

that has been plaguing the or the last couple of years. will allow the user to add w pieces of equipment to quickly and without a lot "ledge" thus creating a re flexible system. In the this will help to herald a modular musical instru- developed by Bob Moog 23 years ago. Only this f choosing the modules eate just one voice on a will be able to construct em from sound source. are already marketing or arket, products such as I keyboards (I hope the roma jump on this one), iced expander modules erheim and Yamaha for department). And this, start. As MIDI reaches and establishment as a hi-tech industries will take notice and intro- tible products. ling studios, home en- ers, interactive video synthesizer learning ome of the possibilities gets rolling. But three d in all this happening: we've got a lot of that), ve've got some of this, id last, but not least (3) mation providing us uly use and promote cept. This last one is on that would be dif- velopers and man- products to provide my healthy competi- to provide any infor-

pendent, non-aligned, non-profit or- ganizations that are dedicated to insur- ing MIDI's integrity, continuity and promotion. At the same time, both or- ganizations are encouraging research and providing a forum for debate in the areas of music equipment/computer in- terfacing. (Let's call this Musical Cyber- netics, OK?). Headquartered in Tokyo, the JMISC is made-up predominantly of Japanese manufacturers of MIDI equip- ment. (At present they are 28 member/ manufacturers strong!) The JMISC's focus is primarily to police the use of the specification in Japan which we under- stand they are handling extremely well (no mean feat). The JMISC, although a totally separate entity, has recently reached an agreement to work in coop- eration with the IMA. The IMA and the JMISC's approach and scope are compat- ible but different. One of the IMA's major goals is to facilitate the communication between those who make the equipment and those who make the music and hope- fully, even beyond that. (The reader should understand that I have a fairly biased viewpoint on this subject as I am heavily involved in many of the IMA's current projects — needless to say, I think this an important organization.) The IMA offers three tiers of member- ship: Manufacturer/Distributor (like the JMISC), Retailer/Educator, and most im- portant to the readers of this column, End User or YOJU. The current plans of the organization are: to offer assistance and accurate information on all aspects of MIDI to its members; to set up a research/information database culled from data taken from the membership and outside technical sources (soon in- cluding a library of stored sound patches for the various synthesizers); to sponsor seminars on MIDI's uses and applica-

IV.1. NEWS & NOTES

By Alex Medford

We have it on good authority that Oberheim will be offering to DMX cus- tomers a "create your own drum chip" service. Upon request, a customer can have Oberheim take drum sounds, re- corded by the customer, and have them digitized (digitally sampled) and then "burned" onto computer ROM chips. These chips can then replace the drum sounds already on the DMX. This service (because of design differences) will probably not be offered for Ober- heim's popular DX Digital Drummer. Better watch out Linn, this was one of your big selling points!

The Personal Grand Piano? Are those saavy boys at Emu busily sampling away, creating a digital grand piano? So the story goes. It seems like the market- ing "window" is opening in this niche — everywhere I go, people seem to want it. This could be shaping up to be a race between the wizards of Santa Cruz and those well financed East Coast "techies" at Kurzweil to see who can hit the right chord first. Can Casio be far behind?

Something BIG may be brewing in Stanford's musical think tank — headed by Dr. Joh Chowning, the man who brought you digital FM synthesis. Rumors are starting to circulate about a musical instrument project, headed by the good doctor and funded, in part, by LucasFilm money (that's George "I don't even wanna think about Star Wars" Lucas) that is in development. The reports, so far are extremely vague but they insist "... a major break- through!" We're digging for more info.

That lawsuit that we mentioned sev- eral issues back concerning those two Northern California MI manufacturers

was finally settled — on the court house steps. Smaller Trailblazing Company — 1; Larger Company — 0.

Mattel Toy Corp. is looking to com- pletely dump their music products divi- sion. (Remember Mattel? They brought you the Synsonics drums, Intellivision, and of course, Ken and Barbie) Poor marketing and a slump in their con- sumer electronics sales are said to be the causes for the white flag. Several en- trepreneurs and at least one large con- glomerate are looking at picking up the project. Stick to the toys, boys.

Do guitars really matter any more? Well I, for one, hope so. Next time I'll have a report on a new development from Colorado that just may be that guitar synthesizer interface everyone's been waiting for.

Yamaha has announced that, due to a large and unexpected demand for the DX7 and DX9, Yamaha Japan is step- ping up shipment of these new prod- ucts to the U.S. market. But Yamaha is also aware that foreign units are appear- ing here; to which they say, buyers be- ware. And here's why: 1) The U.S. and foreign units are not the same voltage. Voltage converters may not properly switch voltages to the DX's liking. 2) The DXs, from other countries, have not passed FCC standards for RF transmis- sion, which could cause interference to other pieces of equipment. 3) Yamaha warranties do not cover foreign Yamaha products. 4) Yamaha will not be stock- ing power supply conversion parts. 5) The U.S. DX7 and DX 9 come with ex- tensive support packages, including ROM and RAM cartridges and an Eng- lish owner's manual. Identification of the U.S. Yamaha DX is simple.