

683f18a0-0

James L Esser

COLLABORATORS

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REVISION HISTORY

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Chapter 1

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1.1 BeatBox 2 v2.55

BeatBox 2 - Music Doesn't Get Any Easier!
By James L Boyd & Curt Esser (c) 1998 - 1999

~Introduction~~~~~	What is this?
~Copyright,~etc~~~~	Legal Drivel
~Requirements~~~~~	What do I need?
~Installation~~~~~	How to install/configure BeatBox 2
~Using~BeatBox2~~~~	Read this before complaining!
~Free~Registration~	Cheap! Easy!
~Credits/Contact~~~	Whodunnit?
~Notes/Thanks~~~~~	Comments and Appreciation
~Problems~~~~~	"Special Undocumented Features"
~Website/News~~~~~	Visit us on the Internet! What's new?

1.2 Introduction

Welcome to BeatBox 2 !

This is an easy-to-use music program, allowing four tracks of samples to be used and everything controlled using buttons and menus (no nasty hex numbers here!).

Note that it's never going to even approach OctaMED or Bars and Pipes for functionality (!) - it's mostly for people who want to make music and can't figure out/can't be bothered with complicated trackers :)

Features

This section tells you what BeatBox 2 can do.

Getting~Started

This is a short introduction to beginning writing your own music with BeatBox 2.

Comments, questions, etc

Tell us what you think, after reading this!

History

How it all started.

1.3 Copyright

Copyright

BeatBox 2 © 1998 James L Boyd & Curt Esser

This program is the copyright work of James L Boyd and Curt Esser.

This program may be freely distributed, as long as nothing is added to or removed from the archive!

BeatBox2 is now Freeware (our gift to the Amiga community), but we would appreciate it if you would take the trouble to register (no charge) by email.

For registration details, see Free~Registration.

Disclaimer

This software will probably destroy your Amiga!

There, that should cover us ;)

No responsibility accepted for damage to your equipment. Or you.

We've tested it endlessly, and so have many others - so it should be OK!

1.4 Requirements

Requirements

Now you're asking...

Well, in theory you need:

- 1) An Amiga (no!)
- 2) Kickstart 2.0+ (hmm, it works on 3.0+, definitely ;)
- 3) At least 1 Mb RAM (make sure you have AT LEAST 200k of chip memory when you start, and even then, it's close!)
- 4) Reqtools.library (actually, I'm not sure if this is needed)
- 5) Er, some samples?

Anyone with a reasonably up-to-date setup will be fine.

NOTE - if you want to start from a no startup-sequence boot-up to save chip memory, you have to run setpatch first, and Online Help won't work because Multiview needs its datatypes and stuff loaded!

Recommended

Not really needed, but useful:

- 1) REXXMaster up and running (if you want the online help).
Note that the online help will still work without it, but you'll have to close the MultiView window yourself when the program ends. Also, it will be possible (by clicking Help or using the menu or hotkey) to wind up with 2 or more copies of MultiView running on the screen! (cuz without REXXMaster, we don't know how to tell if it's running or not).
- 2) MagicTV does a great job of reducing interlace flicker on screens with less than 16 colours, and I (James) use it to run BeatBox 2 comfortably on my TV in Hi-Res Laced mode. Great little program!
- 3) Although BeatBox 2 doesn't support powerpacked samples directly, you can get them to load by using MCP's crunch preferences, and I think it will work with stuff like PP (PowerpackerPatch) as well. With MCP, run the prefs program, double-click on CrunchPatch, click on "Add" and type the name "beatbox2" (without the quotes) into the string gadget at the bottom of the resulting window. Make sure that the PowerPacker checkbox is checked, and then Save your prefs. You should now be able to use your powerpacked samples! The other crunchers supported by MCP should work too, but this is untested (try it - BeatBox 2 will just complain if it doesn't like it!).

MagicTV and MagicMenus are on Aminet, REXXMast is on the Workbench disks (usually Sys:System).

We'd like to express our appreciation to the authors of these

excellent programs. May you never be forced to buy a Windoze box :)

1.5 Installation & Configuration

Installation

Installation is easy!

