

AdLib™
Personal Computer Music System

Visual Composer™

User Guide



AdLib™
Personal Computer Music System

Ad Lib Visual Composer

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Introduction

Visual Composer is intended for anyone interested in creating their own music. There is no need to know traditional musical notation, or even how to play an instrument. With Visual Composer, you write music as if you were drawing it!

In addition to this guide, which instructs you on how to use the program, you will find an instruction booklet showing you the basics of composing music in many different styles and including a glossary of musical terms.

The first section of this guide, entitled "Getting Started", tells you everything you should know before using the program.

The second section, "Using Visual Composer", shows you how to use the program itself. You will learn how to write music, how to manage files, what to do to listen to a piece, and finally, how to print your pieces.

The third section gives you a step-by-step example which covers the essentials of the program.

The fourth section, "References", offers a summarized description of all the commands.

In the appendices, you will find a list of preset sounds provided with Visual Composer, a list of possible error messages, technical data, and information pertinent to using a MIDI interface and a mouse.

Visual Composer is ideal for music lovers. Write your own music, put it into the Juke Box playback program provided with the Ad Lib Synthesizer Card, and invite your friends over for a party!



Getting Started

Getting Started

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This section lists the equipment required to run this program and explains the contents of the diskette. It also shows you how to make startup diskettes, how to install the program onto a hard disk, and explains the way to load the program.

Required Equipment

To run Visual Composer, you need the following:

1. The Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card.
2. A computer:
IBM-PC, PC XT, PC AT or a compatible equipped with at least a 360K disk drive and 256K of memory (additional memory enables longer or more complex pieces).
3. A graphic display card:
"IBM Color Graphics Adapter" (CGA) or "IBM Enhanced Graphics Adapter" (EGA).
4. An operating system:
PC/MS-DOS 2.00 or all latest versions.
5. Headphones, external loudspeaker or stereo system.

NOTE: You can also use Visual Composer with a mouse and with a MIDI interface. Consult the appendices for details.

Getting Started

Contents of the Diskette

Contents of the Diskette

The Visual Composer diskette contains several files related to the program:

- **AUTOEXEC.BAT**
This file automatically loads Visual Composer from the moment your computer is turned on.
- **COMPOSER.BAT**
This file contains the command sequence which loads Visual Composer from the DOS.
- **COMPOS1.EXE**
This file contains the main part of Visual Composer. Do not directly load this file. Instead, use the file **COMPOSER.BAT** which contains the normal loading sequence.
- **COMPOS1.RSR**
This file contains the resources required by Visual Composer.
- **VCINSTAL.BAT**
This file contains the DOS command sequence necessary to prepare your Visual Composer program diskettes.
- **SOUND.COM**
This file contains the sound driver for the Ad lib Synthesizer Card.

- **MPU401.COM**
This file contains the driver for the ROLAND MPU-401 MIDI interface.
- **VCPRINT.EXE**
This file contains the Visual Composer print utility program.
- ***.INS**
The ".INS" files contain the instrument sounds.
- ***.ROL**
The ".ROL" files contain the musical segments for composition projects.
- **README.TXT**
This file contains information on the latest program updates, if there are any.

The SOUND.COM, COMPOS1.EXE and COMPOS1.RSR files must always be in the current directory.

Before continuing, we suggest that you take a look at the README.TXT file. To display this file:

1. Insert the diskette into drive A.
2. Type the following:
A>TYPE README.TXT

Getting Started

Contents of the Diskette

NOTE: In this manual, all expressions that are to be typed on the DOS should be typed as shown in the following example:

A>TEST

The standard type (A>) indicates the computer's prompt while the bold type (**TEST**) indicates what you have to enter.

Making Startup Diskettes

Before using Visual Composer, it is essential that a copy be made and that the original be put away into a safe place.

To begin operating, the computer needs certain information that is contained on startup diskettes. You are now going to make two startup diskettes: the first one containing a copy of the main core of the Visual Composer program and its relevant files; the second, the print utility program.

Before beginning, you will need two blank diskettes and a DOS diskette containing the FORMAT program.

1. Insert the DOS diskette into drive A.
2. Execute the FORMAT program and specify the /S option which will include a copy of the system files:

A>FORMAT B:/S

NOTE: Your DOS manual will give you all the details about the FORMAT command and /S option.

3. The FORMAT program will ask you to insert a blank diskette into drive B.
4. When completed, the FORMAT program will ask you if you want to format another diskette. Answer "Y" (Yes) and then insert the second blank diskette.
5. When completed, the FORMAT program will once again ask if you want to format another diskette. This time, answer "N" (No).
6. Remove the DOS diskette from drive A and insert the Visual Composer diskette.

7. Type:

A>VCINSTAL

The file VCINSTAL.BAT contains the sequence of DOS commands necessary to make the startup diskettes.

First, the Visual Composer program and other related files will be copied onto the blank diskette in drive B.

8. When this is done, you will be asked to insert the second blank diskette and press the Return key. The printing utility program will now be copied onto the second diskette.

NOTE: These instructions apply to a double disk-drive system. If you own a single disk-drive system, the COPY program will ask you to make the necessary diskette changes.

Getting Started

Installing Visual Composer onto a Hard Disk

Installing Visual Composer onto a Hard Disk

To install Visual Composer onto a hard disk, simply create a directory and copy the entire contents of the Visual Composer diskette into this directory.

1. Choose a name for your directory and type it in, for example:

MD COMPOSER

This will create a directory named «Composer».

2. Make this directory the current directory:

CD COMPOSER

3. Insert the Visual Composer diskette into drive A and copy the contents into the current directory:

COPY A:*.*

Loading the Program

1. Insert your Visual Composer startup diskette into drive A.
2. Turn on your computer (if it is already on, press the **Ctrl**, **Alt** and **Del** keys simultaneously to reset it).
Visual Composer will be automatically loaded.

OR,

Type the following in order to load Visual Composer without resetting:

A>COMPOSER



**Using
Visual Composer**

Using Visual Composer

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This section answers all the questions you are likely to have about Visual Composer. It tells you how to enter or edit music, how to place your files in various directories, how to play back music and how to print it.

Actions performed using Visual Composer are grouped into four categories: entering music, listening, managing files and printing. A part of this section is dedicated to each of these categories. But before all that, let's take a closer look at the contents of the screen and at the way Visual Composer commands work.

NOTE: In this manual, the following symbols refer to the corresponding keys:

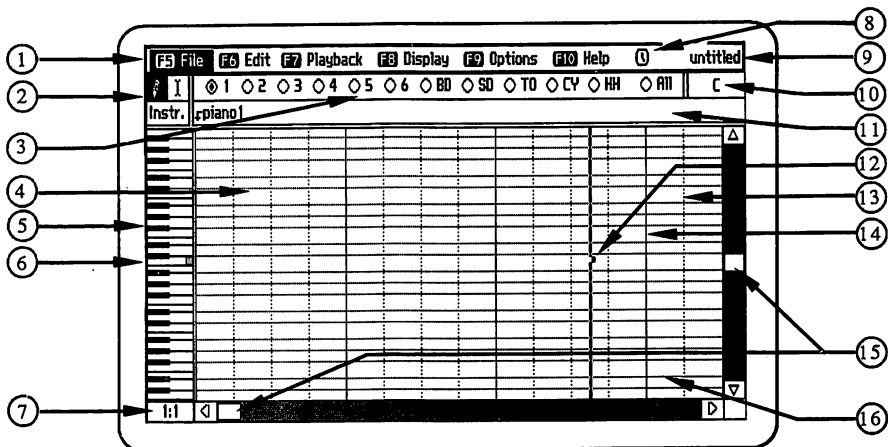
-  Backspace
-  Return
-  Shift

Using Visual Composer

The Screen Display

The Screen Display

The following illustration shows what you will see on the screen after having loaded Visual Composer.



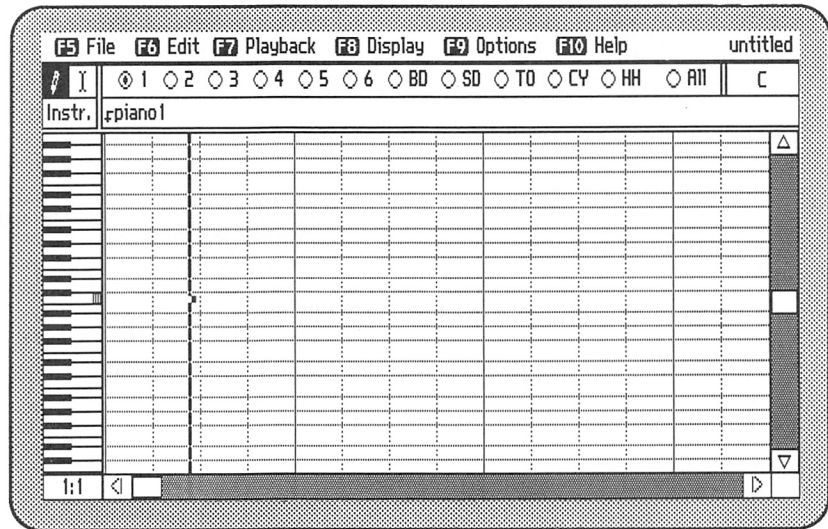
1. Menu bar
2. Current mode indicator
3. Voice indicator bar
4. Grid
5. Piano keyboard
6. Mark indicating middle C
7. Numbers of 1st measure and 1st beat visible on grid
8. Clock symbol indicating momentary delay
9. Title of open file
10. Name of note where pen is located
11. Interpretation data bar
12. Pen
13. Dotted vertical lines separating beats
14. Solid vertical lines separating measures
15. Scroll boxes indicating part of piece displayed on screen
16. Horizontal lines representing black keys of the piano

About Visual Composer's Commands

Most of Visual Composer's commands are categorized on menus so that they can be easily located.

Menu Commands

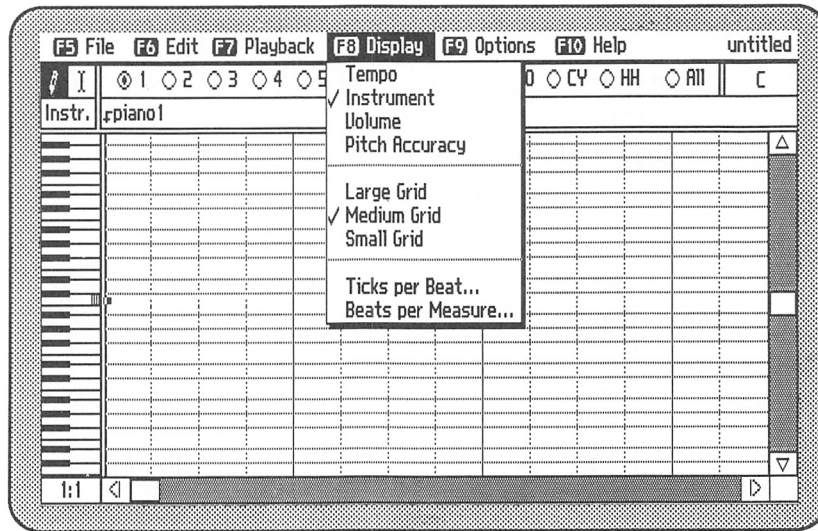
Along the top of the screen, in the menu bar, are the titles of the menus you can choose from. The keys which open each menu are indicated at the left of each title.



Using Visual Composer

About Visual Composer's Commands

Certain menu commands appear with a check mark beside them, to indicate that they are already activated. These commands are de-activated by simply choosing another command of the same group, with the exception of the command Audio Feedback which is activated and de-activated alternately by choosing it.



Other menu commands are followed by an ellipsis (...). These commands need additional information to be carried out. When one of these is chosen, a dialog box appears on the screen. You then enter the appropriate information and press the **[↵]** key to confirm your instructions. If you wish to cancel these instructions, press the **[ESC]** key.

To open and close menus

1. Press the function key given at the left of the desired menu.
The title becomes highlighted and the menu containing commands is displayed on the screen. Commands that are not available at this time are dimmed.
2. Press the **[ESC]** key.
The menu closes.


To choose a command from an open menu

1. Press one of the vertical arrow keys.
OR
Press the key which corresponds to the first letter of the command.
The command you have chosen is highlighted.

NOTE: When more than one command begins with the same letter, Visual Composer begins by highlighting the first one. If you press the same key again, the next command starting with this letter becomes highlighted.

Using Visual Composer

About Visual Composer's Commands

2. Press the  key.
Your choice is confirmed and the command you have chosen is carried out.

NOTE: You can move from one open menu to another by pressing one of the horizontal arrow keys.

Keyboard Commands

Some commands do not appear in the menus and can only be carried out by using the keyboard: commands used to open menus, choose a mode of operation, move cursors and activate voices. These commands are explained when needed in the section entitled "Using Visual Composer" and described systematically in the References section.

Most menu commands can also be carried out by shortcuts—a key sequence on the keyboard—without opening the menu itself. Open the different menus to see these key sequences: they are indicated to the right of the command name.

Entering Music

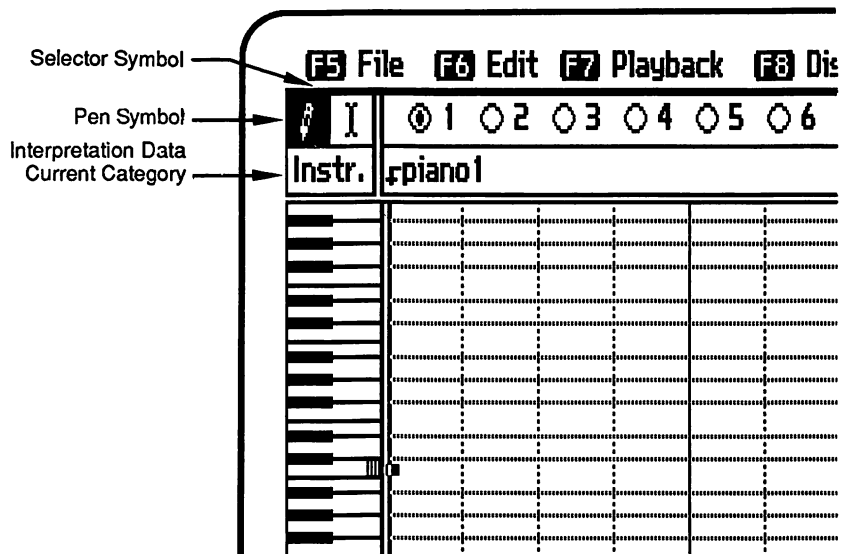
As a rule, written music includes two kinds of information: the notes to be played and indications as to how to play them.

