ProMIDI Interface
Amiga 680x0 Computers

User Manual

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ProMIDI Interface
Amiga 680x0 Computers

Manual by: Microdeal

Hardware Design by: Dave Woodhouse

Another quality product for your home computer from

Pro-MIDI Interface for the Amiga

By Microdeal

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Hardware:

designed and programmed by AVR

Manual:

written by Microdeal

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The Pro-MIDI Interface

Making a Working Copy

Before using the supplied software you should make a back-up copy of the distribution disk and put the original away in a secure place; safe from extremes of temperature, magnetic fields, moisture and children! The disk can be backed-up using the Shell or any back-up utility - before making any backup always write-protect the master to prevent accidental erasure.

Registration Card

Enclosed with this manual is a registration card which you should fill in and return to us in order to register your purchase of Pro-MIDI Interface This will entitle you to a free period of technical support and will enable us to keep you informed of future developments to our products.

For details of our technical support services, please refer to the Appendix in this manual.

Introduction

The term MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, a system designed to standardise digital communications between all manner of musical equipment.

Although not initially designed for the purpose, the creation of MIDI has allowed computers to be used to read, store, edit and replay the MIDI messages that are generated when MIDI instruments are played. This has led to the development of software that has caused nothing short of a revolution in the music industry - the MIDI sequencer.

Because tunes can be built up gradually, instrument by instrument, note by note, in your own time rather than in 'real time', MIDI sequencers make it possible for anyone with the slightest ear for it to create and play music that sounds good, without having to spend years mastering particular instruments.

Amiga MIDI sequencing software isn't cheap, ranging from about £50 to £300 or more. There are a fair number of packages available and you would be well advised check out as many magazine reviews as you can before deciding on which to buy. There are no public domain or shareware Amiga MIDI sequencers as such, but there is one shareware Amiga sequencer, called MED, that does support MIDI and will at least give you something to play with if you don't have cash to spend on commercial software straight away.

Unfortunately, as much as we would like to, we are not allowed to distribute MED on the disk of PD and shareware software that comes with our MIDI interface, so contact your local PD library if you want a copy.

As far as MIDI instruments are concerned, they are coming down in price all the time. A keyboard can cost as little as £50; however you shouldn't expect fancy features in an instrument costing as little as this. For instance, at that price the keyboard will almost certainly not be able to sense how hard the keys have been pressed, and adjust the volume automatically.

With MIDI instruments it is certainly true that the more you pay the better the instrument - competition between instrument manufacturers is enormous, so you are not simply 'paying for the name', except perhaps at the very top end of the market. Having said that, thanks to the great rivalry between manufacturers, even budget MIDI keyboards sound excellent.

Keep in mind that if the instrument you are planning to buy does not have built-in speakers, you will have to connect it to a separate amplifier and speaker system (like your stereo system) in order to hear it.

Connections

Your Microdeal Pro-MIDI Interface plugs into the serial socket on the back of your Amiga.

Important: Before connecting the Pro-MIDI Interface you should switch off your Amiga. Never connect or disconnect the interface while the Amiga is switched on as this could damage both the Amiga and the interface.

On the back of the MIDI interface are four sockets or 'ports' labelled IN, THRU, OUT and OUT. These are the connections that enable the interface to communicate with your MIDI instruments.

The MIDI IN port receives incoming MIDI information. So the MIDI IN port on the interface receives information from the connected MIDI instrument; the MIDI IN port on the MIDI instrument also receives incoming information, from your Amiga via the interface for example.

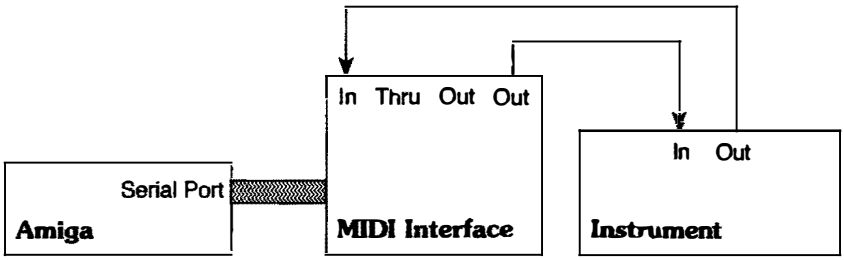
So you can see that connecting MIDI IN from your interface to MIDI IN on your instrument would not be a sensible thing to do.

