Transoniq Hacker

The Independent Newsletter for Ensoniq Users

Ensoniq to be Acquired by Creative Technology

Acquisition Focuses on New OEM Opportunities

Malvern, PA, December 10, 1997 — Ensoniq, a world leader in audio technology, today announced that is has entered into an agreement to be acquired by Creative Technology Ltd. (NASDAQ: CREAF). Creative, based in Singapore, is the world's leading provider of multimedia technology for the personal computer. This strategic acquisition will enable Ensoniq and Creative to extend their reach in the PCI audio segment of the PC OEM and PC motherboard markets. Creative's corporate headquarters and primary manufacturing are based in Singapore, with sales, distribution and research and development being carried out though an extensive, global network of subsidiaries located in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Ensoniq is a key innovator in the design and development of PCI audio microchip technology and has strong brand recognition associated with its line of electronic musical instruments.

"We are extremely pleased to be joining forces with Creative," said Albert Charpentier, president of Ensoniq. "This merger allows us to further continue our focus on the OEM audio business — an area where we have already made major inroads, including the introduction of AudioPCI(tm) earlier this year. Creative's vast resources and its global distribution network will allow us to best leverage our technologies and expand our goals of providing high-quality products and strong support to our customers at the most cost-competitive price points."

Ensoniq also provides Creative with other technologies that are highly complementary to Creative's recently announced Environmental Audio(tm) technology and its future Sound Blaster Live!(tm) product. line.

"This acquisition is a win for both companies and it's a major win for our current and future customers!" said Sim Wong Hoo, chairman and chief executive officer of Creative. "Ensoniq sells to a number of OEM customers including Hewlett-Packard and Gateway. Ensoniq's success with its PCI audio solutions fits perfectly with Creative's current and future product plans in both the OEM and retail marketplaces. We are very excited about the great people, products and technologies that Ensoniq brings and the opportunities this merger presents.

Ensoniq's musical instrument division will benefit from Creative's dedication to high-end audio products," said Charpentier. Since its inception, Ensoniq has been a leader in the professional musical instrument market, providing high quality keyboards, effects processors, and digital recording systems. "Ensoniq has long enjoyed a strong reputation as a company that brings innovative ideas to music keyboards and other musical products at great prices," said Sim.

Per the acquisition, which was signed on Tuesday, December 9, 1997, Creative will pay up to US$77 million in cash for Ensoniq. The closing of the transaction is subject to the receipt of regulatory approval.

The acquisition is not expected to have any negative impact on Ensoniq's operations. All executives and staff will stay in place and continue to operate from the Malvern, Pa. facility.

Founded in 1982, Ensoniq Corporation is a leading producer of audio and sound technology products. Well-known in the professional music industry for 15 years for its production of keyboards, synthesizers, effects processors, and digital recording systems. Ensoniq's custom IC design expertise has made the company a technology and manufacturing leader in sound solutions for OEMs. Ensoniq's ICs may be found in PCs, arcade games, karaoke machines, and amusement park rides. Ensoniq's AudioPCI(tm) sound boards are featured in many of the top OEM PC systems including: Gateway, Hewlett-Packard, Micron, Quantex, and DEC. Ensoniq is located in Malvern, Pa. and employs about 200 people.

(c) 1997 Ensoniq Corp.

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RND (♪♪)

Ensoniq News

Yet *more* interesting times — the big news is on the cover. Again, we'll be following this situation as it unfolds. For right now, it looks like potentially pretty good news for Ensoniq's keyboard fans.

Hacker News

We're still doing a little tweaking on the *Hacker* layout. Hopefully, this issue's Interface will be slightly easier to read and the front section will have a little bit more article material.

Basement tapes news... Correction: In Issue #148 Steve made a reference to Roshan and Shivani's music label as "Copy Cat Music." Of course, what he really meant was "Cosmic Cat Music." No hidden meanings here — just plain ol' typing faster than you're thinking.

And one of our long-time Basement regulars — the Bros. Ryan sends the following: "We regret to announce the dissolution of The Bros. Ryan due to lack of patronage."

Third Party News

We'd like to welcome a new advertiser — **AudioWrx,** provider of "memory conscious multisamples." Check out their ad in the Booteeq, and check out their free demo files on their web site.

Hypersoniq — New Products

Syntaur Productions
Releases New ESQ-1/SQ-80 Sounds

In response to the large numbers of Ensoniq ESQ-1 and SQ-80 synths still in the hands of working musicians, Syntaur Productions has released a brand new set of patches for these decade-old workhorse synths. Since many of these keyboards are landing in the hands of hip-hop and rap artists, Syntaur's Soundset 5 has taken a heavy slant toward those genres, including a multitude of deep and low synth basses, funky worm-type sounds, wah-wah sounds, and more. Also included are the most requested additions to the ESQ's sound library: acoustic and electric pianos, organs, and some drum sounds, such as TR-808 kick, snare, and cowbell. The new Soundset was programmed by Sam Mims.

Soundset 5 is available from Syntaur Productions, 500 W. Prairie Ave., Eagle Lake, TX 77434; call (409) 234-2700 or (800) 334-1288. The set of 40 new sounds costs $19.95, and is available in a variety of disk formats.

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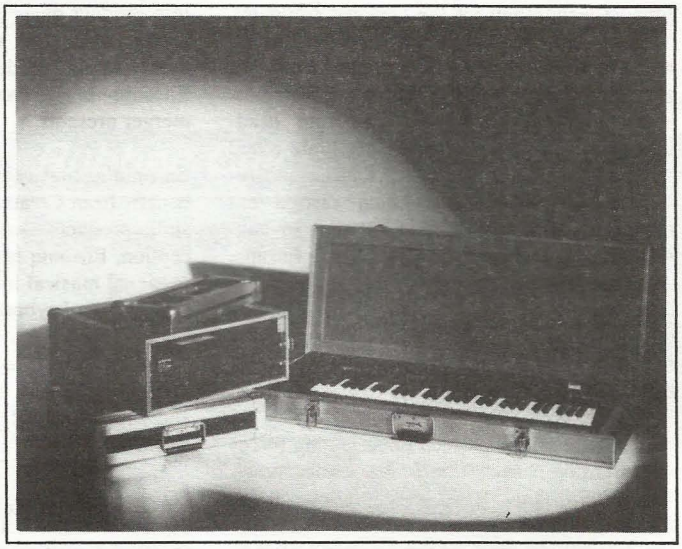

Shown: 4-space rack with EPS-16 PLUS module, 2-space rack, Eagle-I VFX-sd case

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Where the Rubber Meets the Road...

Ensoniq Disk Tools for Windows

Pat Finnigan

Product: Ensoniq Disk Tools for Windows.
For: EPS/16+/ASR/rack variants, TS series.
Price: $59.95 & shipping.
From: Rubber Chicken Software, 714 5th Street SE, Willmar, MN 56201, Phone: 320.235.9798 (voice).

Well, gang, we *finally* get our hands on what has been in the works for probably the past year. All the veteran loopers have prowled the net and siphoned off all the shareware utilities for wave conversion, disk building, parameter editors, etc. We've surfed the wee hours waiting for the traffic to subside before we logged on and forked over all that dough to our local ISP-types, and still we lack a unified app to do all the myriad things our Malvern loopy-boxes are capable of (and put us through). We're forced to work at the floppy level and fragment our SCSI drives editing and replacing files on our arrays. That is, until the emergence of this long-awaited application.

At long last Rubber Chicken Software has released *Ensoniq Disk Tools,* which, to date, represents the MOST complete set of unified utilities for the PC platform. Conceived from SoundVert 1.03 (one of those *.wav-to-Ensoniq shareware utils we pulled down from some obscure site at 4:45 in the morning), this app is, at twice the price, a MUST- HAVE for any Ensoniq sampling owner. Let's dig into this before we get ahead of ourselves...

The Roses

Disk Tools runs fine on Windows 3.1, 3.11 (WFW) or 95. It's actually capable of editing parameters directly from disk (no loading into the sampler, editing, and resaving to disk). TS owners, rejoice: no more "edit" files are generated. It will format EPS/16+/ASR floppies. Where the program *really* shines is in its SCSI disk management utilities...

Backup and restore commands don't write disk images; they write a file-by-file copy from host drive to destination drive. Consequently, backing up from one drive and restoring to another defragments the target drive. This may not sound like a big deal, but in addition to getting defragged, since the backup is individual files in individual directories, you can move both files and directories around with ease, an operation impossible with many backup utilities. Don't expect your macros to work properly after you've moved them around...

Formats and writes an appropriate Ensoniq OS to SCSI drives! This may not seem like much, but consider the ramifications — now that we have the tools to format SCSI drives without attaching them to a Malvern box, we can, at long last, ditch the floppy drive and replace it with a SCSI drive! No more cabling a SCSI drive to your 16+ or ASR! I've personally pulled the floppy from my ASR and dropped in a Syquest 135 cartridge drive, and talk about convenience! Zip drives plop right in without a hitch. Garth even has drives and kits to do exactly this. At long last, we're on an even hardware keel with Emulators. And with ZIP drive prices (bare) falling below $100 (after Iomega Rebate), we're, like, there, dude...

EDT handles single- and multi-wave conversions (VERY handy when doing a multi-sampled instrument) and can batch the process. *Very* cool. Then you can assign wavesamples to key ranges with a simple click and drag. Well done, Garth. A Bank Builder is included which allows custom banks to be created without connection to a Malvern box. *Real* time saver.

The Thorns

Won't run under Windows NT 3.51 or 4.0 (4.0's Hardware Abstraction Layer doesn't allow disk ROM BIOS calls). Can't specify loop points in *.wav files, only 0 to 100% of total wave. Won't run on an Apple PC Compatibility card (same as the NT issue). Doesn't come with Giebler's *Ensoniq Disk Extractor* (to write *.eft TS images to floppy) — must be a licensing thing. Garth does point out the URL to download the file, so minor point. *[Ed. — Disk Tools now supports EDT and EFT files (these are TS files) fully.]* Doesn't open *.ede, *.eda, *.gkh, *.ins and other Giebler-type files automatically — you'll have to manually "associate" the file with the app from the "Open With" 95 dialog box. Only gotta do this once, so another minor point. It *will* convert one file format to another without doing this from the "Convert to File Image" dialog box, so use this instead.

Interface and dialog boxes are typical VB (*Visual Basic*) layout. Would've liked a larger work area and typeboxes, but that's only because I use a 20" Trinitron and have astigmatism. Not a true "Sample Editor" — a "Sample Parameter Editor" is more accurate. Autoexec.bat and config.sys files must be edited if using IDE and ATAPI CDROM drives (about 98% of all PC's utilize these types of CD-ROM drives). Not a big edit for experienced PC users, but downright scary for rookie PC'ers. To RCS's credit, a detailed explanation is given with step-by-step instructions, but an automated batch file to run this would've been friendlier...