With Visual Composer, notes are represented by dashes which you "draw" on a grid. The length of the notes is determined by the length of these dashes. Their pitch depends on their position on the grid: high notes are entered at the top of the grid and low notes, at the bottom.

Once you have entered notes onto the grid, you will want to indicate how you would like them played. You might want some of the notes to be louder, for instance, or to have some of the sections played faster. Visual Composer lets you indicate changes in tempo, volume, instruments and pitch accuracy. We refer to everything dealing with how to play the music as "interpretation data". The place for entering interpretation data is called the interpretation data bar.

Visual Composer, therefore, involves two distinct music writing activities: entering notes on the grid and entering interpretation data in the interpretation data bar.

The **F1** and **F3** keys are used to choose these two activities respectively. Each activity implies a different mode of operation; the current mode is always indicated by a highlighted symbol in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.



There is another activity with Visual Composer, called "selection". Selection involves choosing a group of notes in order to work on it. This activity implies the mode of operation which we refer to as Select Mode; this mode is chosen by pressing the **F2** key. We will be explaining Select Mode and when to use it on page 47.

Entering Notes

With Visual Composer, notes are entered on a grid, using a "pen". The notes you enter will always belong to a specific voice; a row of indicators constantly reminds you which is the active voice.

NOTE: If you have a MIDI interface, you can also enter notes directly by playing on your MIDI keyboard. To learn how to use MIDI with Visual Composer, consult Appendix D on page 125.


The grid

The grid, which takes up most of the screen, is the place where notes are entered. It consists of vertical and horizontal lines which serve as reference points when reading and entering notes.

The horizontal lines correspond to the black keys of the piano displayed along the left edge of the grid. The dotted vertical lines separate beats and the solid vertical lines separate measures.


Before entering a piece, you may determine the desired number of beats per measure and the desired number of ticks per beat (a tick being the smallest division of a beat required within a given piece).

To change the number of ticks per beat and beats per measure


1. Open the Display menu.
2. Choose the command Ticks per Beat or Beats per Measure .
A dialog box appears highlighting the current number of ticks per beat or beats per measure.
3. Type the desired number on the alphanumeric keyboard.
The number of ticks per beat determines the length of the shortest note you will be using, while the number of beats per measure determines the number of beats each measure will contain.
4. Press the  key.
This confirms your instructions and the grid is adjusted accordingly.

The grid can also be adjusted to three different sizes according to your needs: large, medium and fine. The large grid gives you big notes while the fine grid lets you see a larger proportion of the open file on the screen.

To change the grid size



1. Open the Display menu.
2. Choose one of the three grid sizes offered.
3. Press the  key.
This confirms your choice and the grid is adjusted accordingly.

The pen

To use the pen, you must first activate the Write Mode by pressing the  key. The pen symbol is then highlighted in the upper left-hand corner of the screen and a cursor we call a "pen" appears in the grid.

This pen is located on a vertical cursor bar and moves horizontally as well as vertically. You may write or delete notes with the pen.

To move the pen horizontally

- Press one of the horizontal arrow keys (, ).
The pen moves to the left or the right depending on which key you have pressed. It moves a distance equal to one tick.

You can also move the pen quickly over greater distances. You can move it directly to the neighboring beat line by holding down the **Ctrl** key while you press the arrow key. You can also move it to the neighboring bar-line by pressing the **+** or **-** key of the numeric keypad. For information on other quick-move commands, see References section on page 87 and "Scrolling" on page 56.

To move the pen vertically

- Press one of the vertical arrow keys (**↓**, **↑**).
The pen moves up or down a semitone depending on which key you have pressed.

You can also move the pen one octave at a time or move it directly to a specific note.





To move it one octave, press the **PgUp** or **PgDn** key.

To move it directly to a specific note, press the key that corresponds to the note.

A:	A	B:	B	C:	C	D:	D
E:	E	F:	F	G:	G		



When you press one of these letter keys more than once, the pen keeps going up another octave until it reaches the top of the window. It then goes to the specified note at the bottom of the window.

To enter notes

- Hold down the  key and press one of the horizontal arrow keys (, ).
A black dash one tick long appears at pen level.
- If you press the same horizontal arrow key once more without letting go of the  key, the dash becomes one tick longer.

NOTE: When you enter notes, the pen can also be moved directly by beats or measures, as described in the paragraph "To move the pen horizontally" on page 30.

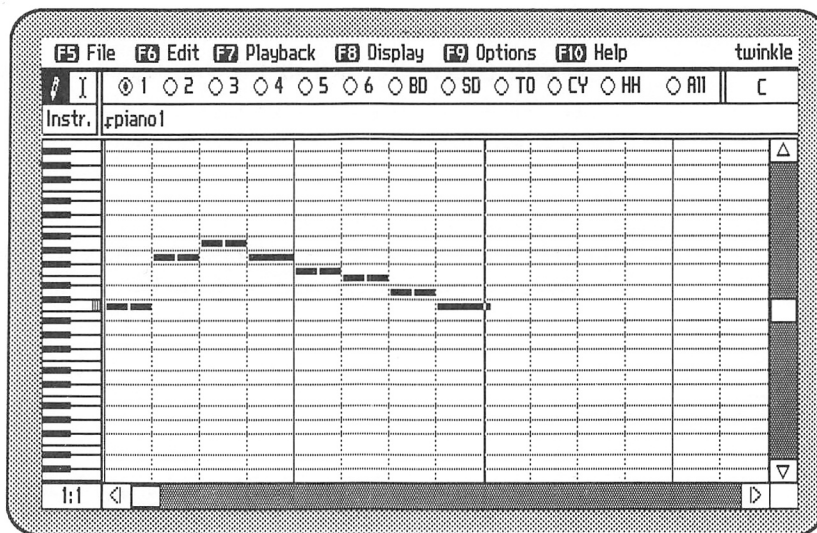
To delete notes

1. Move the pen to the immediate right of a dash.
 2. Press the  key once for each tick to be erased.
- OR
1. Place the pen at either side of a dash.
 2. Hold down the  key and press the appropriate horizontal arrow key once for each tick to be erased.

Using Visual Composer

Entering Music

Practice entering notes on the grid by reproducing the dashes displayed in the following illustration:



Once they have been entered, listen to them by using the command Play from the Playback menu. You will certainly recognize a famous little melody.

Entering Interpretation Data

Interpretation data is the information that Visual Composer is given on how to play notes. There are four categories of interpretation data: changes in volume, tempo, pitch accuracy and instrument.

Only one category of interpretation data can be displayed and edited at one time. The place where this information is displayed and edited is called the interpretation data bar.

To enter interpretation data, you must first activate the interpretation data mode by pressing the **F3** key. The name of the active data category is then highlighted in the upper left-hand corner of the screen, and a cursor appears in the interpretation data bar.

The changes entered in this bar apply only to the active voice, with the exception of tempo changes, which apply to all voices. These changes can be made as many times as you like within the same melody – on each note or even on each tick.

NOTE: When a new file is opened, the interpretation data bar shows a default value for each data category. These values are described below with the instructions related to each of these categories.

To enter or modify interpretation data

1. Press the **[F3]** key to activate the interpretation data mode of operation.
2. Choose the desired interpretation data category in the Display menu.
A check mark appears beside the interpretation data category chosen and its name appears to the left of the interpretation data bar.
3. Press one of the horizontal arrow keys so that the cursor is placed at the desired position in the interpretation data bar.
The cursor moves one tick at a time. However, you can make it jump further if you wish (see Quick-Move Commands on page 87).
4. Press the **[↵]** key to open an edit field.
A black rectangle (the edit field) appears at cursor position. This is where the desired data is to be entered. This edit field is then closed by pressing the **[↵]** key.

To delete interpretation data

1. Press the **F3** key, if the interpretation data mode of operation is not already active.
2. Press the **↵** key to open an edit field at the desired position.
3. Press the **←** key to clear this edit field.
4. Press the **↵** key to close it.

The characteristics of each of the interpretation data categories are described below.


To enter tempo changes

Tempo changes are for slowing down or speeding up music as it is played. Only mechanical music is played without any variation in tempo. You will want to use this item in Visual Composer to make your music sound more natural –more "human".

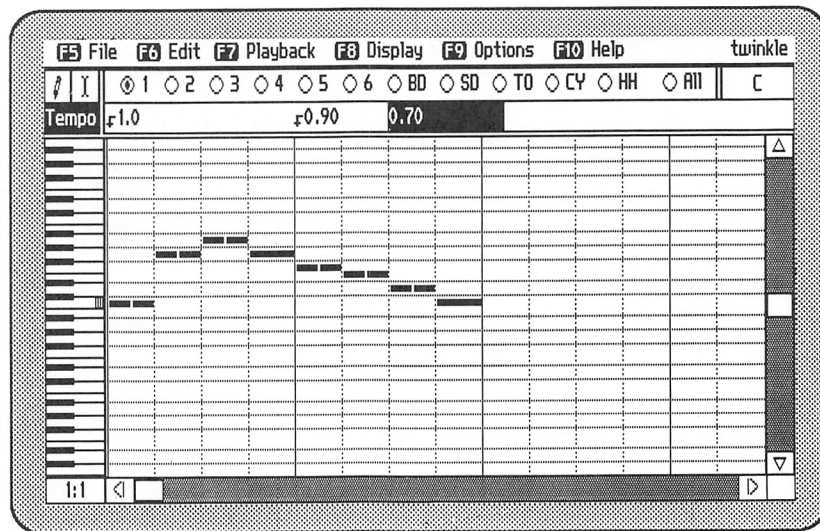
1. Press the **F3** key, if the interpretation data mode of operation is not already active.
2. Choose the command Tempo from the Display menu.
The word Tempo appears to the left of the data bar.
3. Place the cursor where you wish to make a tempo change, and press the **↵** key to open an edit field.

Using Visual Composer

Entering Music

4. Enter a numeric value from 0.01 to 10.0.
Tempo changes are expressed in relation to a basic tempo established by the command Basic Tempo of the Playback menu. For instance, 0.5 is half of the basic tempo and 5 is five times faster than the basic tempo.
5. Press the  key to confirm.
The edit field is closed and the numeric value that you entered appears at the desired place.

The following illustration involves tempo changes. Practice making these changes by entering the data seen in this illustration and listen to the results.



To enter pitch accuracy changes

When two similar instruments play the same notes simultaneously, we can clearly distinguish both of them because they are not playing accurately at the same pitch. If there is a big difference in pitch accuracy, they would sound out of tune with each other. However, a very slight difference enriches the sound. You will be using the command Pitch Accuracy in order to attain this richness of tone found in live music, or to create special detuning effects, as you will see below.

1. Press the **F3** key, if the interpretation data mode of operation is not already active.
2. Choose the command Pitch Accuracy from the Display menu.
The word Pitch appears to the left of the data bar.
3. Place the cursor at the desired position in the Interpretation Data bar.
4. Press the **↵** key to open an edit field.
5. Enter a numeric value that corresponds to the desired pitch deviation of the accurate sound.
The deviation scale goes from the values of 0.0 to 2.0. The number 1.0 represents the accurate sound; the number 0.0 takes the sound one semitone down; the number 2.0 moves the sound one semitone up. All intermediate values are permitted, making it possible to create effects from one extreme to the other. Generally speaking, a deviation of about 0.1 between two voices in unison is sufficient to create rich effects.

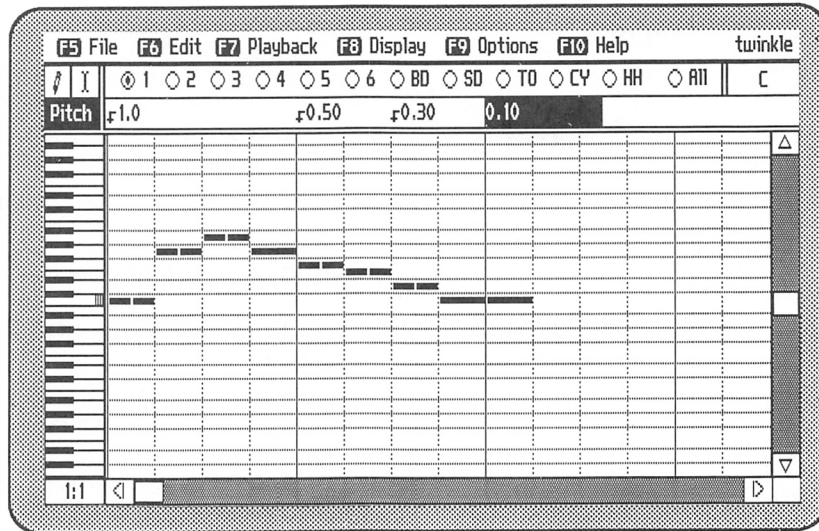
Using Visual Composer

Entering Music

6. Press the **F1** key to confirm.

The edit field is closed and the numeric value you entered appears in the desired place.

The following illustration deals with changes made to the pitch accuracy. Practice making these changes by entering the data seen in this illustration and listen to the results.