Just use the Install BeatBox2 standard installer script. Although nothing must be copied anywhere but into the new BeatBox II directory, the script does make sure the initial tooltypes are properly set, and it gives you some options, so please use it.

If for some reason you don't already have ReqTools installed on your system you will need to download and install it first.

You can find it on Aminet and many other places.

Once you have installed BeatBox2, you can relocate it at any time by simply dragging the BeatBox2 drawer wherever you like.

NEW - if you are not a native English speaker, you can now use Locale to put BeatBox 2 into the language of your choice (French and English catalogs are provided in this release).

If anyone would like to do a Locale for another language, please contact James for details.

No assigns are needed, and nothing needs to be scattered around your Hard Drive. Everything is installed inside the BeatBox2 drawer, so removing BeatBox2 is just a matter of deleting the entire drawer.

DO NOT rename or remove the BeatBox2 icon from the main drawer! Even if you run BeatBox2 from the cli, the icon is necessary - your prefs are stored on it, and the program won't run if it is missing!

Also, DO NOT remove or rename the prefs program! It should NOT be put in SYS:prefs/ or anywhere except the BeatBox2 drawer. It is OK to remove its icon if you only want to use it when the program is running.

It is safe to remove: The title pic from the main drawer (BB2.title) if you don't want to see it when the program starts, or if you have an ECS-only system.

If you only need English support, you can delete the entire BeatBox2/catalogs drawer, as English is built-in (the catalog is still provided, as it is sometimes necessary, depending on how you have Locale set up on your system (eg, if you have more than one "Preferred Language" selected)).

You can remove any unused icons from the icons drawer.

NOTE: if you remove or rename the "Project" icon from the icons drawer, BeatBox2 can NOT save icons with your projects.

You can safely remove the BeatBox.15 font from the fonts drawer if you don't want to use it. But DON'T remove the Iconfont or you won't get any icons for your samples!

You can also move either (or both) of the fonts to your main FONTS: assign if you want to use them for other programs. But DON'T remove the fonts drawer, even if it is empty!

Configuration

When you first start BeatBox 2, you'll get a title screen, upon which the prefs window will appear. You can select a screenmode (the defaults are PAL - Hi-Res Laced 640x512 8 colours and NTSC - Hi-Res Laced 640x400 8 colours), and a font, both via standard ASL requesters.

You can also select the GUI you prefer : BeatBox 2 has GUIs optimised for PAL or NTSC displays. Just try them out. Although the PAL GUI is too large for the default NTSC size, the screen will autoscroll, so you'll get to use the full GUI.

Click OK once you've selected your prefs, or if the defaults are fine by you.

Tooltypes

The prefs program actually just saves a list of tooltypes to the BeatBox2 program icon, so you can edit them if you're feeling brave. The ones marked "Don't touch!!!" are not recommended for messing around with!

DISPLAYID	- Don't touch!!!	
SCRHEIGHT	- Don't touch!!!	
SCRWIDTH	- Don't touch!!!	
SCRDEPTH	- Don't touch!!!	
OVERSCAN	- Don't touch!!!	
FONT	- the chosen font	eg. FONT=Times
SIZE	- size of the chosen font	eg. SIZE=15
GUI	- GUI mode	GUI=PAL / NTSC
GRAPHICS	- graphics rendering mode	GRAPHICS=AGA / RTG / ECS
FILTER	- Filter state on startup	FILTER=ON / OFF
SAMPLEDIR	- default sample directory	eg. SAMPLEDIR=Work:Samples

If you make a mess of these tooltypes, you can just delete them, and BeatBox 2 will just bring up the prefs next time you start.

The rest of the tooltypes are NOT set in the prefs, so you will need

to edit them yourself if you want to change them:

SAVETOOLTYPES=YES (default) BeatBox saves the current prefs when the program ends. This saves your current sample directory path and filter state. If you don't want this to happen, change this to SAVETOOLTYPES=NO

BLOCKLOOP=YES (default) When you click the "Play Block" button, the current block will keep playing till you click "Stop" If you want the block to play only once, the stop automatically set this to: BLOCKLOOP=NO

ICONPOPUP=YES (default) Each time you load a new sample, BeatBox will open the icon selection window for you to select an icon for this sample. If you'd rather not have it do this, you can set this to: ICONPOPUP=NO

MULTIVIEW_VERSION - Don't touch!!! Only to be set by BeatBox 2!

