

■ Amin Bhatia

Requests from the Vault



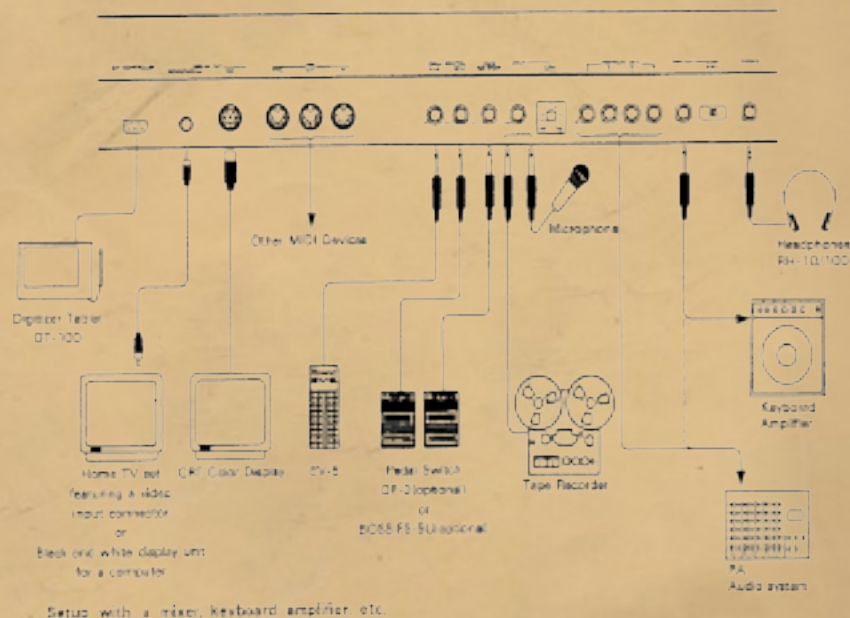
■ Amin Bhatia

Requests from the Vault

This compilation is in response to the many notes over the years asking for “that song that you did” which never ended up on any album, film or TV show. It’s amazing that you remember them.

I also find it amazing that during this recent analog synthesizer revival, sounds that were sometimes considered to be too “raw” then are coming back as “vintage” now. So, with that in mind, here are many different vintage sounds from my old days of 4 track tape recorders and synthesizers that did not exist inside one’s phone.

I hope you enjoy these “Requests from the Vault”...



1983

■ Track List and Instrument Table

track	title	year	notes
01	March of Progress	2004	Virtuality Bonus* NI, VSL, Apple, Roland, Moog, Korg, Yamaha
02	Microchip	1990	Roland MV30
03	Evolutions	1987	aka Dawn in the Forest Roland D50, S50 MT32
04	Answering Machine Song	1988	Roland S50
05	A Clockwork Lemon	1995	Moog, Roland, Oberheim Yamaha
06	Flight of the Bumble Dee	1987	Roland D10
07	Haru Ni	1986	Roland, Oberheim, Yamaha
08	The Repair	2004	Virtuality Bonus* NI, VSL, Apple, Roland, Moog, Korg, Yamaha
09	Feria Ravel Rhapsodie Espagnole	2004	Virtuality bonus NI, VSL, Apple, Roland, Moog, Korg, Yamaha.
10	Manor March	1985	Produced by Steve Porcaro Minimoog, DX7, Emulator II
11	Flight Beyond the Stars	1981	Roland Contest** Minimoog Polymoog 4 track
12	Desert March of the Military	1982	Roland Contest*** Minimoog, Polymoog TR808 and 8 track

Total Duration
39 minutes

<p>* Virtuality, endorsed by the Bob Moog Foundation</p> <p>** Roland International Synthesizer Contest, Grand Prize</p> <p>*** Roland International Synthesizer Contest, First Prize</p>

■ Features

01 March of Progress (2004 Virtuality Bonus)

NI, VSL, Apple, Roland, Moog, Korg, Yamaha

This demo was originally meant to become the opening track to "Virtuality, a Journey inside your Computer" which was released on May 23, 2008.