To enter volume changes

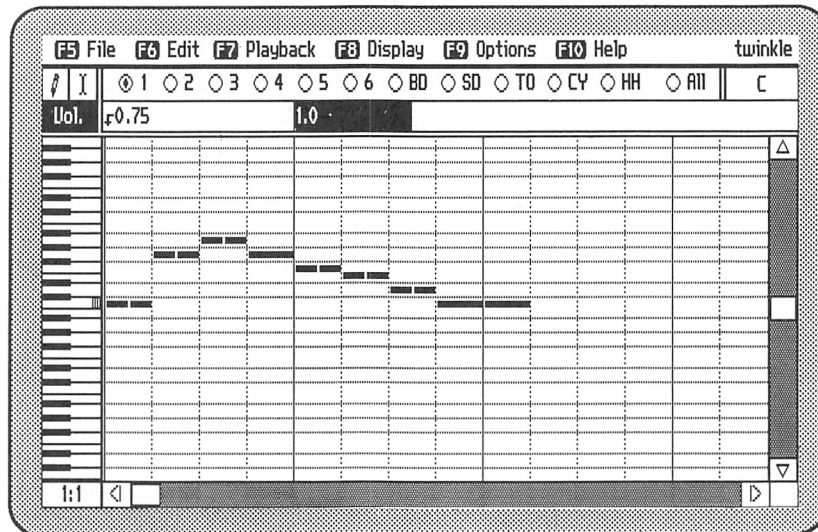
Changes in volume produce what musicians refer to as "dynamics". Dynamics are often used to enhance music. You can introduce your own by using the command Volume of Visual Composer.

1. Press the **F3** key, if the interpretation data mode of operation is not already active.
2. Choose the command Volume from the Display menu. The word Volume (Vol.) appears to the left of the data bar.
3. Place the cursor at the desired position in the Interpretation Data bar.
4. Press the **↵** key to open an edit field.
5. Enter a numeric value from 0.0 to 1.0. The value entered here modifies the basic volume determined by the external volume control of the Ad Lib Synthesizer Card. The number 1.0 represents the maximum volume possible with the current setting of the card volume control, while 0.0 represents no volume. All intermediate values are permitted, creating dynamics from one extreme to the other. The default volume setting for all voices is 0.75.
6. Press the **↵** key to confirm. The edit field is closed and the numeric value you entered appears in the desired place.

Using Visual Composer

Entering Music

The following illustration deals with volume changes. Practice making these changes by entering the data seen in this illustration and listen to the results.



To enter instrument changes

Choosing the instruments for the different sections of a composition is referred to by musicians as "orchestration". You can "orchestrate" your own compositions using the instrument feature of Visual Composer.

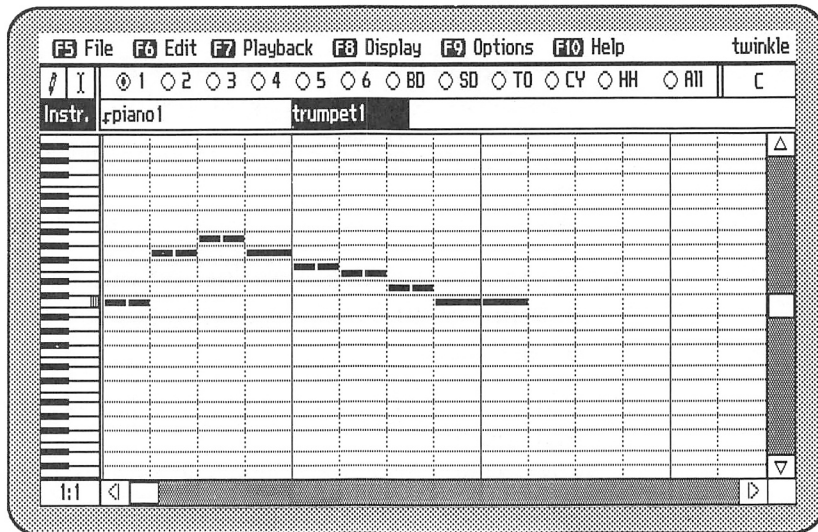
1. Press the **F3** key, if the interpretation data mode of operation is not already activated.
2. Choose the command Instrument from the Display menu.
The word Instrument (Instr.) appears to the left of the data bar.
3. Place the cursor at the desired position in the Interpretation Data bar and press the **↵** key to open an edit field.
4. Press the **F4** key to obtain the list of available instruments.
A list of the available instruments in the linked instrument directory is displayed on the screen.
5. Choose an instrument from this list using the vertical arrow keys.
6. Press the **↵** key to confirm your choice.
The name of the chosen instrument appears inside the open edit field, and the edit field closes.

NOTE: It is also possible to directly type the name of an available instrument in the edit field, instead of referring to the list with the **F4** key. If you do so, be sure of the spelling of the desired instrument name, because any small difference will produce an error message at the time of playing back the music.

Using Visual Composer

Entering Music

The following illustration deals with instrument changes. Practice making these changes by entering the data seen in this illustration and listen to the results.



NOTE: You can add new sounds created with the Ad Lib Instrument Maker to the Visual Composer instrument list. To find out how to do this, read the section entitled "Using a New Sound with Visual Composer" in the Instrument Maker manual.

Writing for Several Voices

Visual Composer lets you enter up to eleven voices to be played simultaneously. A row of indicators at the top of the screen constantly reminds you which voice is active.

You can choose from one of the two following voice assortment options: With Percussion; Without Percussion. The first gives you the possibility of using six melodic voices and five percussion voices while the second offers nine melodic voices but no percussion.

The preset assortment is With Percussion.

To choose the Without Percussion voice assortment

- Select the command Without Percussion from the Options menu.
The row of voice indicators displays nine indicators numbered from 1 to 9. Indicator No. 1 is highlighted.

To choose the With Percussion voice assortment

- Select the command With Percussion from the Options menu.

The row of voice indicators displays six indicators numbered from 1 to 6 and five indicators followed by the abbreviations below:

BD	for the Bass Drum
TO	for the Tom-Tom
SD	for the Snare Drum
CY	for the Cymbals
HH	for the Hi-Hat

Indicator No.1 is highlighted.

The pitch of the SD, CY and HH voices is fixed and independent of the position at which they are written on the grid. However, the BD and TT voices can vary in pitch.

Furthermore, the TT influences the timbre of the fixed voices. To obtain the best results, it is a good idea to place the notes of this voice on the note C, located two octaves below middle C.

To activate a given voice

- Hold down the **Alt** key and press the number key corresponding to the desired voice: percussion voices are activated by keys **7**, **8**, **9**, **0**, and **-**. (As the numeric keypad is currently being used for the arrow keys, you must use the number keys of the alphanumeric keyboard.)
The notes and the indicator for the chosen voice are highlighted and the notes written in the other voices are dimmed. All commands of the three Modes of operation will apply to this voice.

NOTE: The information given in the interpretation data bar is related to the active voice except for tempo changes, which affect all voices.

To activate all voices simultaneously

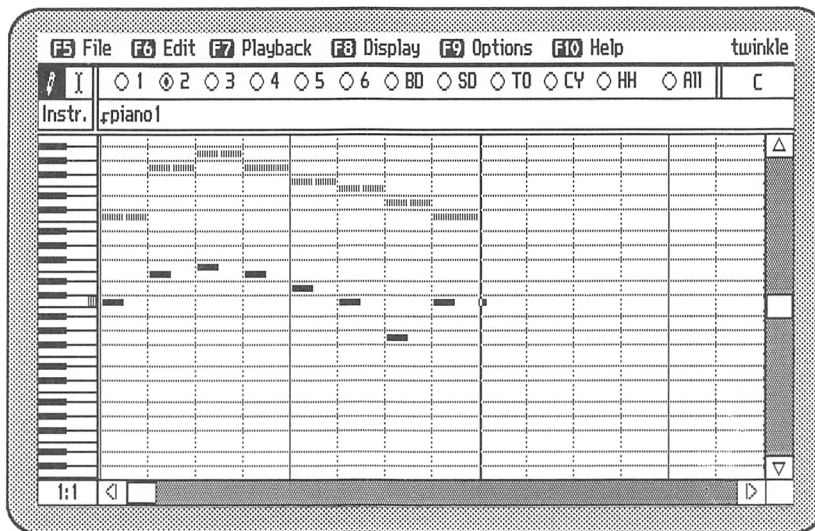
- Hold down the **Alt** key and press the **=** key.
The "All" indicator is highlighted.

NOTE: Choosing all voices is useful when working on sections, as you will see further on. However, it is impossible to write when "All" voices are active. If you attempt to do so, Visual Composer will display an error message.

Using Visual Composer

Entering Music

Experiment with the possibilities of writing different voices; enter an accompaniment for the melody you wrote previously. To do this, select voice No. 2 and reproduce the black dashes which are seen in the illustration below. Then listen to the whole piece while following these dashes on the screen.



Working on Sections

As you use Visual Composer, you will soon feel the need to perform operations on whole sections of music. To do so, you will have to, first of all, select the desired group of notes and then choose a command to be applied to this selection.

We are now going to see:

- selection methods
- instructions for repeating, deleting, moving and transposing a selected group of notes.

Selection Methods

Selection involves choosing a group of notes in order to work on them. The mode of operation used to perform this action is called Select Mode and is chosen by pressing the **F2** key. Once chosen, a cursor bar we call a "selector" appears on the grid and a corresponding symbol is highlighted in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.

When you "select" notes, a highlighted area appears all the way up the grid. However, it is only the active voice of this section that is being selected.

NOTE: When the option "All" located on the voice indicator bar is highlighted, selection applies to all voices.

To select a section in a given voice

1. Activate the desired voice.
2. Press the **F2** key to activate the Select Mode.
3. Place the selector at either edge of the desired group of notes.
4. Hold down the **↑** key and press the appropriate horizontal keys (**→** or **←**).
The selected part of the grid becomes highlighted.

NOTE: You can also move the selector over greater distances, by applying the methods for Quick-Move Commands. (See References page 87.)

To select a section in all voices

1. Activate All voices.
2. Press the **F2** key to activate the Select Mode.
3. Place the selector at either edge of the desired group of notes.
4. Hold down the **↑** key and press the appropriate horizontal arrow key (**→**, **←**).
The selected part of the grid becomes highlighted and concerns all voices.

To disengage a selection

- Press the space bar.
The selection is disengaged and the selector stays at the same place.
- OR
- Press any key or key sequence used for moving the cursor.
The selection is disengaged and the selector is displaced in keeping with the requested move.

Repeating, Deleting, Moving and Transposing Sections

To repeat, delete and move sections, you will often use the commands Cut, Copy and Paste from the Edit menu. These commands use a part of the computer's memory we refer to as the "selection buffer".

Cut:

This command removes the selected group of notes from the grid and places it in the selection buffer. The place occupied by the removed section is then filled up with the notes previously located to the right.

Copy:

This command places a copy of the selected group of notes in the selection buffer.

Paste:

This command uses a copy of the section placed in the selection buffer by means of the command Cut or Copy and inserts it at the cursor position in the piece. The notes located to the right of the insertion are shifted further right. Since the command Paste uses only a copy of the selection buffer contents, you can paste the same thing again elsewhere, if you so desire.

NOTE: The selection buffer can only contain one section at a time. This means that when it receives a new section, the old one is replaced. The selection buffer contents stay intact until you reset or turn off your computer.

When using the commands Cut and Paste, bear in mind that the resulting shifting of the notes located to the right of the cursor may disorganize the vertical correspondances between voices if it is not performed on all voices at once.

To repeat a section

- Within a given voice
 1. Press the **F2** key to activate the Select Mode.
 2. Select the desired notes.
 3. Choose Copy from the Edit menu.
A copy of the selected section goes into the selection buffer.
 4. Place the selector at the desired position on the grid or select the section you wish to replace.

5. Choose the command Paste from the Edit menu and press the **[↵]** key to confirm.
A copy of the selection buffer contents appears where you have positioned the selector, or replaces the selected section, depending on the case. The selector remains at the beginning of the pasted section.

- From one voice to another

1. Press the **[F2]** key to activate the Select Mode.
2. Select the desired notes of a given voice.
3. Choose the command Copy from the Edit menu.
A copy of the selected notes goes into the selection buffer.
4. Activate a new voice.
5. Place the selector at the desired position on the grid.
6. Choose Paste from the Edit menu and press the **[↵]** key to confirm.

To delete a section

1. Press the **[F2]** key to activate the Select Mode.
2. Select the desired notes.
3. Choose the command Cut or Clear from the Edit menu and press the **[↵]** key to confirm.

When you choose the command Cut, the notes that are placed to the right of the selection move to fill in the space created by the cut. This "compression" only occurs in the active voice.

When you choose the command Clear, the notes placed to the right of the selection stay where they are. This means that the command Clear creates a gap in the music – but only in the active voice. The command Clear does not utilize the selection buffer and therefore, leaves its contents intact. Consequently, a cleared section can not be recovered.

To move a section

- Within a given voice

1. Press the **F2** key to activate the Select Mode.
2. Select the desired notes.
3. Choose Cut from the Edit menu.
4. Place the selector at the desired position on the grid.

OR

Select the group of notes you wish to replace.

5. Choose Paste from the Edit menu and press the **↵** key to confirm.

- From one voice to another
 1. Press the **F2** key to activate the Select Mode.
 2. Select the desired notes in the original voice.
 3. Choose the command Cut from the Edit menu.
 4. Activate the target voice.
 5. Place the cursor at the desired position.
 6. Choose the command Paste from the Edit menu and press the **↵** key to confirm.


NOTE: When moving a section, you must always paste it in the same context as the original one. For instance, if there were only one active voice at the time of the Cut or Copy, you must paste the contents of the selection memory at a time where there is only one active voice. By the same token, when all voices are active in the original context, they also all have to be active in the new one.

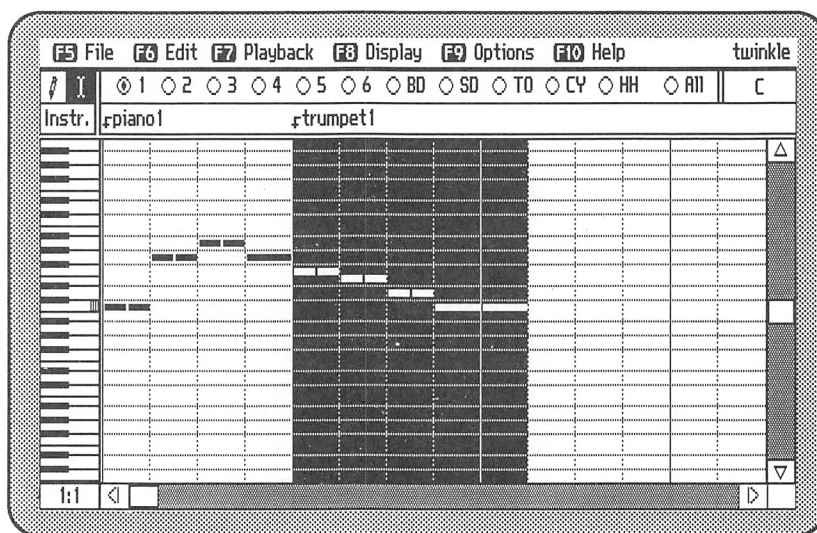
To transfer a section from one file to another

The commands Copy, Cut and Paste may also be used between two files. If such is the case, upon opening the second file, make sure that the Select Mode has been chosen before continuing. Otherwise, the command Paste will remain dimmed, that is to say, unavailable.