DEFAULT_PROJECT - Insert the name of a project which you want to load automatically on startup. Handy for loading a pre-selected set of instruments every time! You should either give the full path, or the path from the BeatBox2 directory.
eg. DEFAULT_PROJECT=Projects/Bad_Example

And here are the menu shortcuts. Just type the letter of the key you want to use after the tooltype (remember the = sign) ,eg :

MENU_PROJ_NEW=N

If you don't want a shortcut for a particular menu item (for example, if you want to use that letter for another item) just delete it.

Here's the list (with default shortcuts shown) :

Project menu

MENU_PROJ_NEW	New	
MENU_PROJ_OPEN	Open Project...	O
MENU_PROJ_SAVE	Save As...	S
MENU_PROJ_NAME	Name Project...	
MENU_PROJ_PREFS	Program Prefs	P
MENU_PROJ_ABOUT	About BeatBox 2	A
MENU_PROJ_QUIT	Quit	Q

Sample menu

MENU_SAMP_KEYBOARD	Keyboard Open/Close	K
MENU_SAMP_LOAD	Load Sample...	L
MENU_SAMP_NAME	Rename Sample...	R
MENU_SAMP_REMOVE	Remove Sample	Z

Block menu

MENU_BLOCK_CUT	Cut Block	X
MENU_BLOCK_COPY	Copy Block	C
MENU_BLOCK_PASTE	Paste Block	V
MENU_BLOCK_FILL	Fill Block	B
MENU_BLOCK_NAME	Name Block...	N

Track menu

MENU_TRACK_CUT	Cut Track	,
MENU_TRACK_COPY	Copy Track	.
MENU_TRACK_PASTE	Paste Track	/
MENU_TRACK_FILL	Fill Track	T

MENU_MISC_DEFPROJ	Set Default Project	D
MENU_MISC_AUTOPLAY	Autoplay on loading?	U

The program will spot any duplicated shortcuts, and remove them.

1.6 Usage

Usage

(Deep breath)

To start with, you may like to try the Getting~Started page, for a quick introduction.

Starting BeatBox2

Menu Options

~Project~Menu~~

~Sample~Menu~~~

~Block~Menu~~~~

~Track~Menu~~~~

~KeyBoard~Menu~

~Misc~Menu~~~~~

The Main Screen

The Block Editor

The block editor consists of four rows of sixteen boxes, each with a button underneath.

The boxes are where you click to place the current sample directly (using the left mouse button), or hear the sample in that box (by pressing the right mouse button).

The buttons are to allow you to either select a box, of most use in the KeyBoard-window, which allows you to enter notes via an on-screen piano keyboard (this is done by the left button), or you can delete the contents of the box by clicking its button with the right mouse button.

You can move around the boxes by pressing the cursor keys too.

The Sample Control Panel

This is a group of buttons (PAL/NTSC) which gives you control over the samples you have loaded.

You have an icon to represent the sample and the sample name in a string gadget. If you want to change the icon, click on the icon to bring up the icon window. To change the sample name, either click in the box and edit using standard text editing methods, or choose Rename Sample from the Sample menu (a bit pointless really - it just sets the cursor in this box!). Note that you must press [RETURN] after changing the sample name to keep the new version - pressing any other gadget will cancel the edit.

The Select Sample gadget only works if you have two or more sample loaded and is intended for easy access, via a listview, to all of the loaded samples. When the window appears, you can click on a sample name with the right button to hear the sample, or left click to select the sample want to use and close the window.

The Play gadget plays the sample at default pitch and volume, and the up and down gadgets select the next and previous samples respectively.

The Block Control Panel

This group of buttons (PAL/NTSC) gives you control over the blocks in use in your project.

The Block name can be edited as per the Sample name, the listview works in the same way, and so do the up and down gadgets.

