Chapter 6
The Idea Pad

The Inspiration Catcher

The Idea Pad is the answer to a songwriter's dream: a device that catches those fleeting flashes of musical magic that all too often evaporate as suddenly as they appear. The Idea Pad "looks over your shoulder" as you play the ZR-76, quietly recording everything you play, and capturing those musical surprises that often become favorite songs.

Using the Idea Pad is simplicity itself—you never even have to turn it on, since it's always listening to what you play. When you've played something you'd like to hear, simply press the Idea Pad's Recall Idea button to hear it played back. If you played something a few moments earlier that you'd like to check out, you can choose it from the Idea Pad's menu, and then play it back.
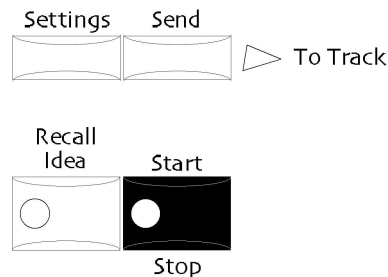
Listening To The Last Thing You Played

The Idea Pad is designed for those "what was that?" moments. When you want to hear what you just played, the Recall Idea button can play it for you.

To Hear What You Just Played

1. Press the Recall Idea button.
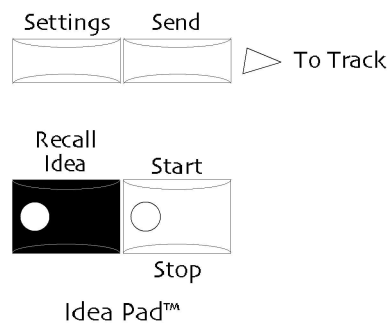
2. To hear the idea again, press the Idea Pad Start/Stop button.

> **Note:** You can set up your Idea Pad so that playback of ideas only occurs when you press the Start/Stop button. See "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" later in this chapter for details.

Listening to Other Ideas in the Idea Pad

The Idea Pad can hold many ideas. Pressing the Recall Idea button reveals a menu of the musical ideas currently in the Idea Pad.

To Select and Listen to the Ideas In The Idea Pad

1. Press the Recall Idea button to view the menu of ideas currently in the Idea Pad. The Recall Idea LED lights.

    Note: If the Auto-Start parameter is set to On, the most recently-recorded idea will play (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" later in this chapter).

    The display will show:

```
Recall Your Ideas:
Idea=        3 of 9
```
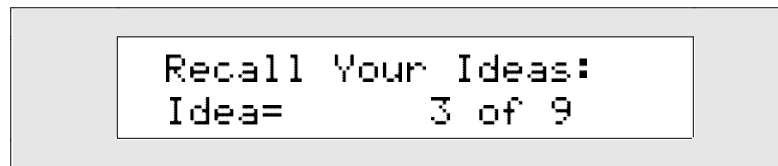
   The currently selected idea   The number of ideas in the Idea Pad

Each idea is assigned a number as it's recorded. The higher the number of the idea, the more recent it is.

You can use the up/down arrow buttons or the Value knob to select the idea you'd like to hear. If the Idea Pad's Auto-Play parameter is set to On, selecting an idea with the up or down button will cause it to automatically begin playing (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" below).

2. Use the Value knob or the up/down arrow buttons to select a idea.
3. Press the Start/Stop button to begin playback of the idea.
4. Press the Start/Stop button to end playback of the idea.

How the Idea Pad Works

There are four Idea Pad buttons:
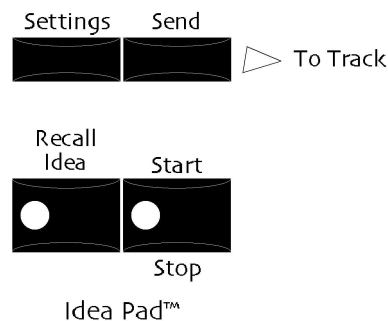
Idea Pad™

Technically, the Idea Pad is a MIDI recorder—a *sequencer*—that's always recording, capturing your ideas temporarily into its own area of the ZR's memory.

How the Idea Pad Works with SoundFinder

The Idea Pad records everything you play on the keyboard, making note of the sounds you use. When you listen to your ideas played back, they sound exactly as they did when you first performed them.

