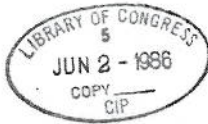the music biz meets the personal computer

START ME UP!

by Benjamin Krepack and Rod Firestone

foreword by Joe Walsh

...mputers are now being used for everything
...this business and this easy-to-read,
...roughly researched book covers
...ll. I highly recommend it."
...Bob Monaco, Grammy
...ard-Winning Producer
...d Co-author of
...best selling book
...e Platinum Rainbow

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Contents

v

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Benjamin Krepack and Rod Firestone
April 1986

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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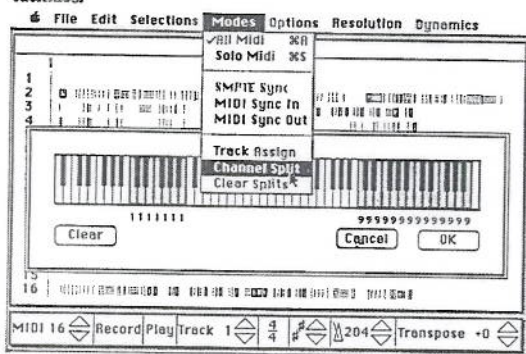
The Future

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.

126   127