

fun way to do this. First, get a pressure sensitive keyboard. Candidates include, but are not limited to, the Yamaha DX-7, Korg DW-8000, or Roland JX8-P or JX10-P, as well as some of the hand-held remotes, like Roland's Axis or Casio's AZ-1. Also, many of the controller keyboards, such as the Kurzweil Midiboard, or Yamaha KX-88 will do the trick. And if you already have a pressure sensitive keyboard, get another one. After all, us guys who work in music stores have to make a living too, you know. But back to the Mirage.

First, set the value of Parameter [32] (LFO depth) to 0. This enables us to use the mod wheel to control LFO depth. Next, set the value of Parameter [79] to 8. This allows us to control wavesample mix from the pressure data of our master keyboard. Now go play your new pressure sensitive keyboard. If you press down on the keys, you should be able to get the Mirage to fade from the guitar sample into the feedback sample. If things seem perhaps overly sensitive, use Parameter [80] to adjust the amount of effect that pressure data has on the mix.

As long as we're on the subject, how many of you got the pamphlet that went along with the 3.0 operating system update? How many of you got it but didn't read it? How many of you read it but didn't get it?

There's some nifty stuff you can do with OS 3.0 and higher - aftertouch controlled mixing is just one thing. And it's really quite simple.

Under OS 3.x, a couple of new parameters have been added. Parameter 78 allows an external controller to control LFO depth, and Parameter 79 allows an external controller to control wavesample mix. Each of these parameters has 10 values, with each value corresponding to a different type of controller (except for value 00, which corresponds to no controller). Setting Parameter [78], for example, to a value of 1 allows LFO depth to be controlled by an external mod wheel (providing the value of Parameter [32], LFO depth, is set to 0); setting Parameter [79] to a value of 1 allows an external aftertouch message to control wavesample mix (providing Parameter [28], mix mode, is set to "on"). Parameter [80] sets the amount of effect that the external controller will have.

You can have any external controller numbered 1 to 9 control either LFO depth or wavesample mix. Aftertouch is generally controller number 8, as you may have surmised from the example above. Other controller numbers are not always as consistent; the Yamaha data entry slider and Casio's master tune buttons on the CZ series of synthesizers both have controller number 6. But what would life be without inconsistencies?

Note that settings for these parameters are set for both keyboard halves; you can't have aftertouch control oscillator mix on one half of the keyboard and vibrato on the other half. Also note that these settings are considered "configuration parameters", and are not saved on the disk along with your normal sound parameters; to save these set-ups, you must save them using Parameter [14], for saving configuration parameters, and then use that disk to boot from whenever you wish to load those parameters back in.

By the way, how many of you use the save configuration parameters option? It's real handy for having your Mirage

boot up in poly mode, on the correct MIDI channel, and with the MIDI thru enabled - as well as some other handy stuff. That was tip number 3. On to number 4.

One of my favorite things is using the Mirage drum sounds along with a regular drum machine; the combination of the generic drum sounds out of my trusty Roland TR-707 along with something like the ambient drums, or the Latin percussion from the Mirage library has made for some real fun with percussion tracks.

I usually program all the drum stuff into my computer right along with the keyboard parts - helps me to keep the various parts organized. And since most of the newer computer-based and hardware sequencers have more editing flexibility than most standard-issue drum machines, this arrangement suits me just fine. But one problem I've run into is that since some of my stuff can run into a lot of MIDI channels going at once, I often need to conserve channels as much as possible. One obvious way to do this is to put all the drum and percussion parts on one channel. Since the MIDI note numbers corresponding to various drum sounds on my TR-707 are all at the lower half of the keyboard, it seemed logical to use topkey commands and wavesample copying to move all my favorite Mirage percussion sounds to the upper half of the keyboard. Don't worry, I'm not about to go into details about how to do that here - that stuff has appeared in the Hacker before.

The problem that I had, though, was that once I had all my sounds on the upper half of the keyboard, there'd still be some sound or other left over on the lower half of the keyboard, and when I'd put the Mirage on the same MIDI channel as the drum machine, the sound on the lower half of the Mirage would be right there, playing the notes meant for the TR-707. And though the keyboard balance control, Parameter [24], helped some, it wouldn't completely get rid of the lower keyboard sound. So how to get the lower half of the Mirage to be silent? Well, there's a couple of ways.

The solution I arrived at was to first locate which wavesample was the offending party, and then simply to use Parameter [69], relative amplitude, to turn the sound all the way down. Works like a charm, although there will sometimes be a quiet, but audible tick when the Mirage plays the silent notes. But since the lower half of the keyboard was being played only at the same time that the drum machine was playing, it was absolutely inaudible. Oh. The other solution I came up with was to increase the attack time on the lower keyboard half to maximum value, so that by the time the envelope generator allowed the DCA to reach full volume, the percussion sample had already played through.

So there you have it - some of the things I've run across in my travels with the Mirage. Do you have an interesting tip, or a technique that you think might help someone else out of a jam? If so, please send it along to me c/o the Hacker, and we'll get your ideas into print, where any damn fool can get their hands on 'em. 'Til next time, then...

*Clark Salisbury is Product Specialist with Portland Music Co. in Oregon, and is also a partner in "The Midi Connection," a Portland-based consulting firm. He has been actively involved in the composition, performing, and recording of electronic music for over six years, and is currently involved in producing and marketing his own pop-oriented compositions.*