



# MIDI *in* MINISTRY

THE INFO SOURCE FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

VOL. II No. 1

## MISSIONS POSSIBLE!

*Roland gear is on the scene – from churches with no walls to churches with high walls...*

A funny thing happened on the way to the studio:



### How the VS-880 is Being Used Around the World in Missions

by Kent Morris

While the availability of personal computers has afforded many musicians immeasurable benefits, those in less-developed areas with less resources have had to look on in disappointment as their counterparts use modern music tools to great success. To redress this inequality, the Roland **VS-880** has been placed in the field (sometimes literally) and has shown itself to be an invaluable tool in the area of church missions. The ingenuity of these "hinterland" musicians is amazing and deserves a closer inspection.

The criteria used to select music products for use in remote areas differ somewhat from the priorities of the local musician. The overriding concern of missionaries regarding equipment is reliability. If a product is capable of performing tremendous feats, yet fails at a critical juncture, it is useless when the nearest repair station is 500 miles away. Additionally, ease of use is important when selecting mission field equipment, due to the fact that most users are not able to access technical support departments' toll free hotlines. Finally, compactness plays a key role in a product's selection since size and weight restrictions must always be considered. The VS-880 has proven itself a reliable, affordable and intuitive way to record "in the field," and at less than nine pounds, it easily meets the needs of the traveling worker who must carry their gear over a mountain range. Given the vast feature set of the VS-880, the ways in which

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## Making a difference in Prison Ministry

by Cindy McMullen

*Truly, I am one person who can't fathom ministry without the MIDI products we have available today. Hopefully, I can relate just how effective MIDI products have been for us in music ministry and more uniquely, in prison ministry.*

I didn't just wake-up one day and say "Oh, I think I'll go to a prison today." I had the same preconceived notions that most of us have about prison. However, one weekend my husband Ralph went on a Bill Glass "Weekend of Champions" to various prisons. He came home walking on air and said that this work was what we were meant to do.

I wasn't convinced. Shortly thereafter, I won a Ms. Harley Davidson contest and was asked to sing with the Bill Glass Prison Ministry. When we took our Roland XP-50 with us into the prisons, I did not fully understand the extra scrutiny given to the equipment we had. Evidently, the keyboards and the cases are considered ideal hiding places for contraband. So, we needed to find a smaller MIDI device with many of the features of the XP-50. To this end, the Roland **MT-80S** has fulfilled all of my expectations and then some.

First, the MT-80S is a MIDI file player/sound module that looks very similar to a tape deck (and it's just as easy to use). Plus, it's light-

weight and rugged, which makes it perfect for traveling. There is not a day that goes by that I do not employ either the Roland MT-80S or the Roland XP-50 in my calling. Each product serves a different purpose.

With the Bill Glass Ministry team, we may be in front of an audience of 50 or 1000 inmates and do as many as 10 pro-



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New **Integrity Music** MIDI Disks

For years, Worship Solutions has been known for having the most complete, high-quality library of MIDI files for worship. Now, they've expanded this library to include songs from Integrity Music's popular Hosanna Series. That means songs like "Firm Foundation," "Shout to the Lord" and "God Will Make a Way" can be played in any key, at any tempo and with any instrumentation to suit your praise band, worship team and choir.



Like all the Worship Solutions disks, Hosanna Series files are optimized for General MIDI and Roland GS instruments specifically. For a catalog or sample disk, call Worship Solutions at (800) 249-MIDI.



For specific information on using MIDI in worship, refer to the previous issue of the Worship Connection newsletter and the Electronic Music in Worship video. Both are available from the Roland SuperStore by calling (800) 386-7575 or via Roland's Website at [www.rolandus.com](http://www.rolandus.com).

those features can be utilized are equally varied. One mission team in the Bahamas (suffering in the surf, no doubt) uses each of the available eight tracks to record a different skit for the puppet ministry. The ability to have all the audio in one place has quickly ended the cycle of lost and incorrect cassettes and their mandatory replacement.

David Lloyd, a missionary in Holland, recently added a CD burner to his VS-880, enabling him to send his supporting churches in the States a permanent record of his revival meetings. The CD is then played on the supporting church's sound system for the entire congregation to enjoy.

In war-ravaged Bosnia, the venerable VS-880 has trooped along in a Humvee on its way to an outdoor concert where it provided WI/WO (walk-in/walk-out) music, as well as backing tracks for the band. In lieu of sequenced parts from notoriously expensive and quirky keyboards, all music beds and pads were played from the VS-880 with one track used as the click reference for the drummer.

