

occur). Having a hard drive makes it easy to be lazy, but if you don't back up your work, you are destined to lose it.

The SCSI software and hardware has not yet been released, so it was buggy (although the main problem was one consistent bug that kept cropping up, not a number of seemingly unrelated ones). I'll assume that by the time the complete product (SCSI interface card, software rev 2.0, and manual) becomes available, the bugs will be mostly out; but I will say the system is, at the very least, usable right now.

I'm excited about adding SCSI to the EPS for two reasons. One, I've been a big Emulator II fan over the years, and have really grown fond of its CD-ROM (although I don't have an E-II hard disk). I pretty much considered the CD-ROM a luxury at first, but being able to load any of thousands of sounds in about 15 seconds is really convenient - no looking around for disks, no waiting for loading, and instant selection. A hard disk provides the same convenience for the EPS, but is faster and unlike a CD-ROM, you can save your own sounds to hard disk.

The other important incentive for getting the Mac and EPS fully tuned in to SCSI hard disks is to take full advantage of Blank Software's "Alchemy" sound editing program. I've always felt that Alchemy was technologically ahead of its time - in other words, its software was designed to a higher level than the hardware it was supposed to serve. Well, the hardware is catching up (if you have the bucks to surf the leading edge). Being able to shoot samples back and forth between Alchemy and the EPS at SCSI rates eliminates that tiresome, maddeningly slow MIDI transfer (hooray), while the hard disk at the EPS end makes EPS loading and saving totally painless. The result is a truly high-speed, high-

performance editing and storage system. Figure that even at a system list price around \$3,350 (\$2,000 for the EPS, \$350 for the 2X memory expander, \$200 for the SCSI port, and \$800 for a typical 45 Megabyte drive) you're getting a lot of convenience for the money.

In the grand scheme of things, the SCSI port takes the EPS one step closer to completion. The manual (still not available) has been a long time coming; the 4X expander is in memory-price limbo; and the "10 Essential Sound Disks" were just released recently. SCSI will of course be a boon to the pros using the EPS, but Ensoniq probably realizes that third party sound developers will be able to go about their tasks far more efficiently if a hard disk is available - and with samplers, the sound library is the key to sales. (Well, at least until people get a bit more adventuresome about doing their own sampling.)

Look for the SCSI retrofit sometime in September for \$199.95. I'm impressed; it drastically accelerates the saving and loading process.



Bio: Craig Anderton is the editor-in-chief of Electronic Musician magazine. He plays with the group Transmitter, produces/mixes albums, and has written several books and hundreds of articles on musical electronics. His series of Classic Synth Disks for the EPS should be available soon.

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While you're at it, check out the reviews in *KEYBOARD*, (August 1988), and *MUSIC, COMPUTERS, & SOFTWARE*, (September 1988).

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