The Deal

This is the absolute "biggest-bang-for-your-buck" software on this blue ball. It requires your computer to run Windows 3.1 or 95. Anyone using an ASR/16+ with hard drives will definitely want to use the SCSI features of the program. It's a tribute to RCS's fairness that you could buy 5 copies of *Disk Tools* for what a SCSI controller card for your PC will cost to manage your ASR/16+ hard drives. (Oops, and your TS hard drives.) *EDT's* roses FAR and ABOVE outweigh its thorns, as there's nothing remotely close to it at this price range...

This is not *Alchemy* or *Sound Forge:* it's not going to give you shaded menu bars and colorful radio buttons and twisty-knob icons to fiddle with. And it's not going to set you back $500+ beans, either. What it will do is clear the fog between your PC and your Ensoniq sampler and allow free communication between the two. *EDT* is "Terje's *EPSm* Mac editor for the PC crowd." And to RCS's credit, the program never crashed. In a VB WIN 95 environment, this is sterling. Not one freeze or blue screen of death...

Documentation is good, and the inclusion of a tutorial for the most common operations is most welcome. And the support is tremendous: I received no less than *three* updates to *EDT* during the course of this review. RCS plans to add further TS support to the program as well, so I don't feel comfortable reviewing this as a finished product. Just like Ensoniq O.S.'s, *EDT* is a constantly evolving application that will only get better and offer more features as it is updated.

And, as Garth points out, upgrades are free to registered owners for life. If that's not a closer, you probably gripe about having to rub yourself daily with an alkali substance. And although this program isn't "squeaky clean," RCS's operation and support of this program certainly are. So what you'll give up in whistles and bells is more than offset by the level of support you're gonna get from these guys. Remember, RCS supports Ensoniq gear *exclusively*. They aren't getting pulled around by supporting *any* other manufacturer. All resources are devoted to Ensoniq gear only.

That's why this program is a winner...

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

Teaching an Old Sampler New Tricks

Tom Shear

When sampling first appeared on the scene people were so in awe of it, so floored, that you didn't have to do much aside from throwing some sampled sounds into your mix to impress people. The novelty of the whole thing was almost enough to keep listeners interested. However, the listening public is a fickle lot, and what was once considered high tech and groundbreaking is now tired and cliched. The bottom line? Simply using a drum loop "as is" doesn't cut it anymore. What to do? Drum loops sound great, but you want to do something different... something that is going to stand out from the crowd. This month, we'll look at a few tricks that can help you do just that.

One of my favorite tricks is to divide a loop into several equal-sized chunks. This simple action is an extremely useful trick in several ways. I accidentally discovered it because I wanted to use a loop in a song, but, since live drummers aren't quite as strict as a sequencer timing-wise, part of the loop would drift out of time with the rest of the sequences. My solution? I made four copies of the wavesample, mapped each one right next to the other (and adjusting the ROOT KEY on the PITCH page so that all the loops played at the correct tempo), and then, on the EDIT-WAVESAMPLE page, I went in and adjusted the SAMPLE START and SAMPLE ends so that the beat was now divided into four pieces. Wavesamples 1 and 3 were the downbeats and 2 and 4 were the upbeats. Now, I could go in and trigger the samples, (1-2-3-4) so that the beat was recreated, but now by quantizing it, my timing error was corrected.

However, this trick is also useful in a much more exciting way... now I wasn't restricted to the loop as it was played originally... since I had the beat divided into four parts, I could vary which parts played when, while maintaining the original funky feel. I could play fills with the snare or have the snare drop out entirely. So many possibilities! Of course, this is only the most simple way of doing this. If you choose to, you can divide it into as many parts as you want to. Simply take the total size of your wavesample (that big number to the left of the SAMPLE END percentage) and divide that number by the number of chunks you want to divide your loop into. The resulting number will be the size of each chunk and will tell you how much you must increment the SAMPLE START and END parameters for each chunk. Obviously, the more chunks you chop your beat into, more possibilities become open to you in terms of varying your beats. The truly hardcore sample heads among you may even choose to do what Ensoniq did on a few of their drum loop disks, and isolate each individual hit in a beat and map it across the keyboard for even more possibilities.

Another favorite trick is to feed loops or drums through the Waveboy Resonant Filter disk. If you own an EPS-16+ or ASR-10 and you DON'T have this disk, you are missing out on what is probably one of the coolest add-ons available for your sampler. I don't know where along the line engineers who worked for musical instrument manufacturers decided resonance wasn't needed anymore, but I sincerely hope all the people involved in that decision were taken out back and promptly shot (with squirt guns, of course). Although resonance is generally associated with spacey synth sweeps and funky bass sounds, it can really add a unique sound to drum loops.

Here, you have several options. The only real key is that you want your filter FREQ value set fairly low... most likely all the way. You can then set your MOD SRC to whatever you choose, and boost the amount of modulation all the way up to +99. Probably the most flexible source is the MOD WHEEL. By assigning this as your source, you have a huge amount of control over how the loop is affected. You can do a slow, smooth sweep... you can slowly move the filter from open to closed... you can boost the modwheel only on the downbeats... the possibilities are staggering. And, by experimenting with different resonance and ENVELOPE values, you can really manipulate things into pretty wild territory. Even better is when you actually play a drum beat by hand on your favorite drum kit sample... now you can assign VELOCITY as a modulation source and you can hear some *really* strange, *really* funky rhythms. I use this one all the time.

These are just a couple ways you can give your drum loops a more interesting and unique sound. There are obviously tons more, but a guy's gotta have a couple of his own tricks, you know?

Bio: *Tom Shear was the much-talked about "sixth Spice Girl" — "Old Spice."*

Call For Writers!

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

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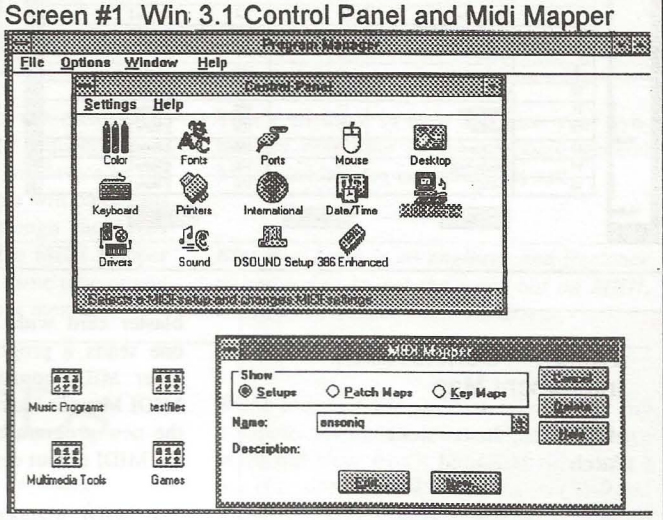
The Mysterious MIDI Mapper

Bob Lang

Wouldn't be great if Ensoniq synthesizers conformed to the general MIDI standard instrument layout? The general MIDI standard defines each patch thusly — Harpsichord is always patch #6, Acoustic Bass is #32, Trumpet is #56, etc. The general MIDI standard allows musicians to exchange MIDI files with others that used different synthesizers and have the song sound similar on each synthesizer. Of course you could copy the sounds around in your Ensoniq memory until you had the general MIDI instrument layout, but that is rather time consuming!

Screen #1 Win 3.1 Control Panel and Midi Mapper

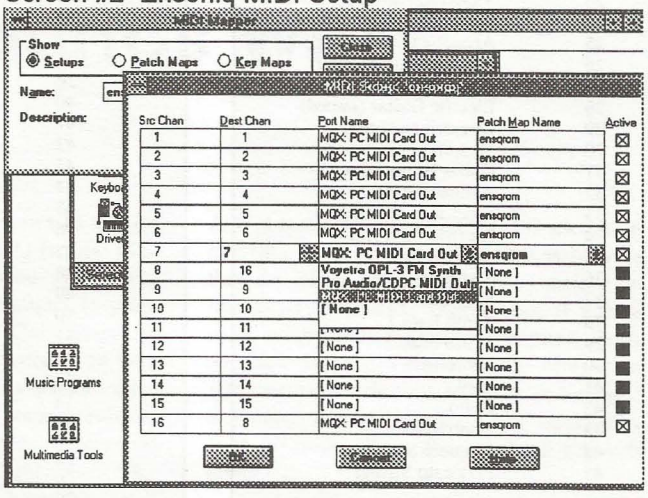


For all of you using IBM compatible personal computers with synthesizers that do not conform to the general MIDI standard for instrument and drum layouts, help has arrived. Part of the general MIDI standard for instrument layout is shown in **Table 1** and the standard for drums in shown in **Table 2**. The general MIDI standard is great for exchanging MIDI ".MID" files with others that do not use the same brand synthesizer.

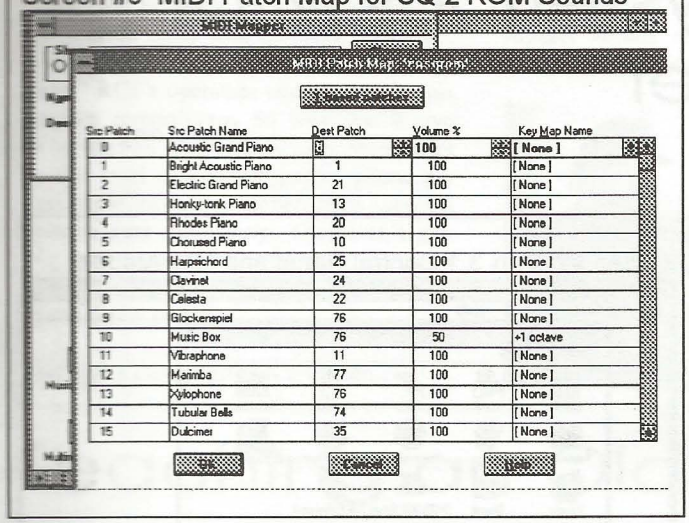
Synthesizers that conform to the MIDI instrument standard will all play MIDI files that conform to the standard so that they sound approximately the same. I say approximately because the reason one chose the X synthesizer was because of its excellent grand piano sound so the file will not sound the same on a Y synthesizer, but at least it will be using the grand piano sound. Of course one could copy the sounds around in memory until the synthesizer conformed to the MIDI standard instrument layout, but what a pain! There is a much easier way.