The MIDI OUT port is the one which sends information. Again, the MIDI OUT ports on the MIDI interface and your MIDI instrument both send information, so if you connect these two together you won't get much joy.

To connect the interface correctly to your instrument, MIDI IN on the interface should be connected to MIDI OUT on the instrument, and MIDI OUT on the interface should be connected to MIDI IN on the instrument.

There are two MIDI OUT ports on your Pro-MIDI Interface, and these can be connected to two separate MIDI IN ports on two separate MIDI instruments if you like. When information is sent from the interface, it is sent along both MIDI OUT ports simultaneously. This saves you having to 'chain' two MIDI instruments together using MIDI THRU from the first to MIDI IN on the second, although you can of course do this if you wish.

The MIDI THRU port is there so you can pass MIDI information coming into the interface (e.g. from a MIDI instrument) directly on to other MIDI instruments. The information received by the interface's MIDI IN port is duplicated, and as well as getting sent to the Amiga it is sent along the MIDI THRU port as well.



Pro-MIDI Interface Cabling

Keep in mind that anything played on a MIDI instrument only goes out of the instrument's MIDI OUT port, not the MIDI THRU.

Although they look very much like normal home stereo connections, the cables needed for the MIDI connections are actually quite different. You will need to buy one MIDI cable for each connection you are going to make. Note that you don't need a different type of cable for IN, OUT and THRU, just a normal MIDI cable for each.

Tandy usually have a good stock of cables, the part number is 429256. Make sure you buy cables that are long enough for your requirements. Tandy usually carry 1.2m and 2.5m length cables in stock, but longer ones are available if you ask. If you have difficulty obtaining cables, you might like to check ouit our special offer on MIDI cables included with your Pro-MIDI Interface.

The MIDI-PD Disk

The MIDI-PD disk contains various PD and shareware tools and utilities that utilise MIDI in one way or another.

Be sure to read the program documentation fully before trying to run any of the programs. Keep in mind that these are PD and shareware programs, so any technical queries should be directed to the various authors, whose addresses you will find in the various '.doc' and 'readme' files.

If you haven't already done so, now might be a good time to make a copy of this disk in case you accidentally damage it.

Several programs require files called 'arp.library' and/or 'midi.library' to be in your LIBS: directory. These two files can be found in the 'libs' directory of the MIDI-PD disk and should be copied from there into the 'libs' directory of the disk you normally boot from.

To do this, open a Shell from your Workbench disk and use the following command ...

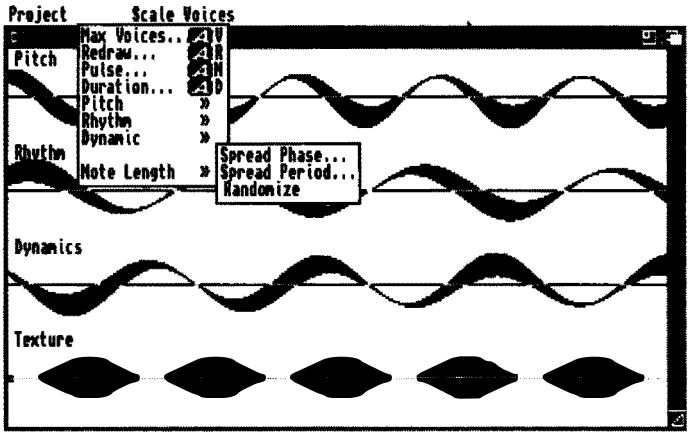
```
Copy MIDI-PD: libs/#?.library TO LIBS:
```

Apart from these two files, everything else can be copied ~y ~ simply dragging the various drawer icons from the MIDI-PD disk to wherever you want them.

