

Connecticut Songsmith

Newsletter of the Connecticut
Songwriters Association



CSA is an educational, non-profit organization dedicated to
improving the art and craft of original musical and lyrical composition.
Serving music's artisans and craftsmen since 1979.



May 2006
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Combining Arts,
Education, and
Community Outreach

1979 - 2006 : 27 Years of Combining Arts, Education, and Community Outreach

Saturday May 13: A Midi/Recording and Production Workshop with Studio follow-up

1pm-4pm Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Mystic

Midi/Recording and Production WORKSHOP and Followup Studio Sesison

(more details inside...)

The CSA meeting for May will be held on Saturday, May 13 from 1pm-4pm at the Mystic Chamber of Commerce conference Room, 14 Holmes St, Mystic (directions on page 2). For the FIRST 10 interested people, there will be a hands-on followup in the studio, right after the workshop.

CSA PRESENTS the 14th edition one of our most popular programs, the Midi/Recording and Production Workshop, hosted by Bill Pere, who runs the Connecticut Songwriting Academy, and who has produced more than 30 full CD's and hundreds of demos, for many artists. Bill has been in the forefront of Midi and digital technology since 1984. Learn how to get the most out your recording efforts, whether you do it yourself or work with others. What's the difference between Midi and Digital recording? What equipment options are there? How should you prepare before beginning a recording session? What should you expect from a producer in today's music scene? How do you know you really have your Master? Do you own your Master? Can a producer legally not give you your Master? How do you negotiate your recording deal? These questions and more will be discussed in the presentation.

Following the presentation, the FIRST 10 people who have registered and who are interested may accompany Bill to his nearby studio for a hands-on

walk-through of recording gear and processes.

The 1-4pm workshop discussion is FREE to members (\$5 to non-members). There is a \$10 registration for the in-studio follow-up session, limited to the FIRST 10 people. To reserve your spot, e-mail info@ctsongwriting.com.

IF TIME PERMITS, we will do a critique session with a special look at production-values

COMING UP !

APRIL 29 7:00pm at Groton Bible Chapel, 66 Toll Gate Rd, Groton: **CSA Presents A Day of Praise -- the live CD release Concert for "Share the Journey"**. All CSA artists are invited to participate in this event. (details inside)

CSA EVENTS CALENDAR

(for complete listing see <http://www.ctsongs.com>)

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Apr 29 | CD Release Concert for CSA Compilation "Share the Journey" Groton 7pm |
| May 13 | CSA Meeting: Productin Workshop |
| June 11 | CSA Picnic and Showcase, Glastonbury |
| June 13 | CSA Monthly Meeting - The Creative Process with Joe Manning and Steve Vozzolo |
| July 11 | CSA Monthly Meeting -- Indie Marketing with Noel Ramos |
| Aug 27 | CSA Picnic and Showcase |
| Sep 12 | CSA Monthly Meeting |
| Oct 14 | CSA Monthly Meeting |
| Nov 7 | CSA Monthly Meeting |
| Dec 02 | - LUNCH Holiday Show - many CSA artists. |
| Dec 12 | - CSA Holiday Showcase and Potluck - Glastonbury |

Guiding Songs Along the Path from Creation to Realization to Proliferation

COMBINING ARTS, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR 26 YEARS

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING LOCATIONS

Directions to Mystic Chamber of Commerce Conference Room (14 Holmes St): Coming North on I-95, take Exit 89. Go right off the Exit onto Allyn St. Go about 2 miles and come to a light and the intersection of Rt 1. Turn left onto Rt 1 and go a short way to the 5-way intersection overlooking Main St, Mystic. Proceed down the Main Street of Mystic, across the drawbridge, to the flagpole (Holmes St). Turn left at the flagpole onto Holmes. Pass a few storefronts and you'll see a red brick building, #14 Holmes St. To park, turn right just before the brick building onto Church St, and park in the lot behind the brick building. The entrance for the Chamber of Commerce is at the far right as you face the rear of the building. Go down the corridor. The room is on the right. Coffee and Snacks available!

