to a disk that wasn't an obvious repository for it – funny how you sometimes save data in places it shouldn't be!

Clearly, organising your floppy disks needs careful thought and it's worth spending a little time devising your own system according to the

programs you regularly use and the type of data stored. It's also worth using different label colours for data originating from different programs; where files from two or more programs *have* to be stored on one disk make sure you keep them in separate 'folders' by creating a sub-directory structure on the floppy.

With the advent of low-cost tape streamers, some of them built into the hard disk, it's easy to perform a watertight backup by regularly copying an entire hard disk onto a tape. This way you stand a fair chance of recovering all those configuration files, macros and other oddments in their latest format. But it does take time, so you may want to adopt one of the systems recommended by tape streamer manufacturers, where faster, partial backups are alternated with complete backups – typically cycling three tapes (see Figure 1).

Depending on where you're located, the AC mains supply is often subject to large, rapid voltage dips below 240v – not to mention momentary 'spikes' many times higher than 240v. These are much more disturbing to computers and their peripherals than they are to most mains-powered equipment.

One avoidable cause of supply sag is voltage drop in cables which are incorrectly rated. Assuming, however, that your own cables are up to spec, the problem is most likely down to the mains supply outside. In the UK, an Act Of Parliament requires the supply to be not less than 225.6v rms (6% below 240v), and the

Electricity Board will uprate their supply at no charge if their measurements show it to be dipping below this.

The supply's peak-to-mean ratio drops markedly at times of peak demand (half-time in the Cup Final when the entire country is putting the kettle on, for example), and this can cause computer power starvation, even though the rms (average) value is 240v or at least within the allowable range of 225.6 to 254.5v.

Protection against the supply dipping low is expensive and is to be considered a luxury rather than a necessity. But if you regularly experience supply problems you might think about using a line conditioner which puts out an agile compensating voltage to keep a steady 240v or a UPS – a back-up mains supply that kicks in and takes over for up to 20 or 30 minutes, when the supply first sinks, and otherwise charges its batteries off the mains. This would give you enough time to save data and safely power down until the supply is restored.

Even if your supply is generally clean, electrical storms and occasional switching on the power grid can introduce spikes. In theory, computers should be unplugged or at least switched off whenever there's a thunderstorm within 20 miles. In practice, you may be in the middle of a session and tempted to chance it. At best, spikes caused by lightning will cause a data error or lock up the screen, making it necessary to reboot. At worst, they'll zap the power supply completely.

Fortunately, the worst of any spikes and RF noise on the line are easily protected against. A simple solution is an RF filtered mains block such as those manufactured by MK and available at most of the large DIY stores. The cost is around £30, but it's rated at 13A and has four sockets, so it should support your entire set up. Remember though that other equipment you use might be the cause of mains quirks when switched on and off, so it may be better to restrict the use of the filtered sockets to the computer and its peripherals alone. ●

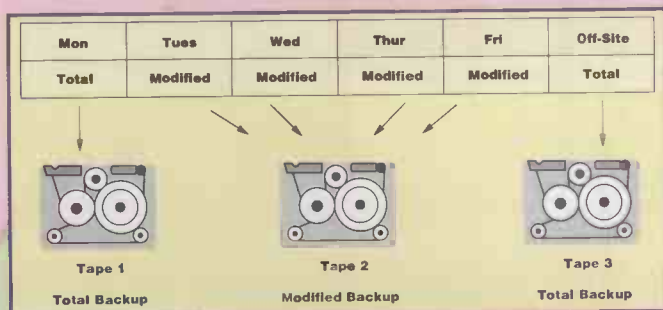


Figure 1: A proper tape-rotation backup system, commonly deployed in offices and industry, could do wonders for your sanity if you create a lot of fresh data every week



● 56 **Digidesign Session 8 multitrack hard disk recorder**

It's getting closer... the home 8-track, gone digital. Ian Waugh

● 62 **Optikinetics Solar 250 sound-activated projector**

A bass down-beat triggers wheel-rotated effects, but this sound-to-light projector system is a lot more flexible than in the old green-for bass, red-for-treble disco days. Ian Masterson

● 64 **E-mu Morpheus synth module**

An exclusive preview of a genuinely new type of synthesis? Eh, just like the old days... Simon Trask

● 67 **Yamaha Hello! Music! desktop music system**

It's a complete computer system with speakers, it gives you GM tones, Cubase Lite sequencing and much more besides, and it's very friendly. Ian Waugh

● 70 **Korg i3 interactive music workstation**

The workstation bites the bullet and goes all the way with sophisticated auto-accompaniment to add to the i3's already copious features based on the X3. Simon Trask

● 72 **Labyrinth video training manuals**

Grab a pizza, shove in a video and learn about Cubase, Notator or Breakthru with these new manuals for the TV age. Ian Waugh

● 74 **NJD MP820 MIDI-to-mains lighting interface**

Key velocity equals brightness – but we're talking light, not sound, with this 8-channels-per-note interface from NJD. Ian Masterson

● 76 **Shortcuts**

Time+Space Zero-G series Techno trance sample CD

Station Record MIDI Busker Electric Guitar MIDI files

IDG Books: The Macworld Music & Sound Bible by Christopher Yavelow

Meinl Marathon equipment rack bag

Revox MK1NF nearfield monitors

Contributors:

- Ian Masterson
- Ian Waugh
- Simon Trask
- Mark Harrison
- John Wright

Session 8

Direct-to-disk PC recording system

With eight tracks of digital recording this new d-t-d system for the PC offers unparalleled flexibility and performance. And your hard disk will hate it.

Review by Ian Waugh

OK, you're convinced, direct-to-disk recording is the way to go. As we've been saying in *MT* for the past twelve months or more, the flexibility it offers makes it the logical choice for every computer/MIDI musician. And the quality is unsurpassed. The only obstacle, as ever, is money. But in real terms, the cost of d-t-d has fallen dramatically in recent months. In fact, a 4-track d-t-d system now costs much less in real terms than a 4-track reel-to-reel recorder did ten years ago. For small studios and dedicated home users it is now an affordable option.

But enough of the gee, wow! stuff. If you want the lowdown on d-t-d, check out the feature in our August issue. Let's look now at one of the latest systems to emerge from one of the founding fathers of d-t-d, Digidesign...

Session 8, as the name implies, is an 8-track direct-to-disk recording system. The system supplied for review is for the PC but a Mac version should be available by the time you read this. Two cards are supplied – a Session 8 DSP/SCSI card and an Audio Interface I/O card. The former does all the digital processing and connects to an external hard disk via SCSI, while the latter handles the audio signals. The two are connected to each other via an extremely short ribbon cable and this means that the 16-bit card must be inserted in the slot below the other card.

The audio side of things is handled by the Session 8 Audio Interface – a 3U high rackmount unit. It has more Ins and Outs than a Swiss cheese and can be used in two modes – Internal Mix mode and External Mix mode.

In External Mix mode you simply hook the unit into an existing recording setup as you would an 8-track tape machine – in fact, it works very like a conventional multitrack recorder – and perform the mixdown, externally, on your own mixer. If this is your normal *modus operandi* you'll probably want to opt for the alternative Session 8XL unit (see Optional extras).

However, Internal Mix is by far the most flexible and powerful mode and not to use it is to vastly under use the facilities offered by Session 8. You simply connect all your outboard gear to the Audio Interface and patch it together through the software. This arrangement means that the signals remain in the digital domain and can stay there until the final mixdown to DAT or whatever.

Optional extras

The optional R1 Remote Controller is a hardware alternative to controlling the system with a mouse. It has faders, transport controls, autolocates and assignable functions keys.

The Session 8XL Audio Interface is a 1U high rackmount unit which dispenses with many of the audio connections and offers eight professional quality ins and outs. It is designed to be connected into your recording setup just as you would a multitrack tape recorder. This still lets you use the software's digital mixing features, although, obviously, it doesn't give you access to the routing facilities.

Digidesign claim most users are opting for the standard Audio Interface but the XL version is finding favour in broadcasting.

If you use the system's digital outs to create the master, the original signal is converted back to analogue only once – when the listener plays it.

The software has three main pages – Routing/Setup, Editor and Mixer. There are transport controls, ten locators and a time indicator which you can set to a variety of displays – time, sample numbers, SMPTE or bars and beats.

Your setup is connected via software in the Routing page. A grid shows the eight recording tracks along the bottom plus the stereo master. Down the left are the four Mic/Line Ins, the left and right submixes and the six FX Returns. To record the input from Line two onto track four, for example, you simply click on the square where the row and column meet. Click on it again and the connection disappears.

There are four Insert icons below the inputs. Dragging one to the box on the right of the inputs 'plugs it in'. Both the inputs and the Insert points may be named in order that you see at a glance what equipment is connected to what. The sampling rate can also be selected here – 44.1kHz or 48kHz – and the input switched between digital (S/PDIF) and analogue for channels one and two.

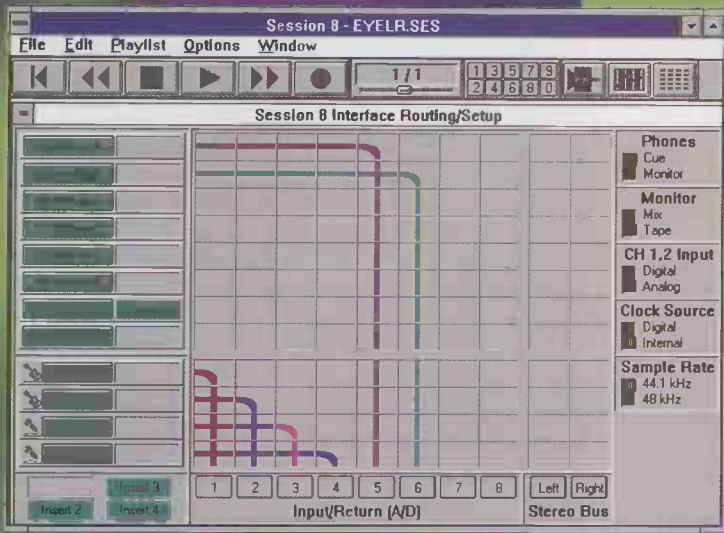
The Mixer window contains sliders for the main mix (the tracks on disk), the stereo master, the input/return channels and the cue mix. (In External Mix mode you only get the main mix sliders.) As well as volume and pan controls, each main mix channel has a solo and mute button, four aux sends plus an area at the top of each channel into which you can drag up to four EQ buttons. The input/return channels have volume, pan, four aux sends and the EQ box.

The EQ controls are excellent. There are six of them and they can be configured as narrow/wide band parametric or high/low shelving types. Frequency and cut & boost settings are fully adjustable – a graph gives you a visible indication of the effect the settings have on the frequencies – and you can stack up to four EQs on one channel, although at the 48kHz rate you can only use two EQs.

To record, you make the required connections in the Routing page, select the tracks you want to record on – they turn red – and click on Record. The disk whirs for a second while it sets itself up, and then you click on Play to start the recording proper. You must save each recording with the Save Takes option as each new recording erases the old take. Once on disk, the recording may be edited in ways undreamed of with analogue tape, and this is where the fun really begins.

In the Edit page, after a recording you'll see a box in the track area. To view the recording as a waveform, you have to create an overview of the track. This is optional as it takes a short while to calculate. You can select different colours for the waveforms to help with their identification.

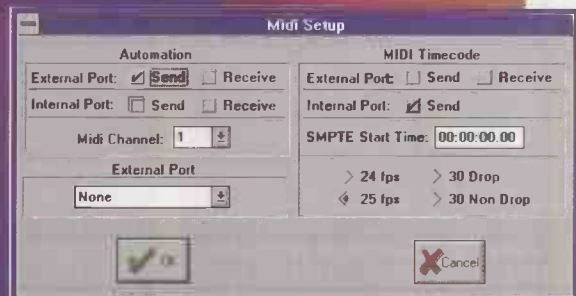
Like all good d-t-d systems, Session 8 benefits from non-destructive editing; any edits you make are not performed on the data itself. Instead, the program creates a list of the changes so it can play back sections of the data in different orders. This is what makes d-t-d recording so powerful. You can paste over a bum note in a sax solo (surrounding sounds and ambience permitting). You can create a mega mix arrangement from a 3-minute song. You can record the vocal for a chorus once and paste it several times throughout the song.



◀ Session 8's Routing/Setup page where you 'virtually' connect the equipment you have plugged into the Audio Interface.

▼ The MIDI Setup menu lets you configure Session 8 to work with a MIDI sequencer running concurrently inside Windows.

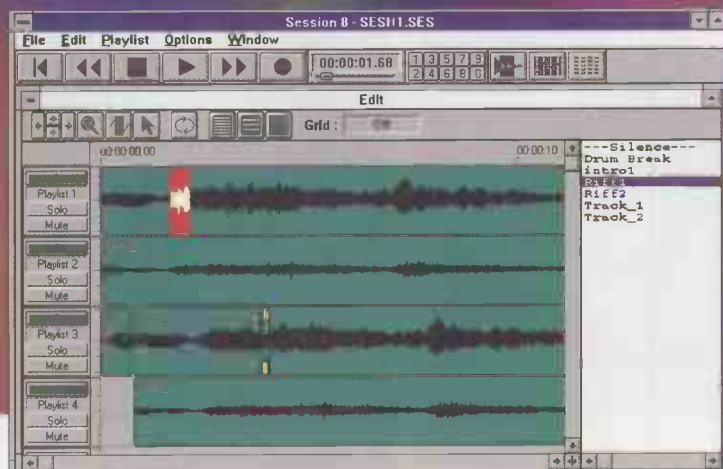
▼ The Session 8 Mixer page where you can balance and mix all the sounds in the system.



◀ There are six EQs and four can be stacked on one channel. When you vary the parameters you can see how the frequencies will be affected.

▲ You can use the Fade In and Fade Out functions to create cross-fades to help smooth the joins where two Regions meet.

► In the Edit page, the Audio Regions list is on the left. You can drag Regions from the list into any of the tracks.



- In other words you have almost as much control over analogue sounds as a MIDI sequencer gives you over MIDI data.

Select an area of a track (the program calls this a Region) by clicking and dragging, name it, and it is logged into the Audio Regions list along with others you have defined. You can drag a Region to another track to create a playlist, and, if you're working in beats and bars, switch on a grid which will make Regions snap into place when you move them.

Editing is quite flexible. Regions can overlap – in which case the uppermost Region will play – and there are several kinds of crossfade to help join Regions. Although you can only playback on eight tracks at once, when a track has been recorded it's possible to use that data in any number of tracks by inserting it – or a Region of it – into a playlist.

Tracks may also be bounced, and, unlike an analogue recorder, this doesn't require the use of a free track as each one can simply be un-cued (that is, not assigned any soundfiles) during the bounce. Soundfiles on the hard disk are unaffected, and, as the bouncing takes place in the digital domain, you don't get the degradation in quality apparent with analogue tape.

Interestingly, Session 8 stores its files in .WAV format. Multimedia presentations anyone?

One of the most powerful things you can do with Session 8 is to sync it to a MIDI sequencer running concurrently within Windows. To this end, it uses a clever Windows driver which it refers to as its Internal Port. This appears in the sequencer's MIDI Device list as 'Session 8'. The program sync'd quite happily with a budget-priced program (Procyon, about £50 – soon to be available from Sound Technology) using MIDI Timecode as well as programs such as Cakewalk.

You can also automate the mixdown process via MIDI – the fader movements can be recorded and stored in the sequencer.

The manual is exemplary; very well written and replete with pics. In spite of

Demands of the system

To run Session 8, you need a 25MHz 386SX PC – or better – running Windows with two free slots (one full-size 16-bit), at least 4Mb of RAM, a VGA monitor and an external hard disk with an access time of 19 milliseconds or less.

The choice of hard drive is very important. It must conform to the required specs and Digidesign will supply you with a list of those drives known to work. It must also be large enough to record your material; 8-track recording eats up a hard disk at the rate of 40Mb per minute!

Audio interface

The Audio Interface is replete with sockets: a total of 8 Outs and 20 Ins – although some of the Ins can be used for two purposes, which could be slightly confusing when you're setting up. The Ins on the back are labelled Inputs 3-8/Effects and Returns 1-6. On the front there are four XLR Mic inputs and four Line inputs (both with trim controls) though only one or the other can be active at the same time.

The Interface has a 5-input stereo sub mixer which you might use for connecting MIDI equipment or, alternatively, for effects returns.

There are eight pairs of green and red input LEDs – the green light at -30dB and the red light if the input overloads.

Output level can be adjusted from the software as can the individual levels for the four effects sends on each track. Compressors, equalisers and the like may be connected to four insert points and again, patched into a track from the software.

A stereo out provides connection for your control room monitors and there are tape in and out sockets for an analogue tape deck, plus two sets of headphone sockets with independent level controls. Finally, there's an S/PDIF digital interface for connection to digital devices such as a DAT recorder.