If you are using Windows 3.1 or later, you already have it! The trick is a little icon buried in the Windows Control Panel called the MIDI Mapper as shown in **Screen #1**. The MIDI Mapper works by setting itself between the WINDOWS sequencing program like CAKEWALK or MUSICTIME and the MIDI output device like an MPU401 card or Sound-

Screen #2 Ensoniq MIDI Setup



Screen #3 MIDI Patch Map for SQ-2 ROM Sounds



Screen #4 MIDI Key Map for Ensoniq SQ-2 Drums

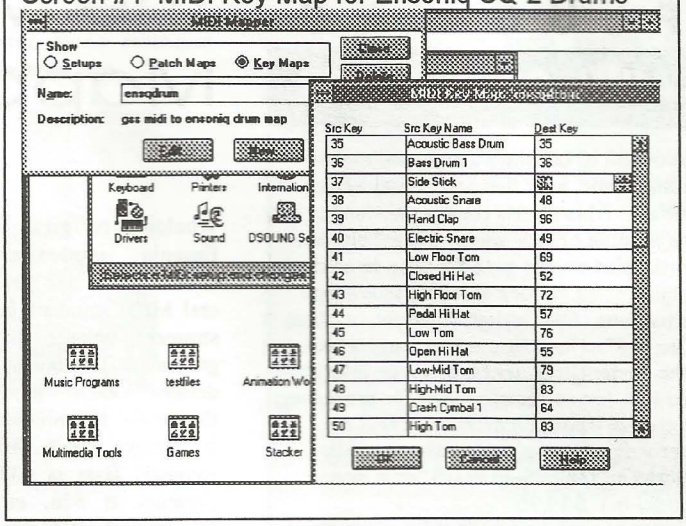


Table 1 – General MIDI Instrument Map

MIDI Patch	Instrument Sound
0	Acoustic Grand Piano
1	Bright Acoustic Piano
2	Electric Grand Piano
3	Honky-tonk Piano
4	Rhodes Piano
5	Chorused Piano
6	Harpsichord
7	Clavinet Chromatic
8	Celesta
9	Glockenspiel
10	Music Box
11	Vibraphone
12	Marimba
13	Xylophone
14	Tubular Bells
15	Dulcimer
16	Hammond Organ
17	Percussive Organ
18	Rock Organ
19	Church Organ
20	Reed Organ
21	Accordion
22	Harmonica
23	Tango Accordion
24	Acoustic Guitar (nylon)
25	Acoustic Guitar (steel)
26	Electric Guitar (jazz)
27	Electric Guitar (clean)
28	Electric Guitar (muted)
29	Overdriven Guitar
30	Distortion Guitar
31	Guitar Harmonics
32	Acoustic Bass/
33	Electric Bass (finger)
34	Electric Bass (pick)
35	Fretless Bass
36	Slap Bass 1
37	Slap Bass 2
38	Synth Bass 1
39	Synth Bass 2
40	Violin
41	Viola
42	Cello
43	Contrabass
44	Tremolo Strings
45	Pizzicato Strings
...	...

blaster card with MIDI output. Whenever one sends a program change command or other MIDI command to be mapped, the MIDI Mapper intercepts it and changes it to the new program change before sending to the MIDI output device.

The MIDI Mapper allows one to do five types of mapping: Channel, Port, Patch, Key and Volume. But before one can use the MIDI Mapper, it must be configured. The first thing to do is create a Setup. In this case the Setup is called ENSONIQ is created for an Ensoniq SQ-2 synthesizer and is shown in **Screen #2.** The Setup defines the channel mapping and the hardware the MIDI Mapper will output information to. It also defines the name of the patch setup that will be used for each channel. Since the Ensoniq SQ-2 only receives on 8 channels only 8 are defined in the setup file. The Ensoniq is connected to the MPX PC MIDI card, but there may be other devices on your computer to connect to the MIDI Mapper. For example, another SQ-2 could be connected to the Proaudio MIDI output on the other eight channels.

The second thing to set up is the patch maps. In **Screen #2** a patch map called ENSQROM is referenced. Screen #3 shows how the ensQrom patch map is set up. Each of the 128 general MIDI standard sound patches is mapped to a sound patch on the Ensoniq. For

Table 2 — General MIDI Drum Map

MIDI Key	Drum Sound	MIDI Key	Drum Sound
35	Acoustic Bass Drum	59	Ride Cymbal 2
36	Bass Drum #1	60	High Bongo
37	Side Stick	61	Low Bongo
38	Acoustic Snare	62	Mute High Conga
39	Hand Clap	63	Open High Conga
40	Electric Snare	64	Low Conga
41	Low Floor Tom	65	High Timbale
42	Closed High Hat	66	Low Timbale
43	High Floor Tom	67	High Agogo
44	Pedal High Hat	68	Low Agogo
45	Low Tom	69	Cabasa
46	Open High Hat	70	Maracas
47	Low/Mid Tom	71	Short Whistle
48	High/Mid Tom	72	Long Whistle
49	Crash Cymbal 1	73	Short Guiro
50	High Tom	74	Long Guiro
51	Ride Cymbal 1	75	Claves
52	Chinese Cymbal	76	High Wood Block
53	Ride Cymbal	77	Low Wood Block
54	Tambourine	78	Mute Cuica
55	Splash Cymbal	79	Open Cuica
56	Cowbell	80	Mute Triangle
57	Crash Cymbal 2	81	Open Triangle
58	Vibraslap		

example general MIDI standard sound patch for music box is 10 which is mapped to patch 76 (new bell) on the Ensoniq SQ-2 ROM sounds. In addition, the music box is also mapped to play notes one octave higher and one half as loud on the Ensoniq SQ-2. You just have to try to find the best match for the general MIDI standard sound.

Finally the last type of MIDI mapping is the key mapping. In **Screen #3** we saw the use of the +1 octave key mapping. One may set up other key mapping as well. Key mapping is especially useful in defining a standard drum set. **Screen #4** shows how the general MIDI standard drum layout can be mapped into the drum map of the SQ-2. A new key map called ensqdrum was set up and would be referenced on **Screen #3** for sound patch #126 (MIDI standard Drums) on channel 16 which would be mapped to Ensoniq sound patch #81 (Top Forty Drum Kit). Thus when drums were assigned to instrument patch #126 playing key #39 (MIDI standard hand clap) in the software sequencer, the MIDI mapper will cause the Ensoniq to use instrument patch #81 and play note #96 (SQ-2 hand clap).

This transformation is shown schematically in **Figure 1.**

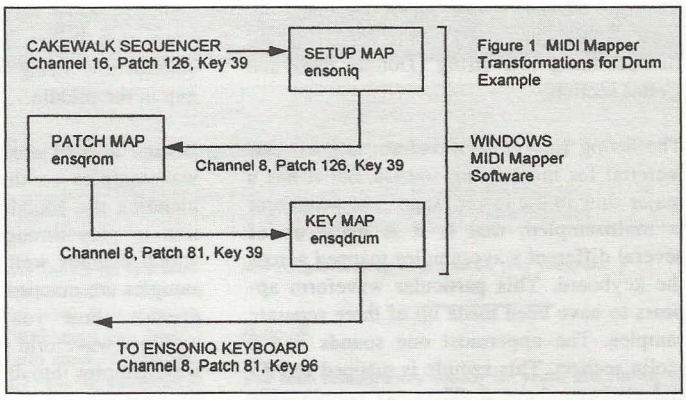


Figure 1 MIDI Mapper Transformations for Drum Example

Once the MIDI Setups, Patch Maps, and Key Maps are configured, then go into the WINDOWS sequencer program and set the MIDI output device to the Microsoft MIDI Mapper. This will force output from the sequencer through the MIDI Mapper. Do not try to use the MIDI Mapper and the hardware port at the same time or you will get a "device in use" error message.

That's all there is to it and now your synthesizer conforms to the proposed general MIDI standard for instrument layout!

Bio: Bob Lang is an engineer and freelance writer trying to get the word out on MIDI, music and computers to the masses.

Ensoniq, MACs & CDs

Mike Jennings

I've seen a few questions about this in past *Hackers,* but never happened to catch if anyone ever printed the definitive answer. Just in case, I'm sharing mine.

As many of you Mac users know, Macs are pretty aggressive about identifying and attempting to "mount" CD-ROMs as soon as they're inserted.

This is pretty obnoxious when you have an Ensoniq box, a CD, and a Mac on the same SCSI bus. You try to insert a Mega-Super-Duper Monster Sample Library into the CD-ROM drive, and the Mac asks you if you want to format it (!?) or eject it.

So to use an EPS CD on a system like this, you are forced to disable the default Apple CD-ROM driver and restart the Mac. Then, to use it for Mac or audio stuff, you have to reinstall the driver and restart, again.

I hate restarting the Mac. The faster your Mac, it seems, the longer it takes to restart.

The Proper Way, Alas

The *proper* way to deal with this would be for Ensoniq (or Terje or Barry — I'll pay for it!) to write a "Foreign File Access" module. These modules work with Apple's Foreign File Access extension, and they are what allows Macs to so gracefully mount audio CD's and CD-ROMs in non-Mac file formats. This would be a cool trick, to be able to directly access the data from the Mac desktop for editing, translation, disk management, etc. But even if all it did was make the Mac ignore it, that would be great, too, because the disk utility I use (EPSm, http://fysmac04.-uio.no/eps.html) can access the CD anyway.

The Expensive Way

In the meantime, I have made do with two CD-ROM drives and an off-the-shelf CD-ROM utility. I use the fast drive inside my computer for multimedia etc. The other drive is an old slow Apple CD-ROM drive that I got cheaply. I use FWB Software's CD-ROM ToolKit ($79, http://www.fwb.com/ci/pr/cdt_pr.html) as a replacement for the Apple CD-ROM driver. This software lists all of the CD-ROM drives and burners on my system, and allows me to enable or disable whichever ones I want.

So I enable the CD-ROM drive in my computer and leave the older external drive "off" (unchecked). This way, the Mac ignores anything inserted into the external CD-ROM drive and lets me use just the internal as a Mac drive.

Hacker Reinitialization — SQ/KS/KT/E-Prime

How Sounds Work

Part 2: Strings

Mark Clifton

This is the second part in a series of articles aimed at the intermediate SQ-family (KS/KT/E-Prime) programmer who is familiar with basic sound design techniques (a graduate, one might say, of the Clark Salisbury School of SQ), but may be unfamiliar with some of the lesser known tricks that can spice up sounds and make them more realistic. Each month I'll present a useful, real-world sound patch that uses special techniques (like realistic vibratos or wind instrument pitch blips) that can be applied to other sounds.

And in true Cliftonian fashion, I'll attempt to explain exactly how those techniques do what they do. These articles will focus mainly on imitations of acoustic instruments. If you're more into esoteric synthesized textures, check out Jack Stephen Tolin's "Wave Mutilation 101" series, which contains some of the most demented methods of destroying waveforms ever to spring from the mind of a psych major.

For this month, we'll look at the patch "Low

Strings." This is a patch that I created for Latter Sounds because I was in need of a full, rich-sounding low string (Double Bass and Cello) section.

The String Ensemble waveform is good raw material for most string sounds, but it has a major flaw in the lower range. The waveform is multisampled, that is it is made up of several different wavesamples mapped across the keyboard. This particular waveform appears to have been made up of three separate samples. The uppermost one sounds like a violin section. This sample is mapped to F#5 and all keys above it. The next sample adds what sounds like violas and maybe cellos and is matched very nicely to the wavesample above it so that there is very little change in timbre when you play between them. The sample extends from F5 downward to G3. On the rest of the keys below it is the double bass sample. And that's where the problem begins.