Native people with varying dialects populate the mountains of southern Mexico. In order to reach all of the tribes in a given area, Onofre Leal is now recording his messages at home (in easy reach of reference dictionaries) in each of the native tongues and then playing back the appropriate track at each village. The inclusion of Virtual Tracks on the VS-880 allows several versions of a statement to be recorded when the translator is uncertain of the correct grammar. Throughout the world, evangelistic radio stations are using the VS-880 as their on-air music source, music bed device, PSA announcer, and program content storage unit. That one product performs all these functions serves as evidence to the VS-880's ingenious engineering and unparalleled versatility.

It's time to take  
**The Next STEP**

On November 8, 1997, Roland hosted 42 music ministers for a music technology training workshop held at the Roland U.S. headquarters in Los Angeles. The workshop was designed to provide hands-on experience with a state-of-the-art keyboard synthesizer/sequencer—the Roland XP-80 Music Workstation—as well as offer practical ways that the XP-80 can be used in ministry applications.

Designed specifically for church musicians, the class was called "The Next Step." The instructors included several Roland product specialists and full-time worship leaders who are utilizing music technology in their ministries. One such instructor was Steve Young, founder of Arts Impact Ministries in Irvine, CA.

"Most worship leaders realize that technology is becoming more prevalent and would even agree that it has some great benefits," Steve noted. "But many don't know how to use what they have or even how to get started. Roland is providing an opportunity for me to share with other worship leaders how this technology can be used in real-life ministry situations, week-to-week."

Each student was stationed at an XP-80 for the day of hands-on training. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 60 and came from as far north as San Jose and far south as San Diego.

"We wanted to try it out here at our home facility before we try to take it 'on-the-road,'" said Chris Bristol, vice president and general manager of Roland's musical instruments division. "But with the amazing response from these people, we'd definitely like to offer these classes in other cities. We see a need for education and we want to be more than just a manufacturer – we want to be a partner with these folks."

It has often been stated that necessity is the mother of invention, and that axiom certainly applies to missionaries' use of the Roland VS-880. While sometimes unconventional, these creative people are reaching the formerly unreachable and, in the process, touching thousands of lives. Every VS-880 owner should now be challenged to develop a new application for the Roland VS-880; missionaries will soon get their hands on the new VS-1680 and change the world with it.

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Roland has been involved in church music workshops for several years now, sponsoring such events as the Maranatha Worship Leader Workshops, Saddleback Church Growth Conferences, Calvary Pastors Conference, Promise Keepers, Billy Graham School of Evangelism and Gospelfest, to name a few.

And it's more than just the students who benefit from the Next Step classes. "Instead of charging tuition for the class, we decided to request a donation that would be given to a local charity," said Roland clinician Corey Fournier, who organized the Next Step training class. "Each student brought about \$30



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grams in a day. Versatility is the name of the game here, as we may be working with youth or visiting a Maximum Security unit. Both the XP-50 and the MT-80S use either double-density or high-density floppy disks. So I simply load these disks as full as possible with as many different varieties of songs as I can. This is important in that ALL of the songs need to fit on ONE 3.5-inch disk.



It is not unusual for us to use 40 to 45 songs in a day. On one particular weekend, we sang and spoke to over 500 inmates who preferred country music and five minutes later we were doing a program entirely in Spanish. After this program, we were escorted to a section devoted to women offenders. And when the audience changes, so does the venue. We often need to make dramatic adjustments when moving from a large gymnasium to an outdoor pavilion to a small classroom, but the MT-80S makes this easy. For small to medium sized rooms, the built-in speaker is perfect. When we get into a larger facility, we plug it right into the P.A.

When not working with Bill Glass, my husband Ralph serves as Contract Chaplain for Garza West Transfer Facility – a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Unit housing over 2100 offenders while they are being processed. Within two to six weeks the offenders will be moved to their final incarceration home. Ralph saw a need for newer, more upbeat worship music for the Saturday night prison service. So he asked me to form and direct a prison church choir. I was really excited about this opportunity and it's one in which I've really put the MIDI gear to use.



Cindy ministers to inmates using the XP-50

There are peculiar challenges to overcome when leading a choir in a transfer facility. Every two weeks, I lose about 50 percent of the 50 men allowed to come. These men are moved to their permanent incarceration home. So I must constantly train new members on the songs. This task is easy on the MT-80S with the ability to punch a button and "solo" the melody. We usually can learn a new song within 10 minutes. Then we sing the song with full instrumentation but remove the melody line. By the following week, the guys have all the new songs memorized, usually better than me.