While you're enjoying the sounds in SoundFinder, your ideas are recorded faithfully without a metronome timing reference. When you send an idea to the 16 Track Recorder, you can use ENSONIQ's exclusive delta quantizing feature to lock your playing into a perfect tempo (delta quantizing is described in *Chapter 7*). To learn how to send an idea to the 16 Track Recorder, see "Sending Ideas to the 16 Track Recorder" later in this chapter.

> **Note:** SoundFinder presets are designed primarily as performance tools and, as such, are not sent over to the 16 Track Recorder from the Idea Pad. When an idea using a preset is captured by the Idea Pad and sent over to the 16 Track Recorder, its note and controller data are sent; however, only the preset's first sound—the sound that had been selected after pressing the Select Sound button—will be heard on the resulting track. If you'd like to use a split and/or layer in the 16 Track Recorder, you can save it as a single sound, capture your playing in the Idea Pad and send your idea over to the 16 Track Recorder (you can also send the split/layer single sound directly from SoundFinder). See *Chapter 4* to learn about saving splits and layers as single sounds.

How the Idea Pad Works with the Drum Machine

When you're playing along with the Drum Machine, the Idea Pad keeps track of the rhythm you're using and anything you play on the keyboard. It keeps track of when your idea occurred within the rhythm so that as you play back your idea, everything falls correctly into place. You can select different variations and fills for your rhythm, and the Idea Pad will record those selections as well, allowing you capture a Drum Machine "performance" (*Chapter 5* describes using the Drum Machine).

> **Note:** If you've been editing the rhythm you're working with, but have not yet saved those edits (see *Chapter 5*), the Idea Pad will play back the unedited version of the rhythm.

When you send your idea to the 16 Track Recorder for further development, the music you've played on the keyboard goes to a track of your choosing, and the rhythm—including your variation and fill selections—goes to a special rhythm track in the selected sequence. *Chapter 7* describes working with this rhythm track in detail.

> **Tip:** You can augment a rhythm with additional drum or percussion notes by selecting a drum or percussion kit sound in SoundFinder, playing along with the rhythm, and sending the whole thing from the Idea Pad to the 16 Track Recorder. The rhythm will go on the selected sequence's rhythm track and the additional notes you play will go on a track of your choosing. If you'd like to add notes using the same kit as the rhythm uses, select the rhythm you want to use, and then select the RthmEditKit sound in SoundFinder as your drum kit sound (you'll find it in the *CUSTOM SoundFinder category). Once your idea is in the 16 Track Recorder, you can also use the rhythm track to record even more drum or percussion notes using the rhythm's kit.

How the Idea Pad Works with the 16 Track Recorder

You can play along with a sequence you've already created—or loaded from floppy—by selecting a track in the 16 Track Recorder and letting the Idea Pad capture new musical ideas as you work them out.

When the Idea Pad plays an idea recorded while playing along with the 16 Track Recorder, it conveniently starts playing the idea immediately, even if it originally occurred somewhere in the middle of the sequence. When you send the idea to a track in the 16 Track Recorder, it's placed into its original rhythmic context within the selected sequence.

The Idea Pad as an Archive of 16 Track Recorder Performances

While recording tracks in the 16 Track Recorder, you may find yourself recording some tracks over and over again as you refine your performance. As you record each take, the Idea Pad captures your playing. The 16 Track Recorder Undo function allows you to undo the most recent take—and yet, you may find that you wish to return to a performance that occurred several takes back. No problem: the Idea Pad is more than likely to hold that earlier take and a host of others from which you can select your best work. The number of previous performance held by the Idea Pad is determined by a few factors, discussed below in "How Big Is the Idea Pad?"

To retrieve any take from the Idea Pad, simply select it and send it to the desired track in the 16 Track Recorder. See "Sending Ideas to the 16 Track Recorder" later in this chapter to learn how this is done.

How the Idea Pad Knows When A New Idea Has Begun

An idea is simply a piece of music you've played. The Idea Pad is smart: it can tell when you've begun a new one. It accomplishes this by paying attention to what you do:

- When you select a new sound, the Idea Pad knows the next music you play will be a new idea.
- When you're playing the keyboard all by itself, pausing lets the Idea Pad know that the next music you play will be a new idea. (The length of this pause can be adjusted—see "Setting the Pause Length Between Separate Ideas" later in this chapter.)
- When you're playing along with the Drum Machine and you select a new rhythm, the Idea Pad knows that the next music you play will be a new idea.
- When you select a new 16 Track Recorder sequence, or press the Play button in the 16 Track Recorder, the Idea Pad knows that the next music you play on the keyboard will be a new idea.