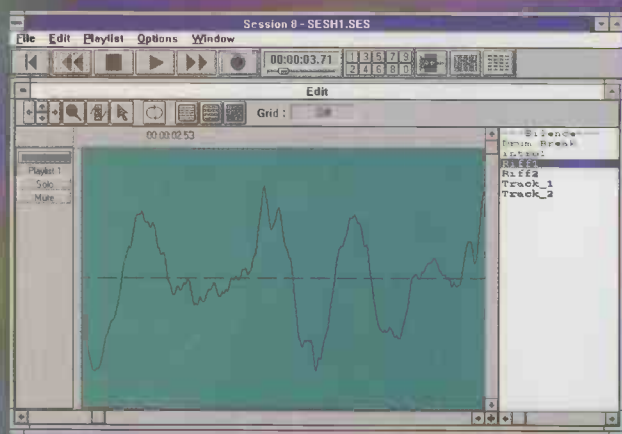
its 336 pages it's also an easy read, full of hints and tips and written in a relaxed, friendly style. It's basically one large tutorial with a reference section in the back. Well done, Digidesign. I had no problems installing, setting up and using the gear – which is unusual on a PC!

As regards the system itself, there are a few minor areas which could be improved to make operation and editing just a touch easier. And there are a couple of extra facilities that I would like to have seen included such as a tempo control and a metronome (although you can, of course, sync to a sequencer to get this). The program is short of a few more advanced edit functions such as pitch change, timestretch, a de-clicker, compression, a varispeed control and digital FX – though it shouldn't be too difficult to include these in software updates.

If you're considering a d-t-d system for a studio, it's worth pointing out that Session 8 is inherently limited to eight tracks, whereas some 4-track systems can be expanded beyond that. And at £3600 no one can pretend it isn't a lot of spondulicks. But if you tot up the cost of upgrading other 4-track d-t-d systems to eight tracks you'll find Session 8 can work out around £1000 cheaper. Certainly, the integration of digital recording with outboard gear gives it a definite edge and makes it rather more than just a d-t-d system.

I can only say it worked brilliantly and other than the observations made earlier, I could find little to complain about. It was just a pity that Digidesign wanted the thing back long before I wanted to return it... ●

▼ You can home in on the smallest section of a sample although you can't directly edit it.



THE LAST WORD

Ease of use	Like a hot knife through butter
Originality	In some aspects very original
Value for money	Good, but expensive nonetheless
Star quality	Shine on...
Price	Session 8 £3600; Session 8XL £5405; R1 Remote £893 (All prices include VAT)
More from	Digidesign UK • 24 Arnold Road • Woking • Surrey • GU21 5JU • Tel: 0483 740009 • Fax: 0483 740010

Imagine a hard disk recorder that's as easy to use as a tape machine! The new Akai DR4 brings high quality digital multi-track to an affordable level, in a package that's powerful, compact and convenient. The stylish 3U case houses all the features you'll need to make truly professional recordings.

The DR4 is a four track tapeless recorder that allows you the choice of size of hard disk as the recording medium. Its simple, user friendly operation has the feel of an analogue recorder and the large jog/shuttle wheel makes editing fast and easy. The 20-segment meters clearly indicate levels and there is a large time display for accurate positioning of the recording.

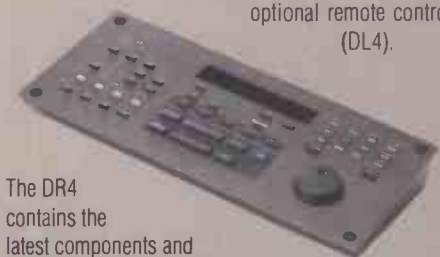
The greatest difference between conventional tape recording and recording on a tapeless system is the way you can access any part of the track you want to listen to, or work on. On a tape system, the only way to get to that vital spot is to wade all the way through



the tape until you find it. By contrast, the Akai DR4 will instantly jump to any point in the recording to pick up the phrase you want.

The DR4 offers all the advantages of tapeless digital recording, COPY sections of a track to wherever you like. MOVE a section to a desired place. INSERT material into the middle of a track, ERASE, or DELETE - all with pinpoint accuracy and your recordings can remain in the digital domain, so there's no degradation in sound quality.

It's expansion possibilities allow you to increase the number of tracks by linking up to four units. These will run in perfect synchronisation and can be operated from the master unit, or optional remote control (DL4).



The DR4 contains the latest components and Akai's own advanced digital technology: a high density 18-bit, 64 times oversampling A/D converter, and an advanced single-bit 18-bit dual D/A converter to ensure high-quality digital audio. It comes complete with a two channel digital input (AES/EBU types I & II) which is optionally expandable to four channels, plus a SCSI connector for external drives. Other options available: MIDI board for external sync with a MIDI sequencer and SMPTE board for time codes without the need for an extra sync box.

All this in one convenient package that you can pick up and walk away with! Hard to resist isn't it?

Want to find out more? Contact us today for a brochure and the name of your nearest dealer.

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CC's WORLD OF MUSIC

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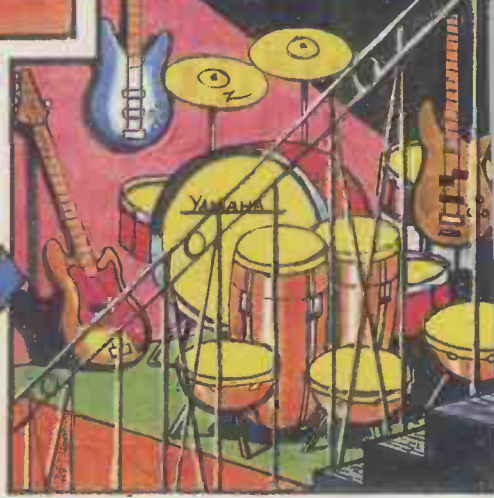
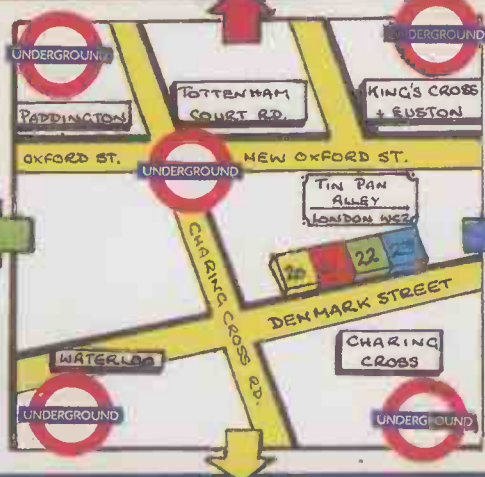
ONCE UPON A TIME, OVER 20 YEARS AGO, A YOUNG CHAP, KNOWN TO HIS FRIENDS AS C.C., OPENED A MUSIC SHOP AT NO. 22 DENMARK ST., LONDON'S "TIN PAN ALLEY" NAMING IT RHODES MUSIC, AFTER SIR CECIL RHODES, THE FAMOUS BRITISH EXPLORER.

HE CRAMMED IT WITH EVERY CONCEIVABLE GUITAR, AMP AND ACCESSORY, AND IT SOON BECAME A GREAT SUCCESS.

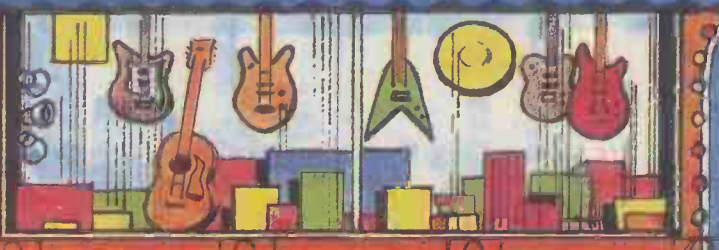
INDEED, IT REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS GUITAR SHOPS IN THE WORLD TODAY. BUT THE STORY DOESN'T END THERE

... AS TECHNOLOGY PROGRESSED, A HUGE DEMAND WAS CREATED FOR HI-TEK. CC BOUGHT THE HUGE SHOP NEXT DOOR AT NO. 21. HE FILLED EVERY AVAILABLE CORNER OF THE VAST SHOP WITH RECORDING, KEYBOARD, SAMPLING, SOFTWARE AND PROCESSOR EQUIPMENT. THE PLACE WAS BEAUTIFUL, SO HE NAMED IT SUTEKINA MUSIC, SUTEKINA MEANING "BEAUTIFUL" IN JAPANESE. IT BECAME AN INSTANT SUCCESS, NOT LEAST OF ALL BECAUSE OF ITS CONVENIENT POSITION ONLY 3 MINS FROM TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD TUBE AND APPROXIMATELY 15 MINS FROM EUSTON, KINGS CROSS AND WATERLOO. (SEE MAP BELOW). THEN... ONE DAY...

THE GREAT BASS AND DRUM CELLAR



23 Tin Pan Alley



THE SHOP NEXT DOOR TO RHODES BECAME AVAILABLE AT NO. 23. CC BOUGHT IT AND OPENED A VAST DRUM DEPT., EQUIPPED IT WITH A MASSIVE RANGE OF DRUMS AND PERCUSSION AND CREATED THE LARGEST ELECTRONIC DRUM CENTRE IN EUROPE.

ALONGSIDE, HE SET UP ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST SPECIALIST BASS GUITAR + AMP DEPTS, WITH A SPECIALIST P.A. AND MIC CENTRE.

SMALL WONDER, HE CALLED IT "THE GREAT BASS AND DRUM CELLAR." MEANWHILE,.....

... ON THE GROUND FLOOR, C.C. SCoured THE COUNTRY FOR JOS STOCK, OR SLIGHTLY MARKED GOODS AT VERY LOW PRICES, FOR THOSE MUSICIANS WHO WANTED QUANTITY BUT COULD NOT AFFORD NEW. THIS PROVED SO SUCCESSFUL, SATURDAYS WOULD SEE QUEUES OF BARGAIN HUNTERS. AT THE BACK, HE OPENED LONDON'S LARGEST ACOUSTIC GUITAR DEPT. WITH A "DINES" DESIGNED SHOWROOM. PROUD OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT C.C. CALLED IT "TIN PAN ALLEY" AFTER THE FAMOUS STREET. THE SHOPS WERE NOW TRULY INTERNATIONAL!

MUSICIANS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD OFTEN MAKE STRAIGHT TO THE STORES. THE STORY WAS NOT YET COMPLETE.....

HE BOUGHT THE SHOP AT NO.20, LEFT OF SUTEKINA, CALLED ARGENTS AND FILLED ALL 3 FLOORS WITH SWEET MUSIC OF EVERY KIND; POP, ROCK + CLASSICAL TUITIONAL VIDEOS; BRASS + WOODWIND, VIOLINS, CELLOS + RECORDERS AND A HUGE ACCESSORY COUNTER FOR REEDS, STRINGS, BOWS, METRONOMES ETC, AND, WITH SUTEKINA, FORMED THE LARGEST DIGITAL PIANO DEPT + MUSIC SOFTWARE SHOWROOM IN LONDON TOWN.



C.C. WAS NOW BECOMING OLD AND GREY. HE NEEDED HELP. SO....

HE EMPLOYED 9 EXPERIENCED MANAGERS TO HEAD THE NOW 9 SPECIALIST DEPTS. HE TRAINED THEM WITH GOOD MANNERS, EXPERT PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE, HELPFUL SERVICE, AND MADE THEM PROMISE TO GIVE THE BEST DEALS!! THEN, HE OPENED A SUPERB MAIL ORDER SERVICE, BUT, IN HIS OLD FASHIONED WAY, RECOMMENDS THAT YOU CALL INTO HIS SHOPS, IF YOU CAN, TO "TRY BEFORE YOU BUY!"

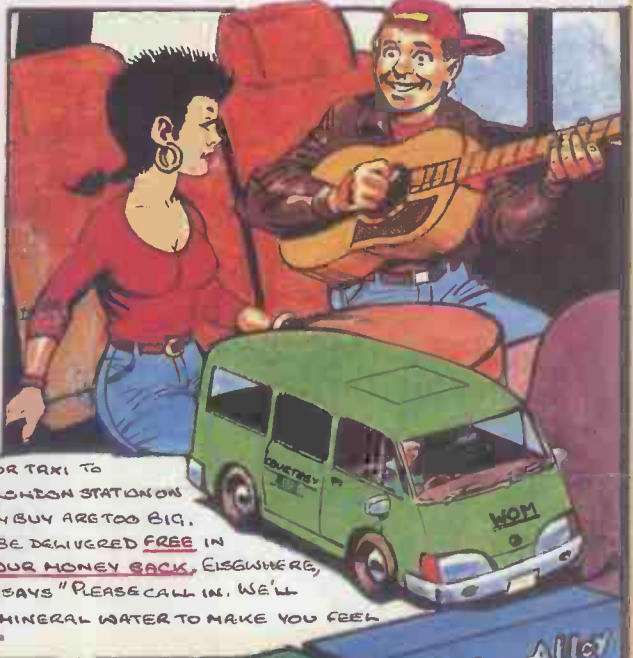
HIS MAIN REASON FOR THIS IS SIMPLE.....

MOST MAIL ORDER CO'S DESPATCH SEALED BOXES FROM THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN WHICH WILL NOT HAVE BEEN CHECKED, THIS MAY MEAN IT ARRIVES FAULTY. YOUR TROUBLES BEGIN. SENDING IT BACK AT YOUR COST! LOSS OF TIME! ARGUMENTS! AGGRAVATION! ARGGH!.....

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Optikinetics

Solar 250

sound animated projector

New lamps for old? Ian Masterson discovers there's more to projecting an image than meets the eye...

With the advent of the portable disco 'environment' in the '70s came a host of 'spectacular' light boxes, lamps and chasing patterns designed to transform that little-used room over the pub or the local church hall into an instant club space that throbbed with atmosphere. The reality, of course, was rather different. And now most of us cringe with embarrassment when we chance upon a mobile DJ with those despised 'kaleidoscope' boxes of flashing reds and greens, or deeply naff string of rope lights adorning his decks at a barmitzvah.

But fashions have a habit of reinventing themselves and what once may have seemed somewhat passé can again become desirable – particularly if some enterprising manufacturer decides to add a few additional features to bring it up-to-date.

Despite having its origins back in the disco boom of the '70s, Optikinetics' projector technology has brought the company renewed interest from the 90s club/dance scene. While the basic design has changed very little, the machines have been continuously tweaked and prodded to reflect the developing tastes of club and gig goer.

The Solar 250 projector is by no means a new machine, but it is enjoying something of a resurgence in popularity at the moment. Clubs throughout the country are busy filling their walls with collages of light and colour. And gigging musicians, who's aim it is to recreate the multi-sensory environment of the club on stage, have also begun to see the potential. The Orb, for example, took a whole bank of 250s to Copenhagen for their massive stage show.

The Solar 250 is actually the most junior projector in Optikinetics' range, weighing in at just over £200, but it is still capable of putting out a powerful shaft of light, courtesy of the internal 250watt quartz halogen lamp. The basic unit is used to drive a whole host of effects, the majority of which take the form of glass 'wheels' screen-printed with a continuous loop of colour artwork and designed to be rotated slowly by the projector's built-in motor. The resulting beam is then focussed onto a screen, wall or floor in normal projector style.

The sound-animated version of the Solar 250 on review here enhances the display further by giving you the option of syncing the effects to a bass down beat – making for a total projection system that sounds simple, but which looks stunning.

Actually, wheel rotated effects are only one of the accessories Optikinetics manufacture for the 250 range. Effect wheels can also be locked into wheel safes and cassette changers, allowing you to remotely select which is used. And there are several other complete accessory packages – such as the Rotagraph and Dynagraph systems –

which make it possible for the 250 to produce a different range of constantly interchanging patterns altogether. Optikinetics can even produce effects to your own custom requirements.

The various accessories are attached to the main unit at different positions, according to their function. Effects wheels are introduced into the main beam of light before the final lens; thus they sit in a cavity towards the front of the projector which contains two brackets or 'gates' holding the rotators and effects assemblies. A further attachment point is provided at the main lens; here you can add various motorised prism and mirror units which can be employed to scatter the beam around the room.

The sound animation circuitry is contained within the projector itself, and is driven by an audio signal taken in through the miniature 1/8" jack socket below the lens. Presumably this has been chosen for reasons of space, but I can't help feeling that a standard 1/4" jack might have been a better choice. Still, Optikinetics thoughtfully provide a matching 1/8" plug with the 250, so there shouldn't be too much of a problem.

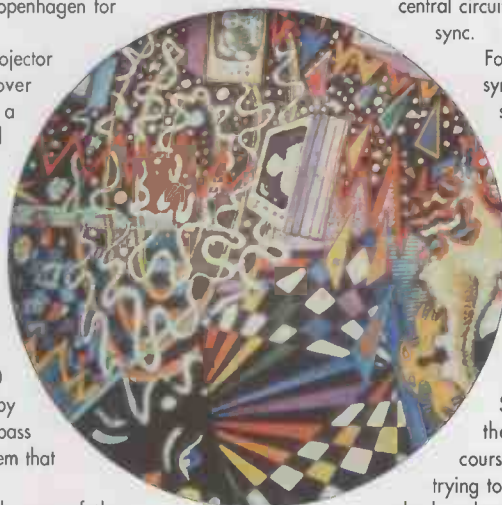
The animated effects are actually connected into the sound-to-light circuitry via an array of three two-pin low voltage sockets on one side of the gate. This configuration makes the effects simple and quick to change should the need arise; and with all the effects being driven from a central circuit, you can be sure that they remain perfectly in sync.

For those effects whose operation does not involve synchronisation to sound – such as the continuous slow rotation of the liquid effects wheel which produces an evolving wash of psychedelic colour – two continuous low voltage outputs are also supplied. The entire Solar 250 unit is driven by a substantial internal power supply, which connects to the mains via the usual IEC socket and plug.