Important: Save these library files on to a copy of your Workbench disk, not the original. You may find that there is not enough room on the disk for the two libraries, in which case you should delete something from your copy of Workbench which you do not need, like the Clock and Say utilities for instance. Do not delete anything from the System drawer.

Here is a bnef description of the contents of the MIDI-PD disk. More detailed instructions can be found in the document files that accompany each program.

AlgoRhythms



Software was written by Thomas E Janzen and turns your Amiga into a composer. The computer chooses the pitches, durations and dynamics (loudnesses) played to one MIDI channel so that a MIDI instrument can play the music that the Amiga 'improvises'. You choose a 'shape' for the piece. The shape is determined by how the pitches, durations and dynamics slowly change with time while the music plays. AlgoRhythms plays music in real time while it makes choices of pitches, durations and dynamics.

SMUSMIDI

With this Thomas E Janzen utility you can convert Amiga SMUS format files into standard MIDI format files.

AM

Algorithmic Music, by Michael Balzer, is another program that lets your Amiga compose MIDI music. This one is a bit tricky to use because it can only be run from the command line and requires a good working knowledge of MIDI.

DX-Synth

This program, written by Jack Deckard, will let you transfer voices from a DX synthesiser on to 3.5in disk, from where it can be loaded into the Amiga's memory for manipulation by a MIDI sampling program and subsequently saved and downloaded back to the synthesiser.

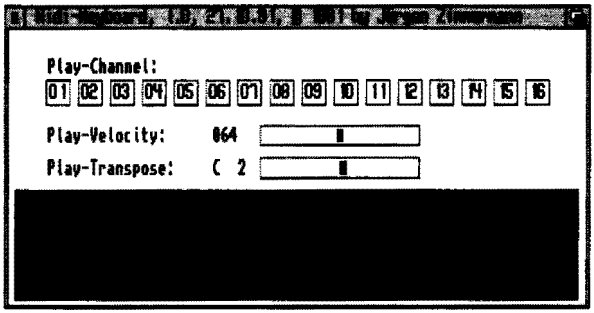
MidiStuff

This is collection of various utilities by Carl Loesch for playing, recording, controlling and timing a MIDI instrument via the Amiga.

MidiPlayground

MP is a versatile tool written by Daniel J Barrett for sending, receiving and storing MIDI data. It has many uses, including learning about MIDI, discovering your instrument's system exclusive data format, testing your instrument's MIDI capabilities, acting as a patch librarian, and helping you to write MIDI software.

MidiKeyboard



With Jurgen Zimmermann's MidiKeyboard it is possible to use the Amiga to play notes on keyboards that are connected via MIDI to the Amiga. You can use the mouse or keyboard to enter notes, and it is possible to play up to 16 notes independently without losing control over the keyboard or the notes being played. The program is fully compatible with Workbench 2.04.

Roland_110

This program by Dieter Bruns lets you transfer sounds from a Roland D-110 synthesiser to and from the Amiga. It will also allow you to save the sounds as samples to disk.

Roland_220V2.0

Written by Dieter Bruns again, this program lets you transfer sounds from a Roland S-220, S-10 or MKS-100 synthesiser to and from the Amiga. It will also allow you to save the sounds as samples to disk.

Appendix
Technical Support

Pro-MIDI Interface comes with 30 days free technical support, starting from the date of registration; therefore you should send in your registration card quickly. Technical support is available by telephone during our Technical Support Hour, by letter or by fax.

Should you wish to receive extended technical support, please complete the relevant sections on the registration card, indicating whether you would like to take up the *Silver* or the *Gold* service.

In addition to your name, address and postcode (very important for UK customers), we need payment details before we can accept your extended registration. You can pay by credit card (Mastercard, Eurocard, Access, Visa etc.), UK debit card (Switch, Connect etc.), Eurocheque, UK cheque or Postal Order.

You may have already registered another Microdeal product under our *Gold* or *Silver* service; in this case, there is no need to fill out the payment section.

Notes

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