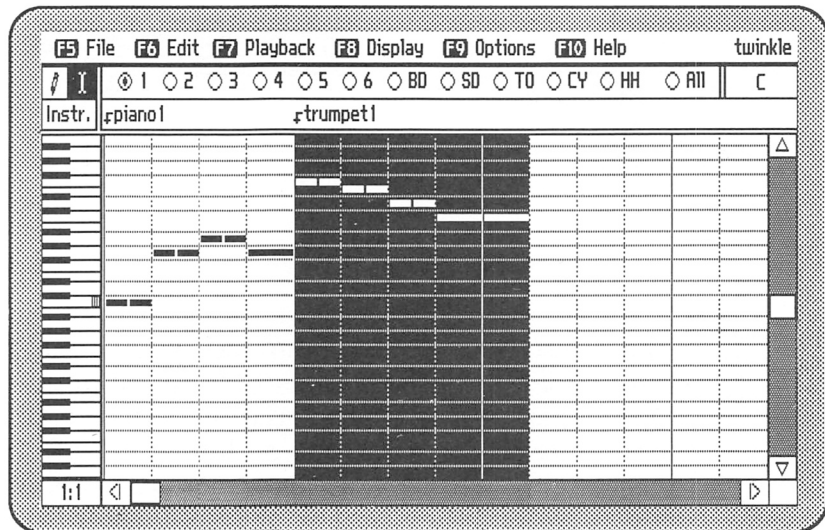
To transpose a section

Transposition consists of moving a group of notes vertically. Visual Composer enables you to transpose a selection up or down whether it be a semitone or an octave at the time.

1. Select the desired notes.
2. Choose one of the four transposing commands of the Edit menu (Semitone Up, Semitone Down, Octave Up, Octave Down) and press the  key to confirm.



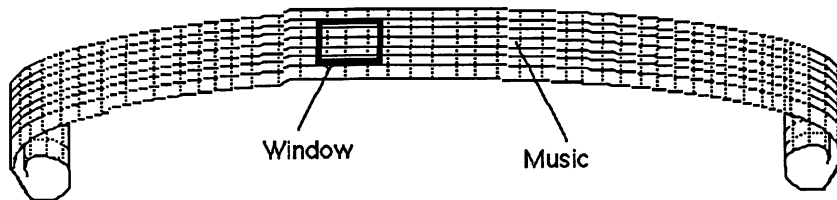
Experiment with transposing a group of notes. Once the group of notes has been selected (see preceding illustration), choose the command Octave Up in the Edit menu. When transposed, the section should be displayed as shown in the following illustration:



NOTE: Transposing a selection, unlike the commands Cut, Copy and Paste, does not involve the selection buffer.

Scrolling

Generally speaking, the Visual Composer window cannot display your entire composition at once – the piece usually contains too much information to fit in.



There are a number of commands you can use to scroll through your music, whatever the mode of operation involved. On the screen, there are two grey bars with scrolling indicators in them (white boxes): one on the right-hand side, the other on the bottom. These indicators show you which part of the piece is displayed in the window. If the indicator is located in the middle of the horizontal scroll bar, for instance, this means that the window's contents are found half-way through the piece. If the indicator is located in the middle of the vertical scroll bar, this means that the window contents are found in the middle of the pitch range.

To move the window up or down an octave

- Hold down the **Ctrl** key and press the **PgUp** or **PgDn** key. The window moves up or down. If you are working in Write Mode, the pen remains in position .

To move to the neighboring pages

- Press the **Home** key or **End** key. The cursor moves to the left or right edge of the grid. If you press the same key once more, the cursor goes to the left or right edge of a new page, shifting the entire contents of the window to the left or the right.

To move directly to the beginning or the end of a piece

- Hold down the **Ctrl** key and press the **Home** or **End** key.

NOTE: As interpretation data stays valid until the next change, this data will be displayed in parenthesis on the left-hand side of the interpretation data bar when scrolling to later parts of a piece.

Using Visual Composer


Listening to the Music

Listening to the Music


You will now see various commands used to listen to what you have written. Visual Composer enables you to hear up to 11 simultaneous voices; however, you can also listen to one voice by itself, one section by itself, or even one voice of a section by itself.

When using one of the two available commands to play back music, the program loads the music you asked to hear into a sound memory buffer. During this time, a clock appears at the top of the screen, to the right of the menu titles. For as long as you see this clock, the program will not respond to any commands. Once it has disappeared, the program is ready to accept further commands.


To listen to an entire piece

1. Select the command Play from the Playback menu.
2. Press the  key to confirm.
You will hear the entire piece.


To listen to a given voice

1. Select the command Play Voice from the Playback menu.
2. Press the  key to confirm.
You hear the active voice of the piece.

To listen to a given section

1. Select a group of notes.
2. Select the command Play from the Playback menu.
3. Press the  key to confirm.
You hear the selected section.

To listen to a given voice of a given section

1. Select a group of notes.
2. Select the command Play Voice from the Playback menu.
3. Press the  key to confirm.
You hear the active voice of the selected section.

To interrupt the playback

- During the playback of a piece, select the command Interrupt from the Playback menu.
The piece automatically stops playing.

NOTE: If there is a clock symbol at the top of the screen, the music will only stop playing once this symbol has disappeared.

Managing Files

The commands used for managing files are found in the File menu. You will often use these commands, whether you are saving your work, opening a new file, finding a piece previously saved, or linking the program to the directories of your choice.

To open a new file

- Choose the command New in the File menu. If there are no modifications to be saved in the already opened file, Visual Composer closes this file and opens a new untitled one. If you made changes in the already opened file and have not saved them, Visual Composer will first ask you if you wish to save this file. Upon receiving your answer, Visual Composer closes the open file and opens a new untitled one.

To open an existing file

1. Choose the command Open in the File menu. If there are no modifications to be saved in the already opened file, Visual Composer closes this file and displays the list of available files in the current directory. If you have made changes in the already opened file and have not saved them, Visual Composer will first ask you if you wish to save this file. Upon receiving your answer, Visual Composer closes the open file and displays the list of files in the current directory.

2. Choose a name in this list.
To choose a name, press the vertical arrow keys (**↑** and **↓**). These keys will scroll the file in the dialog box if the list of titles is too long. You may also use an alphabetic key to jump to the first file name starting with this letter.
3. Press the **Enter** key to confirm the choice.
A copy of the chosen piece appears on the screen and its title is displayed at the right-hand side of the menu bar.

To save a file

1. Select the command Save from the File menu.
If this piece is being saved for the first time, a dialog box appears and asks you under what name you wish to save it. This name will become the title of the open file. (For more details, see below: "To save a file under a new name".)
If this is not the first time that this piece is being saved, Visual Composer replaces the old version, with the current one. If, however, you want to keep the old version, use the command Save As, and rename the new version.
2. Press the **Enter** key to confirm.
Your piece is now saved in the file whose name is at the right-hand side of the menu bar.

To save a file under a new name

1. Choose the command Save As from the file menu.
A dialog box appears, displaying the name of the current open file.
2. Type in the new name and press the key to confirm your choice.
The new name is shown in the box; when you press the key, the box closes and the new name is displayed at the right-hand side of the menu bar. If you give this file the same name as another existing file, a dialog box asks you to confirm whether or not you want to replace this other file with the new one.

NOTE: Not all characters are permitted in the choice of a title. If you use a non-authorized character, a warning signal will let you know. On page 94, you will see which characters are available when choosing a file name.

To link a file to a new directory

To classify musical files, you will most likely group your pieces into different directories. (To create several directories on the same diskette, see the MD or MKDIR DOS command.) Here's how to link Visual Composer to a different directory:

1. Choose the command Music File Directory from the File menu.
A dialog box appears, showing you the current directory name.
2. Type the desired name, abiding by the DOS conventions.
3. Press the key to confirm your choice.
From now on, the program is linked to this new directory.

The file list that appears when the command Open is made now displays the files belonging to this new directory. The next time you save a piece, it will be placed into this directory.

Printing Music

Visual Composer printing features are available through an independent printing utility program included on the diskette and entitled VCPRINT.

This program enables entire pieces or simply parts of a piece (a voice, a section, etc.) to be printed in the form of dashes on a grid, as seen on the screen. You may also obtain a separate print-out of desired interpretation data, either in complete or condensed form.

NOTE: Visual Composer operates with a printer of the "IBM Graphics Black and White" variety, or any compatible printer.

To load the print utility program

- In order to load the print utility program, you must type VCPRI~~N~~T at the DOS prompt and press the key to confirm.
The program then displays on the screen the first of a series of messages about the data to be printed.

NOTE: If you are using Visual Composer, you must first of all quit the program to get into the DOS.

To print a file

Here is the list of messages that will appear on the screen, together with explanations.

- **File to print**
When you see this message, type the name of the file you wish to print and press the to confirm. If this file is not included in the current directory, begin by typing the name of the directory that does contain the file. (Abide by the DOS conventions.)

Formula: <drive> : \ <directory> \ <file>

Example: **A:\COMPROJ\HAPPY**

- **Notes (N) or Data (D)**

This message offers the choice of printing notes or interpretation data. To make your choice, type one of the two letters placed in parenthesis, and press the key.

If you choose to print notes, the print-out will be a copy of what appears on the grid.

If you choose to print interpretation data, the print-out will be a list of alphanumeric values. These values represent interpretation data changes. When the print-out doesn't start at the beginning of the piece (as you may ask for), the last data change that took place (at some earlier stage of the composition) is displayed in parenthesis.

If you press the key, without having chosen either an "N" or a "D", notes will be printed.

- **Voice (All; 1 to 6; BD; SD; TO; CY; HH)**

OR

Voice (All; 1 to 9)

The first message appears when the file to be printed contains percussion voices; the second appears when the file to be printed contains only melodic voices. These two messages make it possible to choose the voice or voices that you want to print.

Make a choice by typing one or several of the elements listed in parenthesis. If you want to print more than one voice, separate the elements with a space.

When you press the key without having chosen any voices, all the voices will be printed.

- **Interpretation data (T; V; P; I)**

This message appears when you have chosen to print interpretation data with more than one voice. In this case, only one category of data will be printed at a time. (T for Tempo, V for Volume, P for Pitch Accuracy, I for Instruments.)

To choose the category of data to be printed, enter one of the letters listed in parenthesis. For each voice that includes data of the chosen type, a list of values will be printed. (There will be only one series of values if T is chosen, because tempo data is the same for all voices.)

- **From measure...**

This message asks you to choose the measure at which printing is to begin. Type in the number corresponding to this measure and press the key.

When you press the key without having entered a number, printing will start at the very beginning of the piece.

- **To measure...**

This message asks you to choose the measure at which printing is to end. Type in the number corresponding to this measure and press the key.

When you press the key without having entered a number, printing will continue to the very end of the piece.

- **Condensed print-out (Y or N)**

This message appears when you have chosen to print interpretation data. You may then choose to have a condensed or a complete print-out made by typing the appropriate letter (Y for Yes; N for No).

On a condensed print-out, only ticks containing a change will be printed. On a complete print-out, each tick will be printed.

When you press the key, without having chosen "Y" or "N", a condensed print-out is made.

- **Press Esc to cancel printing.**

This message will be the last message to appear when you have chosen to print notes or data. It lets you stop the printing process at any time.



**Writing a Piece:
A Step-By-Step
Example**

Writing a Piece: A Step By Step Example

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Changing the instrument	75
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We are now going to write a piece using Visual Composer. The music we have chosen is an excerpt from the song "Happy Birthday to You".

Opening a new file

1. Press the **F5** key to open the File menu.
2. Choose the command New and press the **↵** key to confirm.

A new and empty file page is displayed on the screen.


Note that the grid shows four beats per measure. The song "Happy Birthday to You" has three beats per measure. We are therefore going to change the grid accordingly.

Changing the grid

1. Press the **F8** key.
This opens the Display menu .
2. Press the **↓** key until the command Beats per Measure is highlighted.
3. Press the **↵** key to confirm.
A dialog box then appears asking you how many beats you want each measure to have.

Writing a Piece: A Step-By-Step Example





Changing the grid



4. Type the number 3.
The number 3 is entered into the dialog box.
5. Press the  key to confirm.
The grid now shows 3 beats per measure.


Everything is now ready for you to enter the song. We are going to begin by entering the melody, after which we will enter the accompaniment.

Entering the melody








The pen is located at the beginning of the 1st measure, on a C. The chosen song begins on the 3rd beat of this measure, on a G. We are now going to move the pen to the 3rd beat and then place it on the G.

1. Press the  key eight times to put the pen on the 2nd dotted line.
This line marks the beginning of the 3rd beat.
2. Press the  key seven times to place the pen on the G above middle C. Middle C is indicated on the piano keyboard by a grey mark.
Watch the names of the notes as they change in the box under the title of the piece in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
3. Hold down the  key and press the  key three times.
You have just entered the first note of the melody: a G three ticks long.

4. Release the  key. Hold it down again and press the  key one more time.
You have now entered the 2nd note of the melody: a G 1 tick long.

NOTE: Should you make a mistake, you can delete a note by placing the pen to its immediate right and pressing the  key .


The pen is now placed at the beginning of the 2nd measure, on G .