It has to be said, the original range of 'witches and goblin' wheels used with the Solar 250 really don't cut it any more, but there's plenty of others to choose from. And of course, there's that custom design service for those trying to create an image (sic) for themselves. It should also be taken into account that the projecting a wheel onto a stage filled with musicians and equipment produces a much different effect than directing it onto a flat wall. 'Fracturing' the beam in this way makes the images less coherent and ultimately more usable – particularly for a live band. In any case, the most important element of this kind of effect



Photos: James Cumpsty



is movement; a rotating image, positioned correctly, really can do wonders for an otherwise 'static' stage show.

Ultimately, the Solar 250's continued success is down to its sheer versatility. Optikinetic's expanding range of accessories and effects for their projectors ensures that they offer flexibility, variety, and, therefore, value for money. ●



THE LAST WORD

Ease of use	Can be a little fiddly
Originality	Not especially original
Value for money	Price reflects the precision mechanics
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E-mu

Morpheus

Z-plane synthesiser

PREVIEW



Photos: James Cumpsty

Creative synthesis is set to make a comeback with E-mu's latest sound module. Simon Trask previews the shape of things to come...

Few would disagree that the excitement has gone out of new synthesisers. The continued dominance of sample-based subtractive synthesis and synthesiser workstations at the expense of experimentation and originality has begun a spiral into what some believe is terminal decline. What synthesis badly needs is an instrument which will excite jaded musicians weary of the latest subtle variation of a variation.

Cue Morpheus, the intriguingly-named new sound module from E-mu. While users of the company's Proteus and Vintage Keys modules will find much that is familiar on the new instrument, Morpheus is far from being yet another sample playback machine. To date, all the changes small and large in synthesis have taken place at the sound source stage, from the introduction of digitised samples and waveforms to attempts to 'disguise' those sounds (eg. Roland's Differential Loop Modulation and Korg's wave sequencing and waveshaping). Even Yamaha's FM synthesis was revealed as an attempt to rethink the sound source when the company introduced filtering on the SY77; the company's subsequent abandonment of FM and retreat into sample-based synthesis has not helped the synthesiser's cause.

Now E-mu have done what no other manufacturer has seen fit to do, namely rethink the filtering stage of the traditional subtractive model of synthesis. The result, to judge from an afternoon's encounter with a pre-production Morpheus, is an instrument with unique sonic capabilities. My first impressions are that this is an instrument which many musicians will want to slot into their existing setup – so E-mu's decision to package it in the standard 1U 19" rackmounting format is probably a wise one, although the familiarity of the packaging does rather disguise the originality of what lies inside.

The easiest way to understand how Morpheus's filtering works is to visualise a cube (see accompanying diagram). At each of the eight corners of this cube is a different filter 'frame' (a 'snapshot' of the filter settings – effectively a timbre). Essentially, Morpheus is able to interpolate filter parameter values between different frames on the 'x' axis ('width') in response to note number, the 'y' axis ('height') in response to velocity, and the 'z plane' ('depth') during the course of a note's duration. Interpolations on the 'x' and 'y' axes ('transforms', to use E-mu's terminology) could be described as 'one-shot' – a single set of parameter values generated in response to a note number or a velocity value. However, interpolation on the 'z' plane is continuous, ie. Morpheus generates continuously-changing filter parameter values during the course of a note.

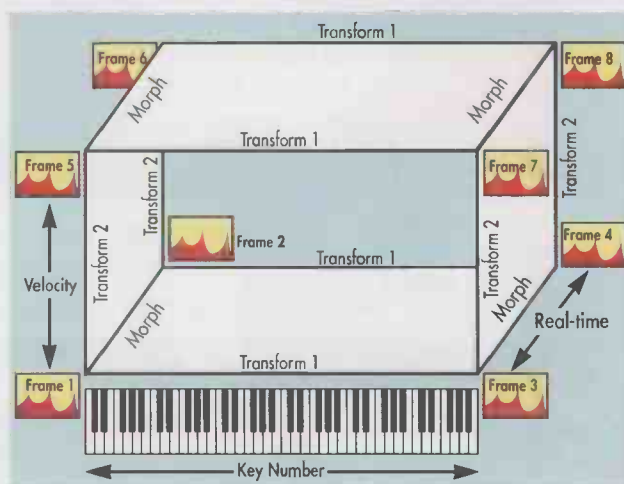
Morpheus' most characteristic sounds derive from this continuous interpolation between two filter frames – hence the description 'Z-plane synthesis'. E-mu draw a parallel with video morphing, the visual effect made famous by *Terminator II*, Michael Jackson's video, and countless TV adverts – hence the module's name, Morpheus.

But what really puts Z-plane synthesis on another, erm, plane is the actual make-up of the filter frames. These consist of eight 14-pole filters which can be configured as AllPole (seven second-order low-pass filters in series) or Low Pass + Parametric Equaliser (one 2-pole low-pass filter with resonance; and six parametric equalisers each with centre frequency, amplitude and bandwidth parameters).

With this sort of filtering power, a whole lot of timbral twisting can go on!

Another important synthesis feature is the Function Generator, an 8-segment modulation source which can function as an LFO or an EG but is much more programmable than either. As well as having its own level and time parameters, each segment can be assigned any one of 61 shapes (including linear, exponential, random and chaos!), and can be programmed to jump to any other segment based on a certain programmable condition. One possibility would be to create a repeating 7-segment envelope with a jump to the 8th segment on key release.

Morpheus doesn't sacrifice more familiar functionality in order to attain its new capabilities. Consequently you've got 32-voice polyphony, 16-part MIDI multitimbrality, Presets with primary and secondary voices (each of which can



transform and morph independently, with its own set of filter frames), plenty of modulation possibilities, and the ability to stack multiple Presets (up to 16 of 'em, in fact). Production models will also have onboard effects processing (absent on the pre-production version).

Anyone searching for new, adventurous sounds should give E-mu's new module a listen. The sonic possibilities are plentiful and exciting, though I suspect that E-mu and third-party programmers will have to do most of the sound creation work if they really want to make Morpheus a success – it doesn't look to be an instrument which will encourage the average musician to get into programming. If E-mu can get the sounds right, Morpheus will become hot property. ●

For further information contact: E-mu UK • Suite 6 • Adam Ferguson House • Eskmills Industrial Park • Musselburgh • Scotland EH21 7PQ • Tel: 031 653 6556 • Fax: 031 653 6556. Price £11ba

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No Of Sound Standards	2	2	4	5
Sound Blaster Version 2	•	•	•	•
Sound Blaster Pro II	•	•	•	•
Covox Speech Thing	•	•	•	•
Disney Sound Source	•	•	•	•
FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL2	•	•	•	•
FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL3	•	•	•	•
MANUAL VOLUME CONTROL	•	•	•	•
DIGITAL SOFTWARE VOLUME CONTROL	•	•	•	•
DIGITAL BASS & TREBLE CONTROL	•	•	•	•
SAMPLING RATE, RECORDING UP TO	20KHZ	15KHZ	20KHZ	44.1KHZ
SAMPLING RATE, PLAYBACK UP TO	44.1KHZ	44.1KHZ	44.1KHZ	44.1KHZ
GAME PORT, WITH MIDI OPTION	•	•	•	•
DYNAMIC FILTERING FOR BETTER SOUND	•	•	•	•
CD AUDIO IN	•	•	•	•
CAN USE MICROPHONE AND CD DURING DIGITAL PLAYBACK	•	•	•	•
SMT BOARD FOR BETTER RELIABILITY	•	•	•	•
FREE SPEAKERS	•	•	•	•
CD-ROM INTERFACE (AT-BUS)	•	•	•	•
PANASONIC INTERFACE	•	•	•	•
MITSUMI INTERFACE	•	•	•	•
SONY INTERFACE	•	•	•	•
CD-ROM INTERFACE (SCSI)	•	•	•	OPTION
MICROPHONE AGC AMPLIFIER	•	•	•	•
STEREO MICROPHONE INPUT	•	•	•	•
SOFTWARE SELECTABLE IRQ, DMA & ADDRESS SETTING CONFIGURATION	•	•	•	•
RETAINED WAVE POWER ON	•	•	•	•
MIXER SUPPORT FROM MORE THAN ONE SOURCE DURING RECORDING	•	•	•	•
BUILT-IN AMPLIFIER	•	•	•	•
STEREO LINES IN AND OUT	•	•	•	•

16-bit COMPARISON	STEREO			
	AZTECH SOUND GALAXY 16 PRO II	CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER 16 ASP	MEGAWATT PRO AUDIO SPECTRUM 16	AZTECH BUSINESS AUDIO BOARD
No Of Sound Standards	6	2	2	1
ADLib	•	•	•	•
Sound Blaster Version 2	•	•	•	•
Sound Blaster Pro II	•	•	•	•
Microsoft Windows Sound System	•	•	•	•
Covox Speech Thing	•	•	•	•
Disney Sound Source	•	•	•	•
FM SYNTHESIZER - OPL3	•	•	•	•
DIGITAL SOFTWARE VOLUME CONTROL	•	•	•	•
DIGITAL BASS & TREBLE CONTROL	•	•	•	•
CD QUALITY SAMPLING RATE, RECORD & PLAYBACK UP TO	44.1KHZ	44.1KHZ	44.1KHZ	44.1KHZ
GAME PORT, WITH MIDI OPTION	•	•	•	•
DYNAMIC FILTERING FOR BETTER SOUND	•	•	•	•
CD AUDIO IN	•	•	•	•
CAN USE MICROPHONE AND CD DURING DIGITAL PLAYBACK	•	•	•	•
CD-ROM INTERFACE (AT-BUS)	•	•	•	•
PANASONIC INTERFACE	•	•	•	•
MITSUMI INTERFACE	•	•	•	•
SONY INTERFACE	•	•	•	•
CD-ROM INTERFACE (SCSI)	OPTION	•	•	OPTION
MICROPHONE AGC AMPLIFIER	•	•	•	•
STEREO MICROPHONE INPUT	•	•	•	•
SOFTWARE SELECTABLE IRQ, DMA & ADDRESS SETTING CONFIGURATION	•	•	•	•
RETAINED WAVE POWER ON	•	•	•	•
MIXER SUPPORT FROM MORE THAN ONE SOURCE DURING RECORDING	•	•	•	•
OPTION FOR UPGRADE TO 16-bit WAVE-TABLE SYNTHESIS	•	•	•	•
STEREO LINES IN AND OUT	•	•	•	•

16-bit STEREO 2 SOUND STANDARDS



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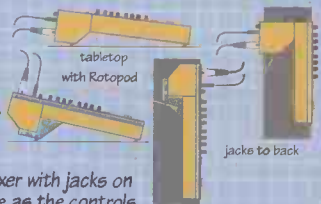
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Yamaha

Hello! Music!

computer music system

REVIEW



Ian Waugh greets a software package for PC or Mac offering the computer user more music than ever

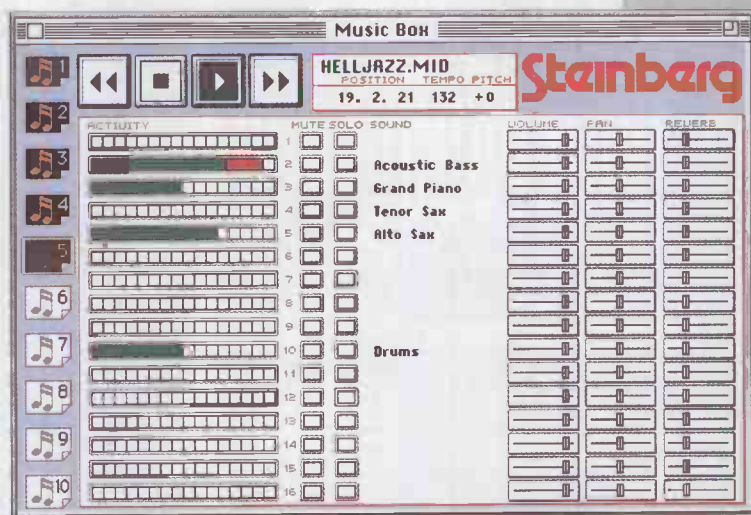
The number of computer users who might be interested in adding music to their system is many times greater than the number of musicians with a computer who might want another expander. At least that's how the big musical instrument companies see it, and it's why Yamaha have aimed their new Hello! Music! system squarely at the computer user.

The concept isn't new, but the way it's being packaged is. The Hello! Music! box contains a CBX-T3 expander, the requisite connection cables and software – everything, in fact, the computer user needs to plug in and go. Yamaha is specifically targeting the system at computer outlets, although it is available to music dealers, too.

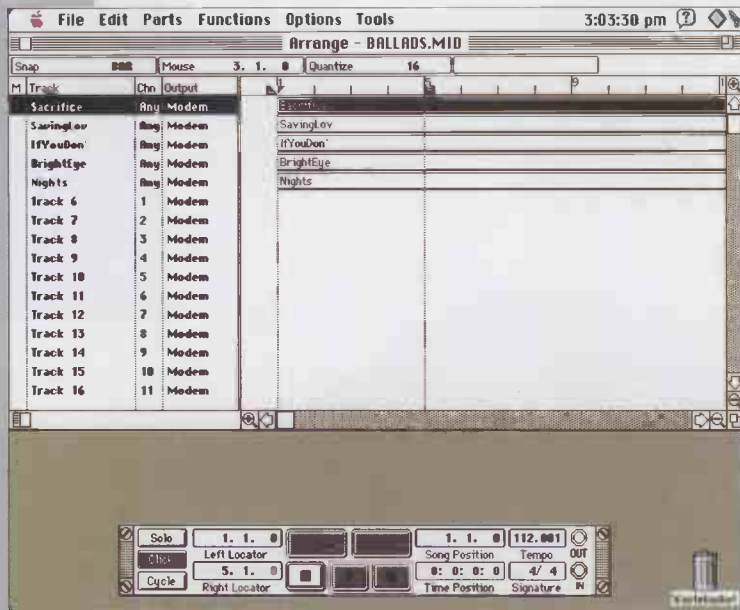
The CBX-T3 is a neat vertical-standing expander based on the TG100. It has 192 instrument sounds, 10 drum sets and 28-voice polyphonic. The sounds are produced by AWM, Yamaha's custom form of sampling, which is used in the company's portable keyboards as well as the current crop of 'SY' synths.

And the sounds are good, particularly when playing MIDI files and taking advantage of DSP (Digital Signal Processor) which offers six reverb and two delay effects.

The unit can operate in three modes – GM (General MIDI), Disk Orchestra, and C/M. These simply select different sounds in response to Program Change messages. GM is the most popular mode and virtually every MIDI file being produced for the mass market these days is in GM



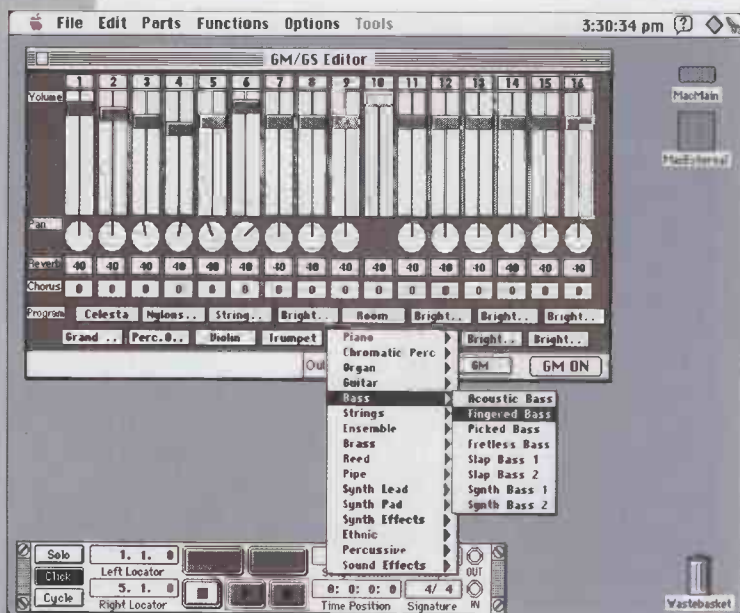
Music Box is a simple juke box program which lets you 'mix' a MIDI file and alter the sounds it uses.



Lite's front end is very similar to Cubase's Arrange page.



You can display and edit music in notation format and print it out.



The GM/GS Editor lets you select sounds, set volume levels and so on, for each track.

► format. (GM is also part of the new multimedia spec, MPC 2, and will be used on new generations of games and CD ROMs.) But the CBX will produce better sounds than most sound cards and it has other advantages – as we'll see.

The Disk Orchestra mode is for use with Yamaha's Disk Orchestra Collection (currently numbering around 60 disks) for Yamaha instruments which read ESEQ format files. C/M mode is compatible with Roland's MT-32 which was the general MIDI standard before GM came along.

To use most musical equipment with a computer you need a MIDI interface. The CBX, however, can be directly connected to a PC's RS232 serial port or an Apple Mac's modem or Printer port. The unit itself has the usual three MIDI sockets – In, Out and Thru – which act as the computer's MIDI interface, saving you the cost of buying one separately.

Hello! Music! comes in two versions – one for the PC and one for the Mac. The difference lies in the CBX-to-computer connector and the software. Whatever your machine, the connecting lead supplied is only about 1m long and the audio cable is 1.5m, so you need to site the unit close by or else get longer leads.