How Big Is the Idea Pad?

Since the Idea Pad uses memory dynamically, the answer to this question varies. Filling up the Idea Pad is not linked to any predictable length of time, but rather to the number of notes you play and the amount of controller activity you generate (using controllers such as the ZR's pitch bend and mod wheels, and so on). The nature of your music determines how many ideas the Idea Pad can hold, regardless of the Idea Pad's actual size. There are two possible Idea Pad sizes: 16k and 31k. Even the smaller size can hold dozens and dozens of ideas. You can use the ZR's librarian to choose either size, as described in "Re-Sizing the Idea Pad" later in this chapter.

What Happens When The Idea Pad Is Filled Up

When the Idea Pad buffer is full, it keeps recording your new ideas, erasing the oldest ideas as it needs to free up memory. It's a good idea to stop every now and again to see what you've captured in the Idea Pad. Before some new idea takes its place in the Idea Pad, you'll want to extract the music you'd like to keep by sending it over to a sequence in the 16 Track Recorder and then saving the sequence to floppy disk. Sending ideas to the 16 Track Recorder is described later in this chapter. Saving sequences to disk is described in *Chapter 9*.

What Happens to an Idea's Effect In the 16 Track Recorder

When an idea in the Idea Pad is based on a sound using an insert effect, and you send the idea to a track in the 16 Track Recorder, you can choose whether or not to send the insert effect along with the idea over to the 16 Track Recorder.

- If you choose to send the idea to a track with its insert effect, the track to which you send it will be routed to the Insert FX Bus.
- If you choose to send the idea without its insert effect, the track to which you send the idea will be routed to the Alt. FX bus of the sound upon which the idea is based (the Alt. FX bus is explained in *Chapter 8*).
- When you send an idea based on a sound that doesn't use an insert effect to a track, the track will be set to the effect bus routing currently being used in SoundFinder.

Note: After you've sent the idea to a track in the 16 Track Recorder, you can manually change the track's effect bus as you please.

Customizing the Idea Pad

### Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad

The Auto-Start parameter allows you to set the Idea Pad to automatically play your ideas as you select them from the Recall Idea menu by pressing the Recall Idea or up and down arrow buttons. If you select an idea with the Value knob, it won't play until you press the Idea Pad Start/Stop button. When Auto-Start is turned off, ideas will only play when you press the Idea Pad Start/Stop button.

To Determine Whether or Not Ideas Will Play Automatically

1. Press the Settings button.

Settings   Send
                    ▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start
  ○   ○
        Stop
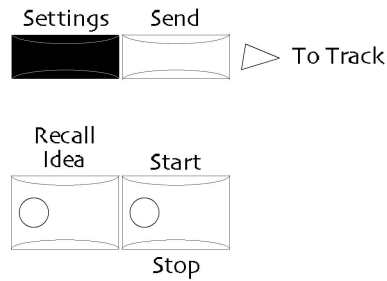
2. Turn the Parameter knob until the display shows "Auto-Start=."

```
Idea Pad Settings:
Auto-Start=        On
```
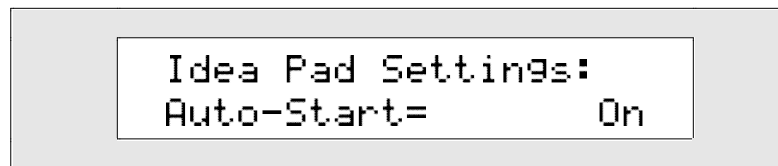
↑
What you see here may be different

The Auto-Start parameter may be set to:
- Off—ideas will not automatically begin playing when they are selected with the up/down arrow buttons or when the Recall Idea button is pressed
- On—ideas will automatically begin playing when they are selected with the up/down arrow buttons or when the Recall Idea button is pressed

3. Use the Value knob or the up/down arrow buttons to set the Auto-Start parameter.

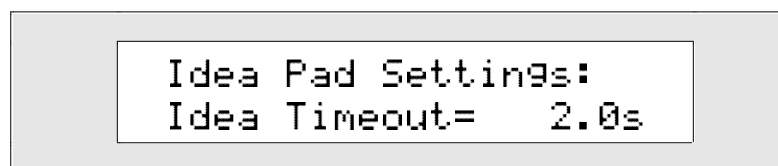## Setting the Pause Length Between Separate Ideas

When the Drum Machine and 16 Track Recorder are not in use, the Idea Pad can ascertain when you've started playing a new idea by the silence between musical phrases. The Idea Timeout parameter determines the length of time that has to pass before the Idea Pad considers the last idea ended, and prepares to capture the next one.