WOULD YOU LIKE A CHANCE TO SING ONSTAGE AT THE BUSHNELL as part of the cast of a nationally touring musical, and help fight homelessness? "Voices for Hope", co-sponsored by New Generations and LUNCH will be selecting 8 vocalists, ages 12-18, to appear on stage at the Bushnell along with the cast of "Booklyn the Musical" in June. Bill and Kay Pere will be among the finalist judges, and all contest proceeds go to support programs which address homelessness in our state. This is an incredible one-of-a-kind opportunity. If you know any talented young vocalists who might like to enter, visit www.lunchensemble.com for entry details. For more info, e-mail info@ctsongs.com.

THE NEW CSA Spiritual/Inspirational Compilation CD, "Share the Journey" is a great collection of CSA work. We feature 19 artists with styles including folk, pop, country, symphonic, and classical. The CD is available for sale at \$10 each. You can order through the CSA website (www.ctsongs.com) or by mail (PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355). CSA Thanks Lani Peck for contributing the CD cover artwork.

NEW COMPILATION FOR 2006 -- CSA is now accepting songs for its 4th **Holiday Compilation**. Songs relating to the Christmas/Chanukah holiday season will be considered for inclusion. The submission guidelines are posted at the CSA website, and can also be found elsewhere in this issue.

NOTE: CSA Marketplace/Classified Ads, and Member Happenings are now online 24/7 at the CSA website. You can go there any time at www.ctsongs.com.

GET A TAX DEDUCTION FOR YOUR OLD STUFF !

If you have any old music or office equipment lying around or just old "stuff" that you don't need, consider donating it to CSA and you'll get a generous tax deduction !

CSA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all items donated to us can be deducted at their maximum fair market value. We have helped many folks get nice deductions for their old items, which certainly can be useful to us either in our regular CSA programs or our community outreach programs through LUNCH.

We can use any office equipment and supplies, old computers, any type of music and studio equipment, and any type of item that could be used for auction or raffle. If you're thinking of putting things on consignment or e-bay, consider that after the commissions and fees are taken, what you actually receive might not be as much as you might get from a tax deduction at maximum market value.

If you have anything that you might like to donate, contact Bill Pere at bill@billpere.com, or call 860-572-9285.

CSA Midi/Recording/Production WORKSHOP

**SATURDAY May 13, 1:00pm - 4:00pm at the Mystic Chamber
of Commerce Conference Room. 14 Holmes St, Mystic**

In today's music scene, there are more options than ever before for getting your songs recorded and distributed. There are many do-it-yourself choices, or options to work with a producer. How do you decide?

If you are acting as your own producer/engineer, how do you get the most from Midi vs digital recording? Are you aware of the differences? When your tracks are all recorded, what's the best way to mix them?

When your tracks are mixed, how do you master them? Do you as an artist really want to bother with all that?

If you go to a studio, do you know what you should be walking away with? Do you know if you really have your master? The recording technology developments in the last decade have drastically changed the whole concept of what a "Master" is and what you should be getting from a studio you work with.

What are the pros and cons of recording to a typical computer vs a standalone, dedicated recorder? Can recording to your home computer affect your other programs?

How do you get sheet music for your songs? Can you just "sing" it? (Answer - "Yes")

The most difficult part of Midi recording for almost everyone is a good rhythm track. Why is this and what can you do about it? Can you use Midi if you only play guitar? Can you use Midi if you don't play any instrument or just sing? (Answer: Yes and Yes).

What do you do if you've recorded the song but after critique, you want to make changes in the structure, tempo, key etc? This is no problem at all with a midi system.

How can you use Midi in live performance? What is Real-time Arranging? Can you quantize and still sound "real"? How does midi create realistic vocal harmonies?

In the recent news, the producer of the band "White Stripes" suing them for a share of their royalties because he made significant creative contributions to the distinct sound that made them successful. Is he entitled to do this? How could a lawsuit be avoided? Can it happen to you?

COME AND GET ANSWERS TO THESE AND ANY OTHER QUESTIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT MIDI and RECORDING and PRODUCTION. Bill Pere, who runs the Connecticut Songwriting Academy, has had one of the first Midi Studios in Connecticut (since 1984). Bill has always been in the forefront of Midi and Recording Technology. (Bill has the 24th Mackie HDR 24/96 unit ever made) and has produced more than 30 full CD's and hundreds of demos.

IF TIME PERMITS, we will do a critique session with a special look at production values.