Note that the Block Panel in the NTSC GUI incorporates the Block Play gadgets too.

The Tempo Control Panel

The Tempo panel (PAL/NTSC) only has two buttons - speed up and slow down. Tempo control is quite crude really, and the figure is pretty awkward to explain. It just acts as a kind of reference... (lame excuses over ;)

The Play Control Panel

This is only in the PAL GUI (the play buttons are incorporated into the Block panel in the NTSC GUI).

The Play Block button plays the current block, Stop will - no! - stop playback (both in Block playing and Song playing), and Play All will

play all of the blocks in order (ie not the song, just the raw blocks from first to last).

The Sequencer Control Panel

The button opens the Sequencer~Window from (PAL/NTSC).

You can also play the current sequence back without having to go into the Sequencer, and you can set the filter on and off here (the filter state when you quit will be saved into the tooltypes).

Online Help

This (PAL) will bring up this guide on the BeatBox 2 screen. If you have ARexx running, it'll resize the guide and close it on exiting the program if you don't do it. The NTSC help gadget is in this section.

Finally, here's a list of Keypresses.?

1.7 Free Registration

FREEWare

To register BeatBox 2,

Send an email with "Register BeatBox2" as the subject.

Also include:

Example

Amiga Model:	A1200
Mode :	NTSC
Specs :	68030 x 50
Memory :	2M chip 16M fast
Graphics :	Picasso IV

And any comments, bug reports, or questions.

Then send the email to:

James L Boyd jamesboyd@all-hail.freemove.co.uk

or

Curt Esser camge@ix.netcom.com

You will receive a personal keyfile to replace the

"Unregistered User" one included with the program.

1.8 Credits

Credits

BeatBox 2 was written by James L Boyd and Curt Esser.

This project is a joint effort in the truest sense of the word, so it's difficult to say exactly who did what.

In cases where the credit (or blame) can be clearly assigned, it goes something like this:

James -

- * Overall concept and design
- * Main window design
- * Keyboard window
- * Menus and hotkeys
- * Locale support
- * PowerPacker support

Curt -

- * NTSC main window conversion
- * Sequencer
- * Font & Icon Font design
- * Prefs program
- * Sample saving routines
- * Installation script

If you have a question or problem related to one of those areas, you'll get faster results by writing directly to the person who did that part. For anything else, write to either of us.

You can contact us at :

Curt : camge@ix.netcom.com

snail mail : Curt Esser
113 Pauline Ave.
Crystal Lake IL
60014
USA

James : jamesboyd@all-hail.freemove.co.uk

snail mail : 10a Thirlestane Place
Dundee
DD4 0TG
Scotland

James has gone and put the Thanks section at the bottom of the Notes section for some weird reason...

1.9 Notes

Some Random Notes

A,C,D#,Bm (oh,sorry,not those kind of notes...)

Well,we've finally finished it (no doubt some nice people will point out more of our "special undocumented features" though ;)

It's been a long road,and along our way we've made many friends and we couldn't (- oh,shaddup!)

We'd like to thank the following for their undying support and wonderful comments in the past for BeatBox (the first one), which have given us no end of joy and happiness (- rrrggghh!! I told you to stop that!).

F1 Software	- for the credit card registration service
Jen Allen	- for all the *&#@ing support down on the farm ;)
Paul Burkey	- endless coding advice, "Brass Eye" quotes ;) and the ASL Filerequester code
Ott M Aloe	- for the font requester code example
Dave Newton	- for help with the ARexx stuff
MaVaTi	- for the timer code example
David McMinn	- for his hook functions for the screenmode stuff
Paul West	- more help with the hooks
The Blitz Listers	- advice,routines,general all-round coolness :)
Carl Read	- advice,support,ShareWorld diskzine
Eric "Islabela" Sky	- for the incomprehensible email (torrid guitar?)
Sebastian Krawczuk	- for comments
Krister Simon Skrtic	- for comments and the cool mock-up pic :)
Johan Hoogeveen	- for comments
Wolfgang Mueller	- for comments

Fred Bo - for comments, and more ;))

Ninjaw P.B. - for comments

Jens Knutson - for comments, and an introduction to Scalos ;))

David Liddle - for comments

Roy Burki - for comments

Anyone I've missed! - er, sorry, you've disappeared from YAM! ;))

Finally, James thanks Curt for doing all the hard stuff ;))

Hmmm, and here I thought James did the hard parts! ;))

Thanks to everyone who replied to us, and apologies for not having AHI, 16-bit 64 tracks, etc as most people asked (hey, we'd like 'em too! ;)) - Maybe next time, if anybody bothers to register this...

