ATARI® COMPUTER

NEWS RELEASE

Agency Contact: Andy Marken
Marken Communications
(408) 738-1115 - work
(4080 732-9589 - home

Client Contact: Frank Foster
(408) 745-2000

MIDI BACKGROUNDER

ATARI® COMPUTER LEADS MIDI MARKET WITH INNOVATION, SUPERIOR SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

LAS VEGAS, NV (November, 1989) -- Atari Computer surprised two industries when the company placed a full-page advertisement for their ST™ system in **Keyboard Magazine** in 1986. In fact, musicians and software developers both took a second look at the personal computer.

The company was confident that the music market held great promise for their ST line. So confident, in fact, that they were not only the first company to promote their computers in the music trade publications, but also the first company to provide MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) ports as standard on their systems.

Atari Computer was also the first personal computer manufacturer to exhibit at the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Convention. The response was so overwhelming that the company continues to attend the event every year.

Today, Atari Computer has established itself as the manufacturer of choice for MIDI users and dealers. Across the nation, computer and music

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stores have become authorized Atari MIDI dealers. They sell Atari Computer ST and MEGA™ systems with MIDI software to hobbyists as well as semi-professional and professional musicians.

SMPTE and MIDI

At the most basic level, MIDI can be described as a standard way of generating, recording and playing back performance data. It is the personal computer "language" that conveys musical information such as pitch, duration of a note, dynamics of a note and the current measure of a song.

MIDI was established to provide a single standard for music equipment. The standard ensures that the MIDI computer that is purchased today will be compatible with the MIDI keyboard or synthesizer that is purchased a year from now.

Atari Computer's ST and MEGA systems are designed to allow straight forward implementation of the industry-standard SMPTE time code. With the Atari Computer systems, once musicians put down a track on their video or audio device, they don't have to think about synchronization. The system locks to the track and automatically synchronizes with the connected external devices.

STs and MEGAs are being used throughout the entertainment industry for all types of audio and video broadcast synchronization and production. The ST system is being used to do everything from synchronizing the sound effects for "The Cosby Show" to developing motion picture musical scores. In fact, jazz

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musician Dave Grusin, who won this years' Academy Award for best musical score with his sound track for "The Milagro Beanfield War," used the Atari ST 1040™ to create his award-winning score.

MIDI Systems

Atari Computer was involved in MIDI almost from its inception. While the ST was the manufacturer's first true MIDI system, the company has since developed a complete line of personal computers with standard MIDI ports and a range of features that are ideal for music applications.

520ST^{FM}™--The 520ST^{FM} is perfect for the hobbyist or entry-level musician. The system has a speed of 8.0 MHz and has 512K of memory. MIDI, mouse, joystick and hard disk ports are standard. The system can run many of the sequencing, editing and other music programs necessary for music composition. The 520ST^{FM} has many sophisticated educational programs that take potential musicians from finger drills to jazz improvization techniques to music theory. The versatile and affordable system can also perform all of the standard personal computer functions, ranging from word processing to spreadsheets. The 520ST^{FM} retails for $599.95

1040ST--A step up from the 520 in features, the 1040ST is the ideal system for MIDI users in school labs, as well as for semi-professional and professional musicians. The system has an 8.0-MHz system speed and a full megabyte of memory. MIDI, mouse, joystick and hard disk ports are included as standard. The system offers superior price/performance to users who will be doing basic sequencing, editing, composition, and other fairly simple MIDI

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functions that do not require more than 1 MB of memory. Initially, the 1040ST was used with synthesizers and electronic keyboards to create demo tapes so that composers could sell their songs without using a full orchestra set-up. Today, Atari Computer's 1040ST can be found in recording studios and on stages around the globe. It retails for $799.95

The MEGA Systems--For the most sophisticated music set-ups, where professionals want to have sequencing, notation and patch editing programs all loaded at the same time, a MEGA 2 with 2 MB of standard memory or a MEGA 4 system with 4 MB of standard memory is ideal. Atari Computer's MEGA line offers more features to MIDI and general-purpose users than the comparable Macintosh™ at half the price. Both systems include an 8.0-MHz system speed, a graphics accelerator chip and MIDI, mouse, joystick and hard disk ports. Designed for professional users who need an economical system for notation and desktop publishing capabilities for music scores, the MEGA systems are easily bundled with the SLM804-PCV™ laser printer, which is PostScript®-compatible. Here again, the Atari Computer system's architecture is an advantage because the MEGA's internal memory can easily accommodate the large volume of graphics data required. There is a direct, high-speed connection between the computer and the laser printer, ensuring that camera-ready print-outs are produced faster. The MEGA 2 retails for $1,499.95 and the MEGA 4 is available for $2,199.95.

Stacy™ Laptop--Atari Computer's latest addition to the ST line, the Stacy laptop, has all of the standard ports and features of the 1040ST. The

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15-pound portable system is ideal for the touring musician and is compatible with all of the sequencing, editing and notation software offered with the Atari ST computers. The Stacy has a full megabyte of RAM and the same MIDI, mouse, joystick, hard drive and other ports that are featured with the 1040ST system. The Stacy has a suggested retail of $1,495.00.

