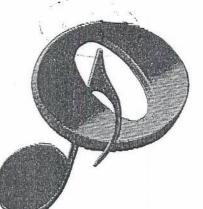


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the music biz meets the personal computer START ME UP!

by Benjamin Krepack and Rod Firestone foreword by Joe Walsh

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START ME UP! (the music biz meets the personal computer)

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS viii

FOREWORD BY JOE WALSH ix

INTRODUCTION - ABOUT THIS BOOK xi

CHAPTER 1 — WORKING IN THE OFFICE 1 Anybody Wanna Buy a Typewriter? 2 Files at Your Fingertips 6 Forms and Labels 9



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Connection 1.1 Artist Managers 12 Connection 1.2 The Record Companies 16 Connection 1.3 The Music Publishers 19

CHAPTER 2 — STAYING IN TOUCH 23 Hanging On the Telephone 23 When Can We Do Lunch? 26

> Connection 2.1 Telecommunications in the Office 28 Connection 2.2 The Desktop Concept 30

CHAPTER 3 — TRACKING THE CASH 33 Specialized Accounting Software for the Music Industry 34 Off-the-Shelf Small Business Accounting Packages 35 Off-the-Shelf Database and Spreadsheet Programs 36

Connection 3.1 Dollars & Sense 38 Connection 3.2 Finances With Fox Productions 41

Page 00003

v

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Benjamin Krepack and Rod Firestone April 1986

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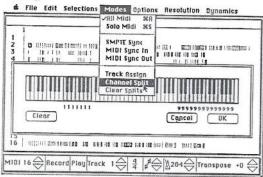
Start Me Up

instruments present to receive and playback the instructions. Some keyboards and drum machines have sequencers built-in. It's also possible to add a sequencer on as a separate component. With the help of special software it's even possible to turn a personal computer into a sequencer (see CONNECTION 8.2).

Having the MIDI technology available in the studio can increase the efficiency and productivity of the recording process. When using MIDI, there's no need for microphones, tapes, tape machines, or a sound proofed room. The sound of an instrument can be changed instantly, the tempo of a performance can be changed without effecting the pitch (this is impossible when a performance is recorded on tape because of what is known as the "chipmunk effect"), and when bouncing down tracks, there's no loss of fidelity.

A MIDI studio is a great tool for pre-production because it provides a method for musicians to re-arrange, edit, and otherwise refine their composition, prior to committing anything to tape. Many professional recording studios, in fact, are finding their more traditional, multi-track, sound-proofed studios becoming less popular and are now adding MIDI rooms to their facilities.





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Musicians And Computers

The Future

MIDI is just the beginning of a brave new world in music that's taking shape, and we can only guess about some of the developments that lie ahead. The ability to convert any sound into digital information, which can then be manipulated by a computer, will change the way music is composed, performed, recorded, marketed, and enjoyed.

One exciting development has already been tested by a handful of professional musicians involved in a trans-continental recording session. In this session, two studios, by way of a satellite hook-up, made it possible for members of the band to record their respective parts while separated by thousands of miles. Because of the new technology, they were able to complete their session almost as if they were sitting in the same room.

Sometime in the future, we'll also be seeing inexpensive multitrack digital recorders and studio effects gear made as compact and portable as your standard video cassette recorder. Once such devices are available, musicians will be able to do studio quality recording in their home (or garage) instead of spending tens of thousands of dollars to rent a professional recording studio. Along with the smaller sizes and cheaper prices, we might also get some outrageous features. We may soon see the day when a computer can actually correct a singing voice. No matter how off-key or horrible a voice is, a computer might be able to make digital corrections, giving everybody a chance at music stardom.

Maybe one day, we'll even have the ability to translate our thoughts into MIDI data. We might be able to hum (or think) a melody, and it will come out on the instrument of our choice. Who knows? There might eventually even be an "intelligent" computer that can guess at national tastes and trends and compose a number one song.

The way we purchase music may change, too. We may see a dial-up service for home computers that we could use to select the titles we want. The songs would be downloaded as digital information into our home entertainment systems that could play them back in perfect fidelity.

127

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126

Page 00005

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