

APrint

A Simple Book MIDI Software

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If you are looking for a simple software that permits you to pre-listen to a piece of music for your instrument (hand organ) before punching it, and printing the book, then APrint could be for you.

History of the APrint's Birth

Built from my father's needs, APrint is a second generation of software previously written ten years ago. As my father was buying pieces of music from a famous Dutch composer, he wanted to be able to listen to it, print it and punch it. This is how the first generation was born. This first generation was using large printers to directly print the books and it was working fine. But there were several issues we had to face in the last few years: the hardware we had was old and it was difficult to buy or refill the ink cartridge at affordable fees. We had (in the garage) a few old printers retrieved from different places, but after a couple of years of inactivity, none of these continued to work.

So, we decided to use more modern hardware, and take advantage of the software contributions that were existing on the Web. One of the most important contributions found was the software of Piet Paardekam, "Midiboek" (<http://huizen.daxis.nl/~Ppaardekam/>). It is a great software, but it was very complicated, and we couldn't listen to midimapped and midi files. Because of this we wrote a simpler software.

This software is freely available and distributed under the GPL license (open source license)

What is APrint?

APrint permits you to load a midi file, choose the barrel organ and the transposition (this is how the midi file is read and interpreted), listen to the piece of music (using the organ note's capabilities), and then when satisfied, print the organ book.

The software is available in several languages (French, German, English, Dutch, Spanish, Italian) and is currently used by several users around the world.

We made the software easy to use, and drastically simplified the installation process. You will need Java installed on your computer. A simple click on the web site allows you to install it on the computer. This software works on PC Windows, Macintosh, and Linux.

APrint has a nice feature that permits you to listen to the MIDI file using the sound of the real instrument. The sounds are recorded on a tape or MP3 device, and then added to the aprint instrument list. The rendering is not as rich as the real instrument, but the result is impressive.

Call for Contributions

As APrint can play the music with the real instrument sound, it can also be used to discover how a piece of music is rendered on other instruments. This is nice to discover the sound of music on an organ you don't have, and perhaps make connections with the organ's owner to let them discover the music.

We do think that this software can help a lot of organ grinders discover the impact of different music on their barrel organs.

At this time, there are only a couple of organs natively supported in the software, but it is easy to add the one you wish. This can be done by yourself with the documentation, or we can help you. If you want to add your instrument to the software, don't hesitate to send me an email with your instrument definition (the keys, registers, drums used) and I'll add it. If you want to let people listen to your organ with the real instrument sound, we only need a numeric record of the notes. You can provide a sample for each note, that's the most realistic, or you can only provide a sample for the different kinds of notes and arrangements.

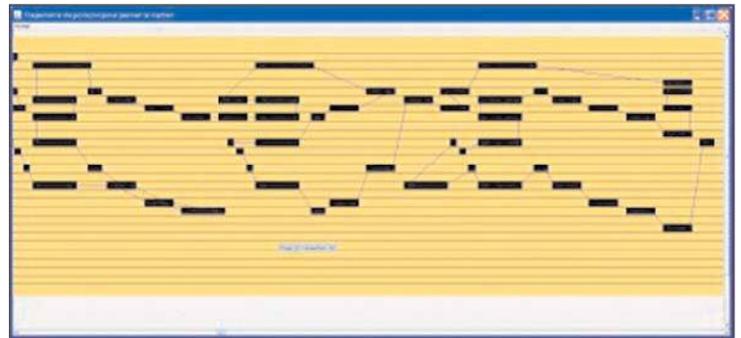


Figure 1. Punch plan computed by APrint.

Investigations and the Road Ahead

In a beta version, we have worked on interfacing the software with punch machines. We want to be able to generate a "punch" file that could be directly used by punch machines to make the music book. As there is no standard file to exchange this information, for the moment, this feature is not used. But if some users wish to integrate this functionality, it could provide them with solutions.

In **Figure 1**, you can see the punch plan computed by APrint to optimise the move of the punching machine. The lines in the picture show the punch moves.

In the future of APrint I wish to improve the sound rendering. The current version is able to use sampled sounds which is really interesting, and the most wanted feature, but this might not be enough when the organ has several registers and pipes. We are investigating such solutions.

The current version of APrint is freely available at the following web address: <http://pfreydiere.free.fr/aprint/aprint-en.html>

The newest version fixes several "bugs," has a new gamma print functionality, a print preview, a script engine for translating from midi to organ, and new instruments

Feel free to contact me for questions, suggestions, feed back or other information.

Patrice Freydere lives in Lyon, France. He is a musician and loves to listen to crank and barrel organs.
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