To start, solo the String Ensemble waveform by itself with no fancy modulation. Start playing a chromatic scale downward starting from C4. Sounds nice, huh? A very usable mid- and low-range string sound. That is, until you hit F#3 and wham!, the double bass sample happens. Just try playing a musical phrase between the two wavesamples and you'll soon find out that it's like impossible to create a smooth sound with that bass sample pounding on the low notes. Now don't get me wrong — both samples are good and usable. It's just that the difference in sound between them can be rather jarring. I knew that there was no way I could get a smooth low string with that kind of timbral gap in the middle.

What I needed was a way to remap the two wavesamples so that they overlapped, thus blending the sounds and allowing each section to play through its full natural range, which extends well past the ranges that the samples are mapped in. And although the SQ doesn't allow you to remap the samples within a waveform it does allow you to shift wavesamples into different note ranges.

When you tune a waveform on the SQ-1 (using Oscillator Tuning page), the samples it contains are shifted to a new note range to cause the change in pitch. In other words, if a waveform is tuned an octave higher than the original pitch, the key ranges of the wavesamples will shift downward so that they are mapped an octave lower. Instead of bending the pitch of the wavesamples, the SQ just moves them all to a different location. This is done to keep the sound consistent and prevent some of the weird sonic artifacts that can creep in when the pitch is bent too severely.

When a modulator, however, is applied to pitch (on the Pitch Mods page) it will bend the pitch without shifting the wavesamples. This is done by altering the sample rate of the wavesample so that you can bend the sound as high or low as you want without intruding into the key range of another sample.

Using these principles, I tuned the sounds so that they covered the key range that I wanted them to and then used an envelope to bend the pitch into tune. If you'll take a look at Oscillator two of "Low Strings*" you'll see how I tuned the lower double bass sample until it covered the range from C2 (the lowest note on the SQ-1 keyboard) to A#5. Since this put the sound massively out of tune, I used Envelope 1 with the Fine tuning parameter to bend the pitch until it was in tune. This took some tweaking to get it right, but not bad, considering. Then I scaled the sound (on the Keyboard Scale/Range page) so that it faded out in the upper register where some noisy artifacts start to appear as a result of the pitch bending.

The technique is basically the same for Oscillator three except that I used different tuning values in order to isolate the viola/cello sample. When both oscillators are played together you get seamlessly overlapping bass and cello sounds that play smoothly up the keyboard. Oscillator one was put in to cover up some of the sonic artifacts resulting from the bending of the pitch and also to add more fullness and consistency. This particular patch was created on an SQ-32 Voice. The "Viola Sect" waveform is not available on the plain bread-and-butter SQ-1 but you can still get a nice realistic sound by replacing this waveform with the "String Ensemble" wave.

This technique can also be seen used in the patches "Tarkus" (TH #86) and "Sabre Saw" (#66) by Jim Grote and in "Sam's Piano" (#64) by Sam Mims. All three are VFX/SD-1 Hackerpatches but they transfer nicely into an SQ-1. Have fun shifting those wavesamples. But always remember this — if you have a dog, don't shift them too high. Trust me, I found out by accident how much good ol' Flem hates beat frequencies.

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

SQ/KS/KT/E' Prog: Low Strings*

By: Mark Clifton

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	On	On
Wave Class	Expan	String	String
Wave	ViolaSect	StringEns	StringEns
Delay Time	000	000	000
Wave Direction	Forward	Forward	Forward
Start Index	00	12	12
MODSCR	Off	Veloc	Veloc
MODAMT	-	-09	-09
Restrk Decay	26	26	26

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	-1	-2	+0
Semitone	+00	-04	+04
Fine	+00	+28	-24
ENV1	+00	-99	+99
LFO	+02	+02	+02
MODSCR	Off	Off	Off
MODAMT	-	-	-
KBD Ptch Track	On	On	On
Glide	Off	Off	Off
Glide Time	00	00	00

ENV1	1	2	3
Initial	-	00	00
Peak	-	00	00
Break	-	00	00
Sustain	-	99	99
Attack	-	00	00
Decay 1	-	99	99
Decay 2	-	99	99
Release	-	99	99
Vel-Level	-	00	00
Vel-Attack	-	00	00
Vel Curve	-	Linear	Linear
Mode	-	Normal	Normal
KBD Track	-	+00	+00

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	38	36	37
Noise Rate	40	40	40
Level	24	24	24
Delay	59	59	59
MODSRC	Off	Off	Off
Wave	Triangle	Sine/Tri	Sine/Tri
Restart	On	On	On

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	2Lo	2Lo	2Lo
Filter 2	2Lo	2Lo	2Lo
FC1 Cutoff	022	022	022
ENV 2	+70	+70	+70
FC1 KBD	-29	-29	-29
MODSCR	LFO	LFO	LFO
MODAMT	+11	+11	+11
FC2 Cutoff	036	039	036
ENV2	+46	+46	+46
FC2 KBD	+36	+36	+36
FC1MOD-FC2	On	On	On

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	56	56	56
Peak	99	99	99
Break	86	86	86
Sustain	72	72	72
Attack	08	08	08
Decay 1	61	61	61
Decay 2	87	87	87
Release	77	77	77
Vel-Level	46	46	46
Vel-Attack	06	06	06
Vel Curve	Convex	Convex	Convex
Mode	Normal	Normal	Normal
KBD Track	+00	+00	+00

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	67	67	67
Peak	99	99	99
Break	92	92	92
Sustain	84	84	84
Attack	21	21	21
Decay 1	75	75	75
Decay 2	66	66	66
Release	30	30	30
Vel-Level	26	26	26
Vel-Attack	13	13	13
Vel Curve	Convex	Convex	Convex
Mode	Normal	Normal	Normal
KBD Track	+00	+00	+00

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	70	74	70
Boost	On	On	On
MODSRC	LFO	Off	Off
MODAMT	+04	-	-
KBD Scale	+00	-99	+65
Key Range	-	A4#-C7	C2-D4#
Output Bus	FX1	FX1	FX1
Priority	Med	Med	Med
Pan	+00	+28	-28
Vel window	>000	>000	>000

HALL REVERB		
FX-1	45	(Note: Modwheel
FX-2	25	increases reverb.)
Decay Time	38	
Diffusion	54	
Detune Rate	36	
Detune Depth	14	
HF Damping	46	
HF Bandwidth	99	
LF Decay	+11	
MOD (Dest)	FX1-Mix	
BY (MODSRC)	Modwheel	
MODAMT	+99	

The Interface

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

Hello everyone,

I've recently downloaded a demo FX library for the **ASR** that was originally distributed, I believe, by Prosoniq. It is dated '94. I enjoyed the effects immensely and wanted to purchase them. The readme file included with the download said to contact Frederic Schelling. I've tried with no response. I also e-mailed Prosoniq and they informed me that they had no products for the ASR.

I wrote Garth at Rubber Chicken to see if he had any ideas and he explained that these effects were no longer available because of possible issues of copyright infringement on the behalf of Waveboy and/or Ensoniq.

Some of these effects sound very cool and I'd love to be having at them on my ASR keyboard as well as rack unit. I own all of the Waveboy effects and would hate to see anybody's rights infringed upon. So please, with the best intentions, if anyone purchased these effects when they were available please contact me to see if we could work something out.

Sincerely,
Luis Resto
lresto@earthlink.net

[PF – Luis: Duly noted and posted. Readers?]

*[TH – We're not really clear here on just exactly what your situation would be with regard to copyrights. I don't believe there was any sort of "recall" of product that was shipped, so if you find someone who, in good faith, simply purchased a product and now is willing to resell it to you, probably no one is going to come after you. On the other hand... *you* know what the history of this little item is – and if someone wanted to make an issue of it, they certainly could. Probably the best thing you could do is to give ol' Waveboy a call and just explain the whole deal and see what they say.]*

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – I agree. Sounds like a good answer.]

[Garth (chickenEPS@willmar.com) – Actually, all we know for sure is that they aren't available anymore because they stopped being distributed. For a full story, check our RCS web site – www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/prosoniq.html. In a nutshell, there were copies of Waveboy's effects, but there were also 16-Plus effects-type versions for some ASR effects (could have been very useful for 16-Plus owners), and some other combinations of reverb effects.]

[TH – And in case anyone has doubts about the actual piracy involved here, we've just had a note from someone who'd rather remain nameless that quite a discussion on this whole sorry tale (complete with some interesting comparison test results) can be found at the Oakland archives. Check out the link on our "Related Sites" page.]

TH –

I have an **EPS**, SCSI, and an extremely old 64MB Winchester Hard Drive that still works, but sometimes gets confused. I therefore bought a used DAC/Syquest 44MB MO drive which worked for a while but suddenly refused to co-operate and now sits here useless.

I notice that the EPS SCSI board has a 24-pin connector, my Winchester Hard Drive and the Syquest have 50 pins, and a standard PC SCSI Hard Drive has 39/40. Is it possible to use PC SCSI drives with the EPS and if so, do you have a wiring diagram to do this? Also, do you have a wiring diagram for the Syquest/Winchester type buss? I bought the EPS and Winchester used about 15 years ago, and they came with a hand-wired 25-pin 'D' connector to 50-pin SCSI connector. It has never been totally reliable and I wonder if it is because the wiring is a bit iffy.

I currently have V 2.35 on floppy, 4X Expander, SCSI and 8-outs. Is my OS worth upgrading?

Any information or pointers to other sites would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Gareth Magennis
gareth@datman.demon.co.uk

[PF – Gareth: You MUST upgrade the O.S. to 2.49: it's SOOO far superior to earlier spins it's a given. The other issue is your ROM version. Ensure it's 2.40. If not, call Ensoniq and request the 2.40 ROM's. As I've said before, O.S. 2.49 with ROM V. 2.40 allows you to boot from SCSI ID #0, use SCSI drives 1 Gb and larger, and allows selectable interleave when formatting (which is a load time saver)...

SCSI is SCSI, whether it's a PC, a Mac, a NeXT, a DEC, whatever. There are different SCSI protocols (SCSI1, SCSI2, SCSI3, differential, etc.) but the EPS performs famously with SCSI-1 or SCSI-2 50-pin devices. A standard PC IDE drive has 40 pins – this is not a SCSI device. As cheap as SCSI drives are nowadays, I'd bag something in the 160-750 Mb range. As Mac computers use SCSI drives that are almost 100% EPS-compatible, any pull from a Mac LCII and above is an ideal candidate. If you're used to working with a 60 MB Winchester drive, I'll GIVE you a Seagate ST1096 5-1/4" 65 Mb SCSI drive for shipping. but you'll get more bang for your buck bagging a 250-500Mb drive from a local source. As the smallest capacity new SCSI drive is 2.1 Gb, it's WAY overkill for an EPS.

