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MOTU DIGITAL PERFORMER 2.6 TO INCLUDE POLAR™ AUDIO LOOP RECORDING FEATURE

INNOVATIVE POLAR™ AUDIO LOOP RECORDING TO SHIP WITH DIGITAL PERFORMER 2.6

CAMBRIDGE, MA - May 18, 1999. Mark of the Unicorn, Inc. (MOTU) will soon be shipping Digital Performer Version 2.6, the latest update of MOTU's flagship audio sequencer software. The "main attraction" for this release is an innovative RAM-based audio loop recording feature called POLAR™. Other enhancements include 100% compatibility with iMac and "Blue" G3 Power Macs, an updated audio engine (MAS 2.0), support for OMS (Open Music System), color coding of tracks, and direct audio input from Retro AS-1 and Unity DS-1 (the virtual synth and sampler software packages from BitHeadz). In addition to dozens of other enhancements, Version 2.6 includes a new MAS plug-in called AudioTap™ that allows users to feed audio output from any Sound Manager-compatible software (such as Propellerhead software's ReBirth™) directly into Digital Performer.

POLAR

POLAR stands for "Performance Oriented Loop Audio Recording". The POLAR window offers RAM-based audio loop recording directly within Digital Performer, allowing users to conduct interactive "jam sessions" with their computer, creating as many layers in real time as RAM permits. POLAR can be used for layering, for "getting the perfect take", or for generating complex polyrhythms by layering loops of different lengths.

A typical POLAR session might go something like this: the user sets loop points in Digital Performer, hits the record button in the POLAR window and listens to the background MIDI and audio tracks they've already recorded. Then the user starts playing and POLAR automatically begins recording. The user then stops playing and listens as POLAR loops their first take. The user then tries again and POLAR automatically creates a new take, saving the first one and muting it so it doesn't interfere with the new take.

After recording several takes, the user then begins to record several passes into the same take, creating a massive layered effect in just a few moments of continuous recording. After several more minutes of overdubbing in this fashion, the user then saves the entire POLAR session for easy recall at any time and then prints the RAM-based POLAR audio as a hard disk track in their Digital Performer MIDI/audio sequence.

Each POLAR loop, or take, is stored individually. POLAR can be set to record only when it receives audio so a user can pause and listen then start recording again - without ever touching the computer. This method of recording gives users the enormous freedom and flexibility when creating music.

Track count inside POLAR has no effect on disk-based tracks users already get with the MOTU Audio System. For example, a user who is playing 32 disk tracks can open POLAR and get dozens — even hundreds — of additional independent audio layers inside the POLAR window (depending on RAM).

To generate polyrhythmic material, users create multiple passes of different lengths. For example, the user could overdub a 3-beat loop against a 7-beat loop, and then on top of that add a 2-measure loop. POLAR continuously repeats each loop, regardless of its length. Layering passes in this fashion produces complex, evolving polyrhythms.

Direct audio input from BitHeadz Unity DS-1 and Retro AS-1

Thanks to recent co-development between BitHeadz and MOTU, Digital Performer 2.6 users can route the audio output from Retro AS-1™ and Unity DS-1™, the virtual synthesizer and sampler software from BitHeadz, directly into Digital Performer’s virtual mixing environment. This allows users to mix and process Retro and Unity audio directly in Digital Performer’s Mixing Board. It also lets users route Retro and Unity audio to any audio hardware they use with Digital Performer, such as a 2408 audio interface. Retro and Unity audio can be bounced to disk along with the rest of Digital Performer's hard disk tracks for mastering. Both 16-bit and 24-bit audio output from Unity and Retro are supported.

