

Look out! It's the Strolling MIDI Guitarist!

Performance Log: MIDI Stroller

Date: Saturday August 31, 1991

Place: Michael Bolton outdoor concert at the Star Lake Amphitheater, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania

Hours worked: 2

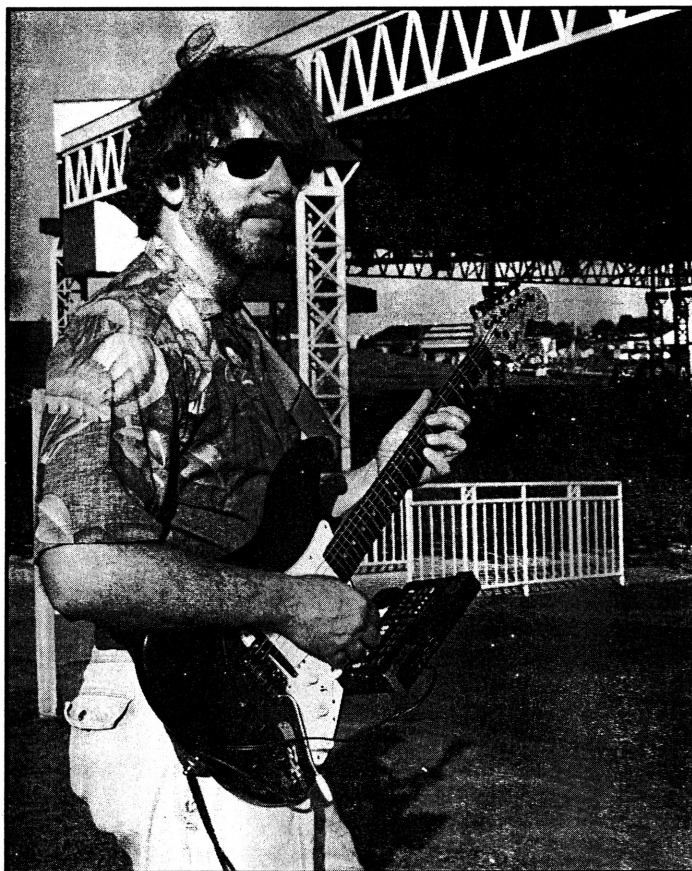
BY BILL PURSE

IT WAS SATURDAY morning when the phone rang, and a problem gig for a booking agent presented an interesting opportunity for today's micro-technology. What was the problem? Could I stroll and play my electric guitar through a battery amp like a Pignose TM to entertain the Michael Bolton fans as they entered the massive outdoor performance center of the Star Lake Amphitheater? The voice from the other end of the telephone exclaimed "Acoustic guitars are not effective, and you must be mobile, to stroll through the crowd." My mental wheels began to turn and I felt I could do even better than just an amplified guitar. My reply, "What about a strolling, battery operated, MIDI sequencer presentation that would sound like five performers?", was met with approval. Since I was not performing that evening, I was glad to take the job.

Bill Purse wants to be the first MIDI Guitarist on the Space Shuttle.

Step one was to take inventory of the equipment I would use: Yamaha QY10 sequencer, Fender Stratocaster, Peavey KB15 keyboard battery operated amp, Digitech PDS 2000 Delay Unit velcroed to the amp, plenty of batteries, Y-cord, two guitar cords, tuner, guitar chops, and business cards.

One thing was missing: my QY10 could only play back 8 pre-programmed songs, so I needed instant access to the interface panel and the QY10's pattern mode. The pattern mode will create 4 background parts to specified chord roots and qualities that are entered: a bass track, 26-voice drum track, and two other chord tracks featuring any of the 30 voice tone generators. The 76 preset backing patterns are great for jamming or practice and include funk, reggae, rock, new-age, salsa, jazz and many more. By punching in the correct change while playing the guitar I could have a great time jamming live with the QY10 after performing my 8 original songs. Now my only problem was how to gain instant access to the interface panel. The videocassette case in