Although the idea behind GM is that you stick with the sounds you are given, you can edit these in the CBX. When the unit is switched on, it copies the first 64 GM voices into an additional fourth bank in RAM. Editing parameters include element level, element detune, and portamento. Ideally, you need a voice editor. None, alas, is supplied with the package but Yamaha has editors for both the PC and Mac which are free on request. Not all users, of course, want to get involved in sound editing.

The RAM bank in the CBX is volatile and any changes made are lost when you switch off. You can, however, save the data by performing a Bulk Dump which is easily instigated from the front of the CBX. A Dump also saves the reverb effect type and depth settings, the drum setup and the settings for each Part – so it's a useful facility even if you don't edit the voices. Dumps offer an easy way of storing voice and music data in the same file.

Just to round off the CBX's facilities, there is a mini-jack headphone socket and an audio In socket on the front.

The software in both versions is identical – Steinberg's Cubase Lite and Music Box. You also get a disk containing a selection of Standard MIDI Files.

The Mac software is easy to install – you simply copy the programs to your hard disk and that's it. PC installation is a little more complex but still easy for a PC. You copy the software to your hard disk and install the CBX-T3 driver. This is done like any other driver using the Drivers option in the Control Panel.

You should then be able to boot up and go, but if you've been messing around with other drivers or have been using MIDI Mapper, you may have to do a little reconfiguring. The nice thing about using the CBX for a MIDI interface is that you don't have to worry about IRQs and port addresses!

One thing I did notice: if the CBX is off when you enter Windows, you get an error message telling you so but no major problem. If, however, the CBX is unplugged, Windows locks up completely! So if you want to use your PC without the CBX connected then remove the CBX-T3 driver first.

Cubase Lite is a neat little sequencer. It has the famous Cubase front-end Arrange page and it shows the music in notation format which you can print out. However, it does have several limitations such as only offering 16 tracks (although this unlikely to be a major problem for the users this package is aimed at) and it lacks many of Cubase's more interesting and powerful features.

The Score editor, for example, is the *only* form of editing it supports – it doesn't even have an event editor. You simply can't access any other MIDI data (although you can, for example, change the Program Number within a track by using a new Part) and you can't alter the tempo to produce ralls. And even the Score editor has limitations. You can't add text, lyrics or music symbols; all you can do is edit the notes and print the score to an EPS (Encapsulated PostScript File) should you want to use it in a DTP program.

Lite also contains a GM/GS editor. It's not a voice editor as such, but a MIDI Mixer. It lets you set volume levels, pan positions, alter reverb and chorus settings and select instruments for each track. It's very useful for making initial settings when starting a song and you can change parameters on the fly. However, it has no link with the settings on the Arrange page – you can't record Mixer changes into a track, and the settings in a track aren't reflected in the Mixer.

Also, Cubase Lite has no external sync mode so you can't control it from an external MIDI device or from a multimedia program, say, running concurrently. Another problem you may encounter concerns the saving of voice and setup data in a Bulk Dump. Lite simply can't handle SysEx data and filters it out on reception.

All things considered, Cubase Lite doesn't really make best use of the CBX's facilities and that's a great shame, particularly as the unit is aimed at GM users

and the multimedia market. Would it have been so difficult for Steinberg to make some adjustments to Lite for the Hello! Music! pack?

The MusicBox program is a MIDI file jukebox. It can hold up to 10 files and play them one at a time or in sequence. The central display shows the names of the tracks and you can alter the instrument, volume, pan position and reverb setting using sliders – an easy way for the non-musician to interact with the music.

The four files are labelled Pop/Rock, Classical, Jazz and Ballad and contain extracts from five pieces of music each with very nice arrangements.

So given that the system is designed for computer users with minimal musical knowledge and for multimedia, how easy is it to use? Well, the CBX manual is extremely helpful and no one should have any trouble setting it up. The Lite manual is very good, too, and should be easy for anyone to load and play the files, experiment with them and print them out. Users with some musical knowledge will enjoy the Score editor (presumably this is one reason why Lite was chosen for the package), but in other respects (discussed above) it must be said that Lite does not complement the CBX as well as it might. Still, once the music bug bites, users could perhaps look for software more suitable to their needs.

For someone with a computer wanting to get started in music, the Hello! Music! bundle is an attractive package. The CBX isn't currently available on its own so it's difficult to work out how much you're paying for the software, but around £120 or so for the extras seems a reasonable figure.

For users who already have some musical equipment, the CBX also works well as a GM expander. However, the most interesting thing about Hello! Music! is the marketing strategy behind it, and the fact that Yamaha really do appear to be taking the computer music market seriously. What developments this could lead to in the future, only the R&D boys in Japan know. Perhaps the music market is shifting its emphasis away from 'musicians' and more towards everyday users.

Anything which helps to encourage an involvement in music is a good thing in my book. And Hello! Music! could well be the incentive for many. ●



THE LAST WORD

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Originality	Old idea, new marketing
Value for money	Fair
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Korg

i3

Interactive music workstation

including any jazzy chord you care to throw at it. Full keyboard scanning is best if you want to play big two-handed chords; this also lets you switch quickly between chords and single- or double-note playing with either or both hands. Lower and Upper keyboard-range scanning modes are also available.

Styles include rock, pop, dance pop, r'n'b, '70s disco, ballad, reggae, fusion, blues, big band, swing and Motown. The familiar traditional keyboard Styles, such as bossa nova, samba, beguine, waltz, march and polka, are in place on the i3, but more contemporary musical styles in the form of new jack swing, house, rap and rave are also convincingly represented – helped by a thumping bottom end and Korg's usual upfront selection of drum and percussion sounds. All in all, the company's Style programming is as good as any on offer; my only criticism is that there aren't enough preset Styles or Arrangements.



Photos: James Cumpsty

Is it a synth? Is it a keyboard? Simon Trask takes the i3 test to find out...

If terms like 'auto-accompaniment' and 'keyboard' turn you off, perhaps it's about time you reassessed your prejudices – and a good place to start is with Korg's latest music workstation, the i3. In many respects it's a regular Korg workstation synth (to be more precise, an X3); however, it also sports an auto-accompaniment section, though Korg haven't called it that – like they haven't given their new workstation built-in speakers or provided little pictures of drum and percussion instruments above its keys. So, is the i3 a keyboard for people who don't like keyboards? Or is it simply the 'all-in-one' philosophy of the synth workstation taken a stage further with the introduction of a built-in backing band?

As space is at a premium here, and the X3 was reviewed recently in the magazine (*MT* September '93), I'll concentrate on those features which make the 61-note i3 and its 76-note companion, the i2, unique in the Korg range. To begin with, the i3's front panel is somewhat better endowed than the typical Korg synth – its generous complement of buttons delivers the all-important 'immediacy factor', considered *de rigueur* in the keyboard world but typically lacking on modern synths. At the same time, the i3's LCD screen-based interface, used for more detailed programming, will be very familiar to existing Korg users.

Although it is possible to create a small number of combination-type sounds in Backing Sequence model (see *Hard fax*), Korg's new workstation forgoes the combis which have been a part of the company's instruments since the M1; however, the familiar Korg Program architecture, Korg sounds and Korg onboard 16-track Song sequencer are all in place. It's when you hit the Synchro Start/Stop button and play a chord in the lower half of the keyboard that unfamiliar things start happening: the instrument takes on a life of its own, with drums, percussion, bass and three further instrumental parts bursting into ensemble activity.

If you've just switched on the i3 you'll be in Rolling Stones territory, with an Arrangement titled 'Mick&Keith' and a Style called 'Open Rock'. Play another chord and the 'band' will change harmony with you. Yep, you're in auto-accompaniment mode. The i3 recognises a wide variety of chord types,

An i3 Style has four Variations, two Intros, two Endings and two Fill-ins (known as Elements), each consisting of the abovementioned musical parts; in addition there are two keyboard parts intended for live playing in solo/split/layer configurations over the backing. The i3 goes beyond usual keyboard Style organisation by providing 6 'sub-variations' for each Variation and 2 'sub-variations' for each Intro, Ending and Fill-in. These sub-variations are selected live by playing chords, so that, for instance, you can have different accompaniments for major, minor and dominant chords; all in all, 20 chord types can each have a sub-variation assigned to them in a Chord Variation Table, accessed via the i3's LCD.

Hard fax

Keyboard: 61 keys (i3), 76 keys (i2) with velocity and aftertouch sensitivity

Polyphony: 32 voices (single mode: 32 notes; double mode: 16 notes)

Multitimbrality: 7-part (Arrange Play mode), 15-part (Backing Sequence mode), 16-part (Song mode)

Waveform ROM: i3: 6Mb, i2: 8Mb (the i2's extra 2Mb are dedicated to an additional multisampled acoustic piano)

Programs: 128 General MIDI Programs + one GM Drum Program (ROM); 64 Programs + five Drum Programs (ROM); 64 Programs + two Drum Programs (RAM)

Effects: 47, utilising two stereo digital multi-effects processors

Styles: 48 internal ROM, four internal RAM, four external ROM (optional card)

Arrangements: 64 stored in RAM

Backing Sequences: 10 stored in RAM

Songs: 10, each consisting of up to 16 tracks, with dynamic voice allocation across tracks

Sequencer event capacity: 40,000 shared by Songs and Backing Sequences, 15,000 for user Styles

Onboard disk drive: 3.5" DSD, MS-DOS format

LCD: 240 x 64 dot, backlight

Connections: left/mono and right audio outputs, stereo headphones output, MIDI sockets (In, Out and Thru), Style card slot, sustain pedal input, assignable pedal/switch inputs 1 & 2, EC5 pedalboard input

Weight: i3: 32.4lbs, i2: 38.1lbs

Dimensions: i3: 42.4" (W) x 13.7" (D) x 4.8" (H), i2: 50.5" (W) x 13.7" (D) x 4.8" (H)

In i3-speak, a Style is assigned to an Arrangement, which governs the sound, level, pan position, octave and effects send settings for the keyboard and backing tracks, together with settings for tempo, drum-map selection (per Variation), part mute on/off and playback status (internal/MIDI/both). Arrangements also let you set which Variation will play after each Fill-in, and which one of four kicks and four snares will be played from the selected drum map(s).

The i3 lets you record an auto-accompaniment performance i.e. the chord changes, melody and front-panel button presses, in its Backing Sequence mode. This mode also provides eight Extra tracks (standard sequencer-type tracks) so you can record additional parts if you want; alternatively these tracks can be used for creating combination sounds, by assigning them to the same MIDI channel and setting up appropriate key and velocity ranges. What you can't do, it seems, is transfer your finished songs across to the regular onboard sequencer and save them as Standard MIDI Files for use in other sequencers with other (GM/GS-compatible) instruments.

You can create your own Styles on the i3, but only a measly four of them can be in onboard memory at any one time. The workstation lets you import sections of up to 16 bars (the maximum length for a Style Element) from any

track in the Song sequencer, so you can draw on existing material of your own or from someone else (via a MIDI songfile in Standard MIDI Files format). If you're using the i3's programmable Styles as a way of triggering sequenced patterns live, the instrument's sub-variations significantly increase the number of patterns you can draw on - while the Arrangements provide other possibilities, such as mute snapshots and instrumentation and effects changes. If you want to get into live sequencing, this is one very effective way of doing it. And as each keyboard and backing part can transmit on its own programmable channel via MIDI, integrating/substituting MIDI'd instrumental parts is easy.

All in all, the i3 is a very convincing addition to the current line-up of auto-accompaniment instruments - whether you want to call it a synth or a keyboard. ●



THE LAST WORD	
Ease of use	Good keyboard style- immediacy combined with accessible LCD-based-approach
Originality	Familiar synth capabilities, adventurous auto-accompaniment section
Value for money	You're paying a high premium for Korg's newly-developed auto-accompaniment software
Star quality	Very attractive
Price	i3: £2199; i2: £2750; EC5 (multi-pedal board): £59.95; all prices include VAT.
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ROLAND JUNO 60/6	MOOG PRODIGY	LINN 9000 CLOCK	HAMMOND tonewheel
ROLAND VOCODER VP-330	MOOG SOURCE		
(In/Thru only)	OBERHEIM OB-1		

A FEW EXAMPLES ARE LISTED BELOW - PLEASE PHONE OR FAX FOR OTHER PRICES AND DETAILS

YAMAHA PF15/10/YP40 (MIDI OUT)	Price £146.88 inc. fitting. Kit price £123.38
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Labyrinth

Video Manuals

for Cubase, Notator and Breakthru

Video may have killed the radio star, will it kill the instruction manual?
Review by Ian Waugh



Video manuals, most people would agree, are a 'good idea', but to date few company's seem to have regarded them as worth the investment in time and effort. It's interesting, therefore, to see a video production company getting involved, particularly as they have no axe to grind about promoting any specific product.

Labyrinth currently have six videos on release with more in the pipeline. Up for review here are the three which offer tutorials on popular software sequencers so let's break open the six-pack, grab the peanuts and see if they're more interesting than *Neighbours*.

The Cubase video runs for an hour and a half and is presented by Chris West, who was head Steinberg honcho at Harman until he left. It's a guide for the complete beginner and starts by telling you how to install Cubase in your chosen computer platform - PC, Mac or ST - and includes a few basic computer and mouse functions.

Chris then moves onto basic sequencer concepts such as tracks and patterns, copying and pasting, and gives you a taste of the four main edit screens - Score, Key, List and Drum.

Because of the relative brevity of the video (and the complexity of Cubase), there isn't time to be able to go into too much detail. Chris' presentation is relaxed and a somewhat 'ad-lib' but it's an easy watch. If you haven't used a computer before, it's an excellent introduction to Cubase. If you have, and already have the program up and running, you may be better off waiting for a more advanced video which Chris hints is to come.

The Emagic Notator video runs for two hours 20 minutes and is presented by Tim Walter, who runs a music production company. Again, the sheer number of features in Notator means it's impossible to cover everything, but this video is longer and you do get a good taste of what the program can do.

There are 28 Tutorials which cover most of the major program areas from basic recording to synchronisation and SMPTE. It's nice to see Tim tackle some less well-known topics, too, such as polyphonic staves, fonts, the Process Note Attributes and Midi Meaning screens. You also get a look at Graphic Arrange Mode and the Hyper Edit screen.

The Score editor features quite highly and you're given a real feel for its potential, although Tim himself could do with a few pointers about drum notation. That aside, the presentation is very good and though fairly off-the-cuff, not without its touches of levity. It certainly covers more ground than the Cubase video - although, again, a more advanced production is hinted at and if you're already comfortable with the program you may prefer to wait for this.

At two hours 27 minutes, the Breakthru video is another long un', this time presented by Alan Ackers, one of Gajits' directors. It's interesting to note that the presentation concentrates solely on the ST, even though I believe an Amiga version is due any day. However, the two formats will work in essentially the same way.

Four introductory sections tell you how to connect your MIDI gear, get the sequencer up and running and give you a fairly comprehensive overview of

the program. Then come 12 lessons which take you through virtually every feature of the program ending with a troubleshooting section.

Alan's presentation is both clear and lucid. He must be reading from a script, but it's not at all apparent. There's none of the mistakes, hesitation or repetition you find in the other videos and Alan moves from lesson to lesson with purpose and some light whimsy.

All three videos come with an insert card listing the various sections of the programs and the time they last - although only the Cubase insert gives you a running time so you can fast-forward to a particular section without doing sums.

One of the problems with video manuals is that although they may be easy to watch and learn from, they simply cannot cram in as much information as a printed manual. The exception here is the Breakthru video which is, indeed, a complete video manual. Of course, Breakthru is a much less complex program so the task is not such a daunting one. Nevertheless, the writers and designers are to be congratulated for making full use of their time.

The price is obviously a major factor. With a Cubase Handbook available at £24.95, the higher price of a video which doesn't 'reveal all' could be off-putting. The Breakthru video is the exception content-wise - though its price does represent a higher percentage of the cost of the program it supports than the other videos. Still, if you hate manuals, the videos offer the sort of instruction a couch potato will love and they could do well in education, too.

After all the cuffuffle in the music business among £million companies over video manuals, it was left up to an independent company to take the initiative. And more power to their elbow. Let's hope the more advanced videos become a reality and we see the trend spread. Who'll be first to bundle a video with the software? ●

THE LAST WORD

Ease of use	Easy as watching TV!
Originality	Fairly typical of the genre
Value for money	Printed manuals offer more detail, less fun
Star quality	More OU than Royal Command Performance
Price	Cubase First In Series £34.95 • Emagic & Notator £44.95 • Getting the most from Breakthru & Breakthru Plus £39.95
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CD-ROM EXPLAINED

WHAT IS CD-ROM?

CD-ROM is a storage technology for large amounts of information, which can be accessed from a PC via a CD-ROM drive. CD-ROM technology uses Compact Discs (CDs) as its information storage medium. These disks can store high resolution colour images, millions of words, full audio sound tracks and much, much more.

THE CD-ROM ADVANTAGE

There are numerous advantages in having a CD-ROM drive. CDs can hold the equivalent of up to 600 floppy disks and software developers can design more sophisticated and complex programs to take advantage of this large storage capacity. Cheap production costs, compact design and the practically indestructible nature of CDs also makes them ideal for software storage.