Following the presentation, the first 10 people who have signed up will come to Bill's nearby studio for a hands-on walk-through of the many types of gear and the choices they give today's artists. If you have a Standard Midi File and would like to have it critiqued at the studio, bring it along on a Mac-formatted floppy, CD, or Zip, or e-mail it ahead

(info@ctsongwriting.com)

Space at the studio portion of the program is limited, so advance registration is recommended. The workshop is free to members, \$5 to non-members. The studio portion of the program is \$10 and spaces will be limited to the first 10 people who sign up. To check space availability, e-mail info@ctsongwriting.com. You can register in advance by sending \$10 payable to CSA to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355.

Directions to Mystic Chamber of Commerce Conference Room (14 Holmes St) Coming North on I-95, take Exit 89. Go right off the Exit onto Allyn St. Go about 2 miles and come to a light and the intersection of Rt 1. Turn left onto Rt 1 and go a short way to the 5-way intersection overlooking Main St, Mystic. Proceed down the Main Street of Mystic, across the drawbridge, to the flagpole (Holmes St). Turn left at the flagpole onto Holmes. Pass a few storefronts and you'll see a red brick building, #14 Holmes St. To park, turn right just before the brick building onto Church St, and park in the lot behind the brick building. The entrance for the Chamber of Commerce is at the far right as you face the rear of the building. Go down the corridor. The room is on the right. FREE Coffee and snacks.

CALLING ALL WRITERS

SONGS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE NEXT CSA COMPILATION

The next CSA compilation will be a Holiday CD, to be released around December 2006. This will be CSA's 4th Holiday CD.

GET THOSE HOLIDAY SONGS READY TO SUBMIT. SUBMISSIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED NOW UNTIL OCTOBER 31

GUIDELINES:

- At least one writer must be a current CSA member
- Songs must be appropriate for the December Holiday Season (Christmas, Chanukah, Thanksgiving, New Year, etc).
- Any musical style is okay
- Submission is NOT a guarantee of acceptance. Songs will be selected based on :
 - Appropriateness to the theme
 - Song crafting
 - Production Quality (must be professionally recorded and radio-ready)
 - Available space on the CD (if there are more acceptable submissions than can fit on the CD, those submitted earlier and those of shorter length will be given greater consideration.
- Songs must not violate the terms of any third-party agreement (e.g. with a publisher). Unsigned songs are preferred. If a song is under contract to a publisher, a signed release from the publisher must be provided.
- Songs may not have been included on any previous CSA Compilation .

TO SUBMIT, PLEASE SEND THE FOLLOWING:

- A recording of the song on CD, suitable for duplication (put your name and contact info on the CD)
- A lyric sheet (put your name and contact info on the lyric sheet)
- A signed release form, printed out from the CSA web site (www.ctsongs.com)
- A non-refundable one-time \$10 processing fee payable to CSA (there are **no** additional costs, whether a song is accepted for inclusion or not)

Send your recording, lyric sheet, release form, and \$10 to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355.

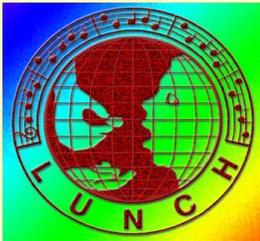
IF YOU HAVE A SONG which is not yet fully produced and you want to know if it acceptable for consideration before doing the production, you may bring it to a CSA critique session, OR send the rough recording to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355. Include your e-mail address.



**Connecticut
Songwriters
Association**

(www.ctsongs.com)

and



**Local
United
Network to
Combat
Hunger**

(www.lunchensemble.com)

**26 YEARS of
Using the Power
of Popular
Music to
Produce
Positive Social
Action**

**SATURDAY APRIL 29, 2006
Groton Bible Chapel, Groton, CT**

**A DAY OF PRAISE
CD RELEASE CONCERT FOR "SHARE THE JOURNEY"**

Spiritual and Inspirational Music to Benefit Local Social Services
(see www.lunchensemble.com)

- 1:00pm - 5:00pm: Gather to learn each other's songs to play and sing backup as needed. Sound Check.
- 5 - 6:00 pm: Fellowship dinner (bring a dish to share - kitchen facilities available)
- 6 - 6:30pm: Kitchen cleanup, set up post-show reception for audience
- 6:30pm: Doors open for concert
- 7 - 9 pm: Concert, open to the public. (Tickets: \$10)

Registration in advance is only \$10 for the entire program

All artists who have songs on the "Share the Journey" CD are invited to present the song at the concert, and to teach the other artists any back-up parts you may want. It is your responsibility to provide written chord sheets, music, and lyrics as needed. We will have approximately 20 minutes to work on each song., so keep it simple.