1. Press the  key twice to move the pen up to A .
2. Holding down the  key, press the  key 4 times in a row and then let go of the  key.
You have entered an A 1 beat long.
3. Press the  key twice to place the pen on G and enter a note 1 beat long (4 ticks).
4. Press the  key 5 times to move the pen to C and enter a note 1 beat long (4 ticks).
5. Press the  key once so that the pen is placed on B and enter a note 2 beats long (8 ticks).

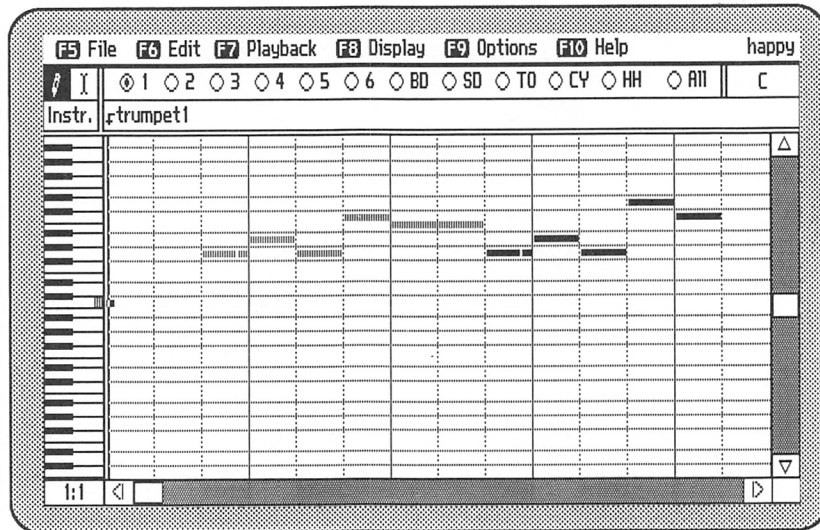
The pen is now placed in the 3rd measure, at the beginning of the 3rd beat. If you have followed the exercise carefully, you will now know how to enter notes of different lengths and at different heights.

Writing a Piece: A Step-By-Step Example

Entering the melody

All the other notes in this melody will be written in the same way: for a one tick note, press the horizontal arrow key once; for a four tick note, press this key four times. To enter two individual notes of the same pitch, let go of the  key between the two notes and, after you have pressed it again and are holding it down, continue to write. Visual Composer will show a small gap between these two notes found at the same height.

To finish writing the melody that we began together, add the dashes shown in the following illustration to what you have already entered on the screen.



You will now listen to the song you have entered.

Playing back

1. Press the **F7** key.
This opens the Playback menu.
2. Press the **↓** key in order to highlight the command Play.
3. Press the **↵** key to confirm.
You will now hear the music you just entered.

The sound you hear is that of a piano. We are now going to replace this "piano" by a "trumpet" to give the song a different feeling.

Changing the instrument

1. Press the **Home** key to ensure that the cursor is at the beginning of the piece.
The pen is placed on the left edge of the grid.
2. Press the **F3** key to choose the Interpretation Data Mode of operation.
A cursor appears at the left-hand side of the interpretation data bar and the word "Instr." is highlighted in the box placed to the left of this bar.
3. Press the **↵** key to open an edit field.
A black rectangle – the edit field – appears in the bar where the cursor was. The name of the instrument already chosen, "piano1", is shown highlighted in this rectangle.

Writing a Piece: A Step-By-Step Example

Changing the instrument

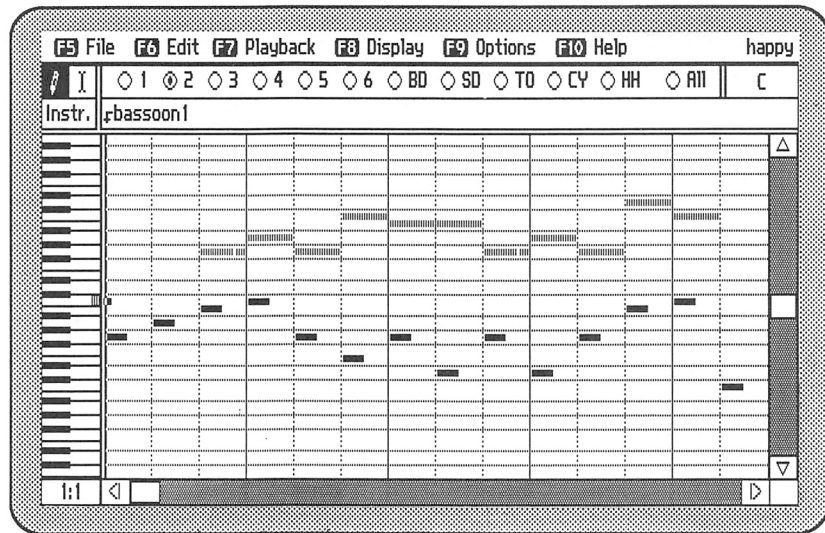
4. Type the word "trumpet1" to replace the piano.
The word "trumpet1" replaces the word "piano1".
5. Press the **↵** key to close the edit field and confirm your instruction.
6. Play back your melody once again.
It is now played by a trumpet.

You would probably like this song even better if it had an accompaniment.

Entering the bass line accompaniment

The notes indicated in the following illustration represent the bass line accompaniment. Before you begin to enter these notes, you must change the voice number so that these new notes will not replace the notes already entered.

1. Hold down the **Alt** key and press the **2** key in order to change the active voice.
The indicator for voice No. 2 is highlighted and the notes entered in voice No. 1 are dimmed.
2. After having re-activated the Write Mode (**F1**), carefully enter the notes in the following illustration:



3. Now change the preset instrument (Piano1) to a bassoon (Bassoon1) applying the same method used earlier to change the piano to a trumpet in the first voice.
4. Listen to the results.

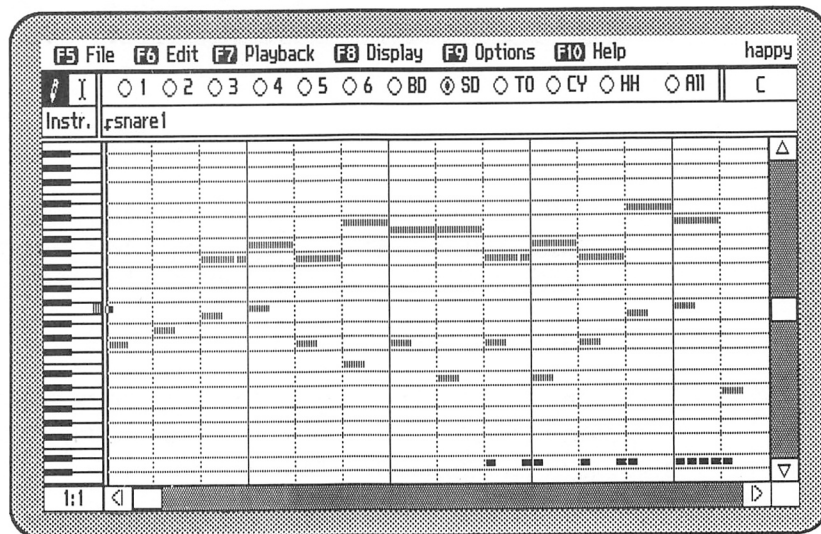
To finish off, we are going to add a touch of the snare drum to this piece to liven it up a bit. To enter percussion notes, you must always choose the percussion voice that corresponds to the instrument of your choice.

Writing a Piece: A Step-By-Step Example

Entering percussion accompaniment

Entering percussion accompaniment

1. Hold down the **Alt** key and press the **8** key.
The **8** key corresponds to the snare drum voice, indicated by the symbol SD on the screen. The SD voice indicator is now highlighted and the notes entered in voices No. 1 and No. 2 are dimmed. The name of the instrument displayed in the data bar is now "Snare1".
2. Carefully enter the notes in the illustration below.
3. Listen to the results.



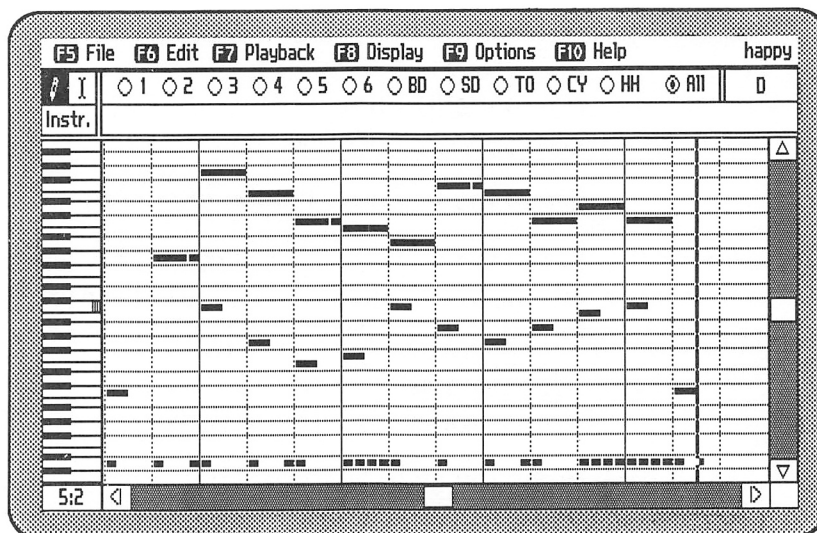
Your piece now has three voices. Before you go any further, it would be a good idea to save this piece to make sure you don't lose all the work you have done.

Saving

1. Press the **F5** key.
This opens the File menu.
2. Press the **↓** key 3 times to choose the command Save.
3. Press the **↵** key to confirm your choice.
A dialog box will appear asking you to name your piece. The name you choose will be the title of the open file.
4. Type a name.
This name is entered in the dialog box.
5. Press the **↵** key to confirm.
Your piece is now saved in a file whose title appears to the right-hand side of the menu bar.

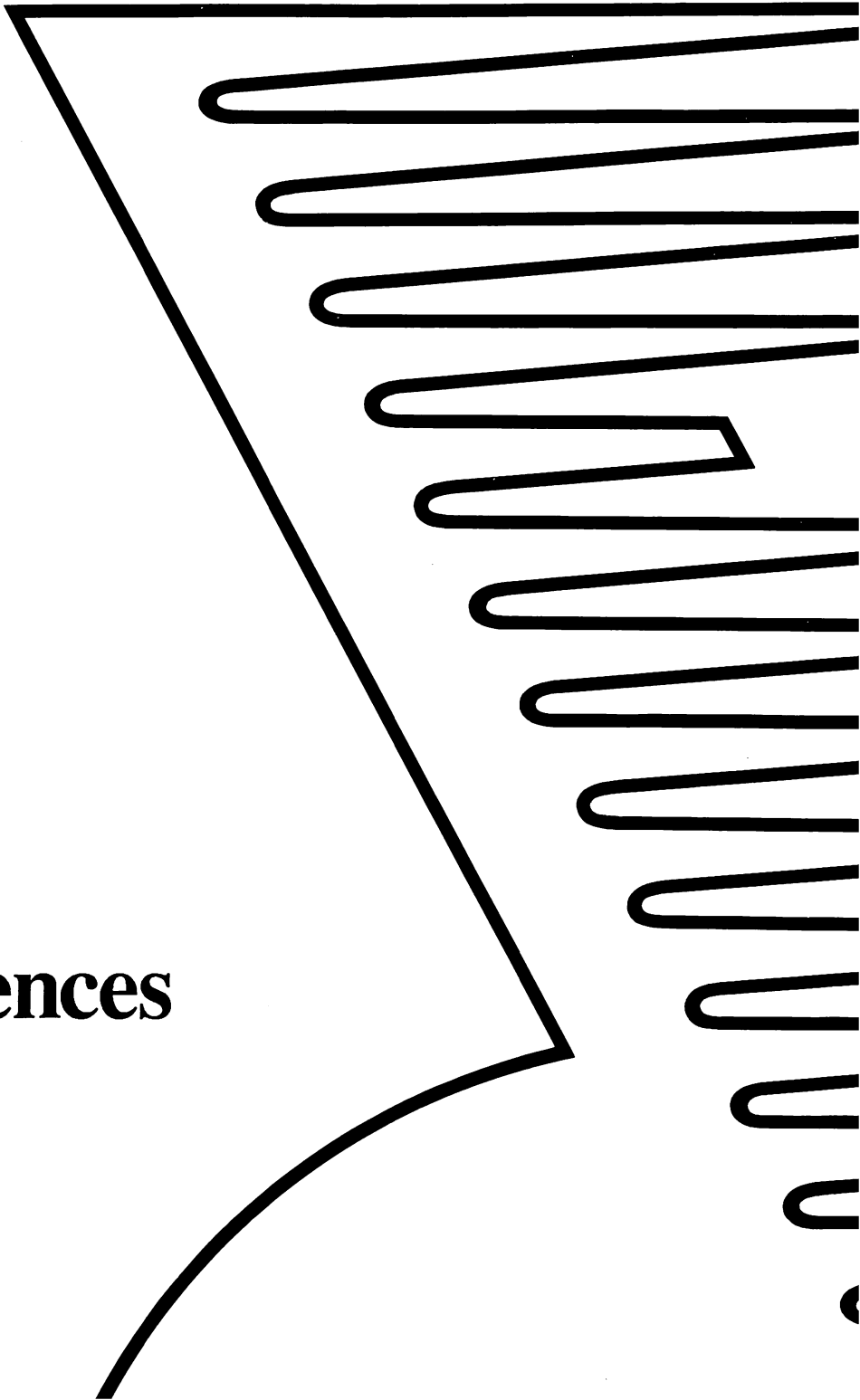
Writing a Piece: A Step-By-Step Example

The following illustration shows the rest of the song "Happy Birthday to You". Complete it in the same way you entered the first section.



From now on, you will be able to enter melodies with an accompaniment, to play them back and to modify them as you wish. When you open another file, Visual Composer will close this one. However, you will be able to go back to it any time you like. Keep it on hand for those special birthdays.

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This section systematically describes all of Visual Composer's commands. It is divided into two parts: the first covers all keyboard commands; the second describes the different menu commands.