MAS 2.0 and AudioTap™ plug-in provides universal Sound Manager input

Digital Performer 2.6 ships with Version 2.0 of the MOTU Audio System, the audio engine that powers Digital Performer’s extensive audio recording and native effects processing capabilities. Among the many new features provided by MAS 2.0 is a new plug-in called AudioTap, which allows Digital Performer users to route the 16-bit audio output of any Sound Manger compatible software directly into Digital Performer’s audio environment. For example, the Sound Manager audio output from Propellerhead Software’s popular ReBirth™ virtual drum machine can be routed directly into Digital Performer and combined with the rest of a user’s hard disk audio and MIDI tracks. Users can even apply real-time

MOTU Audio System effects plug-ins to ReBirth audio, such as Sonic Modulator, PreAmp-1 and even Digital Performer’s 64-bit MasterWorks MultiBand Compressor and Limiter plug-ins.

iMac and "Blue G3" compatibility

Digital Performer 2.6 has been developed and thoroughly tested on Apple's latest CPUs. Mark of the Unicorn no longer employs key disk copy protection, so no floppy drive is required for installation or authorization. For MIDI input/output, Digital Performer will soon be supported by MOTU’s complete line of USB MIDI interfaces. In the meantime, Blue G3 users can purchase one of several affordable third-party USB-to-serial adapters from MegaWolf, Griffin Technologies or GeeThree, Inc.

OMS (Open Music System) Support

Digital Performer 2.6 gives users a choice of using FreeMIDI or OMS for managing MIDI data flow in their Macintosh-based system. Under OMS, the OMS Setup application takes care of configuration chores. MOTU’s Unisyn and Opcode’s Galaxy editor/librarian software programs can manage user’s synthesizer sounds and patch lists. OMS also gives users greater flexibility and compatibility when using Digital Performer with hardware and software from other manufacturers, such as Digidesign Pro Tools.

Color Coding of Track Data and color “schemes”

Digital Performer 2.6 also includes the ability to choose a unique color for the data in each track. But Digital Performer goes even further by providing users with a few dozen preset color palettes or “schemes”, such as “metallic”, “pastels” and “Santa Fe”, which they can freely change at any time. Users can customize any particular track color and even create their own color schemes. For example, a user might devise custom color schemes to suite the particular tastes of several different clients. Color coding extends to all windows that display multiple tracks, including Digital Performer’s virtual Mixing Board, which shows the track color in the name panel at the bottom of the track strip.

Other features

Many other enhancements are included in Digital Performer 2.6, including:

- Narrow mixing board - Allows users to see 50% more tracks in the Mixing Board at one time.
- Improved audio file importing - Digital Performer can now import AIFF files, QuickTime movie soundtracks, 8-bit audio files, and more via drag and drop. In addition, users can now selectively audition and import audio regions using Apple’s new Navigation Services window.
- Support for Apple Navigation Services - Mac OS 8.5 offers new, improved “Open” and “Save” dialogs, now available in Digital Performer.

- Locked tracks - MIDI or audio data in a locked track will remain anchored to its SMPTE frame location, regardless of any changes the user makes to the tempo. In fact, becuase Digital Performer’s timing and editing resolution is sample-accurate, audio and MIDI data will remain locked to its actual sample location.
- Naming of audio inputs, outputs and busses — Instead of generic names like “Input 1”, users can now use customized names like “Kick Mic” or “Reverb Return” for their audio hardware’s inputs and outputs. Users can also create custom names for Digital Performer’s 64 virtual busses.
- Sample-accurate file exchange with AudioDesk - Digital Performer users can now freely exchange files with AudioDesk, the sample-accurate workstation software for Mac OS that is bundled with MOTU’s popular 2408 and 1224 audio interfaces.
- Record-enable buttons added to many windows - Based on user requests, many Digital Performer windows, such as the Mixing Board and Graphic Editors, now provide track record-enable buttons so that users can quickly record-enable tracks without switching windows.
- MIDI note/velocity shading - If they want, users can cause MIDI notes in the Graphic Editor to be shaded according to their on-velocity. A dark note indicates a high velocity; a light note indicates a low velocity.
- Many new remote controls - Additional remote controls have been added, including a new scheme that allows users to work with track and marker lists of variable lengths. For example, a user could record-enable track number 11 from their MIDI keyboard across the room.
- Improved operation of plug-in presets - Digital Performer now clearly shows which preset is being used and whether it has been modified. In addition, Digital Performer now supports third-party TDM plug-in presets, showing the same presets as Pro Tools.

Availability and Price

Digital Performer 2.6 is expected to ship soon and will be sent automatically as a free update to all Version 2.5 users. List price is $795. A special competitive cross-grade is also available for $395.

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