To Specify the Period of Silence That Signifies a New Idea

1. Press the Settings button.

Settings   Send
                    ▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start
  ○   ○
        Stop

2. Turn the Parameter knob until the display shows:
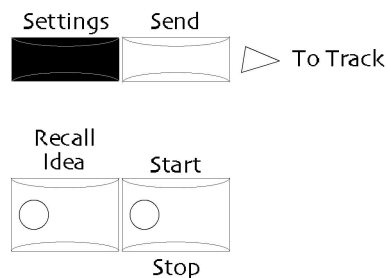
```
Idea Pad Settings:
Idea Timeout=   2.0s
```

↑
What you see here may be different

The Idea Timeout parameter may be set from 1.0 seconds (1.0s) to 5.0 seconds (5.0s).

3. Use the Value knob or the up/down arrow buttons to set Idea Timeout parameter to the desired value.

Re-Sizing the Idea Pad

The Idea Pad uses the ZR's RAM memory, which it shares with the 16 Track Recorder and Song Editor, and with any RAM sound or rhythm banks you may have created. *Chapter 9* provides an in-depth discussion of how the ZR's memory works. The Idea Pad can be set to two different sizes: 16k and 31k. The Idea Pad was set to its smaller size when your ZR-76 was shipped from the factory.

Warning: When you re-size the Idea Pad, anything that it currently holds will be lost, as will anything else in RAM, including sequences. Make sure that you send any ideas that you don't want to lose over to a sequence in the 16 Track Recorder, and that you then save the sequence to floppy disk for safekeeping before re-configuring the ZR's RAM. Sending ideas to the 16 Track Recorder is discussed later in this chapter; saving a sequence to floppy is described in *Chapter 9*.

To Change the Size of the Idea Pad

1. Press the Librarian button in the Disk/Global section of the ZR's front panel.

System   Librarian   Help

MIDI
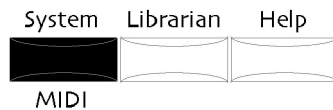
The No and Yes LEDs will begin to flash, and the display will show:

```
Librarian Commands:
Set up RAM memory?
```

↑

What you see on the bottom line may be different

2. Turn the Parameter knob until the display looks as shown above.
   The red/green No/Yes flashers begin to flash.

3. Press Yes if you'd like to continue, or No if you'd like to cancel.
   If you press Yes, the display will show:

The top line shows the four things for which RAM can be used

↓   ↓   ↓   ↓

```
Song Idea Snds Rthm
215K  16K  ---  ---
```

↑
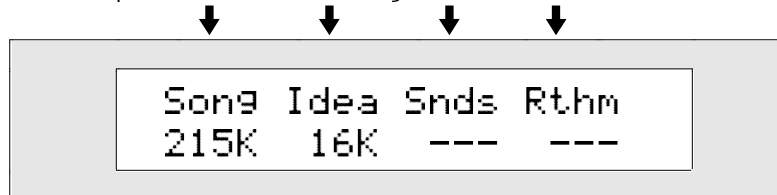
The bottom line shows how the ZR's RAM is currently allocated

On this display:

- "Song" refers to the 16 Track Recorder and Song Editor
- "Idea" refers to the Idea Pad
- "Snds" refers to a RAM sound bank
- "Rthm" refers to a RAM rhythm bank

When your ZR-76 is shipped from the factory, its RAM memory is allocated to the 16 Track Recorder/Song Editor and the Idea Pad, as shown above. There is no RAM allocated for RAM sound or rhythm banks.

4. Turn the Value knob to allocate the ZR's RAM as you desire.

You'll see the allocation of the ZR's RAM memory shift as you turn the Value knob. The Idea Pad will always be either 16k or 31k in size; the difference between the various proportions you'll encounter relates to whether or not RAM is set aside for sounds or rhythms, and to the size of the ZR's 16 Track Recorder/Song Editor memory.