Keyboard Commands

Function Keys

- F1** Activates the Write Mode and highlights the pen symbol in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.
- F2** Activates the Select Mode and highlights the selector symbol in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.
- F3** Activates the Interpretation Data Mode and highlights the active interpretation category, in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.
- F4** Displays a list of all the instruments in the linked instrument directory. The instrument list is only available if instrument interpretation data is chosen, if one voice is lit up, and if an edit field is opened.
- F5** Opens the File menu.



References





Keyboard Commands

- F6** Opens the Edit menu.
- F7** Opens the Playback menu.
- F8** Opens the Display menu.
- F9** Opens the Options menu.
- F10** Opens the Help menu.

Arrow Keys

NOTE: In this section, the + sign means that the following key must be pressed while the preceding one is held down.

 or  Moves the cursor to the left or to the right.
Moves from one menu to another, once a menu is open.

 +  or
 +  In Write Mode (**F1**), moves the pen cursor so that it "writes" notes. When used over a written note, the note is erased.

In Select Mode (**F2**), moves the cursor, creating a highlighted zone in the grid. The notes of the active voice covered by this highlighted zone make up the selection. It is this selection which will be affected by the Edit and Playback menu.

↓ or ↑

Moves an indicator within the following lists:

- command menus (F5 to F10)
- file list (Open..., F5)
- instrument list (F4)

In Write Mode (F1), moves the pen up or down.

Quick-Move Commands

Ctrl + → or
Ctrl + ←

Moves the cursor to the following or preceding beat line.

+ or -

Moves the cursor to the following or preceding bar line.

⌈ + + or
⌈ + -

Writes a note or extends a selection to the following or preceding bar line.

⌈ + Ctrl + → or
⌈ + Ctrl + ←

Writes a note or extends a selection to the next beat line.

Home

Places the cursor at the left-hand edge of the grid. If the cursor is already there, the Home key scrolls the composition one grid width to the left.

End

Places the cursor at the right-hand edge of the grid. If the cursor is already there, the End key scrolls the composition one grid width to the right.

⌈ + Home

Extends a selection to the left-hand edge of the grid. If the selector is already there, the ⌈ and Home keys extend the selection one grid width to the left.

References

Keyboard Commands

⏪ + End	Extends a selection to the right-hand edge of the grid. If the cursor is already there, the ⏪ + End combination extends the selection one grid width to the right.
Ctrl + Home	Places the cursor at the very beginning of the composition.
Ctrl + End	Places the cursor at the very end of the composition.
⏪ + Ctrl + Home	Extends a selection to the very beginning of the composition.
⏪ + Ctrl + End	Extends a selection to the very end of the composition.
P9UP	Moves the pen one octave up, in Write Mode.
P9Dn	Moves the pen one octave down, in Write Mode.
Ctrl + P9UP	Scrolls the composition and the grid one octave up.
Ctrl + P9Dn	Scrolls the composition and the grid one octave down.
A	Places the pen on an A.
B	Places the pen on a B.
C	Places the pen on a C.
D	Places the pen on a D.
E	Places the pen on an E.
F	Places the pen on an F.
G	Places the pen on a G.

A to **Z** When a file list or an instrument list is displayed, or when a menu is opened, the alphabetic keys will select the first word that starts with the letter which corresponds to the key pressed.

Voice Activation Commands

Alt + **1** to **6** Activate the melodic voices corresponding to the numbers on these keys.

The following five key sequences correspond to the percussion instrument voices:

Alt + 7	Bass Drum (BD)
Alt + 8	Snare Drum (SD)
Alt + 9	Tom-Tom (TO)
Alt + 0	Cymbals (CY)
Alt + -	Hi-Hat (HH)

If you have decided to make use of 3 additional melodic voices instead of percussion voices, keys **7**, **8** and **9**, when pressed with the **Alt** key, activate the melodic voices corresponding to the numbers on these keys (see the command Without Percussion of the Options menu).

Alt + **=** Activates all voices, making it possible to apply the Edit commands to all voices at the same time.

NOTE: Since a specific voice has to be chosen before writing, Visual Composer will not let you write if all voices are active.

References

Keyboard Commands

Other Keyboard Commands

 (Return)

Confirms a choice or an instruction:

- in menus (**F5** to **F10**);
- in dialog boxes.

In Interpretation Data Mode (**F3**), opens and closes the edit field where the cursor is positioned.

 (Escape)

Closes a menu or a dialog box, cancelling the operation.

 (Backspace)

In Write Mode (**F1**), moves the cursor back one tick, shortening the note to the immediate left of the pen. This key only effects notes in the active voice.

In Interpretation Data Mode (**F3**), clears the open edit field.

 (Space bar)

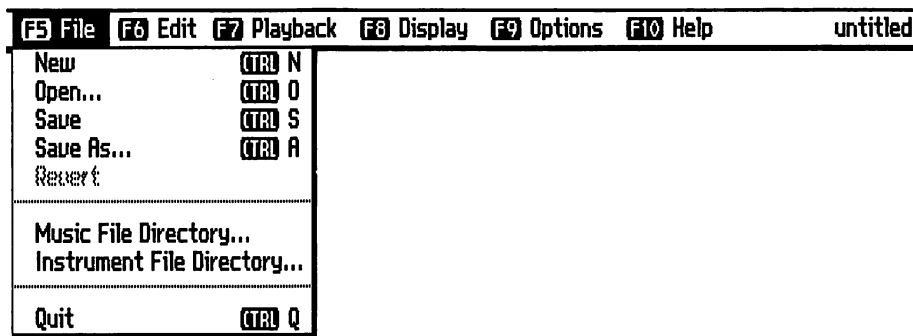
In Select Mode (**F2**), undoes the active selection without moving the cursor.

Menu Commands

The menu bar displays the titles of the different command menus provided by Visual Composer: File, Edit, Playback, Display, Options and Help.

To open any of these menus, all you have to do is press the function key displayed to the left of each menu name. You can close a menu by using the **Esc** key.

The File Menu



The File menu contains all the commands relating to files. To open this menu, press the **F5** key.

References

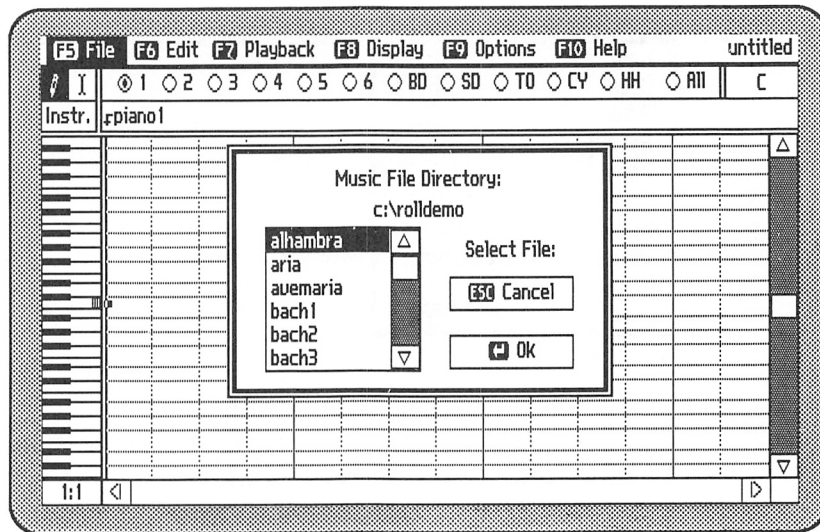
Menu Commands

New

This command enables you to open a new file (empty and untitled). When you choose the command New, the opened file displayed on the screen is closed to make room for the new empty one; Visual Composer takes the precaution, however, of first asking you if you wish to save the latest changes made.

Open...

This command is used to open a file from the linked music file directory. When you choose this command, a dialog box appears on the screen listing all the Visual Composer files in this directory.



To choose a file from this list, press the vertical arrow keys (↓ or ↑). These keys will also scroll the file in the dialog box if the list of names is too long. When the indicator highlights the desired file, press the ↵ key to confirm.

You can also press the alphabetical key corresponding to the first letter of the file name: the indicator will move directly to the first file name starting with this letter. If there is more than one name which starts with the same letter, press the arrow key to continue.

When you choose the command Open, the opened file displayed on the screen is closed to make room for the new one. Visual Composer takes the precaution, however, of first asking you if you wish to save the latest changes made.

Save

This command saves the opened file in the current directory. If this file has already been named, it will automatically be saved. If, however, it is a new file, a dialog box will appear, so that you can name it.

NOTE: Refer to the following paragraph (Save As...) for the rules which apply to naming files.

References

Menu Commands

Save As...

This command is used to save the opened file under a new name.

When naming a file, you must keep in mind the following rules:

- The name must have from 1 to 8 characters.
- These characters are to be chosen from the capital and small letters of the alphabet and from the digits 0 to 9.
- You can combine letters and numbers.


If the name you choose has already been used for an existing file in the current directory, a dialog box asks if you wish to overwrite the old one, replacing it with the new.

Revert

This command cancels the modifications made to a file. It reverts the file back to what it was the last time you saved.

When you ask Visual Composer to revert a file, it will always ask for a confirmation of this command.

Music File Directory...

This command links the program to a new music file directory. This makes it possible to open files in a different directory than the one to which the program was first linked. Enter the name of the desired directory into the dialog box which appears, abiding by the DOS conventions. Finally, press the  key to confirm your instructions. From now on, the command Open will display the list of files in this new directory. The name of the current file always appears in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

Instrument File Directory...

This command links the program to a new instrument file directory. This makes it possible to use sounds in a different directory than the one to which the program was first linked. Enter the name of the desired directory in the dialog box which appears, abiding by the DOS conventions. Finally, press the key to confirm. From now on, the instrument list shown by the command will display the list of instruments in this new directory.

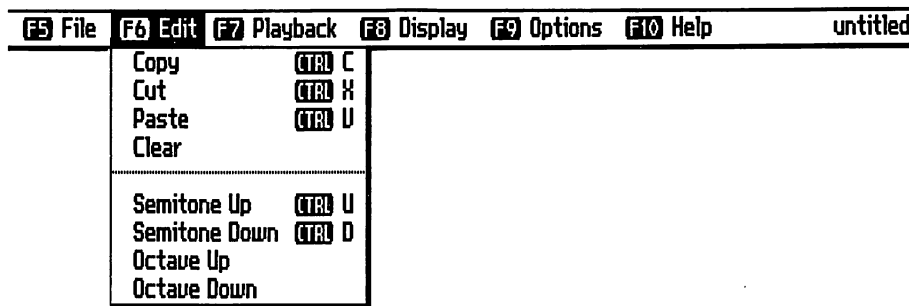
Quit

This command is used to end a Visual Composer session and to return to DOS. Before this command is carried out, a dialog box appears to ask if you wish to save the changes you have made, if there were any.

References

Menu Commands

The Edit Menu



The Edit menu lists the commands which perform operations on a selected section of a piece. To open this menu, press the **F6** key. If nothing has been selected on the grid, the displayed commands will appear dimmed, that is to say, unavailable.

Cut

The command Cut deletes the selected section from the composition and puts it in the selection buffer where it replaces anything that might already have been there. The notes to the right of the selection are automatically moved so that they fill the gap created.

NOTE: Interpretation data is not included in this operation.

Copy

The command Copy copies the selected section and puts it into the selection buffer where it replaces anything that might have been there already.

NOTE: Interpretation data is not included in this operation.

Paste

The command Paste inserts a copy of the selection buffer's contents at the point where the cursor is positioned in the opened file. If something on the screen has been selected, the selected items are replaced by a copy of the selection buffer's contents.

NOTE: If the commands Cut or Copy are carried out with the "All" voice indicator highlighted, the command Paste also has to be carried out with this indicator highlighted. By the same token, if only one voice is active during a Cut or Copy operation, then only one can be active when it is time to use the command Paste.

Clear

This command deletes the selected section from an opened file. Unlike the command Cut, the command Clear does not put the selected group into the selection buffer. Also, the notes to the right of the selection stay in place, creating a gap where the deleted selection used to be.

Semitone Up

This command transposes the selected section a semitone up.

Semitone Down

This command transposes the selected section a semitone down.

References

Menu Commands

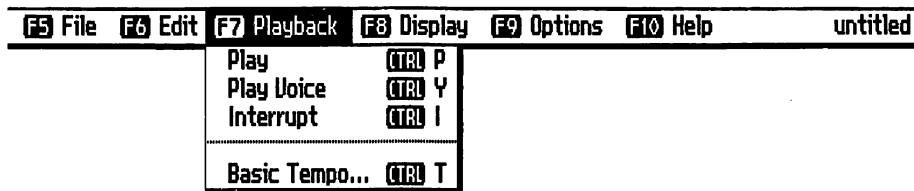
Octave Up

This command transposes the selected section one octave up.

Octave Down

This command transposes the selected section one octave down.

The Playback Menu



The Playback menu contains all the commands which involve playing back the pieces written using Visual Composer. To open this menu, press the **F7** key.

Play

This command lets you listen to the composition in the opened file. When a section of the piece is selected, you will only hear that section played.

Play Voice

This command lets you listen to the active voice of the composition in the opened file. When a section of the piece is selected, you will only hear the active voice of that section played.

Interrupt

This command is used to interrupt the playback of a song. At the beginning of the playback, a clock symbol momentarily appears on the screen (in the menu bar). For as long as you see this clock, the command Interrupt and, for that matter, all commands will be inoperative.

Basic Tempo...

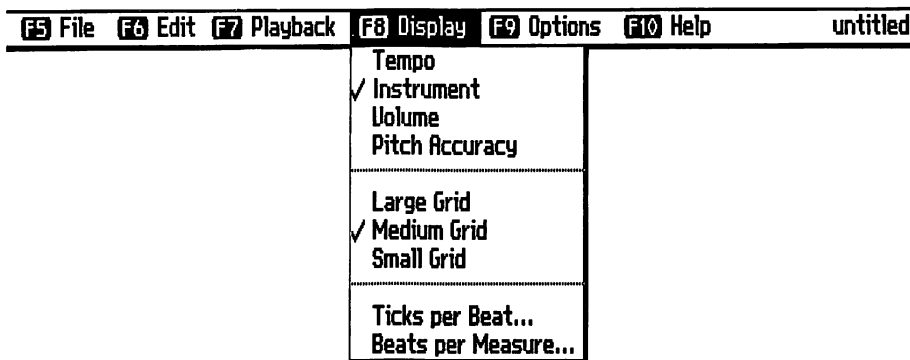
This command is used to check or alter the basic tempo of a composition. When it is chosen, a dialog box appears displaying the tempo of the current composition. You can alter this tempo by entering a new number corresponding to the number of desired beats per minute.