See ya :))

1.10 Problems - surely not ;))

Special Features ... sigh, OK, bugs...

Online Help : Don't run more than one copy at a time - MultiView may freeze up the system!

NOTE: this is only a problem if you have an old version of MultiView.

The fix is to get a newer version or use UniView (available on Aminet)

Also be sure AREXX is running on your system.

GFX Card users: It has been reported that some mode-promoter software causes problems with BeatBox2 - ie, you only get a black screen when starting!

A mode-promoter shouldn't be necessary with BeatBox2 - the screen requester should show all available screen modes on your system, including the ones for your graphics card.

So, if possible, set your mode-promoter to NOT mode-promote BeatBox2 (if this is possible). Then just select an appropriate screenmode from the prefs program.

If you can't make your mode-promoter ignore BeatBox2, you can try removing the title picture from the main drawer. It is named "BB2.title"

More GFX card notes: It is also reported that on some systems, it IS necessary to use a mode-promoter to get the screen to open in the correct size. We are working on this, but it is slow going as neither of us has a GFX card :(If anyone would care to send one...

Seriously, if you have a GFX card and DO or DO NOT have any problems, please email me (Curt) and let me know what happens. Also let me know exactly what your system is. Thanks!

1.11 Key Presses

Keypress Shortcuts

There are many useful shortcuts available to make things nice and quick in BeatBox 2!

Samples

-	Select Previous Sample
=	Select Next Sample
[Space]	Play Sample

Blocks

[Select Previous Block
]	Select Next Block
[Enter]	Play/Stop Current Block

Tempo

;	Tempo Down
#	Tempo Up

Miscellaneous

[Help]	Online Help Mode
[Escape]	Quit
S	Sequencer Window
G	Play Sequence (G for GO!)
F	Filter On/Off

(Note : these 3 were lower-case before, but they're now upper-case to avoid conflicts with the menus)

Default Menu Shortcuts

Project

New	
Open	Right Amiga + "O"
Save As	Right Amiga + "S"
Name Project	

Prefs	Right Amiga + "P"
About	Right Amiga + "A"
Quit	Right Amiga + "Q"

Samples

Keyboard...	Right Amiga + "K"
Load	Right Amiga + "L"
Rename	Right Amiga + "R"
Remove	Right Amiga + "Z" (Z for Zap!)

Blocks

Cut	Right Amiga + "X"
Copy	Right Amiga + "C"
Paste	Right Amiga + "V"
Fill	Right Amiga + "B" (B for Block)
Name	Right Amiga + "N"

Tracks

Cut	Right Amiga + ","
Copy	Right Amiga + "."
Paste	Right Amiga + "/"
Fill	Right Amiga + "T" (T for Track)

Misc

Set Default Project	Right Amiga + "D" (D for Default)
Autoplay on loading?	Right Amiga + "U" (U as in aUto!)

We've tried to make them as logical as possible, and there are little hints given above for the weirder ones!

If you want to redefine the shortcuts, you'll find the menu keys listed in the BeatBox2 program's tooltypes.

1.12 Help

Help

Oh, come on, surely you can use an Amigaguide?!

Well, if not, use the mouse to point to an item which is highlighted like this.

Use the Retrace button at the top to go back.

If you get lost, click on Contents to get to the start page!

1.13 Help Tester!

Understand now?

Click in Retrace in the top bar to go back!

1.14 Features

Features

BeatBox 2 features a user-friendly interface to make the creation of music as pain-free as possible.