KODAK PHOTOCD COMPATIBLE

Kodak have recently introduced a new technology called Kodak PhotoCD. This allows normal photographs from a camera to be stored on CD discs, which can then be viewed on your PC. Photographs can be enhanced or manipulated using KODAK ACCESS or GRAPHICS WORKS software, to give you the results you need for your business presentations or the "family album".

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Some applications require that the information written to a CD-ROM is updated on more than one occasion. This involves several or "multi" sessions of writing to the disc. Both the Mitsumi and Panasonic CD-ROM drives are multi-session compatible, which means that they can read all of the information which has been written to a CD in this way. Inferior, single-session drives can only read what was originally written on the first session, not the information added on subsequent sessions. Applications such as Kodak's PhotoCD use multi-session technology to update CDs with additional photographs. Other users of multi-session technology will include hospitals, updating medical records, plus many other users whose reference information is constantly being updated.

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HOW THE MITSUMI AND PANASONIC CD-ROM DRIVES COMPARE TO THE COMPETITION

	RRP EXC VAT	ACCESS TIME MS	DATA TRANSFER RATE KB/S	MPC COMPATIBLE	KODAK PHOTOCD COMPATIBLE	CACHE MEMORY	DUST SEAL	MULTI- SESSION
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HITACHI 3700Y	£410	300	150	✓	-	64k	✓	-
PHILIPS 462M	£349	350	175	✓	✓	32k	-	✓
TOSHIBA 3401B	£499	200	375	✓	✓	64k	✓	✓
NEC MULTISPIN 84	£409	280	300	✓	✓	256k	✓	✓
PANASONIC CR562B	£334	320	300	✓	✓	64k	✓	✓
PHILIPS 215	£329	360	175	✓	✓	64k	✓	✓
SONY CDU 31A	£395	550	150	✓	✓	64k	-	✓

All of these drives are internal and, at the prices shown, include an interface card, except the Toshiba 3401B. This internal drive does not include an interface and is priced at an SRP of £499.

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NJD

MP820

MIDI-to-mains

The system couldn't be simpler but the programming can be as sophisticated as you like. Ian Masterson gets a taste of the bright lights...

As a relatively recent phenomenon, MIDI lighting interfaces are still something of an unknown quantity for many people. Having made the decision to get involved in lighting, what most people want is a simple, perhaps expandable unit that relates directly, via MIDI, to what they produce musically.

For those who perhaps already have a sizeable lamp and effects rig driven off traditional mains dimming packs and who fancy using their sequencers to control the lights via MIDI, the best bet would probably be something along the lines of Pulsar's Universal Interface (see review in last month's MT). This sort of device will translate MIDI note and velocity information into the industry-standard 10-volt analogue control protocol used to operate lighting packs.

If, however, you are new to the world of computer-operated lighting and have decided to start with a small, portable system and work upwards, you could do a lot worse than to include the MP820 on your shopping list. A single, small black box that simply converts MIDI information directly into mains voltage, the MP820's only distinctive features are two Bulgin socket outlets, a MIDI In socket, nine LEDs and a strikingly substantial blue mains lead!

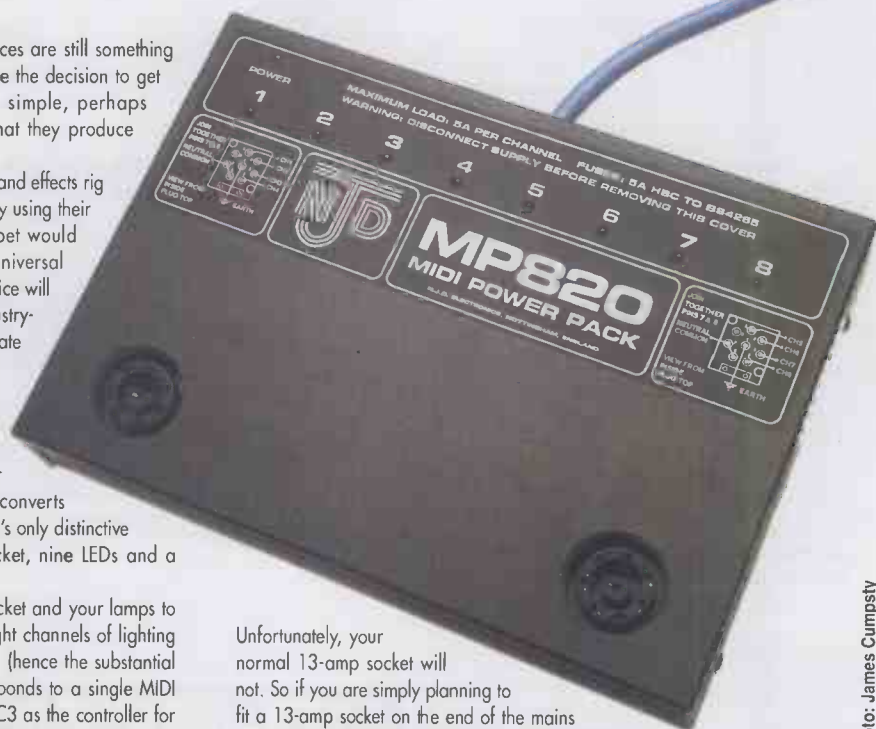
Your computer is hooked up to the single MIDI In socket and your lamps to the twin Bulgin connectors. The circuitry can handle eight channels of lighting at any one time, up to a maximum current of 20 amps (hence the substantial mains lead). Each of the eight lighting channels corresponds to a single MIDI note – so if you set the MP820 to recognise MIDI note C#3 as the controller for the first lighting channel, it goes on to interpret C#3 as the second, D3 as the third – and so on. The higher the MIDI velocity, the higher the mains output – and the brighter the light. Simple, n'est-ce pas?

This of course means that you can 'play' the lamps from your MIDI keyboard, record the data on a software sequencer and then edit the various velocities to create all manner of crossfades, flashes and er... groovy effects. Since the MP820 can respond to eight notes on any single MIDI channel, you could theoretically add more and more MP820s as your system grows: 16 units on a single MIDI channel giving 128 channels of light; 16 units on each of 16 MIDI channels giving an incredible 2048 channels.

The only design niggle which came to my attention with the MP820 was the location of the MIDI channel and note setting switches. Basically, you have to get your screwdriver out and remove the front cover to access the tiny DIP switches on the PCB inside. A set of external rotaries would have been much nicer, and worth the extra expense.

Interestingly, the MIDI implementation stretches beyond simple note (lamp) on/off and velocity (brightness). For example, control change #96 sets the fade rate at which the pack raises or lowers the brightness of the lights – so you can have instantaneous 'bursts', or slow fade ins. Also the 'all notes off' command acts effectively as an instant blackout control, cutting the power to all the channels.

In use, the MP820 is blindingly (sorry) simple: you literally just plug it in and go. The eight red LEDs on the top panel of the unit signal which of the lighting channels are being triggered, while the green LED signals that the mains power supply is healthy. Which leads me neatly onto one word of warning. Since the MP820 is rated at 20 amps, it will happily carry up to 4800 watts of power at any one time (to a maximum of 1200 watts on any individual channel).



Unfortunately, your normal 13-amp socket will not. So if you are simply planning to fit a 13-amp socket on the end of the mains lead, make sure the total lighting load on the MP820 doesn't go above 3000 watts or you could find yourself blowing fuses mid-gig.

Of course, if you are able to hook the MP820 up to a professionally-sourced, multi-phase lighting supply (such as those found in most theatres and decent venues), this restriction doesn't apply.

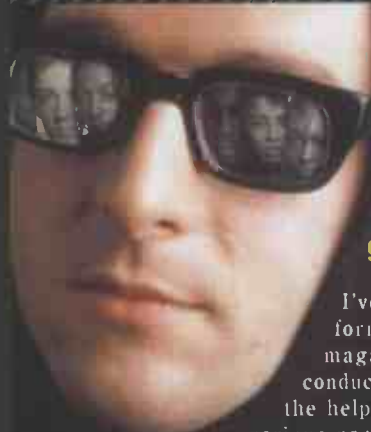
Aside from the minor niggle over the positioning of the MIDI controls, the MP820 is a rather well thought out piece of kit. The simplicity of its design imposes no real limitation on your creativity but will win it many friends amongst those still unsure of this relatively new arm of technology. Indeed, you can get pretty engrossed in some major light programming, particularly when using more than one unit. ●

Photo: James Cumpsty

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Rant



Cassette, CD, DCC, MiniDisk, super CD... what's going on?

I've just reviewed all the above formats for a feature in *Esquire* magazine. The evaluation was conducted at Real World studios with the help of bands and engineers from various parts of the globe. We did some blind tests, with a CD, a DCC/MiniDisk and an audio cassette running simultaneously, switching between them without revealing the medium to the listeners. The CDs always came out on top (no surprise there), followed by audio tape and then by the new digital formats. What came out of this analysis was that even though most of the listeners recognised analogue tape, they seemed to prefer the 'feel' of it, along with CD, much more than DCC/MiniDisk. Sure, all formats have different qualities, but it's important to remember that whatever the format, it's the music that matters.

The first in an occasional series in which we invite anyone, famous, infamous, or just plain furious, to get it off their chest. This month: producer *Pascal Gabriel* formats an opinion..

A recording that feels right isn't necessarily the cleanest one: a listener's emotional response is something you can't digitise (not yet, anyway). The collective view during our analysis - and my own - is that by flogging their back catalogues in these new formats the major record labels are trying (and failing) to create an artificial boost in sales.

It's an extremely short-sighted move, and surely the fortune spent on promoting, marketing and releasing these new formats would be better spent elsewhere. For instance, developing new artists and allowing acts to mature, instead of terminating the career of those who don't break even with the first album or first few singles - which is the norm with most majors these days.

There is still a lot of scope for new CD technology, and with CD-i, CD-ROM, 32-bit Gold CD, Kodak photo-CD etc. well underway, most people have or will have a CD player of some kind. Vinyl is dying, sure, but CD sales are rising, so it doesn't make any sense for anyone to bring out not one, but *two* new digital formats nobody wants. And it does seem that nobody wants them: I heard from a reputable source that *two* acts who both topped the album charts this year with CD/vinyl/cassette releases sold only 50 MiniDisk and DCC versions between them! You can't fool the pop generation..

Pascal Gabriel has produced hits for *Bomb The Bass*, *S-Express*, *Coldcut*, *Jimmy Somerville*, *Erasure*, *EMF*, *Inspiral Carpets* and many more... as well as the essential sample CD *Pascal Gabriel's Dance Samples, Volume 1* of *AMG's HitSound Producer* series.

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ACIDY-TECHNOY-HOUSEY-GARAGEY-ambiently-wicky-wicky. And plenty of it. If seriously squidgy sounds are your bag, then this sample CD could send you on a whole new trip. An over-confident assertion? We'll see. First, let's look through the round window at what *Technotrance* actually offers the average club nutter.

Once your eyes have become accustomed to the, er, 'intensity' of the front cover of the inlay booklet ('I've got a Macintosh art package and I'm not afraid to abuse it'), you can go on to discover the various groups of sounds, noises and effects that comprise *Technotrance*. Rave synths,



FX, Basses, Stabs and 'Tinklers' (?) are just a few examples of the categories on offer here. Interestingly, each of the sounds on *Technotrance* is showcased in a short 'demo' before the raw sound itself appears – quite often, these demos are more immediately inspiring than the sounds themselves! You can of course sample either, which is useful – it gives a new dimension to synth-sound CDs.

As for the sounds themselves... well, there are plenty of them, generally scoring high in the inspiration/quality/usability stakes. But in amongst them are some extremely dodgy rave riffs and silly noises – the sort of thing that went out of fashion two years ago. Thankfully, these are very much in the minority – thundering lead sounds and squidging acid lines being much more the order of the day along with a useful selection of 'alternative' bass sounds, pads and risers. I particularly like the cross-faded 'trancers' section, ideal for people who lack an analogue synth in their setup; the 'Top 20 Stabs and Hooks' section yielded several ideas for complete tracks; and the Moog Basses, as ever, turn out to be invaluable. To round the whole thing off, Time + Space have included a smattering of ethnic instruments and percussion perfect for those evocative tribal styles currently

getting people to their feet on the dance floors.

Sounds such as those offered on *Technotrance* can, quite simply, add a whole new dimension to your musical efforts – or they make you sound like everyone else. This CD is full of sonic interest and potential, but like any other collection of samples it can't do your thinking for you. And that's the way it will be until someone finds a way of boxing talent and potential. **Mark Harrison** ●

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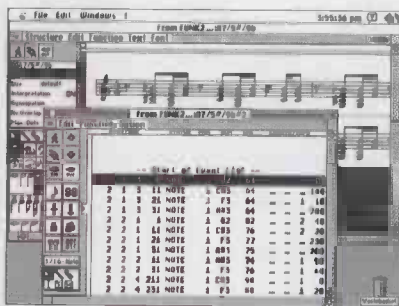
MIDI Busker

Electric Guitar

A DISK OF DÉJÀ VU DROPPED ONTO MY DESK the other day – MIDI Busker Electric Guitar, it was. Well do I remember MIDI Busker Acoustic Guitar which featured in our February issue. At the time I did mention that an electric version was on its way, and here it is.

In case February is too far back for you to remember, let me refresh your grey matter. Busker is a collection of rhythm patterns recorded using a MIDI guitar. This creates and preserves the nuances of a guitar performance which is nigh on impossible to duplicate using a keyboard. This, the review concluded, was a 'a good idea'. But does it translate to the electric guitar?

37 Standard Midi File format patterns are included, each designed to be played with a guitar sound. There's no need for any Program



The chords may look like block chords on the score but you can see they are strummed in the event list.

Change info although there are some demos on the disk which use other instruments, and these are configured to GM.

As with the Acoustic version, the patterns are divided into a limited number of styles – mainly blues, funk, jazz, and reggae – and contain up to 18 chord types, so you'll need a sequencer which can handle more than 16 tracks.

The patterns are four bars long and to use them in a song you simply select the chord type, transpose it to the required key and paste or drag it into position. It's as easy as that.

Documentation is supplied on disk. It includes the instrument setups and drum maps and also hints on how to use the riffs with Cubase, C-Lab and Hybrid Arts sequencers.

Interestingly, Station can supply Mac disks as well as ST/PC disks. Macs are fussy things and require their files to be stamped with file and creator attributes which, under normal circumstances, the user is blissfully unaware of. The Busker Mac files have all been stamped with the MIDI file type but the disk includes a couple of utilities to change these if your sequencer also insists on a creator type. It's fairly easy.

Though there isn't a particularly wide variety of styles, what there are are really quite excellent. And there's certainly no faulting the concept behind Busker – as you'll know if you've already invested in the Acoustic version. What more is there to say? If you want to add some guitar riffs to your songs but can't play guitar, get the disk instead. **Ian Waugh** ●

Price: £14.95 inc VAT and P&P

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Well, a serious amount, surprisingly enough. Revox has spent a great deal of time sorting out the insides of these tiny boxes and adding a carefully-designed front port. I'm not entirely sure how they've done it (possibly because you're not a speaker designer, Ian – Ed), but the resulting bottom end is incredible; markedly better than NS10s or JBL Control 1s. In fact, I don't believe I've ever heard such confident power from an enclosure this size. If you're into thundering 909 kicks, but your 'studio' is only four feet square,



you have to give these speakers serious consideration.

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These speakers do need mounting on substantial brackets or placing on a solid surface if you are to coax from them the performance of which they are capable – and if they are to be trusted as a vehicle for mixing your latest *magnum opus*. Used correctly, they are entirely suited to pop and dance styles and should give you an accurate picture of what your music really sounds like. Are you sure you're ready for them?

Ian Masterson ●

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MEINL

Marathon

Equipment rack bag

I SHOULD WARN YOU THAT THERE WON'T BE much lyrical waxing in this particular *MT* review. I mean, an equipment rack bag? Surely all you do is take a 19" steel rack, smother it in padded material and stick on a couple of convenient carrying handles? Not much else to be said there. Well, let's see...

The Marathon family of rack bags are assembled from some seriously robust materials. There are three sizes in the range – 2U, 3U and 5U – each built around a solid steel chassis with pre-tapped holes ready to accept standard 19" units. The basic frame is encased in a solid, shock-resistant plastic material and covered inside and out with a tough waterproof fabric. Detachable panels are provided at the front and rear of the bags and secured with heavy-duty zips. The three carrying handles (one on each

side and a shoulder strap) are all securely fastened, and Meinl thoughtfully provide a separate zippered pouch to accommodate equipment leads.

Finished in black, their only distinguishing feature is the Meinl logo, which could mean you get mistaken for a drummer (Meinl, you see, are a company more usually associated with the manufacture of cymbals and percussion instruments). But this may well be an indirect way of alluding to the bag's indestructibility. Certainly, corners do not appear to have been cut in bonding and stitching of the constituent materials; in fact, you'd need a powerful chainsaw and a psychotic disposition to tear these bags apart.

Of course, the only way to truly test a bag such as this is to take it on the road – and I've been lugging my Akai S3000 and MIDI patchbay



around in the 4U model for the past four weeks. The bag is surprisingly comfortable to carry (well... as comfortable as 30 kilos ever can be) and certainly seems up to it's job as a bodyguard for your rackmount gear. Both front and rear panels need to be detached when operating equipment if the padding isn't to insulate it in a way it wasn't designed to. But otherwise, I can only recommend it for your attention.