5. When you've selected the desired setting, press the Yes button.

Enter

●

Yes

The display will show:

```
Erase all items in
RAM memory?
```
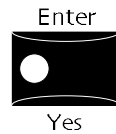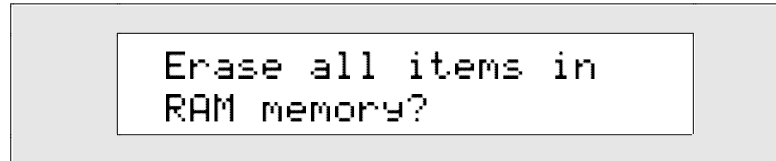
In order to reconfigure its RAM, the ZR must clear out anything currently stored there. Make sure that there's nothing in the Idea Pad you want to keep, and that you've saved any sequences, songs, RAM sound or RAM rhythm banks to floppy before continuing with this procedure. Saving to floppy disk is described in *Chapter 9*.

> **Tip:** Whenever you've added anything to a RAM sound or rhythm bank, sequence or song that has not yet been saved to floppy disk, the Save LED in the ZR's Disk/Global section flashes. This tells you at a glance whether or not you've got any sounds, rhythms, sequences or songs in RAM that haven't yet been stored on a floppy for safekeeping.

6. Press the Yes button if you'd like to complete the re-sizing of the Idea Pad, or press the No button to cancel the operation.

Using the Idea Pad with the 16 Track Recorder

## Moving Ideas from the Idea Pad to the 16 Track Recorder

An idea captured in the idea pad may spark the creation of a new song, or it may have a place in a sequence or song that already exists in the 16 Track Recorder. In either event, the first step in the process of developing your idea is to send it to the 16 Track Recorder for further work.

Using an Idea as the Basis of a New Song

Using an idea as the foundation of a new song is as simple as moving it from the Idea Pad to the 16 Track Recorder. If your idea is based on a sound that uses an insert effect, the effect will travel along with your idea to the 16 Track Recorder.
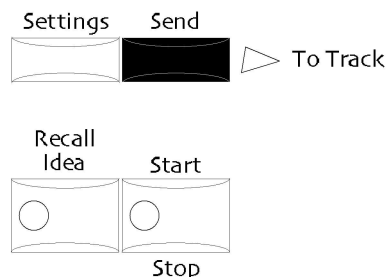
To Create a New Song From an Idea

1. Press the Recall Idea button to view the menu of ideas currently in the Idea Pad.

Settings   Send

▷ To Track

Recall
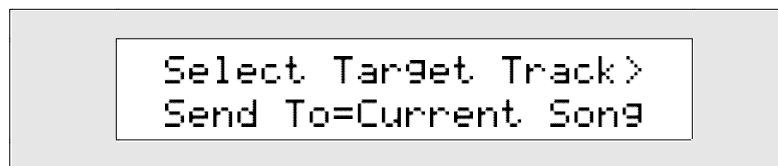Idea   Start

●   ○

Stop
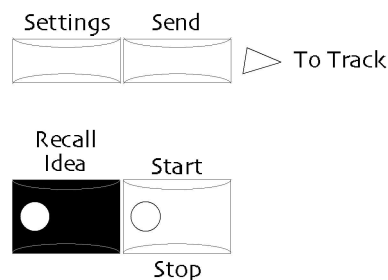
> **Note:** If the Auto-Start parameter is set to On, the most recently-recorded idea will play (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" earlier in this chapter).

You can use the up/down arrow buttons or the Parameter knob to select another idea to send to the 16 Track Recorder. If the Idea Pad's Auto-Play parameter is set to On, selecting an idea with the up or down button will cause it to automatically begin playing (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" earlier in this chapter).

2. If the Recall Idea button doesn't play the idea you want to send, use the up/down arrow buttons or the Value knob to select the idea you'd like to use.

3. Press the Idea Pad Send to Track button.

Settings   Send

▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start

○   ○

Stop

The Recall Idea, Yes and No LEDs begin to flash, and the display shows:

```
Select Target Track>
Send To=Current Song
```

↑
What you see here may be different

You can set the Send To parameter to:

•   Current Song—so that the idea is sent to a track in the currently selected sequence

•   New Song—so that your ZR-76 stores the current song in memory, creates a new song, sends your idea to a track in sequence A in bank 1, designates the selected track as the sequence's insert control track, and the insert effect the idea uses becomes the sequence insert effect (the insert control track and effects are explained in *Chapter 8*).