I have a constant flow of new members as we have a waiting list at any given time of up to 100 men. You see, for most of us, going to church is a freedom that we take for granted. But in prison, going to church is a privilege that can and will be revoked at the slightest hint of trouble. Also, with the constant turnover, I must also be able to adapt to different keys to accommodate the fluctuating number of baritones and tenors. Again, simply pressing

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The Worship Connection would like to give a big THANK YOU to those of you who responded to our first issue of *MIDI in Ministry* with questions and suggestions. To make this even easier, we've opened a new **ONE-WAY** line of communication through the internet. Now, if you want to share...

- What you're doing with MIDI in your Ministry
- Useful ideas that might help other church musicians
- Topics you'd like to see covered in upcoming issues of *MIDI in Ministry*

or anything else regarding *MIDI in Ministry*, drop us an email. Please understand that this mailbox is for *The Worship Connection* ONLY and that you **should not** expect a response. If you need tech-support, call (213) 685-5141 ext. 770.

the transposition button up or down on the MT-80S remedies any discomfort for the singers. Also, in teaching a particularly difficult passage, I can employ the A and B Markers and repeat a difficult section until we have it down and I can also slow down the tempo without affecting the pitch.



Come for the Harley, stay for the music.

I used to feel anxious about using MIDI in worship. What if we really needed to lengthen a song during the service? I had to take a step of faith in this area. One night, I used the A and B Marker and repeat key on the MT-80S to repeat the chorus of a song. This feature worked tremendously. Who says MIDI can't flow with the spirit? I know miracles can happen without any music, but the continual music certainly set the stage for many men to respond that night. *ed. The XP-60 and XP-80 Music Workstations have a feature called RPS that allows you to select any part of the song (verse, chorus, etc.) and assign it to a key on the keyboard. So you can spontaneously go anywhere in the song and repeat it as many times as you like.*

Serenity Ministries, Inc. is another area of our life where we use MIDI equipment. In this ministry, we go to surrounding churches, statewide prisons and community events to minister and educate the public. Once, we did a block party in conjunction with the local police and anti-drug groups at a local park in a low income area. Entire gangs attended. We used the auto play feature on the MT-80S and the people loved the continual music. We had no idea how well this block party was received until so many young people showed up at church the next day! We've also used our MIDI gear in biker weddings and sadly, at a prison officer's funeral.



I guess it's obvious I'm a big supporter of these Roland MIDI devices and their value in helping us be effective using MIDI in ministry.

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and we turned the money over to The Sheepfold, which is a local shelter for homeless women and children. It ended up being a great way to benefit church musicians and our community at the same time.”

So how can YOU take “the Next Step?” Well, as you may know, Roland has been a sponsor and partner with Maranatha’s Worship Leader Workshops for several years. There are 26 of them planned in the U.S. and Canada in ‘98 and Roland will be at each one – providing instruments and training. In addition to the traditional one-day workshop events, this year we’re adding six new two-day events called **Worship Leader Workshop II**.

These new events are designed to give advanced, hands-on training to those musicians who’ve attended a WLW before and now would like to take “the Next Step.” Roland will be setting-up electronic music labs at each workshop to give church musicians hands-on experience with the cutting-edge technology being used in ministries worldwide. Here’s where and when...

Denver, CO	August 21-22
New York, NY	September 11-12
Houston, TX	September 25-26
Orange County, CA	October 9-10
Seattle, WA	October 16-17
Indianapolis, IN	November 20-21

This is a great way for musicians who are really committed to build their skills in a personalized environment with the top tools and teachers in music ministry today. Call Maranatha! Music at (800) 245-SONG to sign up!

## Roland New Product CD-ROM for Mac/PC

If you’d like an interactive tour of the latest MIDI and recording gear, then check out the Roland New Product CD-ROM. This innovative CD-ROM gives you a first-hand look at all the amazing products Roland introduced at the 1998 Winter NAMM show, including the mind-blowing VS-1680 Digital Studio Workstation, the affordable VS-840, the XP-60 Music Workstation, the SP-808 Groove Sampler and much, much more. To help you navigate this wealth of information, the CD-ROM features an

Internet-style home page and product icons, as well as audio demos, product videos and product photos. It’s avail-



able through the Roland SuperStore for just \$5.00. Call (800) 386-7575 to order your copy of this great Macintosh and Windows compatible CD-ROM today!