As the suite took form this track (and Track 08 "The Repair") were orphaned from the album. In retrospect I wonder if we should have kept these pieces in because of their "Interstellar Suite" like dynamics and harmonies. Maybe we'll put them in if we do a surround version.



Studio, 2004

02 Microchip (1990)

Roland MV30

This is a rapid-fire showcase of sounds all coming from one machine, in this case Roland's MV30, one of their first all-in-one sound module, sequencer and mixer.

My years doing Roland demos were very enjoyable because to me each machine was a brand new orchestra. The joy came from the challenge of writing performing and mixing with a fixed palette of sounds, the same way one works with a live orchestral ensemble.



Roland demonstration on stage, Frankfurt, Germany, 1991.

03 Evolutions (1987 aka Dawn in the Forest)

Roland D50, S50, MT32

This was my first demo for Roland Canada used as a tech showcase at the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) in Chicago in 1987.

It was the beginning of sequencer presentations that used no tape at all but played back the synthesizers and samplers “live” via midi communication. The thunderstorm sound effects are from a 1979 cloudburst in my backyard in Calgary that I had the good fortune to record. The melody came from an all night marathon prepping for the trade show.

Although we called the piece “Evolutions” Roland founder Ikutaro Kakehashi loved this piece so much he enthusiastically renamed it to the more visual title “Dawn in the Forest”. It was presented for several years in Japan to live audiences.



With Roland founder Ikutaro Kakehashi

04 Answering Machine Song (1988)

Roland S50

The strangest song I’ve ever done in my life and one of the most requested. It used Roland’s first digital sampler the S50 at a time when telephone answering machines were a big deal.

So I sampled my voice and used a short version of this piece as my outgoing message. In the full version I incorporated a melody from Handel’s Water Music. That’s the version that Music 96 FM in Calgary played on the air.

They told listeners that they could phone my house and hear this message and then they announced my home phone number on the air! This led to my phone ringing hundreds of times with total strangers leaving wacky messages of praise. Unbelievable!



With my amazingly supportive - and patient - family: Fatima (Tina) Bhatia, children Amin, Neemet and Aneesa, and Mansur (Suri) Bhatia, 1985.

05 A Clockwork Lemon (1995)

Moog, Roland, Oberheim, Yamaha

This cue was written for the TV series “John Woo’s Once a Thief” for a scene with a gang reminiscent of the “Droogs” in Kubrick’s “Clockwork Orange”. This was my chance to try that Wendy Carlos amazing Beethovenia sound. In the end this cue was just too big for the scene so it didn’t get used in the show, but friends have always liked and requested it.

VHS, timecode and DA-88...Ah, progress. My ability to organize and engineer sounds on a fast deadline came from my mentor, producer David Greene. He taught me much about workflow and how to lay things out on the mixing board and tape machines so that everything is organized without hampering a creative idea. I still use his methods, but now with virtual tracks inside a Mac.



Tracking in my studio at David Greene’s facility Magnetic Music, circa 1995.

06 Flight of the Bumble Dee (1987)

Roland D10

The Roland D-10 and D-20 had hundreds of built in sounds and could play up to 8 of them at the same time which in 1987 was revolutionary.

I knew Rimsky-Korsakov’s Flight of the Bumblebee from my childhood days listening to classical music with my parents so this was a showcase of as many sounds changing and flying around as possible, all from one machine.

There’s a nod to electronic innovator Jean-Jacques Perry in the humour and rapid panning of sounds in this piece.



At a Roland presentation, 1987.

07 Haru Ni (1986)

Roland, Oberheim, Yamaha

This means “In Spring” in Japanese and the melody seemed to fall out of the sky one day. There’s an innocence about it, like children or cats playing.

Haru-Ni was going to be used in Interstellar Suite but felt out of place once the other movements were finished. It is a friends and family favourite though and was used in the Vancouver planetarium presentation of Interstellar Suite in 1988.



Capturing the mews. (Ugh, sorry.)