4. Turn the Value knob to select New Song.

5. If you'd like to send the idea to a sequence other than sequence A in bank 1, press the Bank and Sequence A-H buttons to select the desired sequence location (*Chapter 7* describes using the Bank and Sequence buttons).

6. Select the track to which you'd like to send your idea by pressing its button in the 16 Track Recorder.

Tip: You can press the Yes button instead of the track button, if you prefer, to send your idea to track 1. Pressing No cancels the procedure.

Note: If the idea uses a Drum Machine rhythm, the rhythm will be sent to the rhythm track in the selected destination sequence.

7. Press the 16 Track Recorder's Play button to hear your idea in the 16 Track Recorder.

To learn about using the 16 Track Recorder, see *Chapter 7*.

## Moving A New Idea Into A Pre-Existing Song

The Idea Pad can be useful as a way to work out new ideas for a song or sequence already existing in the 16 Track Recorder. While the recorder's playing, you can improvise and capture ideas in the Idea Pad. When you've got one you like, you can use the Send to Track button to incorporate your new idea into the already-recorded arrangement.

Tip: If your idea is based on a sound that uses an insert effect, the effect can be sent to the 16 Track Recorder along with the idea.

To Incorporate an Idea Into a Pre-Existing Song

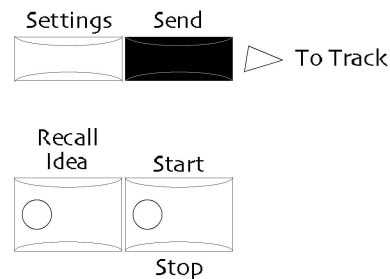1. Press the Recall Idea button to view the menu of ideas currently in the Idea Pad.
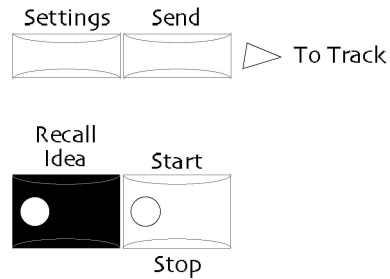
Settings   Send

▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start

Stop

Note: If the Auto-Start parameter is set to On, the most recently-recorded idea will play (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" below).
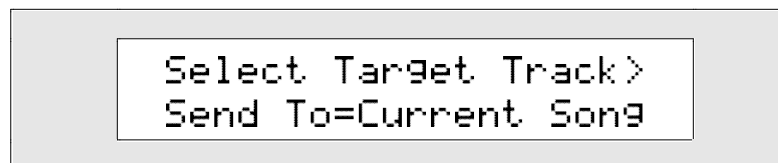

You can use the up/down arrow buttons or the Value knob to select the idea you'd like to use. If the Idea Pad's Auto-Play parameter is set to On, selecting an idea with the up or down button will cause it to automatically begin playing (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad").

2. Use the up/down arrow buttons or the Value knob to select the idea you'd like to use.
3. Press the Idea Pad Send to Track button.

Settings   Send

▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start

Stop

The Recall Idea, Yes and No LEDs begin to flash, and the display shows:

```
Select Target Track>
Send To=Current Song
```
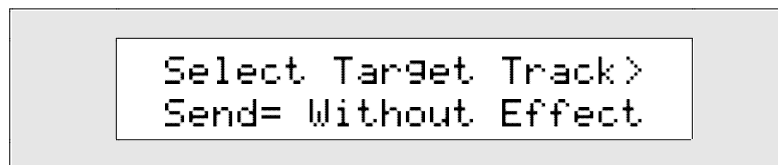
↑
What you see here may be different

You can set the Send To parameter to:

- Current Song—so that the idea is sent to a track in the currently selected sequence
- New Song—so that your ZR-76 stores the current song in memory, creates a new song, and sends the idea to a track in sequence A in bank 1

4. Turn the Value knob to select Current Song.
5. If you'd like to send the idea to a sequence other than the one that's currently selected, press the Bank and Sequence A-H buttons to select the desired location (*Chapter 7* describes using the Bank and Sequence buttons).

6. Turn the Parameter knob clockwise so that the display shows:

```
Select Target Track>
Send= Without Effect
```

↑

What you see here may be different

If the bottom line shown above does not appear on the display, the sound on which the idea is based does not use an insert effect, and you can skip to step 8.