John Wright ●

Price: 2U – £80; 3U – £87; 5U – £99.
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IDG BOOKS

Macworld Music & Sound Bible

Christopher Yavelow

WEIGHING IN AT JUST UNDER 2KG AND managing to squeeze over 1400 pages between its ample covers, *Macworld Music & Sound Bible* is a huge book. Subtitled, 'The Definitive Guide to Music', Sound & Multimedia; on the Mac, its scope is equally impressive – so much so it's hard to believe one guy wrote it all. Must have had a grant.

It is, without doubt, the most comprehensive

book on Mac music ever printed and will almost certainly remain so until it is updated.

It's divided into nine sections – Basics; Sound; Composition; Notation; Performance; Post-Production; Film, Video and Synchronisation; Multimedia, and Education – across a total of 29 chapters. The table of contents runs to over 23 pages and there's an unbelievable 36-page index.

Included is virtually everything the Mac musician might want to know about sound, synthesis, sampling, MIDI, direct-to-disk recording and multimedia. There's copious information on music hardware and software – the different types, what they do and how to use it all – plus essential information for those buying a Mac and ancillary equipment.

Numerous lists and tables complement the main text, and if nothing else, reveal just how much music hardware and software is actually available for the Mac (well – in America at least; it has to be said, there's a lot of gear listed which we are unlikely ever to see in the UK). Of the gear we do see, it's interesting to compare US and UK prices – the old \$=£ conversion trick still appears to be the order of the day, I'm afraid.

The only criticism of the book I can make – other than the fact that my Mac would be obsolete before I finished reading it in its entirety – is that some of the items discussed are a little out-of-date. But that's an occupational hazard when producing books about up-to-the-minute technology – and that's presumably why you buy this magazine each month.

That said, *MM&SB* is as up-to-date as one could reasonably expect, and certainly, Apple's policy of chopping the price of its Macs and rehashing the range every week does nothing to help matters. Other than that, the book is a



treasure trove of information, lists, equipment guides, hints, tips, sensible advice and buying options. If you have any interest at all in the Mac and music, I can't recommend it too highly.

Ian Waugh ●

Price: £34.95 inc VAT and P&P

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Demos reviewed by Phil Ward

One Vision

Akai AX73, S700, S950; Korg Poly 800 Mk1, Poly 800 Mk2, SDD 2000; Yamaha EMT10; Kawai K1R; Roland Juno 106, TR909; Alesis HR16, Midiverb Mk1, Midiverb Mk2; Atari 520STFM (4Mb), 520STFM (2.5Mb); Cubase; Midex+; Oval Audio 16:4:2 mixer; Frontline 8:2 mixer

Talk Talk have come a long way since 'Today' and 'Talk Talk'. Unfortunately, One Vision haven't. But despair not, Rob and Rob; even though it isn't 1982 any more, and even though no amount of delay or chorus can disguise a struggling voice, 'Save Me' and 'Cross That Line' are rare little cutlets of song, and your writing abilities will save you from further admonishing from the likes of me. Given all that equipment, greater sonic heights can surely be achieved.

Now, I admire restraint – there's nothing worse than shovelling everything on there just because it's plugged in. But I've heard all of these sounds and all of these combinations of sounds before, so how about dangling the vocal mic in front of some strange acoustic objects, just for the sheer irresponsibility of it? Mind you, the samples that *are* in evidence are neatly turned, so maybe therein lies a strength to which One Vision can play. Beef it up, ditch the wishy-washy analogue stuff and growl a bit more. No? Well, I'm not an A&R man, anyway.

Contact: Rogue Tapes, 49 Alfriston Gardens, Sholing, Southampton SO2 8GB

Dino

Ensoniq EPS16+R; Roland Juno 106... and, er, that's it.

I admire anyone who can promote themselves by writing to MT on a brown paper bag. Still more, I admire anyone who admits "I actually hope you hate it since there is nothing more frustrating than having your music praised while not being able to get anything out of it." Well, Dino, you are entirely correct to assume that praise from me in no way guarantees you getting anything out of it at all, and you are therefore going to be very disappointed by my response.

I like this because it conveys above all else a spirit of abandon, a carefree twiddling of very few knobs without recourse to overt

pastiche. It's house music, all right, with a few female vocal samples pitched like bales of hay onto a stack. But it corresponds very well to the latterday instrumental explorations of a generation of musicians liberated by a bloody good four-on-the-floor thud and a couple of MIDI leads. Now and again, the melodic twists are just a little too pretty, but we can forgive a final-year music student for that. No doubt talk in the Dean's study is of nothing but Dino and his confounded Wurlitzer, anyway. Stick at it, Dino, and don't let anyone else praise you without offering money.

Contact: Dino Christophilopoulos, 021 633 0894 (Birmingham)

Optional Extra



Amiga computer running Music-X sequencer; Korg M3; Casio FZ1; Kawai K1; Yamaha DX11, TG33; Roland Promars; Sony DTC670 DAT. Recorded at Magic Garden, Stafford.

A trio of two keyboard merchants and a female vocalist, Optional Extra have a cabaret name but quite an original sound. If you allow for the monumental tribute to Trevor Horn in Frankie mode on the intro to 'Give It A Chance', that is. Of course, it's not easy to pay monumental tributes to Trevor Horn on an Amiga, so – Jon Williams and John Paul Dayus, stand up immediately and blush with pride. Unfortunately, not every detail of the ZTT academy of science has been successfully observed, and the arrangement and mixing stages seem to have been

sabotaged by kitchen sink theory – a sort of 'let's try everything' approach to each successive verse or chorus, resulting in alternative patches, dubs and effects almost every eight bars that have the cumulative effect of some kind of recording techniques demo.

At other times the mix is just too dense, a consequence of ambition exceeding means. This is very natural in those who enjoy technology: there's nothing more frustrating than conceding ideas to the budget. But, there's no excuse for Optional Extra's snare sound – like the hiss of an asthmatic snake. Which is a shame, because the songs are strong, especially 'Give It A Chance', whose chorus acts as a lesson in hookdom sadly unrepeated in 'More To You', which melodically implodes. Smarter than the average demo, though...

Contact: Jonathan Williams, 0256 59206 (Basingstoke); John Paul Dayus, 0562 731137 (Worcs.)

Mickey Down Under



Tascam 244; Yamaha QX5, FB01; Roland R8; Cheetah MS6; Casio CZ1000; Aria Pro II guitar

And here is the vote for Sweden. Guitar sound: nil points. The thing is, it's great to be hard and industrial. It's great, in the face of hard ECUs and Brussels pouts, to have *attitude*. But it's not sufficient to load all the angst into a fuzz box and hope

DEMOCracy



Swoon

"Atmosphere is everything", say Swoon, and so it is on these lush, Cocteau-tinged songs in which the technology is a discreet and comfy adjunct to a more traditional web of guitars.
Contact: Linda or Keith, 081 691 5955 (London).

Marvin Wilson

Or Jean-Michel Wilson, to his friends, who has sent us two cassette albums (*Hydra* and *The Lake*) of his electronic explorations. Lengthy, some rather obvious sounds, and a bit of a MIDI delay problem - but enjoyable.
Contact: Marvin, 0532 864129 (Leeds).

Multiplex

Minimal, haunting instrumentals. The opener is incidental, but 'Perplexity' picks up a techno thread which continues throughout. Metallic and melodic.

Contact: Multiplex, 0243 830697 (Portsmouth).

Scissormuseum

More Depeche, in one moody and slightly monotonous song, 'Come Alive'. Suffers from a snare sound disembodied from the general mix, but well worth a mench.

Contact: Nick Walker, 0603 713754 (Norwich).

So It Is

Well-executed, bubbly synth-pop songs from a self-overestimating duo who could be called So It Was. But they love and cherish what they do, and that counts for a lot.

Contact: Chris Nobbs, 0296 81379 (Aylesbury).



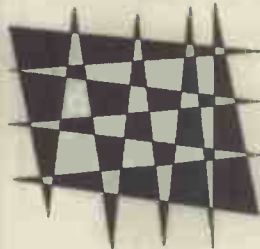
The Pink

The return of... The Pink (see 'Demo Takes', May '93). Doomy, desperate and batty as ever, and still awaiting delivery of his first drum machine from ABC Music. Is Ian Curtis really dead?
Contact: Rodney Birchall, 0772 752368 (Preston).

Dope On Plastic

Promising dance instrumentals with a preponderance for intriguing, wiggly little sounds. Ambient, as in reverberating...
Contact: David Carr, 081 686 2966 (Croydon).

Dope on Plastic



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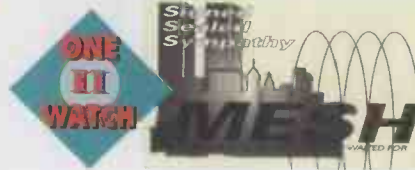
Teknik - the Tanzmusik EP

Text-book techno; Kraftwerk meets acid house (as it was in the beginning); lovingly crafted electronic dance tunes. Yep, it's our old friends Jonathan Russell and Mark Slagg. Keep it coming, boys.

Contact: Jonathan Russell, 0273 464142 (West Sussex).

Club X

Louis Clark meets S/A/W. Yes, it's Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* with a house beat. Bound to be No.1 by Christmas.
Contact: Paul Klein, 0933 678608 (Northants.).



Mesh

Emax II (keyboard), *Emax II* (rackmount); *Akai S950* (expanded); *Roland Juno 106*, *Jupiter 6*, *SH-101*, *MC202*, *MKS30*, *MKS50*, *TB 303*, *R8*, *TR727*; *Korg Wavestation*; *Chase Bit One*; *Casio CZ101*, *MG-510 MIDI guitar*, *DAR-100 DAT*; *Sequential Circuits Pro One*; *Oberheim Matrix 1000*; *E-mu Vintage Keys*; *Yamaha TG77*, *TG55*, *TG33*, *TX7*, *REX-50*; *Boss DR-660*, *SE-50*, *NS-50*, *CL-50*; *Cheetah MDR-16*; *BBC UMI*; *Atari Dr.Ts KCS*; *Creator*; *Groove MIDI-CV*; *Seck 18:8:2 mixer*; *Fostex R8*; *Sony DTC55ES DAT*; *Shure SM58 mic*; *Alesis Quadraverb*; *ART Multiverb LT*.

Good grief, these guys have got everything. And, it has to be said, they know how to use it. But firstly, profuse apologies to Mark,

Richard and Neil of Mesh, who are not the band whom 'Demo Takes' called Mesh in the June issue of *MT*. That was actually an outfit called Ablemesh, so apologies to them, too. Each has their own sound and their own following, and the real Mesh contrast particularly by incorporating a good deal of Utah Saints-style video, lighting and DJ support into their live shows. The U.S. comparison doesn't end there, with the opening song 'What You Get From Me' storming along like Tim and Jez minus only the cheeky vocal samples (Mark Hocking has the kind of lead voice which makes such techniques unnecessary), but it must be pointed out that Mesh are more than mere imitators.

The three songs on this demo reveal them to be quite flexible, veering from the aforementioned techno-rock to something quite consistent with this but more lyrical, closer to current Depeche Mode territory, especially on the final offering 'What You Get For Being Here'. Here Mark's voice really comes into its own, and it's certainly refreshing to find an electronic band able to display this kind of dynamic range. All of which points to a healthy relationship between Mesh and all that hardware, with the boys in charge rather than the other way round. One to watch, indeed.

Contact: Neil Taylor, 0272 671067/601759 (Bristol).

Room 101



Atari ST; *Cubase*; *Roland D110*; *Oberheim Matrix 1000*; *Ensoniq EPS16+*; *Korg 707*; *Alesis Quadraverb*; *direct to DAT with live vocals*.

An excellent vocal from Ginny Hill, over a very original blend of programmed funk and classical string/voice flourishes - particularly on the taunting, malevolent opener 'Death'. The bass drum/heartbeat does peak, though, and the gated reverb is mushy. No doubt the original DAT sounds cleaner, but you must allow for these things when copying onto cassette.

Side 2 is a bit of a disappointment, allowing too much of the band's sense of good taste to show through in a way that contradicts the tension in 'Death'. Louse it up a bit more, and try not to meander too far from the point with unnecessary repetition.

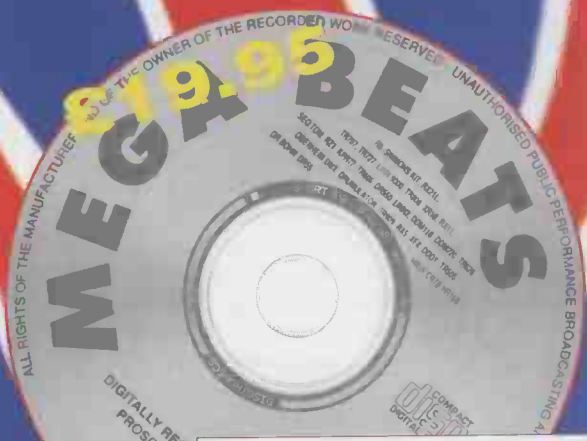
that this will compensate for a less than exorbitant mix. Which is why it comes as some relief to move from the opening track ('A Song In Praise Of The People's Liberation Army', indeed) onto the remarkable 'Bop House', which just as the title says is an up-to-the-minute analogue sequence set against a swing beat! Incredibly, it works, helped along by some very sensitive R8 work, and a wild saxophone solo. And I thought Ace Of Base were weird!

'The Screaming Fish' concludes in highly Surrealist mood, featuring snatches of crowd from Speaker's Corner. Even the letter concludes with "love and eternal cosmic wisdom" from the duo. As I've often said before, a couple with names like Quick and Zapfe can get away with anything.

Contact: Mickey Down Under, Järnvägsgatan 11A, 461 31 Trollhättan, Sweden.

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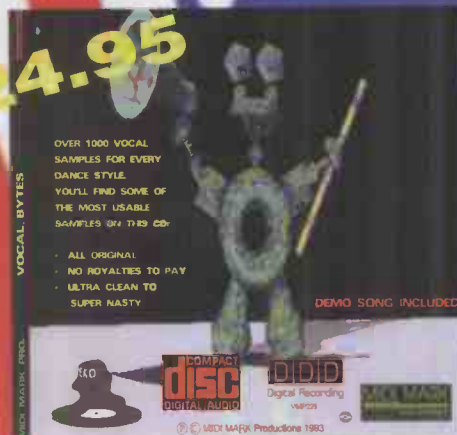
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● Could you please tell me if there are any authorities which offer grants of any kind for young musicians. I would really like to set up a home recording studio but costing things up made me realise that even a simple 4-track studio relying on an audio cassette portastudio with the bare minimum of instruments

and sequencing equipment (for my A500) would be well over my budget. This is especially true as I am interested in producing electronic music, so the need for 'expensive' technology is a must even though they can be bought quite reasonably from dealers and the secondhand market.

Robert Grimes
Wolverhampton

► I know of no specific grants or financial help available, Robert, and frankly, I wouldn't want to be in the queue if there was.

I think it worth pointing out that few people begin their interest in electronic music with an investment of many thousands of pounds. I would advise anyone to start off with cheaper, perhaps second-hand equipment and develop their system step by step over a period of time. This not only obviates the need for spending large sums of money, it also means you are less likely to waste money on equipment you don't need.

Depending on what sort of 'electronic music' you want to get involved with, you could do a lot worse than invest in one of the inexpensive home keyboards produced by a number of the larger manufacturers. There's the PSR310 from Yamaha, for example, and the CD-1 Hyperkeyboard from General Music which is GM compatible. I believe there's also a new range of budget keyboards from GoldStar which might be worth investigating.

Many keyboards of this type have built-in

Letter of the month

Gripe

● I've been a keen reader of your organ for many a year – finding the product reviews first class, interviews and demotakes interesting and music programming articles informative. But this is a gripe letter, and one which I at least hope you will take into some consideration...

The gripe? It's not the product reviews, demotakes or music programming sections – the problem comes in the way the overall feel of the magazine is heading. In the last few months it seems like you have to reach a quota on the number of times the word 'multimedia' is used. Granted, it will be important in the future of music technology as the two begin to marry together, but one can reach saturation usage/coverage and that is what you have done.

Multimedia's biggest downside is all the mindless saturation that's possible – and no one wants that. I enjoy keeping up with all the latest multimedia developments, but in a magazine such as yours the constant presentation of the subject gets tedious. If you honestly look objectively at it you will see that you're trying to hard sell a concept that is not yet ready for such treatment. Progress, updates, features, fine... but I believe that you need to keep a more even balance.

On the subject of interviews... who you interview is your choice, but the trend seems to be going towards the 'hip' and 'fashionable' – in the past you went with a varied selection of musicians (your features on 20th Century Americans were great, as was the interview with Larry Heard, Pat Metheny etc). But now you just seem to be interviewing any bunch of lucky dance acts with a sampler and a record deal; the general attitude being, "Well, we sell records". And then they try and sound pissed off if they get commercial success – yeah right! Their stuff is fine for clubs (Utah Saints & Oceanic being your main offenders), but it grates to see your interviews used as a vehicle more promotion. Would you interview 2 Unlimited? They're in the same league!

How about interviews with William Orbit, Tangerine Dream or the French 'new wave' groups. This doesn't express any preference of mine – they are merely an example of the cross-section of artists you should be interacting with.

Anything 'ambient' seems to have the sun shining out of its ass at the moment and gets rave coverage. I enjoy all types of music, but for the present you seem to have stuck in one mode and decided to saturate it. This cannot be good.