08 The Repair (2004 Virtuality Bonus)

NI, VSL, Apple, Roland, Moog, Korg, Yamaha

This is the other unused track from “Virtuality”. I was going for the strange assembly line underworld of machines being made and repaired, or the journey that magnetic tape makes from “the supply reel of opportunity to the take up reel of destiny” (...nope that’s not drugs, I’m just a nerd.)

In retrospect I wonder if we should have put this piece (along with Track 01 “March of Progress”) into Virtuality, but unless we do a surround mix this compilation may be its only home.



My enduring love of tape.

09 Fera from Ravel's Rhapsodie Espagnole (2004 Virtuality bonus) NI, VSL, Apple, Roland, Moog, Korg, Yamaha

This was originally an orchestral experiment for Virtuality but discarded in favour of the Bolero idea. It was a sonic experiment in the style of my idol Isao Tomita. His use of sound effects and dynamics was as unique as his palette of synthesized sounds.

Using vintage and virtual synthesizers that were in my studio (circa 2004) I ventured to re-create Ravel's lively fandango along with an underwater seascape interlude.



Studio circa 2004

10 The Manor March (1985) Produced by Steve Porcaro Minimoog, DX7, Emulator II

This was the studio experiment that Steve Porcaro brought me to Los Angeles for where we both learned about our wildly different methods in music making. Little did I know that this melody I concocted would become a full blown suite one day. Keyboard magazine published this piece in their June 1986 Soundpage which convinced Cinema Records to sign me on and compose The Interstellar Suite. Some of the sound effects here were used again in the final album.

I am forever grateful to Steve Porcaro, David Paich and everyone at Toto for their support and encouragement, which they continue to give me to this day.



Keyboard Magazine Soundpage, 1986

11 Flight Beyond the Stars (1981 Roland Contest)

Minimoog, Polymoog, 4 track

This is the piece that started it all. Written for an unfinished radio play for my college friend Lynda Falconer, I worked out themes and ideas in small sections and then spliced them all together. Another college friend, Dave Kletke, showed me the ad for the Roland International Synthesizer Competition so I finished off this piece to some level of presentation and sent it in. The result of winning that competition opened many doors to producers and artists including my treasured mentors Ralph Dyck and Steve Porcaro. Listening to it now I cringe at the simple recording techniques, but it was the beginning of what would eventually become the Interstellar Suite.



Ralph Dyck, 1984.

12 Desert March of the Military (1982 Roland Contest)

Minimoog, Polymoog, TR808, 8 track

Many legendary artists and producers have used Roland's TR-808 for some amazing pop and dance tracks. I of course being a classical geek used it for a march!

The melody for this has yet to find a home in an album or film but many friends and family remember when it won the Roland Contest the second year. For myself it was the start of working through a more unified sense of form as well as finally having more recording tracks to work with. Up to 8 of them. Wow.



Steve Porcaro, 1986.



■ Thank You

Wendy Carlos
Keith Emerson
Larry (Synergy) Fast
Jerry Goldsmith
Ikutaro Kakehashi
Bob Moog
Jean-Jacques Perry
Oscar Peterson
Isao Tomita
John Williams

Mum, Dad, Neemet, Aneesa, Rochelle, Angela, Kelsey, and Danielle.
Dennis Quinn, Dave Kletke, Lynda Falconer, and Bruce Ehler.
Ralph Dyck, Barry Creamer, and Paul McCabe.
James Porteous, Dan Lowe, David Greene, Byron Wong,
Arlene Bishop, Ari Posner, and Frank Morrone.
Dominic Milano, Mark Vail, Dave Gross, and Michelle Moog-Koussa.
Steve Porcaro and David Paich.

Roland Corporation
The Bob Moog Foundation
Universal Audio
Spectrasonics
Arturia
Apple Computers
Korg Inc.
Oberheim Electronics
Yamaha International
Native Instruments
Vienna Symphonic Library



All the pieces in this scrapbook were made possible by so many brilliant engineers, producers, artists, friends, and fans that I have had the good fortune to have in my life.

My advice to fellow composers is to savour your friendships as much as you do your melodies. They are where the inspiration comes from.

Amin



2018

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Dan Lowe, Barry Creamer.

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