Yes, I've experienced the very same problems with a custom cable from the DB-25 port on the EPS to a 50-pin Centronics connector. As it turns out, the EPS SCSI expander is NOT internally terminated. What this means is you'll need to terminate the SCSI adapter with a DB-25 to DB-25 terminator at the back of the EPS, as well as the SCSI hard drive (remember, any SCSI chain must be terminated at its beginning and its end). Usually, SCSI hard drives ship with a series of 2 or 3 terminating resistor packs on the drive controller (usually orange or black resistor packs near the ribbon connector).

But yes, ditch both the Winchester HD and the Syquest, bag a used 160 Mb or larger hard drive, check your termination, and get ready to rock. Don't be self-conscious about your EPS; in my humble opinion, that's the best sampling keyboard for the bucks you could ever buy (or can still pick up used). With the SCSI expander and the OEX-8, that's as rocking a box as the $5500 new Emulators. Everybody thought the Kurzweil 250 was the hotbox when the EPS was introduced: with 21-voice polyphony (compared to the Kurzy's 10-note polyphony), a total of 10 outputs with the OEX-8 (equalling the Kurzy's optional output board), it's no wonder Kurzweil was purchased by Young Chang.

No need to defend your box – it speaks for itself 10 years later, and still outmeasures all but the most esoteric of new samplers. Keep us posted on your progress...]

Hello all.

I've been reading away silently for years, and putting my head above the parapet now with a serious problem. I recently upgraded my electronic piano from a Yamaha PF-1500 to the newer P-150. One feature of this is the built-in amp and speakers, which makes for quick play.

Unfortunately, I am suffering very obtrusive digital noise sounds whenever I play the **SQ-1+** through the piano speakers. The noise is not there when the SQ-1+ plays through another amp, and also the noise is not there at the SQ-1+ headphone socket. Before blaming the piano, note that other instruments play fine through it.

My thought is that there is a missing/broken ground connection in the back of the SQ-1+, and I am going to open up the back when I get a chance. My question is: has anyone had this problem (and solved it)? Does anyone know already which blob of solder to touch up?

I note that the SQ-1+ is earthed (grounded) through its mains lead, unlike those other instruments which sound okay with the piano. The other amp is also earthed, while the Yamaha piano is not. I don't know if that is related to the problem. There was no difference when I disconnected the mains earth lead from the SQ-1+.

Looking forward to any comments.
John Gray,
Glasgow, Scotland
JJGray@compuserve.com

[PF – JG: What you've going on is a gain structure anomaly – the SQ-1 is sending out a hotter signal at times than the PF-1500 can handle. BTW, what's the purpose of routing the SQ-1's outputs into an electric piano, anyway? Besides, the possibilities of ground loops in your configuration is more than suspect to cause the "buzz" you're experiencing...

Ground is a relative term: is this chassis ground, earth ground, digital ground, analog ground, what "ground" are we referencing? Typical config is to lift the grounds on the input (keyboard instruments) which may or may not have a ground lead attached on the mains connector. Then the amp is grounded, hopefully earthed. But get all your inputs summed at a central source. Don't try to plug one keyboard's outputs into another unless you've got all those low-Z luxuries of lifting the ground, inverting the phase, grounding either side of the mains to center, etc.

The issue here is not only the grounds, or the fact that you're tying analog outputs of one keyboard to another, it's the ground potential of ALL the pieces with respect to one another. This is key. It won't mean much now, but you'll hear it again. And Again. And Again...

Sum ALL outputs to a CENTRAL source, ensure Central is grounded (earthed) and can switch on two ways (the dual-position "ON" switch to ensure you're effective reversing the "hot" leads WITH RESPECT TO one another), and low-Z your stuff if possible. Low-Z stuff is a balanced (not hot or ground) 3-wire signal that is equal across BOTH signal lines, AND shielded by a third ground lead being referenced to chassis ground (which should NOW be earth).

Given these "complexities," you should be able to diag-

nose the "Buzz" problem, reconfigure/reconnect all the components in your system to "earth" ground potential, and isolate your signal lines and signal ground from "chassis" ground" and to "earth" ground.

If this sounds altogether too mystifying, bag "The Sound Reinforcement Handbook" from Yamaha by Hal Leonard (HL 00500964). It's $34.95 (US), but it's a veritable compendium of professional audio in around 415 pages. All truths are espoused in this book...]

[TH – An earlier version of this letter with some rather colorful language appeared on the web for a short time. Bill has since said that, while the feelings were sincere (and he's feeling MUCH better now, having expressed them) that they didn't really serve much purpose being posted.]

Hi,

Let me preface my comments by stating that the Hacker is great, I subscribed to it for the past three or so years and have received great advice and knowledge.

I went to the music store here in Vegas to order an expander for my MR-76 and the dealer informed me that Ensoniq was going to drop the MR-76 series and faze it out. He said that the new head or president of Ensoniq was quoted saying that he wanted the company to only sell keyboards in the 1200 to 1600 dollar range and anything more expensive was something he didn't want Ensoniq to be involved in the future.

I started with the EPS and then the EPS Plus, then the ASR-10. I even bought a TS-12 and when Ensoniq stopped development on that I bought 3 MR-76's to be used by me and by the Circus Circus Hotel where one has been used 14 hours a day for the past year without a major hitch.

Ensoniq changes direction like a fart in the wind. Instead of developing the ASR-10 they bring out a new model X that is useless to ASR-10 owners. I finally gave up on that and bought a Kurtzwell 2500 rs that can read any zip drive, has built-in sounds, and offers 128 megs of RAM for samples. Why couldn't Ensoniq do the same? This 2500 rs makes the ASR-10 look like a mickey mouse watch against a Rolex.

Still, I bought an MR-76 with the hope that they would improve some things. Maybe a SCSI port. Naaa. Maybe more memory. Naaa. Maybe concentrate on one thing for once and develop it to its potential. NAAA.

Well, all I can say is I'm history, as far as Ensoniq is concerned, and I'll be preaching this sermon to anyone who asks.

I wish you good luck, Hacker. But you'll probably be replaced with a Japanese manual.

Bill Callanan, Las Vegas, Nevada
BCallan369@aol.com

[TH – Well, thanks for the kind words about the Hacker...

It's pretty hard to put much of a positive spin on Ensoniq dropping the MR keyboards... but I do have to say that I think this is really being driven by the marketplace. There are scads of keyboards coming out of everywhere. It reminds me of the the ol' "Hi-fi amplifier market" – there used to be these little niches where some quality manufacturer could make something pretty special and survive just fine. Then the technology got to the point where, hey, they ALL sound great. Now, perfectly fine amps are being cranked out by the shipload and they're really a commodity item. Ensoniq can not survive in a commodity market – they're just not the size that that requires.

We're still trying to figure out where this puts the Hacker. We're certainly going to keep covering these critters for as long as there's interest – hey, we still print Mirage and ESQ articles when we get 'em – but we've also got to match our long-range plans with the market. (When's the last time you picked up a copy of High Fidelity magazine?) Right now, we're still not sure what Ensoniq's plans are. From what we hear, the company itself is very healthy – thanks mostly to their soundcards. They may find some new niche in the keyboard market. Or not. We'll all know more as the next few months unfold. Interesting times...]

[PF – Bill: I, too, am depressed at the 180 Ensoniq has turned. By the same token, it just makes those older keyboards that much more valuable (or worthless, depending on which side of the tracks you're standing). I'm getting pulled both ways: there's nothing easier and friendlier to use than the Ensoniq interface, but as Eric points out, companies like Roland, Korg, Yamaha, etc., have caught up to the same level and functionality (as you've discovered with your Kurzy) while at the same time driving the cost down to the point where Ensoniq couldn't compete. I've heard they're migrating into the $1K-$1.5K market, too, so we'll have to see...

But that doesn't mean all my Ensoniq gear is now worthless. I still wouldn't trade it for any of the new stuff out there. And you CAN get an expansion board from just about any Ensoniq dealers out there – my dealer has 3-4 sets of all the cards in stock. It still hurts though, doesn't it...]

[VonKrogh@aol.com (Derek) – I just gotta say it!

May Ensoniq do whatever has to be done to stay alive in such a hard yet small market (except from that soundcard thing perhaps). I'd really hate to see such an innovative company disappear and make place for the Akai 4500xxl deluxe with quick-access-to-pre-defined-sample-length functions.

Still, if they're healthy, why do they behave so... nervous?? Why is the ASR-X a completely redesigned techno-dj-tool for the European market with about a quarter of the functions of 6-year-old ASR-10? Is it true that the programmers of the old models left Ensoniq? And if so, why is that??

I have no idea how Ensoniq products sell in the USA but they've never been very big in Europe to my knowledge, so I wonder what the ASR-X is meant to be. I understand that developing hardware is much more expensive than things like the audio pci, but then why give up hope with existing models so quickly, even risking reputation as fx specialist? (You can read it in every second review – "The onboard effects sound great, no wonder as Ensoniq has a long tradition in....")

Now they're even taking risks at PARIS which is obviously one of Ensoniq's biggest hopes – I plan to buy it the day they remember to ship some over to Europe. But now I'm being told that it has no MIDI!! In times with low price software from Emagic or Steinberg, all having at least some sort of eq or pseudo dsp performance, who would buy a software without MIDI for such a price, even if they give you 10 hardware controls for free?

I'm really upset about this one as I completely focused on buying PARIS this year and getting rid of syncingsequencigrecordingmixing chaos, now I'm being told that PARIS will somewhat sync to external MIDI software – yeah, somewhat!

Still, I'm hoping that after getting rid of most of their products Ensoniq will now really focus on PARIS, make some money, and in thirty years we'll have the ASR-10+ :-) I'd really like that! What do you say?]

[PF – Derek: All I can say is that it appears Ensoniq is betting the farm on Paris. And without a MIDI sequencing environment (like Cakewalk Pro Audio or Digital Performer/Studio Vision Pro), no SMPTE striping or reading (like Cakewalk Pro Audio or Digital Performer/Studio Vision Pro), and no audible audio scrub features (like Cakewalk Pro Audio or Digital Performer/Studio Vision Pro), they might as well drop the "P" from PARIS, because without the above features, it's anything BUT a professional solution...]

[TH – There may be something we're missing here... The Hacker is going to be covering more on PARIS and hopefully some of these issues will be addressed.]

[TRWEBBS@aol.com (Tim Roche) – Hi Hackers. I may be off-base on this, but here goes... Flame me if you must.

I'm all for change and moving ahead and "Vision" and all of that crap, but "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" I'm referring to the ability to make KB's that are "light years" ahead of anything else in its class. I'm also of the opinion that it's "Paris" that has hurt Ensoniq, not the "Market for KBs." Ensoniq has been SO successful in the last 12+ years, doing what they do best... keyboards. Well, "Paris" is now over budget, (and in my opinion) over priced, and way behind schedule. Given that, I think it's "Paris" that should get the AXE, not the MR's.

