

MAKING MONEY



Musician Mark Freedman in his Manhattan recording studio.

MAKING MUSIC

THESE PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS STRIKE CHORDS—
AND EARN LIVINGS—OUT OF THEIR HOMESPUN
COMPUTERIZED RECORDING STUDIOS

BY JOEY LATIMER

As music software and hardware become more sophisticated, so do businesses providing musical services. Drove of musicians—outfitted with computers, synthesizers, and recording gear—are heading home to make beautiful music and getting paid for it. Although their home offices more closely resemble recording studios than traditional office setups, like other home-based professionals, they find that they get more work done and have greater control.

If you watch "Cagney and Lacey" or the "CBS Movie of the Week" or listen to the WAVE, a Los Angeles radio station, or have been to an exhibit at the

St. Louis Science Center, then you may have heard the music of people who are profiled here.

KAYTE AND JACK GOGA:

A MUSICAL MARRIAGE

Kayte and Jack Goga, both accomplished musicians, fill three rooms of their Woodland Hills, California, home with musical equipment. Aside from Kayte's occasional performing and teaching, their income comes from the projects they do at home.

Some of the music composed and recorded at the Goga home has been heard on "Cagney and Lacey," the "CBS Movie of the Week," "Children's Classics" on PBS, and "Eye On Hollywood" and at the St. Louis Science Center in Missouri. Other projects currently in progress include music for planetarium light shows and a

new movie called *Savage Harbor* starring Frank Stallone.

The work is done in a recording studio built around an Atari 1040ST computer with sequencing software, a host of MIDI keyboards and software for storing their sounds, a drum machine, two eight-track recorders and one two-track recorder, and many other devices used for special effects, video, and film work.

"The computer is involved in almost every project," remarks Jack. "It makes everything twice as easy, twice as quick. To be honest, I couldn't ever relinquish the control I have with computers."

Kayte agrees: "They're almost a necessity. We've been in situations where we recorded a track for a vocalist, and all of a sudden he decides that he wants the track in another

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH BERGER

key. If you don't have a computer to transpose the track, then you're stuck. You'd have to go back, get the musicians, and record the whole thing over again."

The Gogas are always working to attract new business, a process that involves making demo tapes and then taking them with a resumé to prospective clients. Once a client materializes, the Gogas jump into action. "Basically what happens," says Kayte, "is someone comes to us with a musical project, let's say a movie, a record project, a songwriting demo, or a television show. Depending on the project, some things I'm better suited for, and for other things Jack has stronger concepts or ideas. It's give-and-take when you work with a partner."

"The nice thing about the two of us is that we are coming from different directions," says Kayte, who earned a degree in computer science. "He's focused on the writing, the arranging, and the business aspects, and I am more conscious of the performance aspect. Also, by virtue of the fact that I have a degree in computer science, I've always taken a big interest in the technical side, including synthesizer programming and playing with music software."

The Gogas have encountered few problems as a result of working together at home. Says Kayte: "One nice thing about both of us being in music is that we don't argue about where we spend our money."

MARK FREEDMAN: A STUDIO IN THE SKY

There are some appetizing reasons why such musicians as Laurie Anderson, Jerry Harrison (of Talking Heads fame), and Junior Walker (remember the All-Stars?) relish renting out the Battery Sound recording studio. After a grueling session, studio owner Mark Freedman has been known to run into the kitchen and return with homemade cookies or even a roasted turkey for his visitors. And of course, Freedman is also known for his good taste in musical equipment.

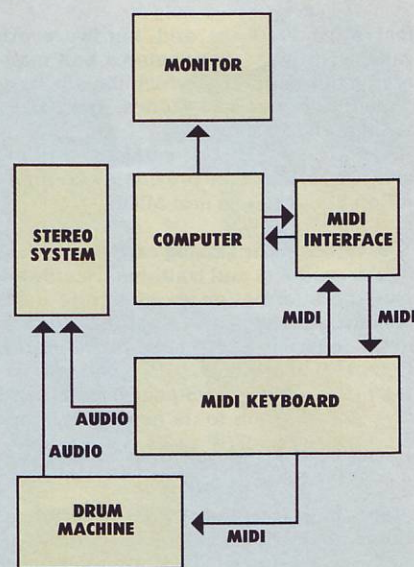
According to 37-year-old Freedman, musicians are attracted to the high-tech, yet homespun atmosphere of Battery Sound. "It's very cozy; there's a kitchen, wooden floors, and wooden walls," he says. "The studio has windows that put people in a great mood." Those windows are so uplifting because they are 22 floors above the ground, overlooking lower Manhattan, the New York Harbor, and the Jersey Shore.

