Transoniq Hacker

The Independent Ensoniq User's Newsletter

RANDOM TIPS - FIRST SESSION (?)

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Welcome to 1987! Okay, now, can anyone out there answer me how to make one half of the keyboard on the Mirage totally silent - and why on Earth anyone would want to do that, anyway?

Yes, it's time for RANDOM TIPS. You know - tighten up some of the loose ends, stick a bunch of the little things that don't warrant an entire column of their own together and see if we can come up with something that might be of some use. Hey - this might turn into a regular feature, even! Let me know if you'd like to see more of this kind of thing.

Anyway, my first random tip has to do with setting the wavesample start and end pointers. (I know I've mentioned this one before, but a lot of folks seem to have missed it, and it's worth repeating.) The idea is that you can use the same wavesample start and end pointers for two or more different wavesamples. Now, why would you want to do that? Well, I can think of at least a couple of reasons.

Example: you've got a great brass sample. It covers two octaves of the lower portion of the keyboard. However, the lowest notes have too long an attack time, making it difficult to play quick passages on the lower notes. So you decide to remove a few pages of memory at the beginning of the wavesample in order to speed up the attack time. But the problem now is that the higher notes have too sharp an attack. This is because when you play back the wavesample at the higher pitches, the playback time of the wavesample is shortened, and the attack portion can go by so quickly that it becomes pinched sounding. So here's what I do to remedy the situation.

Let's say that your brass sample occupies lower memory starting at 00, and ending at 7F (hex). First, select Wavesample 1 (hit Parameter 26, and give it a value of 1 if you're not using MASOS, or hit PLAY in the sequencer section, followed by the number 1 if you are using MASOS), then set the topkey (Parameter 72) to a value of 12 - thus covering the low octave of the Mirage with Wavesample 1. Next, select Wavesample 2, and set its topkey to a value of 24 (to cover the second octave on the Mirage). Now for the interesting part. Select Wavesample 1, and set its start point (Parameter 60) to something in the range of 2 to 12, whatever seems to work the best. This will cause the wavesample to begin playing anywhere from 2 to 12 pages into memory, effectively chopping off the very beginning of the sound, and shortening its attack time. Now select Wavesample 2, and set its start point (Parameter 60) to 00, and its end point (Parameter 61) to a value of 7F (the same end point as for Wavesample 1, you'll recall). Now the first octave of the Mirage will play the shortened version of Wavesample 1, and the second octave will play the normal sample. You'll probably need to tune Wavesample 2 to match Wavesample 1, and you may need to adjust the relative amplitude and filtering parameters.

And there are other applications. Having the ability to address the same memory area from two different wavesamples means you can have the same sample with different filter settings, or tunings, or amplitude settings on different areas of the keyboard. You can also use this technique to rearrange the order of your samples on the keyboard without having to do any copying of data (assuming you have some wavesamples that aren't being used for anything else available). For example, if you want Wavesample 1 and Wavesample 2 to trade places on the keyboard, simply switch the start and end pointers for Wavesample 1 to those of Wavesample 2, and vice versa. Likewise, you'll need to switch the topkey settings for the two wavesamples, as well, and you may need to retune your wavesamples and re-do their relative filter and amplifier settings.

I should warn you in advance, though. You can't use this system to set two different loops in the same waveform on the Mirage. Now why would you want to do that? Well, as some of you may have noticed, some loops on the Mirage seem to work fine in one area of the keyboard, but become unbearable in another. The reason, I suspect, is because the Mirage transposes pitch up and down not by varying the playback rate of the sampled waveform, but by removing samples from, or adding them to, the wavesample in question. This has the effect of causing it to take a longer or shorter time to play back a sample. Sometimes you'll get a loop that seems pretty good in one octave, only to find that it doesn't work that well in another octave. I assume this is because a sample, or set of samples, has been added to or subtracted from the wavesample in question, and the change has affected the loop point.

Oh well. On to tip number two. How many times have you wished that you could have both feedback and vibrato on Program 1 of the electric guitar sample? As it stands, the mod wheel is set up to control the mix between the guitar and the feedback sample on the upper keyboard half. Of course, you can set things up so that both vibrato and feedback are controlled simultaneously by the mod wheel (just set the value of Parameter [32] to 0), but there's a more