I feel that what Ensoniq does not need to do to "stay alive" right now, is to do what they're doing right now... and that is to drive their "loyal" customers (and newbies as well), away by confusing the daylights out of 'em. KB Customers got them where they are today, by buying the products. Sure, they're GREAT products... but not if nobody bought them. In years past, Ensoniq had been the one, single "constant" in the musical instrument market. MAKE IT BETTER... "They" asked us what "we" wanted, and then they "gave" it to us. Nobody else did that. What more could we have asked for? Well, it does appear that they're abandoning ship, as well as that philosophy... I just can't believe it. Pinch me...and tell me "It ain't So!"

And btw, if they're gonna have a website, they should try to keep it at least semi-current. It might help amid all this unnecessary confusion. All I know about Ensoniq's future plans, I get from reading this here Hacker. I just visited Ensoniq's web site, and still nothing is mentioned about any of what I've been reading here, or about stopping KB production. I'm left with the impression that they tried to do this behind our backs, and we just happened to find out about it, and now we're a little bit mad. Well, if I'm wrong, then what the heck gives? Ensoniq's still saying on their website, that the MR's current O.S. is 2.10, and it's not. It's 2.11. I know it's not an earth-shattering upgrade, just a maintenance revision, but that's not the point. If there is such a Drastic change in the way Ensoniq plays the game now... then why all the questions? Why all the secrets? And most important, Why all this confusion?

Lately, my local (ever so friendly!) Ensoniq dealer gets Ensoniq's news from me well in advance of any news (if any) he ever gets from Ensoniq. He asks me what the current OS is? I haven't seen a factory rep in town in over a year, and it didn't used to be that way. I remember when I informed my dealer I wanted to purchase the Flash sample option, he knew nothing about it... (price, or availability), and yup!, my dealer only found out from me what's been going on at Ensoniq recently. That just ain't right.

Just my opinion on this very disturbing thread...

Now, having said all that, I'm still in agreement that ANY Ensoniq KB is better that its relative competition, and I'm still a happy camper with my Mirage, ESQ-1, and now outdated MR. However, if Ensoniq continues their newfound "blind to the loyal customer" attitude, then that scenario will very easily do an about-face. There won't BE anymore Ensoniq KB's, and we'll all be playing Korgs again in no time, and Ensoniq will have gone back in time, only this time, selling recording equipment in some far off 3rd world country!

Sorry, I can't afford Paris right now, I already bought an MR, and wanted an ASR, but am now re-thinking my position. So, I'm with Bill on this one. Ensoniq's CEO needs to step back and think just what the heck they're doing to us.

Like I said before, "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" I'm NOT slamming Ensoniq... they're doing it themselves.]

[PF – Tim: I happen to agree with you on all of your points. I certainly hope PARIS works out...]

[L Vandenberg (ljvdb3@ucr.campus.mci.net) – Ensoniq's failure to push ahead with keyboard technology in lieu of Paris is disappointing, given how impressive, how admirable, their product offerings have been during the last ten years. The Ensoniq interface has been unbeatable. Beyond the great boards, I have come to appreciate the Ensoniq effects devices. The latest, the DP Pro, is absolutely excellent. Now I am told that the company "is no longer in the effects business." This is a real shame. The DP Pro is, in my view, as good as Lexicon, or better. Clearly, huge investments of time, talent and money have gone into developing and producing these products, and clearly Ensoniq has a loyal musician customer base. The question is: is the new management team at Ensoniq a visionary one prophesying a wholly integrated digital future, or a bunch of nattering fools who have squandered their past, missed their opportunities, alienated their customers and sullied their future? Somebody said that keyboards have become commodities and that Ensoniq can't compete, that soundcards have kept the company healthy. What is more of a commodity than a soundcard? Long term viability there is pretty dubious. I have put many thousands into Ensoniq gear and will continue to support the company. I may purchase Paris. But there are many choices Ensoniq has made in the past couple of years that have made me question my loyalty.]

[TH – Soundcards can certainly be a commodity – but they're a LOT easier for a small company to produce in large enough quantities to stay in the game. It's not just simply what is a commodity and what isn't – numerous factors determine just how much "girth" a company has to have before they have a chance with a particular commodity. Technology can sometimes give a small company enough of an edge to have a shot – but if the technology matures across the board...

*And, it's not *certain* that Ensoniq is leaving the keyboard market – they're evaluating their place in it. We'll have more news as we find out. And – we'll have more info on PARIS as we find out... let's not get too carried away before anyone's even had their hands on one.]*

[Rick Lerch (mongoose@ptd.net) – So you'll know, and I don't know how up-to-date this is for you guys, but I e-mailed Ensoniq about quitting keyboards. I was kind, really. On 11/18, I got a response from Bert Neikirk, Ensoniq Technical Support, stating that "While some products have been discontinued, we're not getting out of the keyboard business!"

Does this do anything for ya?]

[PF – This just in: The latest version of Paris software now supports SMPTE time code. Other features soon to come are more tracks, more plug-ins, more features, more FX, etc. AND they are working on the Audio Scrub features. So I hereby recant my earlier posting, and pronounce PARIS a true professional non-linear DAR indeed. After placing Ensoniq in harm's way by judging their new book by a beta cover I have done disservice not only to prospective customers, but to the individuals who are working those 14-16 hour days in Malvern fighting the good fight. So it's premature to say that PARIS doesn't offer this or offer that as it's still evolving. After all, Pro Tools took two years to get straight...

And Ensoniq IS listening to owner input: the question here is "What direction is the keyboard market moving?" So I hereby ask Malvern to re-release the TS-series here in the states. It's still the most intuitive, easiest to learn, powerful wavetable/sample player every designed. And with the terrabytes of the Malvern sampling library, nothing else even comes close. I'll even take it with the Russian character set...

My apologies to all parties for these misunderstandings. Hopefully, any omissions have been corrected and added to the PARIS thread. Craig Anderton's review of PARIS here in the Hacker should prove to be a VERY interesting read. BTW, your subscription IS current, isn't it?]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – It is good that there are loyal customers out there. I feel that there is a lot of very intense rumor out there also. I think rumor stems from not knowing. The "I'll just make up something and tell my friends and enemies that it is true" attitude seems to be the right thing to do when you are discouraged or upset, but as we can see, one person (it took a LOT of courage and integrity I might add) had to retract his statement.

Let's try and remember that even though we care, big business is big business. There are guys here who put in 15 hour days to get features added to products and there are guys who spend as much time figuring out what new products should be made, guys answering calls and e-mail and many other things. It takes time to decide what is going to work and what is not. The best thing is to be patient and wait for real answers.

I heard people saying that the products they already own are now garbage because Ensoniq no longer makes them or stopped making something. Some people are saying the same thing about their ESQs they own because of the MR situation. What? This doe not make sense. Make music and have fun! Let the business people do the business and we should be making music and having fun!

Someone said the K word. They make great products just like Ensoniq does. He also has spent a very large sum of money for that Kurz and must be a genius because it has a high learning curve. We all like different features and different sounds. We all have different uses for our products too. No one can please everyone and we seem to be at an interesting crossroads. Let's ride it out and see what we get. Until then, enjoy the products you own and learn more about them and upcomming ones. That is what the Hacker is for. There will be more articles on MR or ASR family and definetly on Paris. Take a deep breath and say.....Aaaensoniq – whatever will be will be.]

TH –

I recently got my **ASR-10** stolen... However, as I am not getting a new one I will be now building a system around a computer along with a couple rack mount synths, using this Cakewalk program and possibly Samplecell.

Is there a system enabling me to use my (ASR-10s) sounds and sequence data (that was NOT stolen)? Are the ASR-10 files (seq) Standard MIDI files?

Jon at firstjon@hotmail.com

[PF – Jon: With the recent developments we've seen so far, this is probably the first of a slew of questions addressing the same issue. I know Gary Giebler's ASR-SMF converter will translate ASR-format sequences into SMFs and vice versa. It'll set you back about $40, but that's pretty cheap considering the man-hours you've spent assembling your sequences...

*As far as a PC app that'll translate ASR sounds into *.wav files, AWAVE'll do it, Rubber Chicken's Ensoniq Disk Tools' do it. Point your browser to www.soundcentral.com. You'll find all kinds of info to help you on this quest. The ASR does NOT write an SMF to disk – it uses its own proprietary file format.]*

Dear Hacker,

Is there a way of fitting a fixed hard drive inside the **ASR-10** rack? I hear IBM drives are recommended. I have used Syquest 270's with some luck and some problems. JAZ drives won't work.

Now I need something stable for the road gigs.

Thanks a lot,
Soren K. Jensen
sound-v@inet.uni-c.dk

[PF – Soren: See Rubber Chicken's homepage at http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps. They've got a retrofit Zip kit available for $250 US that fits into the floppy drive bay. The only issue is that you've got to have Ensoniq Disk Tools and a PC to format the Zip Carts. Check that URL for details...]

Yo!

I have an **ASR-10** (running O.S. 3.53) that I have daisy chained via SCSI to a Zip drive and a CD-ROM purchased from Ensoniq about a year ago.

I am experiencing the following problem...

Zip drive and CC-ROM work intermittently... Sometimes I can boot from the Zip drive, sometimes I can't... Sometimes I can pull sounds from the CD_ROM, other times I get a error message saying "disk not installed or disk not responding..." I have changed SCSI addresses (staying above #3, but not #7). I have made sure that I am properly terminated. During my experimentation, I have swapped each of the devices to the "end of the daisy chain" and terminating accordingly. The Zip drive has a termination switch and with the CD-ROM I am terminating externally. The CD-ROM drive is very hot to the touch, I called Ensoniq and they said this was normal.

Are the SCSI cables bad? How can I ascertain that I am not having Zip compatibility problems? Is the temperature of the CD-ROM too hot?

Any help much appreciated...
Dave Cruikshank
DCruikshank@avoice.com

[PF – DCruikshank: I've never known CDROM drives to get that hot, but depending on what brand, type and other assorted info, Ensoniq is probably right here (jeez, they should know, shouldn't they?).

I've never trusted "active" termination or other termination solutions other than a terminating resistor block connected to the end of a SCSI chain. Many SCSI drives have a "termination enable" jumper that connects termination to the drive. However, every drive I used with my ASR (and my Mac) that uses this type of termination has given me problems, data read errors, or simply locks up a machine.

Are you sure the CDROM drive isn't internally terminated? Open it up and take a peek just to be sure there aren't any resistor packs inserted near the 50-pin connector. If there aren't any, connect the external terminator to it, leave it camped out at ID #4 (to keep "Direct-Dialing" of CD navigation enabled), and connect the Zip drive between the ASR and your CDROM drive at an ID between 0 and 3.

I've had very good luck running a Syquest 135 at ID #0 and a CDROM at ID #4.]

Hi,

Do you have any recommendations for a good book/video tutorial on the **ASR-10** effects/sound conditioning? The manual that came with the ASR-10 is okay, but not clear enough on how to fully utilize things like compression and tweakage of effects parameters.

Thanks.
Andy Dokmanovich
Livonia
adokmano@ford.com

[PF – Andy: There was a set of VHS tapes for the ASR from Covert Videos featuring Rick Parent demystifying

the ASR-10. I don't know if they're still available or not, but check some of the back issues for their address/phone/etc.]