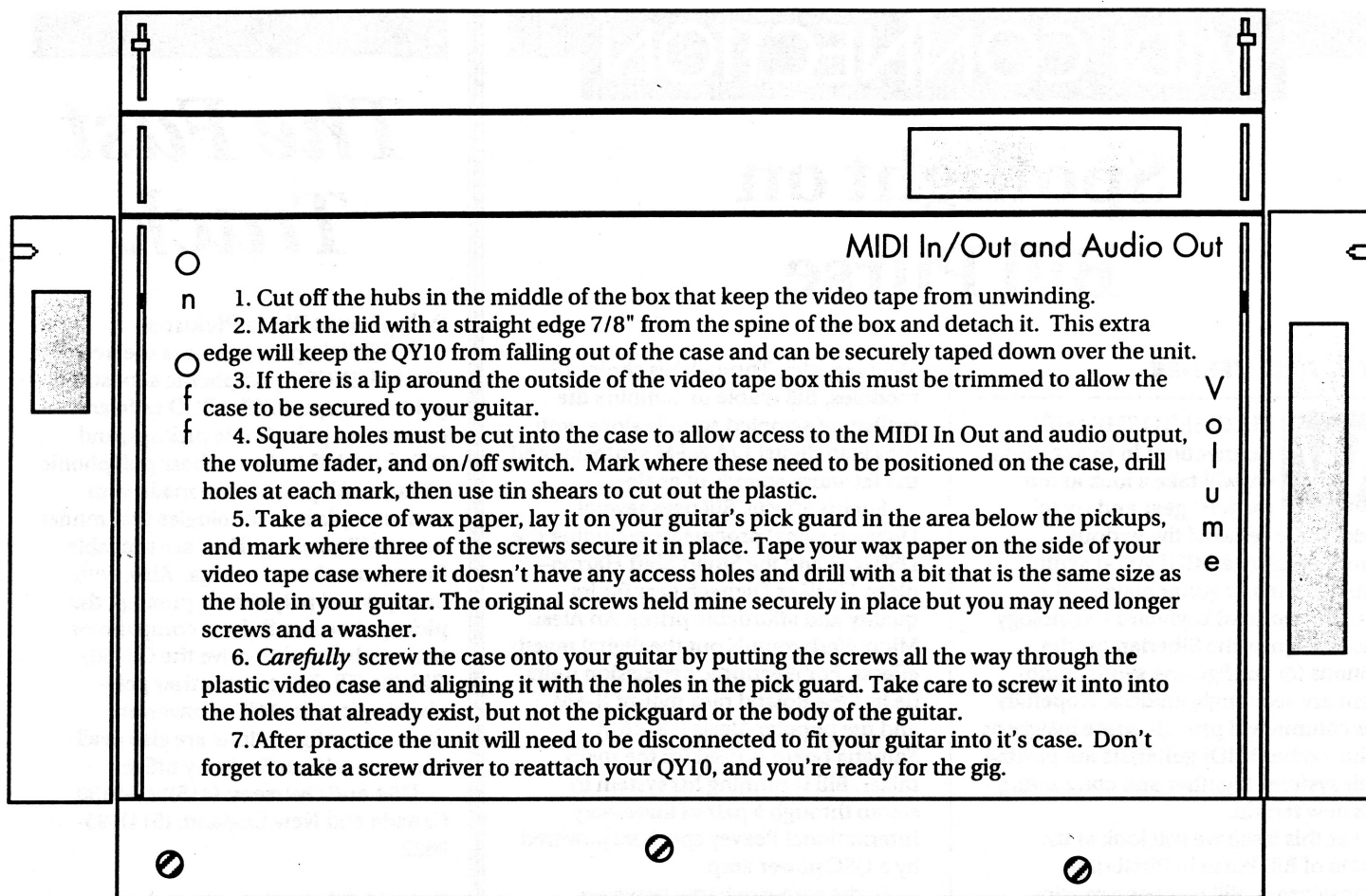


which the unit is shipped gave me my idea. What if I modified another video case and attached it to my Stratocaster? With just 30 minutes of my time and my X-acto Knife, I was ready for the gig. (*Construction details are provided in the figure*).

A Good Time for All

The concertgoers and amphitheater owners loved my setup and were intrigued by the quality and versatility of my performance and the

use of technology. The interest my setup and performance generated was reflected in the large number of business cards I handed out. I got to enjoy performing and jamming with a minimal tech setup, to see a concert with 10,000 people (two thirds of who were female fans), and to take home a paycheck to boot! I'm looking forward to my next minimalist MIDI gig and would love to hear from *MIDI Guitarist* readers about similar experiments.



Fingerstyle MIDI

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Mono from Poly

"Renaissance Mapping" would sometimes sound better if the melody voice were heard in Mono; i.e., each note on the high strings cuts off any already-sounding notes. This is especially true when using wind sounds for the melody, unless you mean to imply a wind ensemble rather than a soloist. This can be accomplished with a variant of the 2-Branch setup above.

First, we're mapping only 3 strings into the melody for this split, so we need to shut off string 4 in Branch A and

turn it on in Branch B. For this application, you don't necessarily need bending in the bass, so you could make Branch B Poly and Chromatic too, if you wish.

The trick is to program the receiving synthesizer to put the sounds triggered on Channel 1 into Mono Mode. Sometimes this means putting the whole sound module into Mono Mode, but that should work just fine.

When you do this, you end up transmitting your top three strings in Poly Mode and receiving them in Mono, and getting exactly the right effect!

Next time: 3-part music! You won't believe what you have to go through, but it's worth it!

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