If you do not have a song on the CD but would like to perform at the concert: Contact Bill Pere at bill@ctsongwriting.com . We welcome other performers to do backup parts on the songs.

All registrants may have a spot on the merchandise table to display and sell CD's. It is requested that \$1 of each item sold be donated to LUNCH

**On Behalf of the 100,000 hungry children
in Connecticut, Thanks for Caring**



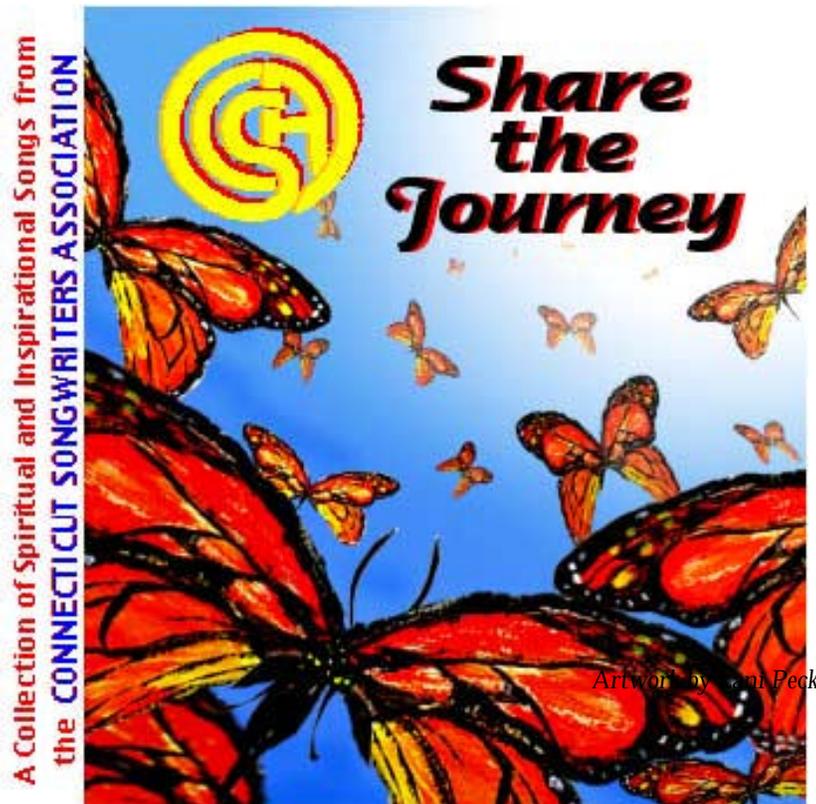
Directions to Groton Bible Chapel: 66 Toll Gate Rd, Groton, CT

Exit 86 off I-95, onto Rt 12 (a left exit if you are coming across the Gold Star Bridge from I-95 going North, then Rgt onto Rt 12) From Rt 12, Toll Gate Rd is the a right at the 3rd light, and the church is just up on the left.

From I-95 going South, Exit 86 to Rt 12, go right at the 4th light onto Toll Gate Rd. the church is just up on the left.

ANNOUNCING THE NEWEST CSA COMPILATION -- SHARE THE JOURNEY --

A Collection of Spiritual and Inspirational Songs from CSA Members



Now Available to
order !
The first printing
has already sold
out !

CSA is proud to announce our 14th Compilation album and our first on the specific theme of Spiritual and Inspirational music. This collection represents several different musical styles, united by a common theme..

"Share the Journey" is the result of the CSA "Day of Praise" events that began in 2004.

To order your copy, you may print out an order form from the CSA website or you can send a check for \$10 per copy to CSA PO Box 511, Mystic CT.