[TH – We've had a LOT of requests for those old Covert tapes over the years. Unfortunately, the two folks running Covert went their separate ways and you just can't get them anymore. Rubber Chicken was going to try to carry them, but I think they gave up in frustration. Probably the only hope would be that your letter might trigger someone to sell you their old set.]

[Garth (chickenEPS@willmar.com) – You're from Livonia? (ha) – the EPS/ASR Sampler Guide first printing is almost ready for delivery – it's an application guide that goes further than the manual, at least for applying to musical situations. Check with RCS for more info. Ensoniq also makes a video that might be helpful, too.]

Hi there,

I'm looking for an **ASR-X** mailing list so I could contact other users of this newcomer. Could you please give me some tips?

Thank you, Balint Udvarhelyi, Budapest, Hungary
balint_udvarhelyi@non-hp-hungary-om1.om.hp.com

[PF – Balint: That's a good question – there's an MR group at http://www.rain.org/~msavard/index.htm, but I haven't heard of an X-group: readers?]

[TH – And don't forget the ol' Hacker's going to start covering more on the X's as it ramps up. We got a bit of a late start on this critter 'cause Ensoniq accidently left our flyer out of the X box – but we should be catching up shortly. Garth has a whole little series of X-articles in process.]

Hi,

I would like to inform Atari users that Zero.x from Soundpool works very well with the **ASR-10**. I often use it with my Falcon without problems for SCSI dumps, for sample editing, cutting a drum loop in a set of samples you can map in the ASR, and it creates a MIDI File so you can change the tempo (as recycle) load from samplers or Atari disk before sending to the ASR. Nice and inexpensive!

Of course, I have questions.

- Can the ASR use and format the jazz cartridge?
- What's the maximum size for a SCSI drive?
- Is there an Atari utility that defrags the ASR hard drive with backup and directory printing?
- Do I dream?

P.S. I don't really like the new closed architecture of Ensoniq: not very compatible, no new FX, no software development.

Pierre Gasmi
Grenoble, France

[PF – Pierre: In order:

(A) Only if it was manufactured before 1997. Otherwise, no.

(B) 9.1 Gb: Micropolis makes one that big, as does Seagate. Actually, Seagate has just released a 23 Gigabite whopper, the ST423451N. I don't think any Ensoniq keyboard will "time Out" while formatting this beast, but as it could probably take a few hours, I'm sure you'll time out before your Ensoniq does. At $1100 bare, I think it's overkill, but hey, some folks might enjoy trying to navigate around THAT many nested directories.

(C) Not that I'm aware of...

(D) Only if you sleep...

Hope this helps!]

To the Interface,

Great mag guys, especially this section at the back.

I've been an **ASR-10** user for about four years now and quite enjoy the challenges/creativity it offers. But, the support Ensoniq users get in Australia is shocking. The local rep is Electric Factory and the list of their messups is long. In addition to the lack of OS copies and OS manuals, what is frequently heard is – "No one is here right now," "Can we call you back?" "We have to order it in" etc. I finally had the money to get an ASR CD ROM. the CDR4 Archives was being sold here through the official Ensoniq rep for A$399!, which was also the price they forced their retailers to sell it for. I ordered one from EASTWEST Australia for A$139!! Which is what it should be as Ensoniq designed it as a budget CD. A warning to Australian musicians – Ensoniq gear is hot but don't take the word of its local rep as gospel. Please, Ensoniq, monitor the performance of your "sole agents." Maybe we'd buy more gear.

Some technical questions:

1. I seem to have memory problems on a near empty SYQUEST 270 MEG cart when recording vocals. That is, when recording a (punched) 3rd take of the second chorus I sometimes get a time delay of approximately a quarter note when overdubbing a final chorus (punched in).

2. Any hints on speeding up the ASR processor to keep strict rhythm from a Mac sequencer? It seems I can only go a few instruments on the ASR (with polyphony and memory) before the processor starts choking and a good dance track has to be reworked with the other R..... equipment in the rack. The usual tricks are adhered to – rhythm on top tracks 1-2, 3, 4, etc. and the shortest possible MIDI leads. Maybe it's the Mac? Any hints to speed that up without spending more money?

Thanks,
George Zocratos
Melbourne, Australia

[PF – Greg: Yeah, I've heard that EVERYTHING down under is expensive, but $399 for a CD is pushing the envelope a bit too far (IMHO). Actually I'm surprised you're getting that level of performance from your Syquest 270 – Ensoniq doesn't recommend ANY removable media for DiskTracks. I'd bet you if you change those SCSI buffer settings you might have a bit better luck, but I'd hesitate to guarantee any results unless you're using a vacuum-sealed canister for ATRK recording...

And yes, I've had the same problem with the ASR sequencer. The CPU is SOOOO busy paging 16 Mb of memory around, interpolating key events to MIDI channels, picking stuff out of the loaded wavetable, DSP'ing FX, etc... What you can do to lighten the load on the ASR is to turn DiskTracks OFF. That'll win you back a few spare clock cycles. Check your instruments to see exactly HOW many waves are being triggered when you press a key. Check the instruments to make sure they aren't being peeked and poked as a Preset. Shutting off DiskTracks will really help while you're sequencing. Once you've got the tracks down, you can turn ATRKs back on do DiskTracks, but get the groove down before you do that.]

TH –

Is my **VFX-SD** able to read General MIDI or Standard MIDI?

BRIDENSTINE@prodigy.net

[PF – Bridenstine: Nope – the VFXsd writes its sequence files in Ensoniq format, which isn't an SMF. HOWEVER, Gary Giebler has a $40 utility that will convert from VFX to SMF and vice-versa. Garth Hjelte of Rubber Chicken Software also sells ol' Gary's wareS. Ping him at http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps for the details...]

TH –

My band is having trouble with our **EPS**.

After loading samples into the keyboard, there are times when the sampler completely freezes up, produces odd tones, or the sustain pedal stops working.

Could this be a problem with the CPU? If it needed to be changed, how much would that be, and would it be worth it just to upgrade to something more versatile, such as the EPS-16+?

Let me know if there are any dealers who specialize in the older products such as these.

Thanks,
Ted
From the Band XXX

[PF – Ted: Sounds like your EPS is displaying the infamous "keyboard" bug. Your EPS keyboard mechanism is manufactured in two halves – the connector that joins these halves has gotten oxidized/corroded/intermittent. What to do is to take your EPS to your FRIENDLY Ensoniq Service Center and have the tech install the "hardwire" fix (which removes the connector and hardwires across the keyboard halves)...

If this is a time sensitive issue, you can clean the connector yourself by popping the EPS's hood (this takes an allen wrench to remove the 4 screws holding the top cover down) and removing the keyboard. Using a zero residue cleaner, spray that connector in the middle of the keyboard mechanism until it's clean and free of grit, grime, whatever. You might even wiggle it a bit just to ensure you've wiped the contacts clean. The danger here (as another reader discovered) is ensuring you don't accidentally reattach the keyboard and place a screw thru the ribbon connector that connects the keyboard to the logic board...

If you're the least bit faint of heart about doing this yourself, take it to your dealer for the "hardwire" fix. If you make a mistake and nuke your trusty EPS, nobody can fix it, as repair parts and replacement logic boards are NLA...]

TH –

I love my **TS-10**. I love the TH Magazine. Issues remaining:4 – scare me!!!

Re: TS-10 RAM UPGRADE.

I'm shopping for two 30-pin, 4-MB, non-parity SIMMS chips. 60ns or 70ns or what? I have upgraded memory on several PCs. So, I'm going to give it a try here! I think I only have 4MB of RAM and only 1 Bank of Samples, But how can I be sure? How easy is it to access to the RAM in the TS-10? Will the TS-10 recognize the new RAM automatically?

How do I convert .wav files to a sample I can load into my TS-10, via 3.5" floppy? Rubber Chicken, Giebler, or what? I want to record this .wav file on my PC then convert it to a sample that I can load into my TS-10 and have a Fat Sample to play live...

What soundcard would I use to get the best sample out of my PC? Is there a software package that would help?

Thinking about the digital music workstation + SCSI R/W CD to burn own CDs... Well, if I buy a SCSI R/W CD, can I use my IBM PC instead of the digital music workstation? Are SCSI CDs slower than the ESDI CDs?

What are the rates for the Cyber Subscriptions to the *Transoniq Hacker*?

Thanks,
Imani4321@aol.com

[PF – Imani: Answers, in order –

(A) It doesn't matter. As long as they're 80ns or faster, either will perform well. See http://www.ensoniq.com/html/0006.htm for details.

(B) 4 Mb is approximately 7900 free blocks: check your TS to see how many free blocks it reports. The ASR has jumpers to select 1 Mb or 4 Mb SIMMS, I don't know if the TS has these jumpers as well. You can remove the SIMM cover underneath the TS to see if it has jumper selects as well...

*(C) I've had very good luck doing this with Awave, although RCS's Ensoniq Disk Tools is the caddilac for doing this if you're running WIN95. The issue here is looping a *.wav file, as the TS has NO editing functions to loop with...*

(D) WAY too subjective to answer. Creative Labs, Ensoniq, Roland, Yamaha, EVERYBODY's got a soundcard that professes to be better than the next guy's. I won't even go there -- I see the flames already...

(E) Yes, if your PC has a SCSI interface. If not, you'll need to add one to do this.

(F) SCSI is the fastest data xfer spec available (until the world embraces FireWire)... The issue here is not which is faster, SCSI or ESDI, but rather, which CD R/W is compatible with BOTH your PC and your TS-10. Check out http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps for details on which CD-R's are compatible.

(G) Considerably less than $1000. See Jane & Eric on this (The Hacker's editrix/editor).]

[TH – $20/year.]

[Imani4321@aol.com – PF: Way to go. Good Job & Thank You.]

[PF – Imani: You got it!]

Hi!

I have an Ensoniq **EPS** with the 4x expander memory cartridge. My problem is that I can't get the VU-meter to read the input signal, and in average the input-signal is very low. I've got audio input from "line-out" from dj-mixers and the result was very low audio, then I switched the cable to headphones-out, the sound was better but still no movement on the display. I have spoken to Swedish service technicians, but they don't have a clue what could be wrong. Do I really have to change the motherboard?

Please need your help,
Patrik Pettersson
Patrik.Pettersson@swipnet.se

[PF – Patrik: First, ensure you're running OS V. 2.49 and ROMware V. 2.40. Then check the "Mic/Line" switch (a software switch documented in the Musician's Manual in the Sample Modes). It may be set to "Line" rather than "Mic." If your EPS still samples at a low level, you may need to clean or otherwise change the "Audio In" phone jack. It might be a defective input opamp as well, but either requires a technician. As the EPS logic board is NLA, any Authorized Ensoniq Service Center should have the EPS schematics now and can repair this for you with little difficulty. But if you can find a replacement motherboard, sure, that's the fastest way to repair your EPS.]