NOTE: Tempo changes entered as interpretation data are indicated in the form of multipliers applied to the basic tempo.

References

Menu Commands

The Display Menu



To open this menu, press the **F8** key.

The first four commands determine which interpretation data category is to be displayed; the rest of the commands in this menu determine the size and the divisions of the grid.

When you choose an interpretation data category, Visual Composer displays your choice in a box to the left of the interpretation data bar, and shows the data pertaining to this category.

To enter new interpretation data (changes in tempo, volume, instruments or pitch accuracy), activate the Interpretation Data Mode by pressing the **F3** key, and place the cursor at the desired position. Next, press the **↵** key. This opens an edit field in the form of a black rectangle in which you can enter the desired change. Press the **↵** key once more to close this edit field. The **↵** key enables you to clear an edit field.

Tempo

When you choose this command, Visual Composer displays "Tempo" at the left of the interpretation data bar and shows any tempo changes in this bar.

In this context, the number 1.0 means 100% of the basic tempo, the number 1.5 means an increase to 150% and the number 0.5 means a decrease to 50% of the basic tempo. The extreme numeric values allowed are 0.01 and 10.0.

NOTE: Tempo changes apply to all voices.

Instrument

When you choose this command, Visual Composer displays "Instr." at the left of the interpretation data bar and shows, in the bar, any instrument changes for the active voice.

References

Menu Commands

There are two ways of entering the name of an instrument in an opened edit field: by writing it in directly or by calling it up from a list of available instruments in the active directory. This list is displayed by pressing the **F4** key. To choose an instrument, either use one of the vertical arrow keys (**↓**, **↑**) or the key corresponding to the instrument's first letter (which will highlight the first instrument name starting with this letter). If there is more than one name that starts with the same letter, press the arrow key to continue. Confirm your choice using the **↵** key. Visual Composer places the name of the desired instrument into the open edit field.

Volume

When you choose this command, Visual Composer enters "Vol." at the left of the interpretation data bar and shows any changes to the volume of the active voice.

In this context, the number 1.0 means 100% of the maximum volume established by the external volume control of the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card. All intermediate values are permitted, creating dynamics from one extreme to the other. The default volume setting for all voices is 0.75.

Pitch Accuracy

When you choose this command, Visual Composer enters "Pitch" at the left of the interpretation data bar and shows, in the bar, any changes in the pitch of the active voice.

The values entered here correspond to a pitch deviation of an accurate sound. The deviation scale includes values from 0.0 to 2.0. The number 1.0 represents the accurate sound; the number 0.0 takes the sound one semitone down; the number 2.0 moves the sound one semitone up. Intermediate values are permitted, making it possible to create effects from one extreme to another. Generally speaking, a deviation of about 0.1 between two voices in unison is sufficient to create rich effects.

Large Grid

The command Large Grid gives you large-size notes and a two-and-a-half octave piano keyboard. Use this grid to examine your manuscript as if through a magnifying glass.

Medium Grid

The command Medium Grid gives you medium-size notes and a four octave piano keyboard. This is the most frequently used grid – which is why it is pre-selected.

Fine Grid

The command Fine Grid gives you small-size notes and a six octave piano keyboard. It helps you see more notes at once.

Ticks per Beat...

This command is used to determine the smallest beat fraction within a given piece. Although a beat is initially divided into four parts, you can divide it into as many as 99 parts.

References

Menu Commands

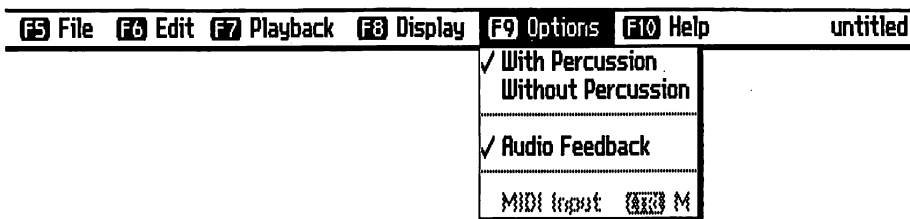
Enter a number in the dialog box which appears on the screen and press the **[↵]** key. The number of ticks per beat determines the spacing of the dotted vertical lines separating the beats.

Beats per Measure...

Use this command to determine the number of beats in each measure. Visual Composer is preset at four beats per measure. You can change this, however, to as many as 99 beats per measure.

Enter a number in the dialog box which appears on the screen and press the **[↵]** key. The number of beats per measure determines the spacing of the solid vertical lines separating the measures.

The Options Menu



With Percussion

This command gives you 6 melodic voices and 5 percussion voices as opposed to the 9 melodic voices possible with the following option.

Without Percussion

This command gives you 9 melodic voices as opposed to the 6 melodic voices and 5 percussion voices possible with the preceding option.

NOTE: When going from the one option to the other, Visual Composer warns that instrument changes made in voices found in only one of the two options will be lost.

Audio Feedback

The command Audio Feedback lets you hear notes as they are being written. This command is activated and de-activated alternately by choosing it.

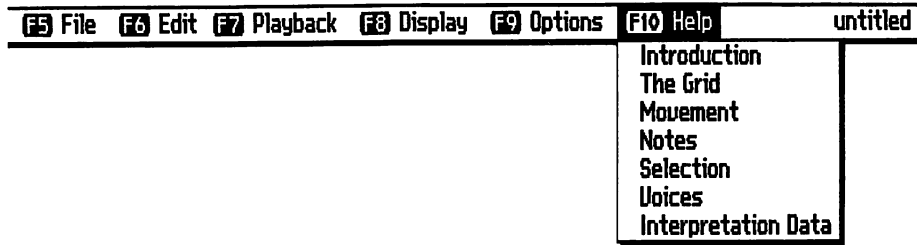
MIDI Input ...

This command becomes accessible when Visual Composer detects the presence of a MIDI driver. When you choose this command, a dialog box appears on the screen asking you to press a key when ready to start entering notes. From then on, you may use a MIDI keyboard to enter notes into Visual Composer. (See appendix D for more details.)

References

Menu Commands

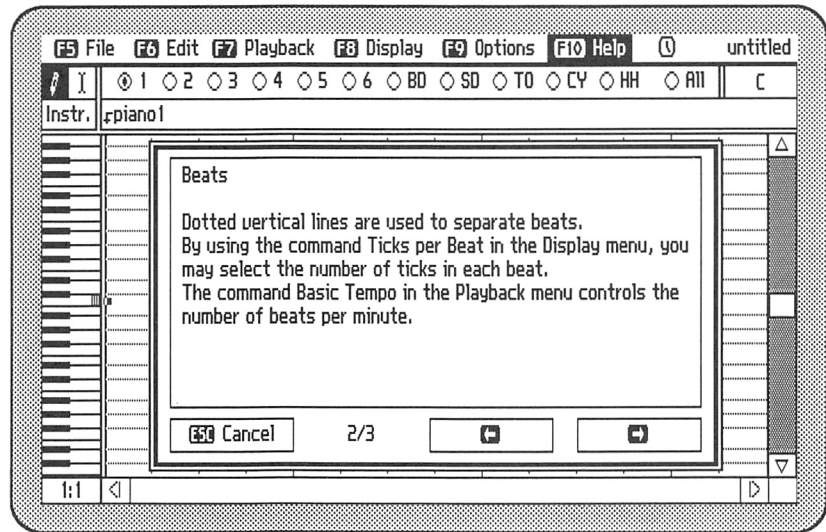
The Help Menu



The Help menu gives you access to a summarized program guide.

When you press the **F10** key, the list of information categories seen above appears on the screen.

When you choose one of these categories, a window containing pertinent information opens. The arrows located at the bottom of this window indicate which keys are used to see the other pages of this document. To close this window, press the **Esc** key.



Appendices



Appendices

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Appendix A

List of Preset Sounds

BANJO1	Banjo: excellent for short notes in quick succession; sounds best from one octave lower to three octaves higher than middle C.
BASS1	Double bass: weak volume; inaudible when notes are very low. Best register: the two octaves below middle C.
BASS2	Electric bass: smooth; best when used in second and third octaves below middle C.
BASSOON1	Bassoon: sounds an octave lower than written. Best register: from one and a third octaves below to two octaves above middle C.
BDRUM1	Bass drum: hammering; sounds best in the second octave below middle C.
BELLS	Chiming bells: brilliant and resonant; sound best between the first octave below to the three octaves above middle C.
BRASS1	Brass ensemble: "brassy"; sounds best from two octaves below to two octaves above middle C.
CLAR1	Clarinet: best when used one octave below and two to three octaves above middle C.

Appendix A

List of Preset Sounds

- CROMORNE** Cromorne: wind instrument used in Renaissance Period; very accentuated reedy sound. Best register: from one octave below to two octaves above middle C.
- CYMBAL1** Cymbal: medium-crash (high pitched), played with drumstick.
- ELGUIT1** Electric rock guitar: distorted (fuzz pedal effect). Best register: from one octave below to two octaves above middle C.
- ELGUIT2** Electric jazz guitar: soft; slightly metallic; sounds best from two octaves below to three octaves above middle C.
- FLUTE** Flute: soft sound; sounds best in the four octaves above middle C.
- FLUTE1** Flute: soft muffled sound; sounds best in the four octaves above middle C.
- FLUTE2** Flute: like flute sound on an electric organ; sounds best in the four octaves above middle C.
- HARPSI 2** Harpsichord: full accentuated sound; sounds best from two octaves below to two octaves above middle C.
- HARPSI 3** Harpsichord: appropriate timbre for low register; sounds best in the three octaves below middle C.
- HIHAT1** Hi-Hat: closed double cymbals played with drumstick; metallic resonant sound.

MARIMBA1	Marimba: wooden bars played with medium-hard mallets; sounds best from one octave below to four octaves above middle C.
MARIMBA2	Marimba: wooden bars played with hard mallets; resonant and slightly metallic. Best register: same as Marimba1.
OBOE1	Oboe: sounds best in the two and a half octaves above middle C.
ORGAN1	Electric organ: bright sound; sounds best from one and a half octaves below to three octaves above middle C.
ORGAN2	Electric organ: velvety; sounds best from two octaves below to two octaves above middle C.
PIANO1	Piano: sounds best from three octaves below to four octaves above middle C.
PIANO2	Resonant piano: pedal effect; sustained; same register as Piano1. (Everything played lower than the first octave below middle C sounds like a resonant electric bass.)
SAX1	Saxophone: sounds best from two octaves below to two octaves above middle C.
SITAR1	Indian Sitar: rich and resonant; sounds best from one octave below to two and a half octaves above middle C.
SNARE1	Snare drum: snappy; high pitched.
SYN1	Synthesizer: slow attack; sonorous. Best register: the three octaves either side of middle C.

Appendix A

List of Preset Sounds

- SYN2 Synthesizer: short, staccato, artificial sound of plucked strings; sounds best from two octaves below to four octaves above middle C.
- SYN3 Synthesizer: resonant; short attack. Best register: from three octaves below to four octaves above middle C. (When used in the second and third octaves below middle C, a rich and powerful bass sound is produced.)
- SYN4 Synthesizer: twangy brass sound; sounds best in the two octaves below and four octaves above middle C.
- SYN5 Synthesizer: very piercing sound; lots of high harmonics. Best register: from two octaves below to two octaves above middle C.
- SYNBASS1 Synthesizer: buzzing distorted bass; sounds an octave lower than written. Best register: the two octaves below middle C. (Also interesting above middle C.)
- TINCAN1 Percussion effect: dry, metallic sounds, varying from note to note; indeterminate pitch; use above middle C.
- TOM1 Tom-Tom: smooth; sounds best the third octave and half of the fourth octave below middle C.
- TROMB1 Trombone: "brassy"; sounds best when used from the two octaves below to one octave above middle C.
- TROMB2 Trombone: velvety; same register as Tromb1.
- TRUMPET1 Trumpet: very sonorous (striking); sounds best from one octave below to three octaves above middle C.
- TRUMPET2 Trumpet: soft; slow attack (wah-wah mute effect); same register as Trumpet1.

- TRUMPET3 Trumpet: very resonant; twangy; excellent for quick passages; same register as Trumpet1.
- TRUMPET4 Trumpet: smooth; same register as Trumpet1.
- TUBA1 Tuba: with characteristic slow attack; sounds best when used in the two and a half octaves below middle C.
- VIBRA1 Vibraphone: metal bars played with medium mallets; vibrato; sounds an octave lower than written. Best register: four octaves above middle C.
- VIOLIN1 Violin: strings played with bow; rich sound; best when used in the four octaves above middle C.
- VIOLIN2 Electric violin: noisy sonority, with light vibrato; same register as Violin1.
- VLNPIZZ1 Violin: strings played pizzicato (very short plucked sound); volume weak. Best register: from one octave below to three octaves above middle C.
- XYLO1 Xylophone: narrow wooden bars played with medium mallets; sound very dry and dampened. Best register: the second, third and fourth octaves above middle C.

Appendix B

Technical Data

Sound Driver

The sound driver enables Visual Composer to be used with the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card. When you ask Visual Composer to playback a piece, the program stores the data needed to perform this operation into a memory buffer. The size of this buffer determines the reaction time of the program: the bigger the buffer, the more information the program can store in advance and the quicker it can respond to your commands.

However, the memory used for the buffer cannot be used for anything else – be it another piece or another program. Therefore, adjust the size of the memory buffer according to your needs.

Adjusting the Size of the Memory Buffer

When the commands contained in the file COMPOSER.BAT are carried out, the sound driver of the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card is loaded before the Visual Composer program.

To change the size of the memory buffer, you must modify one of the lines in the COMPOSER.BAT file by supplying a different value (argument) to the sound driver's loading program.