**The initial response has been overwhelming. We are already into our second printing.
This has quickly become CSA's best-selling CD ever !**

TRACK LIST

- *1. If Jesus Had a Credit Card 4:20 (Brian Booth) ©2005 Brian Booth.
- *2. New Day Coming Tomorrow 4:08 (Bill Pere) ©2005 Bill Pere - www.billpere.com
- *3. Blessings 3:15 (Kay Pere) ©2005 Kay Pere - www.kaypere.com
- *4. Tale of the Trail 3:01 (Peg D'Amato) ©2005 PeggyD Music - www.pegdamato.com
5. Through His Eyes 3:20 (Jack Kavanaugh/Lisa Maloney) ©2005 Kavanaugh/Maloney
- *6. Lord Give Me Strength 4:20 (Nicole Sullivan) © 2005 Nicole Sullivan
- *7. Of Words, Thoughts and Deeds 4:26 (Joe Frawley) © 2005 Joe Frawley Music (vocal by Kay Pere)
- *8. Gather 'Round the Baby Grand 3:45 (Paul McCarron/Joyce Josephson) ©2005 McCarron/Josephson
9. Somewhere Beyond the Stars 3:27 (Wendell Radke/George LaFlame) ©2005 Radke/LaFlame
- .10. Lullaby For Peace 3:15 (Bob Smith) ©2005 Bob Smith
11. Fruits of the Spirit 4:16 (Laura Principato) ©2005 Laura Principato
12. Let Go 3:35 (Lani Peck) ©2000 Lani Peck
13. Shhh...Listen 4:05 (Marcia Reinhard/Terri Goldsmith) ©2005 Reinhard/Goldsmith
14. Texas Night 4:00 (George Tift) ©2005 George Tift
15. One Day 3:20 (Gale Gardiner) ©2005 Gale Gardiner
16. Symphony No. 1 "Remembrance" 3rd Movement 15:06 (Albert Hurwit)
Bulgarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra Conducted by Michael Lankester
©2005 Albert Hurwit

NEWSLETTER BONUS FEATURE

SONGCRAFTERS COLORING BOOK – THE MAGIC OF MIDI by Bill Pere

In the 1960's, "midi", along with maxi and mini, referred to the length of a skirt. Since the early 1980's, Midi means undreamed of freedom to create and produce music, free of any physical limitations. Midi means "musical instrument digital interface". It is a common language, agreed on by all the major music equipment manufacturers, that allows any midi device to 'talk' to any other midi device.

What does this mean for you as a songwriter? Suppose you have lots of music in your head – you can hear fully orchestrated arrangements, but you do not really play any musical instrument --. Before midi, this would mean you would have to find a producer or arranger to work with, probably at considerable cost. With midi, you can take any physical motion that you are comfortable with – banging on pads, fingering a reed instrument, bowing a violin, one-fingering a keyboard, picking a guitar, etc., and produce all the parts and sounds of your desired orchestration – i.e., as long as it's in your head, you can do it. This is not limited to musical types of physical motion – you can control music sounds by beating your chest, waving your hands, poking your nose, or using any motion from any part of your body (yes, that does allow for very interesting possibilities...) The fundamental concept is that midi allows the sound and the action that produces the sound to be completely independent. You could even type in the notes and sounds you want from a standard computer keyboard. If you are just a vocalist, you can sing them in –that's right, sing "la" into a microphone and get a French Horn playing the note you just sang – and if your voice was a bit sharp or flat, it can be automatically corrected. Your mind becomes the engine of ingenuity, freed from the fumbling limitations of your fingers.

You can control tempo changes, volume changes, expression, vibrato, stereo placement, and all kinds of stuff. You can make the music sound as precise or imprecise as you want. You really do have full control over your creative output. And most importantly, you can do it all yourself, customized to your own way of doing things, (and to your budget) once you learn the midi basics. The device you use to physically interact with (keyboard, guitar, your chest, etc.) is called the "Controller". Controllers make no sounds – they just send instructions. The sounds come from a "sound module."

Midi is used in two primary ways: in live performance, and in recording and production. In live performance, you could have your guitar set so that each string produces a different sound – violin on one string, flute, on another, vocal "oohs and aahs" on another, etc, as well and having the regular sounds of the guitar mixed in. You can trigger riffs and other sounds just by waving your hand or wiggling your guitar a certain way. You can even set each individual fret to be a different sound. The difference between live midi and midi for recording is that when playing live on stage, nothing is recording the midi instructions you are sending for later repetition. In a recording application, midi is usually used in conjunction with a sequencer. This can be a stand-alone box,, or computer software. Some keyboards have sequencer's built in. The sequencer records the midi instructions. It is a recorder for instructions, not sounds.