New MIDI-Compatible Systems--This year, Atari Computer introduced two additional powerful MIDI-compatible personal computers systems the TT™, which is based on the 68030 microprocessor and the 1040ST^{E}™, an enhanced configuration of the 1040ST. Both systems are compatible with the hundreds of existing 1040ST packages that are already available. The TT provides users with a true 32-bit system running at 16 MHz, Stereo 8-bit PCM sound and 2 MB RAM (expandable to 8 MB). The 1040ST^{E} also offers 8-bit PCM sound, as well as expanded ROM and enhanced graphics capabilities. Both systems are excellent for basic MIDI editing, sequencing and other music tasks that the semi-professional or serious home enthusiasts would need to perform. Both will be available in the first quarter of 1990.

Applications Software

Software developers quickly recognized the potential of the Atari Computer line in the MIDI market. In fact, all of the MIDI software available for Atari's computers was created by third-party software developers. Within a year of the ST's introduction, developers were offering a vast array of MIDI packages for the Atari computer system.

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Sequencing

Sequencing software controls the MIDI system's timing. It is essentially the music equivalent of a word processing package, because it allows the musician to go back and change or edit any section of the score without having to start from scratch. There are more than 35 sequencing programs available for the Atari Computer systems.

C-Lab Notator™--C-Lab Notator is currently the top-selling notation package in the music industry. Developed by C-Lab, Notator provides users both sequencing and realtime notation capabilities. The package includes everything the studio professional musician or the semiprofessional would require in a sequencing or notation program, including SMPTE synchronization and notation print-out ability in one package. C-Lab Notator is available in the U.S. from Digidesign, Menlo Park, CA.

Pro-24™--One of the first sequencing packages available, Pro-24, from Steinberg-Jones, also offers users SMPTE synchronization. The system provides complete editing features and works with SMPTE lock. Used with the company's Time-Lock SMPTE Processor, Pro-24 provides sync-to-tape capabilities and can be used to read and write the four available modes of SMPTE. Geared toward the professional or semi-professional musician.

Tiger Club™-- Dr. T's Tiger Club is an integrated, icon-based 12-track sequencer with "piano roll" graphic editing and standard music notation.. Tiger Club provides hobbyists with the sequencing capabilities and flexible editing capabilities that they require in an affordable package.

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Notation and Printing

Notation and printing software automatically notates music so that they can then go back and edit it. Combined with a laser printer, notation software eliminates the need for a typesetter. C-Lab Notator (discussed under sequencers) is the top-selling notation package because it is a sequencing and notation package all in one. But there are at least 10 other comprehensive notation packages available to users of the Atari Computer systems.

Copyist DTP™--When combined with a laser printer, Copyist DTP by Dr. T's provides professional users with the system features they require to desktop publish their own scores. Copyist DTP offers high-level users with realtime notation, unlimited staffs and unlimited file capacity. Composers can create an entire orchestra score using this flexible system.

EZ Score Plus™--Developed for the hobbyist or home musician, EZ Score Plus, notates up to three staffs and outputs to a dot matrix printer. This easy-to-use program provides the features that serious non-professional musicians require. EZ Score Plus was developed by Hybrid Arts.

Patch Editing and Librarian

Patch editing and librarian software enable the musician to create new sounds for the synthesizer; view all of the envelopes, graphs and graphics; and store and recall thousands of sounds from one disk. With well over 60 software titles available, there are more patch editors than any other single type of MIDI software. When patch editing and librarian packages were first

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introduced, most worked with a specific keyboard from a specific manufacturer. The trend now is to work with generic editors and generic librarians that can be used with any keyboard.

Super Librarian™--This generic librarian package from Pixel Publishing provides users with all of the organizational functions necessary for a studio mix or a live performance and is geared toward the professional musician.

GenWave™--One of the best-selling sample editing programs on the market, GenWave enables users to create and edit samples from several keyboards--a must for professional performers. GenWave also enables users to create sounds from scratch. GenWave was developed by Drumware.

Educational Software

Music software can be used to teach music students anything from the most rudimentary finger exercises to music theory and composition. Music educators are already realizing that with the right software, a child's interest in video computer games can be channeled into an interest in music.

Because the ST is so reasonably priced, even schools with limited budgets have been able to set up music computer labs with a computer and keyboard at each station.

There are more than 20 music education programs for every level student available for Atari Computer system users.

Electronic Courseware Systems™--With 16 different modules, students start this program learning basic scales and note patterns. As their skill

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level increases, they then move into more advanced pieces, music theory and finally basic composition.

The Ear™--With the help of the keyboard, this unique entry-level package from Steinberg/Jones helps players learn to recognize perfect pitch by ear.

The Future

To ensure that Atari Computer maintains its strong market position, the company created the Atari Computer MIDI Developer Council, which consists of key MIDI software developers and Atari Computer representatives. Members of the council work together to establish standards and participate in joint promotions in the MIDI arena.

The potential applications of MIDI technology have only begun to be tapped. The recently announced "Hotz Box" will move the Atari Computer ST and MEGA systems to a new plateau in the music industry. Hobbyists and professionals will all be able to create fully orchestrated compositions using the system.

But as glamorous as some of the applications are, the real future of MIDI will be in the consumer markets. The nurses and engineers that always wanted to compose music and hear it fully orchestrated will be able to do just that, at an affordable price, in their own homes.

For more information, contact Frank Foster, MIDI market manager, Atari Computer, 1196 Borregas Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94088; (408) 745-2000.

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