- * Four channels of music
- * Uses standard Amiga "8SVX" IFF samples
- * The save format now includes the samples (unlike our last effort!)
- * Oh, and decent tempo control at last!
- * Uses simple block system (16 samples per block)
- * Easy-to-use block sequencer
- * System friendly, multitasking
- * Online help
- * Locale support, now with easy language installer
- * Default project loading
- * Projects can be set to play automatically on startup
- * Idiot-proof (almost!)
- * Font sensitive
- * GUIs optimised for PAL or NTSC
- * Works with graphics cards (er, sort of...)
- * Designed from the start to use as few resources as possible
- * Easy installation - needs no assigns or fonts installed
- * Choose your own screenmode
- * Er, that's it...

1.15 History

History

(James "on the keys")

Not much to tell...

BeatBox started over a year ago (this is being written in May 1998), as a simple drum sequencer (because I couldn't get round a bug in Blitz Basic at the time, to change the pitch of samples!).

The first, hopelessly bugged version appeared on an Amiga Format cover CD, winning a reader's award of £50. Only problem was, as I keep subtly (like, COUGH COUGH!!!) hinting, they never got round to paying up. No harm done, though, as I didn't expect anything in the first place.

After it was released, I got a letter from Jen Allen, who said it was good, but had a few bugs which needed to be fixed (understatement of the year).

So I got on the Blitz Basic mailing list, and put out a desperate call for help. Curt Esser replied, and within a couple of months, we'd got it sorted out (well, mostly).

We put it on Aminet (and a little bird told me that Amiga Format had put it on their subscriber's disk!) and people generally seemed to like it. Although we couldn't get AHI and stuff done, since we're not clever enough (yet), we took note of all the comments and ideas sent to us.

Then we started again from scratch, having learned loads of stuff in the months on the mailing list.

This is the result...

1.16 Getting Started

Getting Started

A quick tutorial (I'm not very good at this kind of thing)...

First of all, double-click the BeatBox2 icon (no way!) to load the program.

(The best way to use this introduction is by clicking on the "Online Help" button on the BeatBox 2 screen, then resizing the guide so that you can use the program at the same time...)

You may be asked to choose a screenmode, GUI, and a font to suit your preference, so do this, and then you're in the main program.

Right, what've we got?

There are four rows of sixteen boxes, going from left-to-right,

each with a little button underneath.

Loading Samples

Go to the Samples menu, and choose Load Sample, then choose a standard Amiga sample (the program won't let you load anything else).

You'll now get a big window full of little instrument icons, from which you select an appropriate icon for the instrument you've loaded. If you want to change the icon later, click in the little square box next to the sample text display.

If you want to free up the memory used by a sample which you don't need, choose Free Sample from the Samples menu.

Creating A Block

OK, now start clicking with the left mouse button in the sample boxes in the grid. Once you've put a few in, click on Play Block (PAL GUI/NTSC GUI) to hear your effort. You might want to load some more samples (the program will choose an appropriate "slot" for the sample), and put a few more instruments into the block.

See the Usage section for details on using the keyboard~window to input notes (clicking straight in the boxes as above will just place the plain sample in there - the keyboard allows you to change the pitch and volume of the notes).

To give the block a name (strongly recommended), either click in the block name box (PAL/NTSC), or go to the Block menu and choose Name Block.

Once you're happy with it, you can click on the + button beneath the block name display to move onto another block, and when you've got two or more blocks, you can use the Select Block button to bring up a list of all your blocks, where you just click once on the block you want to edit.

There are full Cut and Paste facilities available in the Block menu, as well as in the Track menu.

Sequencing Your Blocks

OK, now that you've got a few blocks created, click on the Sequencer button (PAL/NTSC) to bring up the Sequencer (you don't say!).

Here you see two listviews. The names of all your blocks are in the right-hand list. Left click on one, and the name will appear in the left-hand list. This is the sequence list, and you just keep adding blocks in the order you want them played. If you just want to hear a block, right click on it's name. If you want to insert a new block between two others in the sequence, just highlight the first of the two by clicking on it in the left list, then click on the block you want to insert. Delete a block from the sequence list by clicking it using the right mouse button.