You can record your midi instructions on tracks in a sequencer (just like you would with sounds on tape), either by playing an instrument (controller) or by typing them in. However, a midi recording has no sound. It is just instructions. When you send those instructions to sound modules you hear your tracks, played back in whatever sound you want. You then can instantly do "what if's" – This is an essential part of arranging and production: What if I change the sound of the bass guitar? What if I use strings instead of flutes? What if I use a nylon guitar instead of a steel guitar? What if I change the stereo placement or reverb depth? You can instantly hear these changes with one click, as your arrangement takes shape. And you can take as much time as you want to explore and experiment, because the only studio time you are using is your own.

Midi is incredibly freeing for people with any kind of physical limitation that may prevent them from playing 'normal' instruments. There are a wide range of midi-specific instruments designed to allow an ordinary person with no great physical music technique to still be able to produce great music.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS::

Q: Can the same midi sequence be used on different computers and sequencers?

A: Yes. Any midi sequence can be saved as a Standard Midi File (SMF). An SMF contains no sound. It is the set of instructions for what notes are to be played, when, how loud, for how long, etc.

An SMF is one of the most valuable parts of the song development process, as it allows you do instant 'what if's' on your production. An SMF can be played in any sequencer (stand-alone or computer), and the sounds will be determined by the sound module to which the sequencer is connected.

Q: Does that mean that the same midi file sequence can sound different if it's played on two different sound modules?

A: Yes. This is very important to understand. The midi file sequence itself has no sound. The sounds come from the sound module. If you send the exact same instructions to two different sound modules, you may get very different results. Sometimes this is a pleasant surprise, and sometimes not

Q: Is there a way to avoid this so that it stays the same?

A: Yes and No. Most modern sound modules have a group of sounds called GM or General Midi. Any sequence that sticks with GM sounds, is going to sound the same on most sound modules.

If you don't stick to GM, then the best thing to do is to clearly label your tracks e.g, "Flute", "Violin", etc., so that when going

to another sound module, it will not be difficult to set the right sounds for your tracks. This can be done pretty quickly. If you use sounds that are unique to a specific sound module, then the best thing to do is to bring that module along with you if you go to a different studio.

Note: This is one of the best reasons to keep your sound source separate from your controller (e.g. a keyboard). You can bring compact sound module boxes with you anywhere very easily. Also, as technology continues to evolve, you can then replace your sound modules without having to ever change your keyboard, or other controllers. A modular system lets you keep current with technology at the lowest cost. When you have a choice to buy lots of features in one unit, or to get separate pieces for each feature, go modular.

Q: Why would I want to bring a midi file sequence to a different sound source or studio?

A: A common scenario is that if you have a basic midi setup at home and generate a quick midi file yourself with a simple sequencer, you may then want to have more work done on it by someone who has a wider range of sound modules or more experience in working with midi, or you may want to have acoustic or vocal tracks added. By having a midi file to start with, you'll probably save significant money when you go to another studio. In order to do this, you do need to know how to get a midi file in good enough shape for further work. Also, if you needed to change key to accommodate a vocalist, it's no problem.

Q: After a vocal or acoustic instruments are added, can I still change the midi arrangement?

A: Absolutely – the acoustic tracks are independent of the midi tracks.

Q: Don't midi tracks sound "fake" or mechanical?

A: Like any musical instrument, it totally depends on how it is "played". A good midi producer can make midi tracks sound just like a real player. All the tools to do that are there, and you just have to know how to use them. When you play an acoustic instrument live, you have to add the nuances that give music its expressive nature, regardless of the instrument you're using. If you play a midi instrument expressively, midi will capture all the nuances. If you do a midi track by typing instead of playing, you can add in all the expressiveness through midi expression controllers (these are automatically captured in live midi playing)

Q: What are some of the important things for beginners to learn?

