



Fender Musical Instruments Corp.

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Dear David,

I just received both copies of the User's Group Newsletter and I think it's fantastic. It does my heart good to hear other people "preach" the gospel according to CHROMA. I spent several years doing the same things to customer and dealers regarding both the Chroma and the Polaris. I've got some information that may be helpful to your readers.

1. Here are two (2) Chroma Polaris Service Manuals for reference.
2. MEMORY EXPANSION - Currently Fender is out-of-stock on the memory expansion kits, but never fear there is an easier and less expensive way to upgrade your Polaris. The memory chips that were used are the following:

HITACHI HM 6264 LP-15 or TOSHIBA TC 5564 PL-15

Either brand will work fine. These chips are about \$4 to \$5 (US) at the more sophisticated electronics stores.

The installation is fairly easy and installation instruction can be found in Section 7-1 of the Service Manual.

3. POLARIS CONTROL PEDAL - This pedal is still available from Fender. We have several hundred still in stock. The Fender part number is 30-5712-700 and the List Price is \$59.95. If any of the readers are interested they should contact their local Fender Dealer. This pedal will allow access to all the features and functions found in the Assignable Control Section. Some very interesting parameter changes can be done with the pedal and remember that all pedal parameters are programmable. On one patch it could act as a volume pedal, another patch could use the pedal to open or close the filter or to add vibrato or to bend pitch; all from the same pedal.

4. For those Polaris owners who are using some type of sequencer or computer, here is a new use for the Polaris' sequencer. Take a multi-track sequencer on your sequencer or computer (say 3 tracks, bass, chords, lead) and merge all the tracks into one track. All the tracks must now use the same sound. Take the one track with all the information and load this track into the Polaris through MIDI. Since the Polaris' sequencer will record one track on one MIDI channel, the multi-track sequence can be stored in the Polaris. This is very handy for playing live. I suggest that the memory expansion be done before this can be truly useful. Remember that the Polaris can only play six notes at a time, so don't make the tracks too complex.

## POLARIS HISTORY

For many years (20 to be exact 1965 to 1985) CBS Inc. was the owner of Fender. In 1981 in a move to expand our market share, Fender bought "selected assets" from ARP. Fender did not buy ARP outright due to legal and financial problems that had been created during the final year of ARP's existence.

When Fender purchased ARP, the Chroma was about 95% designed, but this last 5% took another six months to finish and get the instrument into condition for manufacture. Fender was first going to build the Chroma in the giant Fullerton, CA factory where all the guitar, amplifiers, Rhodes pianos, etc. were made. At the last minute it was decided that the Chroma would be made in a CBS owned factory in Hoopston Il. where the Guilbranson Organs were made. With the changes in manufacturing, this caused even more delays and problems.

The Chroma is an incredible instrument, but it suffered from poor timing. By the time the Chroma went into production, Sequential Circuits and Oberheim had taken a large portion of the potential buyers for a \$5,000 synthesizer. At that time in synthesizer history, the buyers expected to see a large number of knobs, levers, switches and anything else that would make the instrument look like it was worth \$5,000. The Chroma took a very different approach with the multi-function switches and master parameter slider (Yamaha took this idea for the DX 7). Many people could not understand what the Chroma was capable of doing just by looking and truthfully the Chroma is a very difficult instrument to use. It is very difficult to make simple changes to a sound. The Chroma did establish the credibility for sophistication, excellent sound quality and a great keyboard.

It was in early 1983 that the Polaris project began. During the early stages, a name for the instrument had not be developed so all the early documents referred to the Polaris as FRED. During this period all the design work was being done in Worburn Mass. under the direction of Paul DeRocco, who was the main designer of the Chroma. Paul is an amazing guy for both his hardware and software design skill. Paul is also an outstanding musician, playing both guitar and keyboards.

As the project developed, the decision was made to build the Polaris in Japan rather than the Hoopston Il. factory. This slowed the project by at least 6 months due to design changes to accomodate Japanese manufacturing ideas.

In the summer of 1984, CBS announced that they were getting out the musical instrument business and Fender was for sale. It was not until March of 1985 that the sale finally took place. Through the 8 months the company was up for sale, the support of our dealers become very weak. In addition, CBS cut off all advertising and promotional money. Of all the products in the Fender line, the Polaris felt the impact of this situation more than the others. Our first production of Polaris was in Sept. 1984, right in the middle of this sale period. There was no money for ads, promotion, clinics, sales training, etc. so the instrument was put into the market with no fanfare. Compare this to the millions of dollars Yamaha and Korg were spending at the time for their products. The Polaris hit at a time when "digital" was just becoming the buzz word of the eighties.

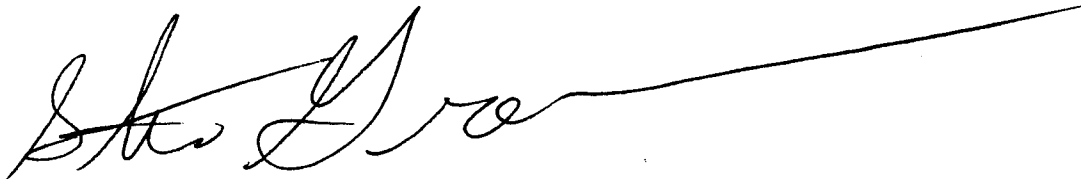
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Fender had a certain amount of success with the keyboard line, but the money we were spending on our R&D staff was out of balance with sales. The decision was made in mid 1986 to exit the keyboard market for a while and see who survives.

I have sent some information of a new product that may be of interest to some of your readers...MIDI STAGE LIGHTING. In Dec. of 1985, Fender purchased SUNN Electronics in Poartland Oregon who had just begun selling lightng products. I worked with two other engineers to design a MIDI Programmable Lighting Controller that works like a drum machine in many respects. Now A complete lighting show can be stored as part of a musical sequence.

I hope this information will be helpful to you and your readers. Once again I think you are doing a fantastic job and if there is anything else I can help with, please call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Grom", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEVE GROM  
Director of Marketing  
Electronic Products