If the Send parameter is available, as above, you can set it to:

- Without Effect—so that the idea is sent to the 16 Track Recorder, but the insert effect it uses is not sent
- With Effect—so that the idea is sent to a track in the currently selected sequence, the track is designated as the sequence's insert control track, and the insert effect the idea uses becomes the sequence insert effect (the insert control track and effects are explained in *Chapter 8*).

7. Turn the Value knob clockwise to select the desired setting.

8. Select the track to which you'd like to send your idea by pressing its button in the 16 Track Recorder.

Tip: You can press the Yes button instead of the track button, if you prefer, to send your idea to the lowest-numbered empty track. Pressing No cancels the procedure.

Note: If your idea uses a Drum Machine rhythm, the rhythm will be sent to the rhythm track in the selected destination sequence.

If you're sending the idea into a sequence containing a Standard MIDI File that hasn't yet had its tracks re-ordered to correspond to their MIDI channels, the No/Yes LEDs will flash, and the display will show:

```
Align MIDI channels
& add track params?
```
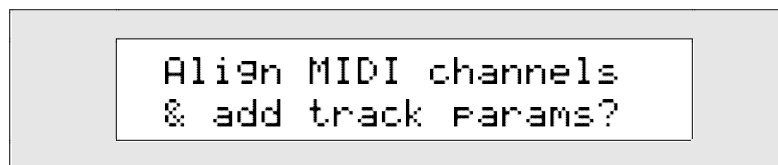
Answering Yes to this question will organize the Standard MIDI File's tracks into numerical order according to their MIDI channels, and add a set of ZR parameters to the track to which you're sending your idea—they'll also be added to the sequence's rhythm track if your idea uses a rhythm. *Chapter 7* describes using Standard MIDI Files in the ZR-76.

9. Press the Yes button to proceed, or No to cancel the operation.

If you're sending an idea to a track that's already being used, the No/Yes LEDs will flash, and the display will show:

```
Replace contents of
target track?
```
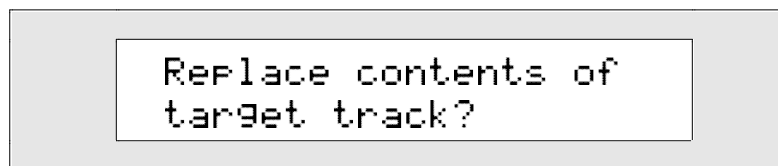
10. Press the Yes button to replace the contents of the selected track with your idea, or No to cancel the operation.

If your idea uses a rhythm, and the selected sequence's rhythm track is already in use—for normal

tracks, or a previous rhythm track—the display will show:

```
Replace contents of
rhythm track?
```
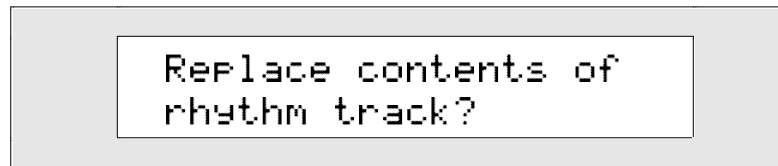
11. Press the Yes button to send the idea's rhythm to track 10, erasing anything currently on the track, or No to cancel the operation.

    If your idea uses a rhythm, and the both the track you've selected for your idea and the rhythm track are already in use, the display will show:

```
Replace contents of
rhythm & target trk?
```
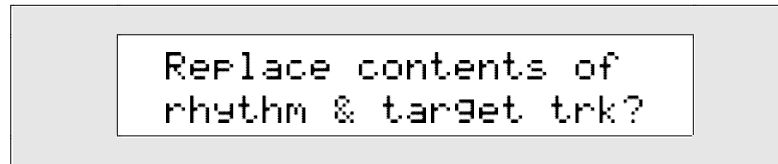
12. Press the Yes button to send the idea to the selected track, and the rhythm to track 10, erasing anything currently on either track, or No to cancel the operation.

    If you're sending an idea into a sequence where any tracks—or a prior rhythm track—have already been recorded, the No/Yes LEDs will flash, and the display will show:

```
Seq tempo/meter will
be used! Proceed?
```
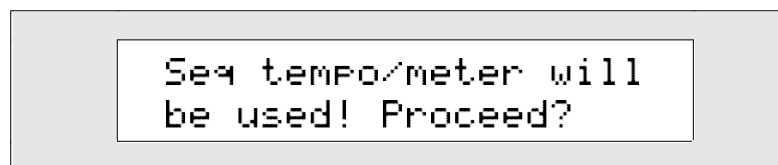
    Since tracks already exist in this sequence, it already has a time signature and tempo. If you choose to continue with this operation, the idea you're sending to the 16 Track Recorder will be converted to the sequence's time signature and tempo.