Battery Sound also thrives because

THE INFLUENCE OF MIDI

The MIDI interface specification has made work at home possible for many musicians. In 1983, manufacturers of electronic instruments agreed on a standard way for instruments from different companies to communicate with each other. This standard, MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), was widely adopted by makers of electronic instruments. It didn't take long for musicians to discover that computers, when rigged with a MIDI interface, software, and electronic instruments, work well as the brains of a modern music studio (see diagram, right, of a typical MIDI setup).

Running specially designed recording software, the computer can act as the master clock for synchronizing MIDI instruments together during the playback of a recorded song. By using other software, it's possible to edit and print musical scores or even compose music mathematically. Music processed by the computer can be saved for later listening and editing, and the information to reproduce songs and sounds can be sent from one computer to another.



A TYPICAL MIDI SETUP

computers are successfully incorporated into the creative process. "It's a 24-track studio and features a Fairlight Series 3 (a multipurpose computerized music workstation) as a centerpiece," says Freedman. In addition to the Fairlight, Battery Sound has a Macintosh. "If you want to compose at home, you can bring in your disks, and we can MIDI the Macintosh up to the Fairlight."

"We've done a lot of film scores that way. The Fairlight sounds so nice, . . . and can also automate, via MIDI, all the outboard gear and show it graphically. It's very powerful."

In addition to renting his studio to other artists, Freedman uses it to compose and produce music for his own LPs and for films and promotional videos. In fact, Freedman, who holds a master's degree in music composition from The City University of New York, had never planned to get into the recording business at all.

"The composing and the musicianship are really what came first," says Freedman. "The recording engineering came from just doing the music. As time went on, I got more and more into the equipment for two reasons. I wanted to use the equipment to do my own music because you have to have a certain level of equipment to compete—to realize your ideas—and number two, it was a way of making an immediate living."

BRIAN VIGO:

A MEDLEY OF MONEY-MAKING IDEAS
The digital sounds of New Age music have been filling Brian Vigo's North

Hollywood home, but they haven't been coming from a compact disc player. "I've been working on an album of New Age music called *Dream Journey*. It's all computerized, strictly digital," explains Vigo. "I've also done jingles for the WAVE (an L.A. radio station) and for commercials."

Vigo, who often works 12-hour days, has been planning his career for a long time. The 29-year-old took music lessons as a child, received an undergraduate degree in music from the University of South Florida, and continued his studies after college.

However, the recording studio in his bedroom was something Vigo probably never planned. Because he dedicates so much of his time these days to working on his album, using a home studio is a lot more cost-effective than renting outside studio space.

Vigo uses his home as a preproduction facility for himself and for a number of other musicians. "Clients can see if they like a song before they spend a lot of money in a big studio." His clients usually pay him on a per-hour basis to record their songs into his computer and then play them back through his range of synthesizers. "It sounds great coming straight off the synthesizers," boasts Vigo.

While a student at the Dick Grove Music School in Los Angeles, Vigo learned about different ways of using computers with music. The computing power behind his studio comes from an IBM PC clone, which is equipped with a 20MB hard-disk drive, an Epson FX-80 printer, a

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MIDI...

Most MIDI software and hardware are available through music stores and mail-order catalogs, both of which usually have trained salespeople assigned specifically to MIDI products.

Here are newsletters, catalogs, and organizations that can provide more information about music and MIDI:

The Future Music Catalog carries a variety of MIDI products and contains friendly articles and information about getting started making music with computers. Future Music offers a \$15-a-year membership program that includes a free copy of *Understanding MIDI*, a 98-page booklet, and a free subscription to its newsletter. Contact: Future Music, P.O. Box 1090, Reno, NV 89504; (702) 359-6434, (702) 826-6434, or (800) FOR-MIDI.

IMA, the International MIDI Association, is a membership-funded association dedicated to the accurate dissemination of information pertaining to MIDI. IMA publishes an information newsletter called the *IMA Bulletin*. Individual membership costs \$40 a year. Contact: IMA, 5316 West 57th St., Los Angeles, CA 90056; (213) 649-6434.

The Musician's Music Software Catalog is a discount catalog of educational software, MIDI interfaces, cables, accessories, and more. Also included in the catalog is an introduction to MIDI capabilities and

MIDI system configurations. Contact: Digital Arts & Technologies, P.O. Box 11, Milford, CT 06460; (203) 874-9080.

