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VIDEO FILE

BROTHERS KNOW THE SCORE FOR FASTER FILM COMPOSING

By David Crook
Times Staff Writer

This is a complicated story that began eight months ago when Ron Grant, a composer for the "Knots Landing" TV series, asked his brother Richard, a lawyer and computer systems designer, what kind of home computer to buy.

The story ends with a nice new business for the Grant brothers, a nifty way for composers to use computers in the scoring of film and TV sound tracks and a radically new approach to the problem of how humans and computers talk to each other.

When Ron, 39, first investigated home computers, he looked at most of the popular brands. He even looked at some unpopular models, such as one that was selling for \$40,000 - considerably more even than the price of his Porsche. Richard told Ron to buy a Commodore 64, an inexpensive model. Richard, 41, insisted that the software — not the computer itself — was what Ron had to pay attention to.

Pointing to the Commodore in his office, Richard said in an interview, "Hardware is going to be like razors. Before long, computer companies will be practically giving them away so they can sell you the software."

Like millions of other new computer owners, Ron soon developed an interest in programming. He wanted to adapt his Commodore for use in his music composing, especially the tedious, boring part of the job that he spent figuring click tracks — the internal timings composers use to fit music tempo to a film or TV show's visual action.

"I wanted to come up with a system that would let a composer do whatever he wanted his music to do," Ron said.

There is probably not a profes-

sional musician in Los Angeles who has not at one time or another consulted and groaned over a click-track book — a massive encyclopedia of numbers used by film and TV composers to find the proper music tempo for scenes of varying lengths. (An analogy for the rest of us might be the logarithm tables we used in Algebra II.) It's an exacting exercise for composers, poring over columns of figures to find just the right tempo to fit a scene that's only a few seconds long.

As much as two-thirds of a soundtrack composer's workday can be spent just figuring the arithmetic of click tracks, Ron said.

In essence, Ron wanted a way to tell his computer things like "Remeter Bar 10 to 3/8," a simple, direct command that any musical arranger would understand easily. Few computers would, however.

Richard had a solution: the Auricle, a totally new way for people to deal with computers. Or, more precisely, for computers to deal with people.

Richard calls Auricle the "ear of the computer." It understands English (or any other language a user may choose to write, including gibberish), because the Auricle user teaches the computer what words he or she wants to use for any process. If, for example, a word processing program code for spell check is "control-period-Y-space-T" or some other equally arcane combination of keys, an Auricle user simply may change that to "find the dictionary" or "*donnez moi le dictionnaire*" or "look it up, dummy."

An Auricle user just types the command and then sees what he or she wants superimposed on the screen - an advantage over most computers which require the user take the current project off the screen in order for the computer to perform another task.

"Auricle's not HAL," Richard explained, referring to the famous fictional computer of "2001": A Space Odyssey." "It's a system for the creative personality, a way of creating a line of communication between the user and the machine." It's also a way for teaching even the simplest computer a whole new bag of tricks.

Richard Grant's Auricle teaches computers how to do things the way brother Ron wanted. The result is a computer program that understands musician's jargon, contains all the mathematical variations of the click track book, reconciles musical time with film time and real time, produces an audible metronomic beat for musicians and is still simple to use.

The Grant brothers developed a Commodore program called "Auricle: The Film Composer's Time Processor." It was used for the first time last month by composer Lance Rubin to score an episode of "Dallas." The music writing took Rubin one day, instead of the usual three.

Another composer, Charles Bernstein, took a crack at the Auricle for a scene in last year's miniseries "Sadat" that had taken him eight hours to time. With the Grant brothers' program Bernstein scored the same scene in ten minutes.

The Grants recently began selling the program for about \$500, and they are attempting to interest the makers of Commodore in licensing Auricle and adapting it to other uses. Richard has already written and sold an Auricle program for legal research.

"Auricle can change the face of music as we know it," Ron said. "It's a personal program with none of the constraints of (conventional) systems."

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