I'd like to see MT get past this and get back to doing what it does best: get beneath all the surface gloss and give us eager readers a nuts and bolts view – not some addition to an already considerable hype machine. If you want to cover Hex or Richard James, fine. But take it apart, don't tell us how wonderful they are all the time.

Sorry to gripe, but this is more important than "your keyboard reviews are crap" type of letters. I hope you consider my points – you have the potential to be the most up-to-date and influential magazine.

Stephanie Stoffrian
Guildford

► I don't feel that "a bunch of lucky dance acts with a sampler and a record deal" is a fair description of The Orb, Speedy J, Elektric Music, Brian Eno, U2, The Listening Pool, ATR, Hex, Oceanic, Rene van der Weyde, Jean Michel Jarre, Utah Saints, Steve Reich, Aphex Twin, Sub Sub, Disposable Heroes, Orbital, Wendy Carlos, Gary Clark... sorry to ramble on but these are the artists who have actually featured in MT over the past few months, and it doesn't strike me as providing saturation coverage of ambient music.

MT's task is to keep its finger on the pulse; to encourage and reflect what excites people during any given period of musical and technological development. Admittedly, right now both multimedia and ambient are buzzwords, and maybe we should be careful how much we use them ("already we are wary of its use and distrustful of its users", said Nigel Lord of the word 'multimedia' in his Editorial, September issue). But they are buzzwords for a reason: we are in the middle of a period in which the torch of exciting innovation seems to have been passed to those artists who operate in these fields – those artists who exploit the creative possibilities thrown up by developing technology with energy and passion, and with such synchronicity that something, indeed, appears to be happening.

No doubt in a frighteningly short time things will have changed – and MT will be there, too. A few years ago, MT developed a reputation for promoting – yes, promoting – house music and its attendant dance spin-offs, and was lauded for being the first serious music magazine to do so. The tone of the interviews has not changed since then, and they continue to be based on professional respect rather than sycophancy, and genuine enquiry rather than gossip. I'm sorry if you detected some "surface gloss" in the Richard James feature. But then, we all know what an outrageous, self-promoting, egotistical and TV-saturated media tart he is...

And yes, we would interview 2 Unlimited. Back in June 1987, MT interviewed Stock Aitken & Waterman. There were some howls of indignation from hardcore Neuronium fans, but in general it was recognised for what it was: the most open-minded, in-depth and downright useful interview with them that you could hope to read anywhere. And that's what you'd get from an MT interview with 2 Unlimited today. Anyone got their 'phone number?

Here's some more artists lined up for MT: William Orbit (just a coincidence, honest); Robert Fripp; Bill Laswell; PM Dawn; Moby; Black Dog; Mixmaster Morris (yes, I know, he's ambient); Sheep On Drugs; The Other Two... OK, you don't like Utah Saints or Oceanic, but I only hope that an aesthetic aversion to an artist never clouds our appreciation of what they have to say for themselves, and that this list reflects our continuing commitment to broad ranges of musical style.

By the way, Tangerine Dream are almost hip again – thanks to the bright sun shining from ambient's ass. If we interviewed them now, would that be hype? PW

sequencers (in addition to rhythm and accompaniment sections) and could, with a little time and effort, be used to produce complete compositions.

If you're looking for a sequencer to run on your Amiga A500 you could check out Sequencer One at £19.95 from Gajits, and I've seen copies of Music-X advertised for under £50.00. Both of these would 'get you going' and could be used as the basis of a complete system. NL

Groan

● Having purchased your magazine for some twelve summers, I was shocked/amazed/horrified to notice the complete lack of any mention of the *Elektric Music* album Esperanto in the September issue. A publication revelling in the name Music Technology should surely have devoted many, if not all, it's pages to this event, coming as it does from the stable of those High Priests of the

genre – Kraftwerk.

The very first Electronics & Music Maker (MT as was) that I bought featured the band, having just released the seminal *Computer World*. I doubt if there has been an issue since that has not mentioned Kraftwerk, and Herr Bartos' offering is most certainly worthy of the same respect.

An in-depth interview is, I trust, planned for the immediate future, and for your convenience I attach the album review missing from your 'End Product' page.

David Shephard
Welling
Kent

► I wouldn't blame anyone for believing this to be one of those 'made up' letters magazines use as a ploy to draw people's attention to the fact that a particular feature is included in the current issue. It isn't; but see page 18 anyway.

Of course, when we do make up letters we make sure they're from readers who actually do buy every

issue and don't bugger off on holiday during August when the said album was reviewed. NL

Groovy

● A thought stuck me the other day: my home studio set up (4-track, QY20, Roland S10, Jackson bass, Aria guitars, Zoom 9000 etc) is technically superior to that of the late '60s Abbey Road.

So how come my demos don't sound like Sgt Pepper?
Anthony O'Neill
Norbury
London

► You don't take enough drugs. NL

Opinions expressed in readers' letters are not necessarily those of the Editor, who cannot be held responsible for their contents and reserves the right to abbreviate letters where necessary.

That was Then

Ye olde worlde
future shock



Above: The Suzuki Omnichord. As the promotional display indicates, the Future was to arrive to the strains of 'When The Saints Go Marching In'. Early customers included Spock, who could be found 'strumming' an Omnichord during those long, dark evenings on *The Enterprise*.

Left: *Great Moments In Techno*, 5: Franz Lambert has a party.

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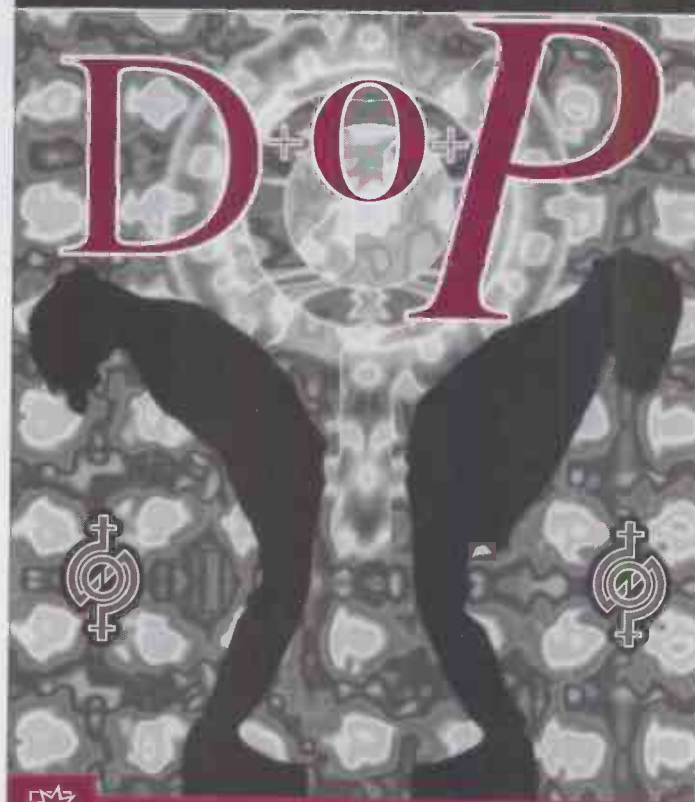
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MT ease

Philosophers down the ages have pondered the eternal questions. Life. The Universe. Why men have nipples. But none of them, until now, have had the opportunity to fill in MT's searching questionnaire. Enter Bluey Maunick of Incognito...

TRAVELLING INCOGNITO

Bluey and Incognito will be playing selected dates around the UK up



to Christmas - keep an eye out for regional announcements. Incognito emerged at the forefront of the UK jazz-funk movement of the early '80s, and Bluey has guided the band with a sure hand through a turbulent decade, notching up hit albums *Jazz Funk* (1981)

and *Inside Life* (1991) plus six hit singles along the way. The latest of these, 'Still A Friend Of Mine', is taken from the new album *Positivity*, released on Talkin Loud.

1 What was the first synthesiser you ever played?

"A Yamaha CS80. A huge son of a bitch which takes ages to program but sounds superb. It's still one of the finest; inimitable and a roadie's nightmare. Put one in a flightcase and you need a crane to lift it."

2 Who is your favourite musical pioneer?

"Stevie Wonder, for obvious reasons. Listen & learn. I recommend Innervisions, Talking Book, Fulfillingness' First Finale and Songs In The Key Of Life."

3 What's the difference between Take That and Stravinsky?

"Stravinsky is my favourite composer, and... this question is begging for a slagging but you won't get one from me, because they both appeal to totally different types of people - for example, me and my 8-year-old daughter. My days of negativity are over; there is room for all tastes."

4 What's the difference between a drum kit and a drum machine?

"One uses chips, comes in a little case just bigger than a shoe box, and the other takes up the whole stage at The Jazz Café but you can eat your chips on it. Look, let's not be silly; one is a sequencer; the other is live, and I prefer the latter, although the drum

machine is a good writing tool."

5 Playing live: why bother?

"Because it's the best f**king feeling in the world..."

6 Which record says most to you about music technology?

"Slave To The Rhythm" by Grace Jones: Trevor Horn and the Sarm posse at their very best - high-tech plus fabulous musicianship."

7 What does the phrase 'multi-media' mean to you?

"Means we can do whatever the hell we like - no rules. Great. eh?"

8 How do you react to hearing a sample of your music on someone else's record?

"Happy if they have credited or paid us; pissed off if they haven't. The only thing worse was when a so-called friend of mine nicked one of my songs and had a hit with it. I couldn't prove it, but I believe in Karma. Keep looking over your shoulder, Ian!"

9 What is the next piece of equipment you would like to buy?

"A Hohner Clavinet, a Gibson Howard Roberts guitar and the new Trace Elliot acoustic amp."

10 Will technology become invisible?

"It already is when used properly. Long live the human touch! Keep up the good work, MT - respect, I'm out. Bluey."

Autumn Zippers

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grief

Having trouble syncing your synths or MIDIing your mother (keyboard, that is!)? Write to Grief, MT, Alexander House, Forehill, Ely, Cambs CB7 4AF.

Q In the June issue Nigel Gooderham writes about a problem syncing a Korg Mono/Poly with his other boxes. He, and others, may be interested in my own solution to this. As you say in your reply, he is less than explicit about what these other boxes are, but assuming some kind of drum machine or sequencer is involved, the following may be applicable...

I have never got around to converting my Mono/Poly to MIDI (mainly because my income won't stretch to it), so I use the Arpeggio Trigger In socket on the back panel and feed a bass drum into it (from a separate Out on my D110).

You need a fairly hefty signal for this to work, so give it maximum output and velocity. Of course, this bass drum or whatever does not appear in the mix. You can construct the rhythm of your arpeggios on the sequencer or drum machine but not the notes. These are determined solely from the Mono/Poly keyboard.

This will work as long as your source of drum sounds has separate outputs from the main mix. At mixdown, this leaves your hands free to twist those knobs with the best of them.

Rob Norman
Edinburgh

A Ah, there's nothing like twisting your knobs with the best of them is there? But thanks for that, Rob. I'm sure all those Mono/Poly owners out there will find it useful. You could apply the same principle to other analogue synths with trigger inputs, too. Hell, who needs MIDI, anyway? IW

Q I recently re-read your terrific article, Microtonal Musings, in MT August '89. I've always been interested in different musical scales such as Arabic, Indian and so on. What puzzles me is that there seems to be programs for this on Macintosh but not the Atari ST. Why is this?

I have an old DX7 and an ST running Cubase. I've just read Scott Wilkinson's *Tuning In* and I'm eager to move into the realms of ethnic tunings. Surely some computer software company has realised the value of a universal synth re-tuneable disk for the ST and created one?

Can you suggest any recent development since the article was written? How can I move forward without buying another new re-tuneable synth?

Hugh Beattie
Clydebank

A Well, Hugh, your letter raises an interesting question – albeit four years late. Microtuning was in vogue in the late '80s and early '90s, but seems to have died a slow death since then – though many instruments still include microtuning facilities and offer the best way of getting into it. The adventurous may be able to create their own tunings using SysEx messages, but this assumes the instrument allows you to alter its tuning via SysEx. I'll bow out here – life's too short.

The MIDI Tuning Dump Standard mentioned in the article was ratified about 18 months ago, but as far as I am aware has not yet been implemented on any instrument. (So why ratify it, guys, if you're not going to do anything with it?) Of

course, there is a way you can use microtones with any instrument – via pitchbend (OK, I never said it would be easy!). You'd have to sit down with a calculator and work out the tunings produced by degrees of bend, then apply them to the notes.

An event editor is essential here. Anyone with Emagic's Notator can use Hyper Edit: set it to pitchbend and you'll have a graphic display of your pitches.

Clearly, this is a process which calls for a certain amount of experimentation. I'm not aware of any disk of tunings for the ST. Most of the work in this area seems to be taking place in the US where they tend to use Macs and PCs.

If any readers are actively involved with, or even remotely interested in, microtuning, drop us a line. That goes for anyone with information which may lead to the whereabouts of tuning disks and the like. IW

Q I'm looking for some information with which I think you may be able to assist. Some time back, MIDI retrofit specialists, Groove Electronics, went into liquidation but shortly before that happened, I believe they were converting the old EDP Wasp monosynths into MIDI-controlled rack-mounted modules.

I understand that this said module is still in limited production from a small company run by one of Grooves' two directors and that this small business is located somewhere in the West Country.

I would be grateful if you could provide the address of this company so that I may get some details and, hopefully, purchase such a unit for my ever-expanding rack.

PS: Is there any chance of providing a full test report/write-up of the remarkable analogue range of Studio Electronics' superb modules in the near future? I understand that they have produced about half-a-dozen models of well-known analogue units based on classic instruments of the day, including the recently-released SE-1, a sort of programmable Mini Moog! Speaking of classic modules, how about the inclusion of the Groove version of the EDP?

Chris da Silva
Southsea

A There's a lot of 'I believes' and 'I understands' here. Where did you get your information, Chris? There are a lot of people who would like to discover the whereabouts of Groove's Neil Nash (not all with the same benevolent intention as yourself). My enquires haven't managed to unearth said West Country company but I'm sure that if any of our readers has any more info they'll pass it on PDQ.

As far as I was aware, the instrument you mention was not a rackmount unit. It was shown once (somewhere!) but never went into production. But I could be wrong.

The Wasp bears a 7-pin socket for connection to another Wasp. If you have or can acquire one of these instruments (try our small ads), you should be able to control it with Kenton Electronics' Pro-2 CV Converter which is £195 plus VAT. Give Kenton a call on 081 974 2475 for more info. Such a nice, helpful bunch of chaps.

As for Sound Electronics gear, it doesn't seem to be widely available in the UK which makes getting review instruments rather difficult. But if you want more info, give them a call on 0101 818776 8104. They may be able to supply you with some write-ups from US mags. We'd be very interested to hear from any readers with Sound Electronics gear. IW

Q At the present time my equipment list is a bit on the short side. Luckily for me this is about to change as I intend investing in some serious gear. I would be very grateful if you could show me in diagram form the best way of routing all my new equipment together with both audio and MIDI cables.

My equipment list will be: an Atari 520STFM running Pro24, JV880, Vintage Keys, Waldorf Microwave, JX1, Juno 60, Alpha Juno 2, Jupiter 6, W30, SH-101, Microverb 3 with a Mackie 1202 mixer going straight to DAT.

I want to use the JX1 as a mother keyboard to control all the MIDI Devices and I am thinking of using a V10 MIDI Thru unit to create a star system. Also, I will be using all of the equipment simultaneously but I do not intend on upgrading to a bigger mixing desk.

I would also be grateful for any info on the Alpha Juno 2, a photo, a rough

idea of cost and an address where I could get my hands on one.

Finally, will the new Atari Falcon run normal ST software as some people say it does?

Steven Payne
Coventry

A Hell! You won the pools, or what? 'Fraid your question is a little too broad. However, in general terms, wiring should not be a major problem. The star network is a good idea - you'll find all the relevant information in *The MIDI Survival Guide* which is £6.95 from PC Publishing on 0732 770893.

Providing a mixer diagram for your mixer would also be rather impractical; a lot depends on what exactly you want to do with your system. But, the shop where you buy it should give you some help and there's always the instruction manual. Basically, it's just a matter of routing the instrument Outs to the mixer's Ins.



But a couple of points for you to ponder. The 1202 will not give you much room for expansion, especially if you want to use the instruments in stereo or use individual outs. Also, I'd suggest that the Microverb may be a little low-end for the mega setup you'll have. I'd suggest looking a little more

upmarket for a more versatile and quieter FX unit.

I'd also suggest you opt for something a bit more up-to-date than Pro24, but that's up to you. You may find you need at least 1Mb of RAM in your ST, too.

As regards the Alpha Juno 2: it's not exactly a classic design and to my knowledge there have been no retro' reviews. MT's original review was back in February '86 - copies are available from our back issues department (0353 668586). Roland (0252 816181) might also have some back info on it.

As for getting your mits on one, look in our Warehouse ads to see if anyone's selling one or advertise for one there yourself. You could also check the main ads where you'll see companies like eXclusively Analog (Chris on 0625 526449 or Tony 0246 208287) and Music Control (0270 883779) which specialise in analogue instruments.

How much to pay for one depends on how many wallies are prepared to pay over the odds - supply and demand and all that. It came out in 1986 at a RRP of £995 so you'll probably be looking at about £400, but personally I wouldn't pay more than £300 for one.