Hi,

I am still the proud owner of a **TS-12**. I have one teeny weeny problem with the OS that I hope you are able to solve.

1. When I first bought the TS three years ago, I was able to input alphabetical letters and numbers using the keyboard. But I did a system re-boot a few months later and the keyboard ceased operating as a "typewriter." I know this is only a small problem but does it mean that my keyboard is "losing its memory???" Can I fix it with the touch of a button? There is nothing in the manual that suggests this is possible.

2. I currently have about 500 GBP to spend on a sampler that I can use along side the TS-12. I currently transfer *.wav files from my PC using Rubber Chickens fantastic Disk Tools, but the quality of recording isn't too hot (Using an SB-16Pro). So what are my options? I know that there are few samplers that will transfer straight into my TS-12. I probably can't get a used ASR-10 for that kind of price. So what shall I buy? An old EPS? A high quality soundcard? Or just a cheap sampler made by somebody else...?? I can get a high spec used ESI-32 over here in England for about 600 GBP.

Cheers for your help. I'm sorry to hear about this turn-around by Ensoniq. I still haven't found a keyboard to beat the TS-12 for all-round performance. Top hole!

Andrew Ogden
Manchester, ENGLAND.
A.J.Ogden@civils.salford.ac.uk

[PF – Andrew: Keyboard naming is an option that is set in the "Master" pages. If you've reinitialized the unit, this parameter defaults to "off." Switch it back on and your keyboard will become a typewriter again.

And actually, I'd recommend the SCSI interface option and a compatible CD-ROM for your TS. This gives you access to all the Ensoniq CDROM library (THE most comprehensive in the industry). As you are probably aware, the TS directly reads ASR/EPS/16+ sample disks, so you'll have more than enough sounds to ping into your TS. Ensure you've popped two 4 Mb 30 pin SIMMS into the TS so you can load 8Mb of extra samples into it.

The beauty of this solution is that you won't have to wrestle with either sampling thru your Soundblaster anymore, and you won't have to worry about looping sounds: Ensoniq has already done this in a sterling library that far exceeds any other sampler library on this blue ball. And the SCSI interface for the TS is still available.

Just my $.02 worth, but for around half of what you have to spend, you can purchase the CDROM, SCSI interface and RAM, and still have change to bag a few CDs from Ensoniq's library to give your TS some fresh new sounds...]

TH –

I have been trying to locate someone to service my Ensoniq in the Tacoma, WA area. Can you direct me to the nearest service in my area?

BHarris407@aol.com

[PF – BHarris: As in Paula's request, you'd have to contact Ensoniq directly at 610.647.3930 for that information.]

[TH – We've asked Ensoniq to please add this type of info to their web page – or send it to us so we can add it to ours.]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – Use the following URL at our website and you can find a service center nearest you: http://www.ensoniq.com/mid/servlist.htm.]

Love the *Transoniq Hacker!*

I want to convert a .wav file created on my PC to a sample my **TS-10** can read. Then I want to save this sample to a 3.5" floppy which my TS-10 can also read. Then I want to load this sample into my TS-10 via the TS-10's 3.5" floppy drive.

Well, so much for what I want to do, here is what I've done:

I'm sure I got Awave to convert a .wav file to an .efe file. The .efe file is the Ensoniq EPS family instrument file. But my TS-10 will not recognize this .efe (EPS) file on the floppy.

I should be able to play an EPS sample on the TS-10, right?

Imani4321@aol.com

*[PF – Imani: Any sample file with an *.efe extension is an Ensoniq sample file, but in PC format. You need to convert this *.efe into an *.ede (Ensoniq Disk Extractor) format to make a loadable file of it. Good 'ol Gary Giebler has these utilities (he wrote them years ago) as does RCS...*

*Typically, most Ensoniq files up on the web are *.ede files. Check out http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps for a listing of what shareware/freeware utilities will do this for you, as well as the real deal from Giebler Enterprises.]*

Hi,

I use my **ASR** to help learn certain solos. I usually assign the sample to middle C, and then play it back 1 octave lower to learn it. However, the pitfalls are: the severe drop in pitch as well as the severe drop in speed. Does anyone know of a way to tweak the ASR parameters so I maintain the original pitch while slowing down the sample?

OR – does anyone know of a simple windows-based utility or program that has this ability? Our voice mail at work has this ability and I would imagine it's out there somewhere. I've seen the $150 boxes for sale in various music catalogs that digitally sample a solo and allow pitch and speed manipulation, but that's a last resort.

THANKS, looking forward to hearing back from anyone.
Andy Dokmanovich (adokmano)
Go Steelers!
Livonia
adokmano@ford.com

[PF – Andy: You don't need any computer stuff to do this. The ASR has a function called "Time Compression/Expansion) that'll do precisely what you're trying to do. Refer to ppg. 182-183 in the ASR Musician's Manual for the details...]

Dear sirs :

I recently got an Ensoniq **EPS** sampler, dated 06/16/88. It has a 2x memory expander installed, and is in fair condition. I was hoping I could ask a few questions of you.

1) I believe the disk drive may be worn out or almost so, because of intermittent operation. Can disk drives for the EPS still be obtained, and is a computer 3.5" drive compatible with the EPS?

2) Are the 4x memory expanders still available for the EPS, and if so, do you know where, and how much?

3) I'm having trouble getting my EPS to read disks I've tried to create on my PC using various EPS utilities I've found around the net. Can you tell me the format parameters (heads, tracks, sectors, etc.) the EPS uses?

4) The manual I got with the sampler has pages 5, 6, 7 and

8 twice in a row, and then goes to page 13 and so on (no pages 9, 10, 11 and 12). Are corrected manuals, or pages 9-12, available, and if so, do you know where and how much?

Thank you and regards.
Fritz Uhle
fritz@primary.net

[PF – Fritz: (1) 9 of 10 problems on an EPS disk drive revolve around the power connector on the back of the drive. I'm not saying that's the case with yours, but it's suspect of every older 800k diskette drive in an Ensoniq. Ensuring the power and data connector are good, cleaning the heads with a zero residue cleaner and a 3 1/2" diskette cleaner are about all you can do.

If the drive is truly bad/defective after you've checked the above, a company called Teczam repairs floppy disk drives. Contact Rubber Chicken Software as well at http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps: lotsa good links there...

(2) Good luck. People have been trying for the past 5 years to get their hands on a 4X for the EPS – they're NLA. Not even the 3rd party channel has these anymore...

(3) Check with www.giebler.com: Gary Giebler wrote the book on that...

(4) You should contact http://www.fatsnake.com/syntaur: they are the sole purveyors of original manuals for the EPS (as well as all the older pre-1989 Ensoniq gear).

Good luck in your search!]

TH –

A letter or so back in the Interface someone suggested a save for Ensoniq that they should take VERY seriously: Begin making **TS-10/12s** again. The ability to load samples, the killer sequencer and the overall ease of use makes this a wonderful choice even today. Updates in the OS really wouldn't be that costly and the price would be competitive – get it close to 2k and you'll have a hit – yet again. Really! One of the biggest complaints I've heard from the Ensoniq loyal was that with the TS-10 reading samples was built in. With the MR it was an expensive option?! Oh, that was a smooth move. (Sort of the same flak they took when they went from the SQ-80 with disk and sequencer to the original VFX.) Anywho...The tooling is still available and the customer base still exists as well. With prices dropping in memory, hard drives and CD-ROMS, upgrading the TS-10 would be inexpensive. Build it (again) and they will come.

RobertoRom@aol.com

[PF – Roberto: Yes, I said that, and yes, I'd buy one right now if it were available here in the states (the only ones manufactured are for Russian export only). Gotta used one?]

[RobertoRom@aol.com – I'd buy one too! I've been looking for a used one myself. Another thing to add to the "really ticked people off" list was the loss of the patch select buttons. Lots of power, killer sequencer, flexible outputs, sampling ability, upgradeable, hard disk access, with an OS upgrade that would recognize WAV files, you'd have a winner. Come on people, let your voices be heard! The MR was too far of a departure and just too much. Look in the market, Malvern! A moderately priced, solid board that can be used as a workstation and for road use is still needed in the market. As for the "we're going to make keyboards in the $1200 to $1600 market." Uh, with a few updates wouldn't that be called, oh well, uh, how about... SQ-1, SQ-R and SQ-2? Talk to your dealers boys. They felt the loss of the SQ series was a big mistake. What professional level keyboard even came close for the price?! So... check it out... see the dealer/customer reaction and get the lines back and running.]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – I suppose we have to wait and see...]

Hi,

I recently had a SCSI board installed and I'm not sure that this problem occurred exactly at the same time, but I believe it did. My **ASR** sends a volume control message somewhere in the vicinity of 55. I didn't realize this at first and wondered what the problem with the volume was. When I tried to run the ASR via MIDI from Notator, the volume control change that the ASR sent was obvious on the ATARI sequencer. If I try to use the ASR as a controller, then I have this problem with all 8 ASR instruments. If I use another instrument as the controller, then I only have this problem on the selected ASR instrument. The data coming from the ASR is continuous and therefore takes precedence over any MIDI message that I might put in.

Needless to say this is quite frustrating, since I can't use the ASR at all without the computer, the keyboard itself is useless, and using MIDI I am limited to 7 instruments on the ASR .. or one with a volume of 55... not to mention the extra stream of MIDI data generated! My fear is that I will need another SCSI board (this is already the third one!). I'm beginning to wish I never had the SCSI installed since I've experienced nothing but problems since. Please tell me there is some easy reinitialization trick that will fix this problem.

Thanks for your assistance!
Peggy Madden
pj@madtrax.com

[PF – Peggy: Does the ASR send out these CC#7 level 55 messages when NOT connected to the computer? On the ASR, do you have your track volume levels in the sequencer set to 55? Or do you possibly have your Song Tracks set to level 55? Or is the sequence that's doing this setting all track levels to 55? Since you note that another controller connected only plays the track back at 55, this implies that your instrument/track levels are set to 55. Does it demonstrate this problem when NOT connected to the computer? What controller is the Data Entry slider mapped to in the Master pages? Bet it's #7: change that and see what happens.

Does it do this with or without a foot volume controller connected?

Try a factory disk or sequence like "Time Bomb" just to see if your ASR still sends out those CC#7 55 levels. This sounds more like a data/computer issue than an ASR issue, but anything is possible.

Check to make sure you're running the most current version of the ASR OS (V.3.53) and the most current ROMs (V. 1.5), 'cause this problem sounds more like software than hardware.

Keep us posted, as I've NEVER heard of this problem before. I use an ASR-10, 16 Mb/CDROM/Syquest135/2 Gb SCSI drive, and I've never experienced this...]

[Peggy Madden (peggy@together.net) – PF... Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!! I had inadvertently plugged the sustain pedal into the CV input and never ever thought to look there. Sometimes simplicity is the key! I wish I had asked this question months ago as it's been quite an aggravation! Anyway the problem is solved and I am very happy .. :-) .. pj]

Classifieds

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