1. Open the file COMPOSER.BAT with a program editor.
2. Find the line containing the word "sound".

On this line, you will find the letter "b" followed by a hexadecimal number. This parameter indicates the present size of the buffer.

Example: sound b1000

3. Replace the present size by the desired size, using the table seen below as a guide.
4. Save the COMPOSER.BAT file.

To put the adjustment into effect, it is necessary to reset the computer; for it is when the program is loaded that the sound driver notes the configuration of the memory.

Buffer Size	Program Argument
4K	b1000
6K	b1800
8K	b2000
10K	b2800
12K	b3000

It is worthless to increase the dimensions of the memory buffer beyond 12K.

Memory

Visual Composer adjusts itself to the amount of memory available in your computer. A driver allocates parts of the memory for the operations being carried out. When an operation is completed, the driver frees the space used by this operation.

This memory management method makes it possible to get the most out of a limited amount of memory. It can, however, break the memory up into very small fragments that cannot be reused. This may happen if there is not much memory available or if the music is particularly complex. Visual Composer might then interrupt a session.

When this happens, the open file is closed and the music it contains is automatically saved under the name RESCUE.ROL. Visual Composer then returns to DOS. To find the piece you just lost, all you have to do is reload Visual Composer and open the file named RESCUE.ROL. You can then give this file back its original name by using the command Save As. Reloading Visual Composer solves most memory problems.

Appendix C

Error Messages

- **Cannot write when all voices are activated.**
The pen cannot write when all the voices are active. Activate one voice and try again.
- **Directory "xxx" not found.**
There is no directory corresponding to this name. Make sure that the name conforms with the DOS conventions.
- **Disk drive is not ready, re-insert diskette, close door and try again.**
The program cannot gain access to the disk drive. Make sure that the diskette is properly inserted into the disk drive and that the door is closed.
- **Diskette is write-protected, remove protection and try again.**
No information can be added to the diskette because it is write-protected.
- **Error while reading or writing, diskette may be unusable.**
The program cannot gain access to the contents of the diskette. By using the DOS **COPY** command, copy the contents of the diskette onto a blank diskette and try again.

- **Error while writing file, insufficient disk space.**
There isn't enough space on the diskette to write the data. This message could also appear if the maximal number of files on a diskette is reached.
- **File "xxx" is incompatible with program version.**
The Visual Composer that you are using cannot open this file, because it was created by another version of Visual Composer.
- **File "xxx" not found.**
The program cannot find the specified file. This is probably because the music file diskette was removed after the command Open had been executed. To correct, re-insert the correct diskette.
- **Instrument list unavailable when edit field unopened.**
The instrument list is only available if instrument interpretation data is chosen, if one voice is lit up, and if an edit field is opened.
- **Instrument "xxx" not found.**
The program cannot find the specified instrument file, because a bad name was given, an improper music directory was specified or the diskette was changed. In the first case, check if the correct name was typed. In the second case, change the instrument file directory (consult Menu commands). In the last case, re-insert the correct diskette.

- **Insufficient memory to continue.**
The program lacks memory space. Your file is either too large, or the memory is too fragmented. Fragmentation occurs when a large number of operations are performed with a limited memory space. Reload the program and try again. The work in progress may be found under the title RESCUE.ROL.
- **Insufficient memory to open file "xxx".**
The program cannot load the specified file, because the space required is greater than the space available. To correct, quit the program and change the size of the sound driver (see Appendix B) or delete other resident drivers from memory.
- **Internal error: operation cancelled.**
An unexpected error occurred. Please report the problem to our Customer Service, relating all details and circumstances under which it occurred.
- **Last copy or cut pasted to incorrect number of voices.**
When the selection buffer contains data from one voice, the data cannot be pasted to all voices. Similarly, data from all voices cannot be pasted to one voice.
- **Resource file not found.**
The program cannot function because the file COMPOS1.RSR is not in the active directory.

- **Sound driver buffer too small to play this piece.**
The memory buffer of the sound driver is too small for all the sound information of this piece. Consult "The Sound Driver" section of Appendix B to see how to adjust the buffer dimensions.
- **Sound driver is not installed.**
The program cannot function because the sound driver has not been loaded. Load the sound driver and try again. This should not happen if you use COMPOSER.BAT- the normal loading procedure.
- **Unable to create temporary backup file, insufficient disk space.**
Some extra space was required to save the file, but the diskette was full. To save, change the music file directory to another diskette.

Appendix D


Using a MIDI Interface

If your computer is equipped with a Roland DG MIDI Processing Unit MPU-401, or any compatible, you may use a MIDI keyboard to enter notes into Visual Composer. Simply load the MIDI driver provided on the diskette into the memory by writing the following command at the DOS prompt:

```
A>mpu401
```

When Visual Composer detects the presence of a MIDI driver, the command MIDI Input becomes accessible in the Options menu. When you choose this command, a dialog box appears on the screen, featuring the following message:

"Press OK to enter MIDI data into selection memory."

Press the  key to notify the program that you are ready to enter notes. From then on, you will hear a metronome and you may play on your keyboard the notes you wish to enter.

To stop recording, press any key on the computer keyboard. The entered notes are placed into the selection buffer. You may then put them anywhere in the piece by using the command Paste of the Edit menu.

NOTE: Visual Composer accepts MIDI recording, one voice at a time.

Appendix D

Using a MIDI Interface

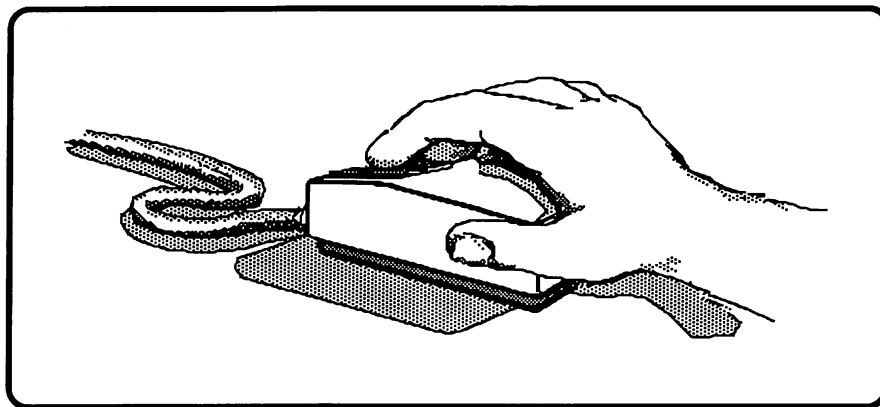
Apart from the position of the notes on the keyboard, only the times at which the keys are struck and released are recorded into memory. Therefore, any other data (after-touch, velocity, pitch bend, etc.) is ignored.

The accuracy of the recording is relative to the tempo and to the number of ticks per beat. The program rounds off any note length in the execution to the nearest tick per beat. A very accurate reproduction of what was played is possible if a large number of ticks per beat is chosen.

Appendix E

Using a Mouse

This appendix explains how to use Visual Composer with a mouse – which we take for granted you know how to operate.



Loading Visual Composer with a Mouse Driver

Visual Composer automatically detects and utilizes a mouse driver if one is loaded. Load your mouse driver according to the manual that comes with the mouse. Next, load Visual Composer in the usual way. The program is compatible with mice by Microsoft (and all related drivers) and Mouse Systems PC Mouse.

NOTE: You may integrate the loading of the mouse driver with the AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

Appendix E

Using a Mouse

When the mouse driver is already installed but you don't wish to use it, load the program with the option "/-m". This option prevents the automatic utilization of the mouse driver. At the DOS prompt, type:

A>COMPOSER /-M

Program Particularities When Using a Mouse

- Choosing an element in a list
- Choosing a mode or a voice
- Scrolling
- Writing notes
- Entering interpretation data
- Selecting
- Piano keyboard

Choosing an element in a list

- A command in a menu
Position the pointer on the title of the desired menu. Click and drag to the chosen command, then release the mouse button.
- A file in a list
Click on the name of your choice, then release the mouse button. If the list of files is too long for the window, click on the arrow in the scroll bar to scroll the list.

Choosing a mode or a voice

To choose from either the Write Mode or Select Mode of operation, click the appropriate symbol in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.

To activate the Interpretation Data Mode, simply click at the desired place in the interpretation data bar.

To choose a voice, click one of the voice symbols which will then light up.

Scrolling


The scroll bars placed along the writing grid let you see the contents of a file. You may scroll vertically and horizontally.

These are the different ways to scroll:

- **Scroll progressively**
Click the arrow pointing in the direction you wish to scroll.
- **Scroll sectionally**
Click the grey zone of the scroll bar.
- **Scroll to any part of the document**
Click and drag the scroll cursor to a point corresponding to the passage of music you wish to see.

Writing notes

When you choose the Write Mode, the pointer on the screen becomes a "pen". From then on, the actions of the mouse are the actions of the pen.

- To write notes
Point to the grid where you wish to begin the note. Click and drag the mouse.
- To write notes free-hand
Pressing the  key, click and drag the mouse. You may thus create free melody lines.



Entering interpretation data

Before entering interpretation data, choose the desired data category in the Display menu and the desired voice in the voice indicator bar, and simply open an edit field.

- To open an edit field
Click on the interpretation data bar where you wish to enter data. A black rectangle – the edit field – will immediately appear, indicating that you may enter the desired data.
- To close an edit field
Click anywhere outside the edit field. It will close automatically.

Selecting

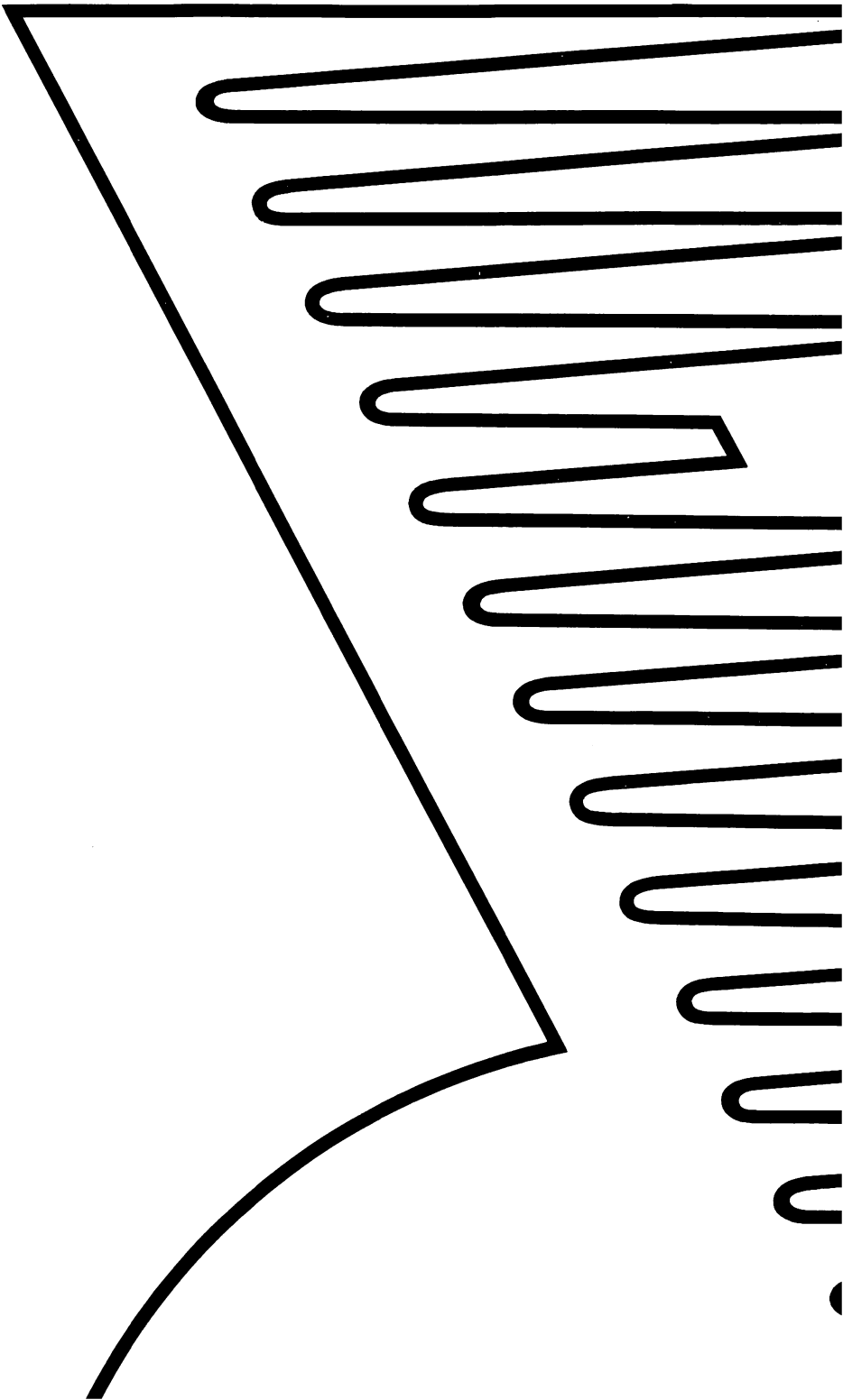
By choosing the Select Mode, a selector appears on the grid.

- To select a group of notes
 - Click and drag the selector over the section of music concerned.
- To quickly select large sections of music
 1. Place the selector at either end of the section to be selected.
 2. Point to the other end. It may be necessary first to scroll the music.
 3. To end, press the  key and click.
- To extend or shorten a selection
 - Position the selector where you want the extended or shortened selection to end.
 - Pressing the  key, click or drag to complete the selection.

Piano keyboard

To play any note on the piano keyboard situated at the left of the screen, point the arrow on the key you wish and click.

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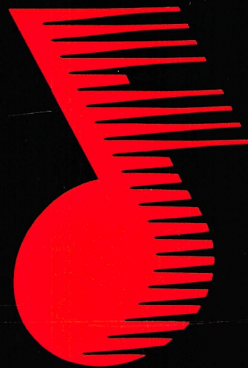
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