The Falcon will run some normal ST software. Some reports say it will run 70% of ST software but other reports say it won't. Decide what software you can't live without and then see if the Falcon feels the same way about it. ●

Much as we'd love to, we simply don't have the time to reply to readers' queries by phone or individually by letter. Similarly, if you phone us with a query you are more than likely to catch us in the middle of some devilishly tricky operation (such as eating a jam sandwich with one hand while playing Lemmings with the other) so we wouldn't be able to devote the time to you that we would wish. More to the point, most questions involve a degree of research - books, magazines, manuals, massage parlours, phone calls and so on - so many queries couldn't be dealt with on the spot anyway. Contrary to popular belief, we don't know the answer to everything. We answer as many as we can as quickly as we can through these pages, to which end we appreciate written queries - help us to help you and all that.

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No MT, no comment...

Mixmaster Morris & Pete Namlook

Dreamfish (Rising High)
Sabres Of Paradise
Sabresonic (Warp)

Two albums which consolidate the position of the creative DJ in contemporary electronic music. The sheer flexibility of the tools now available to the 'non-musician' – the battery of essentially playback devices built around the turntable and the sampler – enables artists with no traditional musical training to construct works of artistic and commercial merit in their own right. It's a phenomenon that has already made pop stars out of The Orb, and in their wake DJs of the calibre of Mixmaster Morris and Andy Weatherall (who has formed Sabres Of Paradise with colleagues Jagz Kooner and Gary Burns) continue to break new ground with the support of loyal audiences in club and record shop alike.

Morris is responsible for the catchphrase 'I Think Therefore I Ambient', and *Dreamfish* is a predictably free-flowing collage of relaxing sounds, over 70 minutes of music divided between a mere four titles. 'Under Water' typifies the mood: a highly abstract and spacious recording that ought to come as a free cassette with every new flotation tank. In actual fact, Morris has a bit more of the musician about him, with over a decade's experience at the cutting edge of keyboard technology, and the techniques of the DJ have simply dovetailed perfectly into his always experimental style. Significantly, he

met Pete Namlook in Frankfurt en route to a 50th anniversary of LSD celebration, and this collaboration brings together several acidic threads: the post-acid-house ambience of Namlook's Fax label in Germany; Morris' evangelical spirit; and the trans-Europe nouveau-hippy movement currently expanding minds from England to Italy.

Meanwhile, Sabres Of Paradise is already a label, and Sabresonic is already a club, in Weatherall's urban empire built on a series of legendary remixes and residencies and dominated by technologically oriented trance and dub. Exhibiting more of a punk attitude in his wilful

iconoclasm, Andy

Weatherall marks his album debut as an artist with the eclectic zeal of the born DJ. There's a drama and explosiveness to the music that recalls mid-'80s ZTT, but without the sense of landmark state-of-the-artness. Throughout, the demands of the dancefloor hold sway, and a rock-solid beat carries the myriad sounds along.

Since punters have been going to clubs specifically to see top DJs perform 'live' for some time now, it's only logical that record sales should follow. Eno's ambient music seems to have found its time, and to

have found its most suitable protagonist in the unprejudiced chill-out DJ (such as Morris). This is the new psychedelia: a music for inner contemplation that mirrors the '60s and claims to provide a soundtrack to the planet-conscious '90s. Whether Sabres Of Paradise have the teeth to warrant similar comparisons with punk is less certain, but Weatherall is right when he cites the DIY ethic afforded by current socio-technological realities, and the exciting unpredictability that it gives to the music scene. PW



Pet Shop Boys

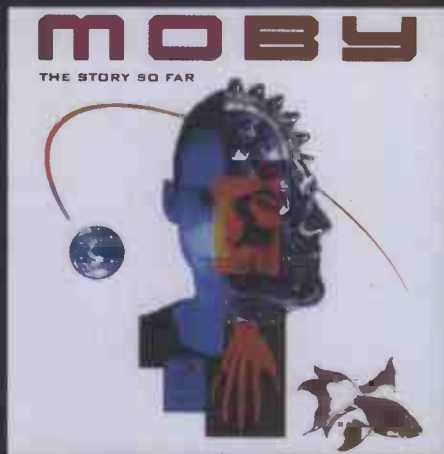
Very (Parlophone)

The last of the great '80s synth-pop duos (excuse me a second, Vince) returns in a blaze of glory – well, a blaze of orange, anyway. What makes them stand out in the '90s is their continuing devotion to the idea of taking the pop song sort of seriously. I mean, there's sackloads of clever irony and slapstick in the lyrics and the arrangements, but above all it remains the work of people who *care*. As well as the recurring themes of gay culture, shot through with tragedy and sardonic camp, the whole of our celebrity-soaked pop society is refracted through these mini-operas, the fiercest *and* cutest menagerie of hooks I've heard in a long time.

You know you're onto a good thing whenever you can invoke Noel Coward's famous phrase about the potency of cheap music. If it's still potent even though you know its cheapness has been expensively designed, even better. Programmer Pete Gleadall has taken Tennant and Lowe's grandiose sketches and fashioned a series of classically ordered masterpieces, so assuredly composed that there's still room for Lowe's trademark, the cheesy, Emulator-driven orchestra stabs, without upsetting the balance. In fact, they provide that final flourish which throws the quality of the groundwork into sharper relief.

House beats get a look in, sure – it would be unthinkable for a pair of club-hoppers like these two to ignore them. But unlike conventional chart fodder which attempts to weld a fashionable rhythm onto a mediocre song, *Very* contains scarcely a single mediocre song. Even the final wry twist – Village People's 'Go West' – is revealed to be the melodic tour de force that nobody ever gave it credit for. Better than Erasure's Abba party, it cuts deeper as it digs in its high heels. Melancholy from kitsch – that's a trick not many get right. PW





Moby
The Story So Far
(Equator/Mute)

A useful compilation of the New York eccentric's releases on Instinct Records between 1989 and 1993, including the notorious 1015bpm peaks of 'Thousand' and the US Top Ten hit 'Go'. Moby has recently signed a long-term deal with Mute.

Autechre
Incunabula (Warp)

Having graced the first of Warp's seminal Artificial Intelligence series of 'electronic listening' releases, Autechre return with number seven all to themselves. The titles are almost irrelevant, their identity scarcely an issue, and such is their confidence that even the dreaded FM synthesis gets a look-in with some brassy DX-type timbres. Essential.



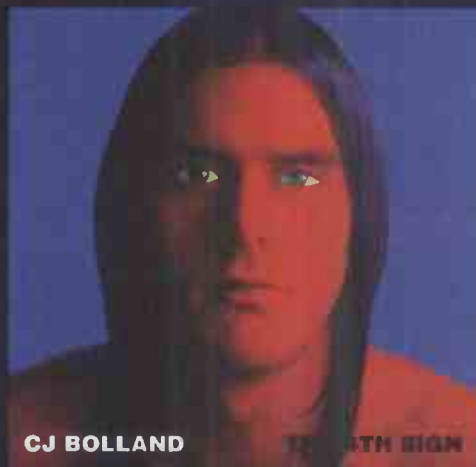
Terminal Power Company
Red Skin Eclipse
(Beggars Banquet)

Programmed sequences collide with grating guitars and growled vocals in the fast lane of a motorway on the outskirts of oblivion. Sort of. The first track's called 'Juggernaut', anyway.

Nicky Skopelitis
Ekstasis (Axiom/Island)



Co-produced by Bill Laswell on his world-shrinking Axiom label, *Ekstasis* pits Skopelitis' understated, funky guitar against a welter of ethnic timbres and only occasionally lapses into muso self-indulgence.



CJ BOLLAND

CJ Bolland
The 4th Sign (R&S)

Sublimely analogue dance routines from Belgium's king of the 303 – linear, polyrhythmic and not without a certain ethereal grandeur.

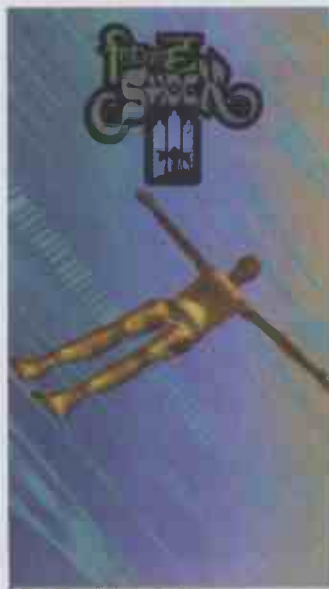
The Cocteau Twins
Four Calendar Café
(Fontana)

The Cocteau's first album since the amicable divorce from 4AD. Melodically and lyrically, it's more distinct than the ethereal musings of yore, but quite at home in these ambient days.

Various Artists
Full On 2 (deConstruction)

Continuing deConstruction's trawl through the international house scene, this is number two in a series which makes rare and import 12-Inches available in a double-CD package. Highlights include Sub Sub's 'Ain't No Love (Ain't No Use)' – not particularly rare now, of course – and CJ Bolland's 'Mantra'.

On Video



Dr. Devious
Future Shock (Prism)

This latest release from Dr. Devious' multimedia bunker of joy is the most successful yet. Is it me, or is it a truism that whilst you can listen to an album for time immemorial, a music video pales after a couple of viewings? Nevertheless, *Future Shock* is, for once, exceptional value – a wealth of video and computer art lending original and varied interpretations to the audio tracks of established artists.

The track selection is so good – The Orb, Brian Eno, Aphex Twin, Future Sound Of London – they could hardly fail, but the increased

investment in audio seems to have inspired a beautiful and rewatchable video. Gimmickry is finally banished, and even the live action bits (notably on Eno's 'Fractal Zoom') are cheese-free. The computer animation accompanying Banco de Gaias' 'Soufie' is the audio and visual highlight, detailing a cathedral of breathtaking geometry and colour. None of the other tracks are far behind, and you'd be well advised to buy this even as a seriously good ambient music collection. This is a video that delivers what it promises, and there should be more like it. The Dr. Devious team is clearly going from strength to strength. *Bruce Hepton*

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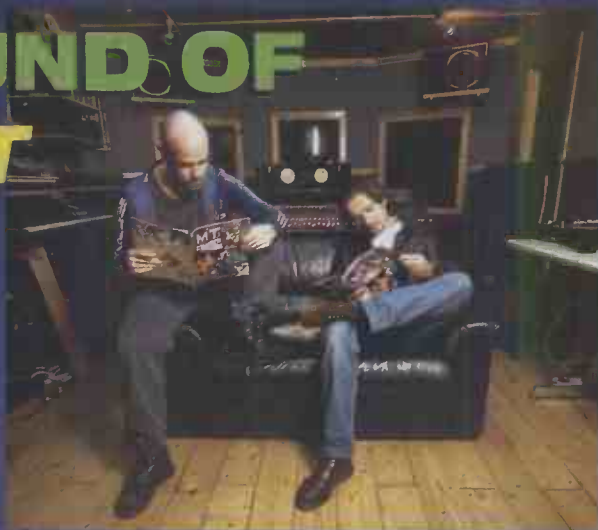
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ROLAND JUPITER 8 £450. SECK 24:2 mixing desk £475. Roland 909 drum machine, £350. TB303 bassline, £150. Casio DA7 DAT player, £175. Chris Maymore rare analogue keys. Everything must go - emigrating. Jimmy. Tel: 031 554 0020 after 9pm.

ROLAND JV30 inc. case and stand, £610. Marshall 8015 150W amp, £380. Kawai Q80, £240. All mint. Simon. Tel: 0332 833780.

ROLAND JV80 multitimbral synth, as new with expansion board worth £250 and memory cards worth £90. Give away price at £1200. Mr Mills. Tel: 0322 554652 (eves).

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ROLAND JX1 good condition plus adaptor and manual, £210 ono. Drew. Tel: 0676 532755.

ROLAND JX3P analogue with SEQ and programmer £250. DX7 £325. Roland W30 workstation with 50+ disks, £500. All with manuals. All ono. Tel: 0222

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ROLAND M64C and Yamaha RAM 4 cartridges for sale, £40 each. Mr PJ Manchester. Tel: 0274 491340.

ROLAND MKS70 and PG800, £750. Drawmer DS201 noise gate, £200. Symetrix 511A noise eliminator, £200. 3 16-channel patchbays, £25 each. Dave. Tel: 0726 870661.

ROLAND S10 excellent condition, semi flightcase, reasonable library, £300. Carlsbro 100 keyboard amp, hardly used, £175. Steve. Tel: 0296 434059.

ROLAND SOUND CANVAS SC155, as new, £375. Casio VZ1, 1 x ROM card, 1 x RAM card, £325. Tel: 0928 566647.

ROLAND U110 module, 2 x cards, £265. Yamaha TX7 (Dx7 module), £195. Tel: 0372 275293.

ROLAND U220, £295. 3x sound cards, 325 each. Roland R8M, £295. 2x sound cards, £25 each. Roland MC50 sequencer, £395. Tel: 0332 841163.

ROLAND VOCODER plus UP330 keyboard with strings, excellent condition, classic sound, Vocodes, voices, guitars, synths etc. Heavy duty flightcase, genuine collectors item. Tel: 021 355 5769.

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YAMAHA CS50 superb analogue synth, off-the-wall Vangelis and Dr Who type sounds. Good condition, £200. Richard. Tel: 0902 343409.

YAMAHA DX11 mint condition, £275 ono. Also Atari ST 1Mb hires monochrome monitor, printer, software and external drive, £375 ono. Roland CR5000 drum machine, £50. Gibson V3 guitar in red with flightcase, £450 ono. Tel: 0532 750089.

YAMAHA DX100 excellent condition, £100. Rowland. Tel: 0243 80697.

YAMAHA DX11 synth with manual and service book. Excellent condition, fully flightcased, £400 ono. Tel: Stoke-on-Trent 0782 396666.

YAMAHA DX7 11D boxed with stand and manual, excellent condition, £475. Also Ibanez Blazer bass Custom Series, £95. Tel: 0803 294009 eves. 0803 872193 day (Steve).

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→ octave full size keys, vgc, £180.

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YAMAHA DX7 Mk1, never gigged with flightcase, £250 ono. Christine. Tel: 091 416 5883.

YAMAHA DX7S MkII, excellent digital programmable synth with 1000's of sounds on Atari disk plus 2xRAM worth £70 and 1xROM still boxed and in superb condition. Atari Cubase and Notator, £450 ono. Marcus. Tel: 0273 594197.

YAMAHA EMT10 sound module, £80. Julian. Tel: 0905 724662.

YAMAHA PQ5 expander/sequencer good condition, £165. Andy. Tel: 0773 608923 after 7pm.

YAMAHA PSR4500 MIDI built-in 4-track recorder, good condition, £340. Graham Mckeye. Tel: 0670 505766.

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ALESIS MMT8 boxed, £120. Carol. Tel: 0656 723020.

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ROLAND MC50 mint, boxed, £400. Yamaha CS50, £200. Richard. Tel: Wolverhampton 0902 343409.

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AKAI S950 sampler, perfect condition, home use only, 8 outputs etc. Plenty of samples available plus Notator or Cubase thrown in, £800 ono. Marcus. Tel: 0273 594197.

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1MB SIMMS chips to upgrade Atari 1040STE computer to 4Mb. Bill Lawrence L500 pickups, Floyd Rose trem system or copy of. And anyone interested in swapping MIDI song files? I have about 700. Tel: Leeds 0532 311990.

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ANY RACKMOUNT sampler for around £500. Also wanted: Casio CZ-series editor/librarian for Mac (write to me Paul). Also wanted: Casio or Yamaha MIDI wind controllers. Tel: 021 509039. Tomas Mulcahy, 13 Courtlands, Silversprings, Cork, Ireland.

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SEQUENTIAL CIRCUITS Prophet 5 synth preferably MIDI. Reasonable price paid - cash waiting. Andy. Tel: 071 737 3762.

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TASCAM 060 I'll pay £300 plus Simmons SPM 8:2. Tel: 0708 825481.

TB303 BASSLINE must be in good condition with or without manual, £300. Will collect. Paul. Tel: 091 267 1339.

YAMAHA CS30 synth wanted urgently. Must be model with built-in sequencer. Cash waiting. Nigel. Tel: 0706 815912.

YAMAHA TX81Z swap for my Cheetah MS6 with manual. Mick. Tel: 0203 301193.

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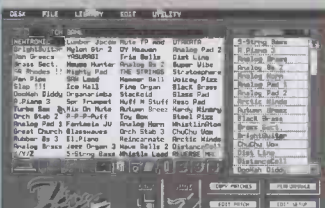


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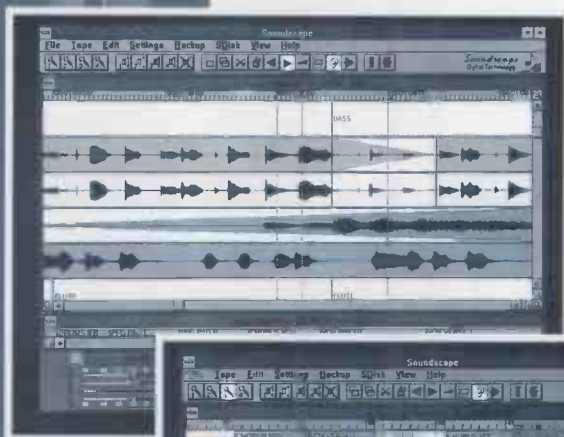
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