13. Press the Yes button to complete the procedure, or No to cancel.

14. Press the 16 Track Recorder's Play button to hear your idea in the 16 Track Recorder.

    To learn about using the 16 Track Recorder, see *Chapter 7*.
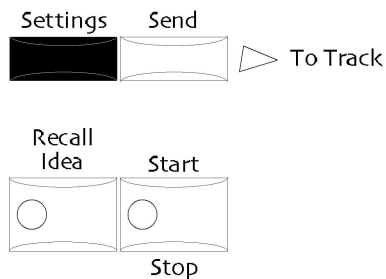
Erasing Ideas from the Idea Pad

Removing a Single Idea from the Idea Pad

There may be times when you'd like to erase an idea from the Idea Pad. The "Erase this idea?" command will delete a single idea you've selected from the Recall Idea menu.
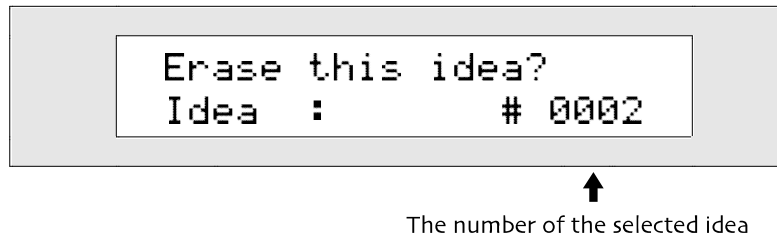
To Erase A Single Idea From The Idea Pad

1. Press the Recall Idea button to view the menu of ideas currently in the Idea Pad.

    You can use the up/down arrow buttons or the Value knob to select the idea you'd like to erase. If the Idea Pad's Auto-Play parameter is set to On, selecting an idea with the up or down button will cause it to automatically begin playing (see "Enabling and Disabling Automatic Playback of Ideas in the Idea Pad" above). Pressing Recall Idea also causes the most recently recorded idea to play.

2. Use the up/down arrow buttons or the Value knob to select the idea you'd like to erase.

3. Press the Settings button.

Settings   Send
             ▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start
○   ○
    Stop

4. Turn the parameter knob until the display shows:

```
Erase this idea?
Idea :      # 0002
```

↑

The number of the selected idea

If there are no ideas in the Idea Pad to be erased, the display will tell you so.
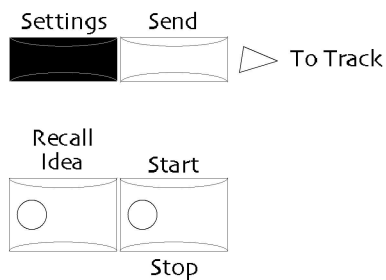
5. Press Yes to erase the idea or No to return the Recall Idea menu.
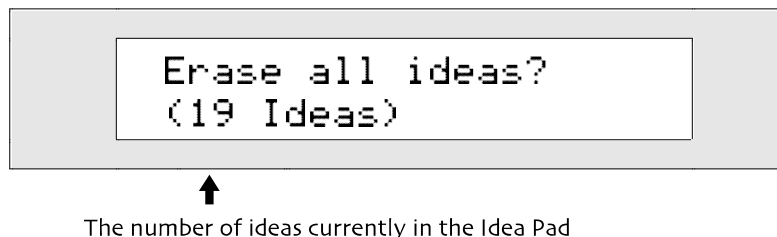
Clearing the Idea Pad

Like any good scratch pad, the Idea Pad can be cleared. Use the Erase All Ideas command to erase all of the music from the Idea Pad at once.

To Clear the Idea Pad

1. Press the Settings button.

Settings   Send
             ▷ To Track

Recall
Idea   Start
○   ○
    Stop

2. Turn the Parameter knob until the display shows:

```
Erase all ideas?
(19 Ideas)
```

↑

The number of ideas currently in the Idea Pad

This display will only appear if there's more than one idea currently in the Idea Pad.

3. Press Yes to erase all of the ideas, or No to return to the Recall Idea menu.