NRI School of Electronics, a division of McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center, is offering a home-based Electronic Music Technology correspondence course built around a MIDI-equipped computer, MIDI synthesizer, and MIDI software (all of which you keep at the end of the course). For a free catalog, write to: NRI School of Electronics, McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center, 3939 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016; (202) 244-1600.

Passport Designs, Inc., the largest manufacturer of MIDI software and hardware, has published a free 16-page booklet entitled *Passport to MIDI*. The booklet discusses the basics of starting a MIDI system, including diagrams and an overview of Passport's MIDI product line, and a glossary of MIDI terms. To order, call or write: Passport Designs, Inc., 625 Miramontes St., Half Moon Bay, CA 94019; (415) 726-0280.

Roland Users Group Magazine is a quarterly publication that provides information on new music products and applications, including question-and-answer guides to MIDI, software listings, and special events. For a free subscription, contact: Roland Corp., 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040; (213) 685-5141.

A GLOSSARY OF MUSIC TERMS

Drum Machine: An electronic musical instrument that simulates the sounds of a drum set. Most are MIDI compatible and are played by pressing buttons.

Edit: To alter musical information. This is helpful when polishing a piece of music or shaping a synthesized sound.

MIDI Controller: A specially designed instrument for playing music that is converted into MIDI information. Most MIDI controllers are piano-type electronic keyboards, but some are patterned after wind instruments, guitars, and drums.

MIDI Device: A synthesizer, sampler, controller, sound module, computer, special-effects unit, or any other useful piece of hardware, capable of sending and receiving MIDI information.

MIDI Information: Representations of musical performance or activity. These messages carry information about notes played, timing, playing intensity, and more.

MIDI Interface: This is the basic link between the computer and MIDI instruments, synthesizers, samplers, controllers, or other MIDI equipment.

MIDI Program: Software that lets you control and interact with MIDI devices.

Multitrack Tape Recorder: A tape recorder containing several independent tracks for recording music in segments of one instrument or one musical part at a time. The tracks are combined for final assembly and playback of a piece of music.

Music Notation Software: Programs for editing and printing musical scores. Most music notation programs let you assemble notes and other musical symbols on staves for later playback or printing of music. Some function only to let you print scores and lead sheets.

Sampler: An electronic device for digitally recording and storing the sounds of instruments and other sounds for later reproduction. The playback of sound "samples" can be triggered by an electronic keyboard or other MIDI controller.

Sequencer: Program for recording, editing, and playing back musical information. Most sequencers work like a multitrack tape recorder and record performances played on a MIDI instrument.

Synthesizer: Electronic instrument used for simulating other instruments or creating new musical sounds. Most synthesizers are played from a keyboard.

monitor, and a MIDI interface.

When he's not programming music, Vigo uses his computer for writing letters, keeping mailing lists, and storing sounds and recording notes. He would like to add automated mixing to his studio and, like many other computer users, wants to upgrade to a more powerful machine to speed up his work.

He also uses his computer for the live performances he does with a guitar-playing friend. "We do corporate parties, weddings, and private parties. I use the sequencer live," says Vigo, who preprograms drum, bass, and keyboard parts into his computer and uses them later at the affairs.

Currently, about 65 percent of Vigo's yearly income is earned via his bedroom-based recording studio; he makes the remainder at party gigs. But if his album—which is scheduled for completion in September—sells well, Vigo may say good-bye to the parties and make *all* of his money from his home office.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSICIANS

As the stories of the people profiled here demonstrate, building a music-related business requires hard work, dedication, and persistence. But the opportunities are many, and the rewards can be great. If you're a musician, here are just a few occupations you might be able to pursue using your expertise, computer, and MIDI products.

Composing: Create music for film, television shows, theater, commercials, promotional videos, and other projects.

Consulting: Set up a consulting business to help others with MIDI. Help clients choose and purchase the right hardware and software to suit their particular needs.

Desktop Music Publishing: Edit and print lead sheets, musical scores, arrangements, and lyric sheets.

Recording: Rent your MIDI studio and recording services to other musicians.

Sound Designing: Use your computer to create and sell custom musical instrument sounds (patches) for popular synthesizers.

Teaching: Employ your MIDI studio as a teaching aid for music and recording students.

More musicians than you might imagine have carved out lucrative careers for themselves in such fields as these. And best of all, they didn't have to leave home to do so. ■