To leave the Sequencer, use the close gadget on the window.

Saving Your Project

Once you've got something sequenced, go to the Project menu, and select Save As...

You can now enter a name for your project (if you've already given your project a name by using the Project/Name Project menu option, this name will appear, with spaces converted to underscores, as the default filename). It's strongly recommended that you save projects into the Projects drawer, as you'll then be able to double-click project icons to start BeatBox 2 and load your chosen project on startup.

Quitting The Program

Choose Quit from the Project menu, or press ESCAPE - you'll get a requester asking if you really want to quit.

1.17 Comments, questions, bugs, requests

Comments, etc.

Before you ask us to implement every sound feature you can think of, read this transcript from "Dilbert" :

Dilbert : Dave, tell me what Marketing wants the new product to do.
Dave : It needs to act as a communications satellite as well as a room freshener. HA HA!! And it has to be capable of time travel!!
And have a telepathic user interface!
Dilbert : [SLAP]

We would've put 16-bit, AHI, 64-channel mixing in if we knew how to do it, but we are just simple Blitz programmers, and we're not yet clever enough for all that stuff.

Any comments are welcome though :)

Contact us here.

1.18 WWW Home Page

Visit the BeatBox 2 Home Page!

We're at :

http://members.xoom.com/Curt_Esser/bbox.htm

You'll find the latest version (before Aminet!), along with various previously created projects (we'll stick the best ones on there!),

and samples to use as well.

Make sure you go to Curt's main page, too, for plenty of interesting stuff!

What's New?

The updates to BeatBox 2 since v2.0 include:

- * Improved Song Playback
 - opening windows, etc, in other programs should no longer cause slowdowns in the playback.
- * Locale support
 - supplied with English and French catalogs
- * Proper tempo control!
 - NOTE : you may have to modify the tempo of any old projects
- * Default project loading
 - BeatBox2 can now automatically load a project when starting
- * Autoplay option
 - you can set BeatBox2 to start playing projects immediately when they are loaded.
- * PowerPacker support
 - BeatBox2 can now load PowerPacked projects
- * Sample Saving
 - BeatBox2 can now save samples as standard IFF/8SVX
- * Updated Prefs program
 - Prefs now uses the screen's font and the screenmode requester now ignores most non-usable modes

1.19 Getting Started

Starting The Program

BeatBox 2 can be started by Workbench, CLI, or by clicking on a project icon (as long as they are in the Projects drawer, or you've set the project icon (BeatBox2/Icons/Project.info) with the path & "BeatBox2" as the default tool.

From CLI, you can add the name of a (ie ONE!) project, eg :

```
> BeatBox2 Projects/NumberOneSong
```

If you have specified a default project to be automatically loaded on startup, this will be loaded, unless you've supplied a different filename, as detailed above.

However, you can supply the keyword "-nofile" to avoid loading the default project. Type :

```
> BeatBox2 -nofile
```

Hint - don't call any of your projects "-nofile" ;)

1.20 Project Menu

Project Menu

New

Will start a new project, after asking if you're sure.

Open Project...

Clears current project after requesting confirmation, then loads a selected project.

Save As...

Use this option to save a project. Won't save blank projects.

Name Project...

Give your project a name. This name will be used as the default filename when you choose "Save As...", and all spaces will be converted to underscores(_) for the filename.

Program Prefs

Loads the external prefs program and displays it on the BeatBox 2 screen. You can change all settings while BeatBox 2 is running.

About BeatBox2

A requester with copyright details, and user details.

Quit

A requester asking if you want to quit the program.

1.21 The Block Menu

Block Menu

Cut Block

Cut out the current block, and hold it in a buffer in memory.

Copy Block

Copy the current block into a buffer in memory.

Paste Block

Paste the block currently in the memory buffer (after Cutting or Copying a block).

Fill Block

Fills the current block with the current sample.

Name Block...

Gives the block a new name. This is recommended for ease of use in the sequencer. You type the name into the block name gadget (you'll see the cursor appear when you select this, though it's easier to just click in the gadget yourself!).

1.22 The Track Menu

Track Menu

Cut Track

Cut the currently selected track, and place it into a memory buffer.