A: Besides the fundamentals of how to set up the system and record tracks, two very important things are knowing how to get the music aligned to bars and beats, and knowing how to add expression to the tracks. (e.g. dynamics, articulation, modulation, etc) This takes practice to know how to adjust one's playing style, or how to go into the sequence afterwards and add expression. But all the expressive factors are yours to control through midi. And of course, knowing how to tell your tracks to change from one sound to another automatically (patch changes) is a great time saver and creative tool.

Q: Can midi be wireless for performance?

A: Yes

Q: Can sheet music be produced from a midi file sequence?

A: Yes. Some computer sequencer programs will do this automatically, or the SMF can be read into any music notation program (e.g., Finale, Sibelius). You have to be sure all your notes are aligned to the bars and beats, and extra rests are removed. These are both one-click operations.

Q: Can midi be mixed with standard tape or digital audio tracks?

A: Yes. A sequencer and a standard tape recorder can be synchronized to run together and control each other. The same is true of digital audio recorders (hard disk s or tape-based). All can synchronize with a midi sequence.

Q: Can a midi file be sent through e-mail to someone else?

A: Yes

Q: Can midi control anything else besides sound?

A: Certainly. Anything that understands the language can respond to midi instructions. A good example is lighting. When you are performing, you can plug your lights into a midi power strip, and each outlet on the strip will respond to a different note that you set, turning the light on and off, with the brightness linked to how hard you play the note. It makes a very customized and inexpensive light show.

Q: Is there such a thing as a midi file player, like there is for MP3 files?

A: Yes, you can get a SMF player. Remember though, that midi files have no sound, so the player needs to connect to a sound module. This is a good way to create and provide backing tracks for you on stage. You can also purchase midi files of lots of hit songs (the arrangements are usually pretty close to the original, if you buy the licensed products). Besides using them as backing tracks, you could load them into your sequencer and study them to see how the hits that you like are made. Also you can change key, tempo, sounds, etc. to fit your performance needs.

Q: What would be a scenario for recording a song, from beginning to end, with a midi setup?

A: There are of course many ways to do things, and it depends on what equipment you have, but one typical scenario would be:

1. Set up a basic rhythm (either with a drum machine, type it in, tap in it, etc) that you can play to. (or you can actually do the complete rhythm track for the song first, if you wish). You just need something as a place holder to set the structure of the song. Align your rhythm to the barline (quantize). and set your tempo. Alternatively, you can simply use the click of the metronome if you are able to play along with that in time, but a drum beat usually makes it easier. If you do that, you would add percussion later. Another option to start is to use a scratch keyboard (or guitar) track.

2. Play in (or otherwise enter) your primary track (Note that this does not have to be used in the final product – it can be a place holder. An example would be a place-holder guitar track, when you know you'll add an acoustic track later.

3. Add however many other tracks to want, until you have a satisfactory arrangement

(Note that a tool called a "Real Time Arranger" or a software program like "Band-in-a-Box" can give you a complete basic arrangement all at once (keyboard, bass, drum, guitar, etc) just by your playing or typing in chords. Then you can use midi editing to shape it the way you want. This is a very quick and inexpensive way to get a basic set of midi tracks to work with.

4. Transfer your midi tracks to your recorder in however many passes you need, (multitrack tape, ADAT, Digital Audio Workstation, etc). and add your acoustic and vocal tracks. (note, if you are using a combined midi/ digital audio workstation on your computer, you would not have to do this, but if you have the opportunity to be modular and separate the midi and recording functions, it would probably be to your advantage. Digital recording technology and formats are evolving rapidly, while midi technology has been stable for many years. Keeping them separate means you can replace one without having to replace the other. And of course, you could have absolutely everything built into your computer, but since computers become outdated in a year or two and operating systems change, that might not be to your advantage either. You'll want the freedom to replace your computer independent of your music system. Using the computer for sequencing via software is usually a good economic break-point, as the software is transferable and more easily upgraded than hardware. As always, you have to be the one to determine the right combination of flexibility for you, but it's important to know your options.

NOTE: Once you have a few midi tracks down, you can add acoustic and midi tracks in whatever order you wish, since your recorder and sequencer can synchronize. However, the advantage of getting all the midi tracks onto your digital recorder early in the process is that you then do not have to synchronize anything, which is a potential place for things to go wrong. If two sources get out of sync, you could have a problem.

5. Add any midi vocals

6. Make your final mix and capture it on your master media for final mastering.