Copy Track

Copy the currently selected track into a memory buffer.

Paste Track

Paste into the currently selected track, from the memory buffer (after using Cut or Copy Track).

Fill Track

Fill the currently selected track with the current sample.

1.23 Miscellaneous Menu

Misc Menu

Set Default Project

Lets you select a project that will automatically be loaded into BeatBox2 every time you start. This can be useful if you want to have a set of samples loaded up for you each time. Just load up the samples, and save them out as a project. Then select this as your Default Project.

Autoplay

This one has three subitems:

- Never: Projects will be played at your request only
- After Start: The default project will not autoplay, but any projects loaded later will start playing as soon as they are loaded.
- Always: All projects loaded will start playing as soon as they are loaded, including the Default Project if you have set one (see above)

Load Help

This will open the AmigaGuide document you are reading now on the BeatBox2 Screen.

1.24 The Keyboard Menu

Keyboard Menu

Keyboard Open/Close

Opens and closes the Keyboard~Window.

Block Advance

There are 2 subitems for this, which determine how the Advance feature in the Keyboard window operates:

- On: BeatBox will advance into the next block automatically as you edit the song.
- Off: BeatBox will stay in the same block as you edit, and will "wrap" back to the beginning when you hit the end.

1.25 The Sample Menu

Sample Menu

Load Sample...

Allows you to load any standard, non-packed Amiga sample, smaller than 128k. The program automatically finds a slot in which to place the loaded sample, and you can have up to 99 samples loaded, chip memory allowing.

Rename Sample...

Allows you to give the sample a new name. Note that this doesn't change the actual filename of the sample, just the sample's name in the program.

Replace Sample...

This lets you load a different sample to replace the current sample. Note that the current sample will be removed, and any place it was used in your project will now use the replacement sample instead.

Remove Sample

Allows you to free a sample from memory if it's not in use. You'll get an error requester if the sample's in use in a block.

Save Sample

Saves the current sample as a standard iff/8svx sample file. Why? Well, you can use this to "grab" samples from other people's BeatBox2 projects.

1.26 The Sequencer

The Sequencer

The Sequencer is where you put all your blocks together to make a song.

You will see two listviews. On the left is a listing of the sequence of blocks in the order they will be played in the song. (When you first start, of course this will be empty!)

You'll get a list of all available blocks in the right-hand side list.

A right mouse button click on one of these will play the block for you.

A left click places this block into the left-hand side list.

The block will always be added following the currently selected block in the sequence list.

There is also an item at the end of the block list called "Loop"

Left clicking on this will add a "Loop" to the END of the sequence list, and cause the song to loop back to the currently highlighted item in the sequence list.

A right click in the left-hand list will delete that block from the sequence, and a left click will move the highlight bar wherever you clicked.

The Buttons

Play Sequence will play the sequence from the beginning

Stop will stop playback

Pause will pause/continue the playback from the current item

Easy!

1.27 The Keyboard Window

The Keyboard Window

This is a representation of a piano~keyboard, which allows you to enter notes into the current box.

The left mouse button clicked on a key will play the note and place it into the current box, whereas the right button allows you to just play the note without entering it.

There is also volume control via a slider, and crude fine tuning, using the - and + gadgets.

The Play button will play the note in the currently selected box, and Default will set the note in the box to the default settings which the sample had on loading.

The Cycle Gadget on the right selects the mode for the keyboard window. The choices are Enter and Edit.

Enter uses the currently selected sample : when a "key" is left clicked, the note will be entered into the selected box, overwriting anything else that might be in the box. Also active in Enter mode only is the Advance cycle gadget just to the left.

The choices here are Hold-1-2-3-4. If a number is chosen here (instead of "Hold") after each note is entered, the current selected box will be advanced by this amount, going into the next block if needed, so you can enter a whole series of notes without stopping to select the next box.

Edit mode, rather, will always operate on the sample that is already in the box, modifying it to the note you play on the keyboard. If there is no note in the selected box, the volume and/or pitch of the last played note in the track will be modified rather than playing the note again.
