FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Keith McMillen Instruments StringPort Heralds New Era of Expression for Guitarists and Bowed String Players

BERKELEY, CA, NOVEMBER 4, 2008 — While keyboards, drum pads, and even turntables have dominated the world of commercial electronic musical instruments, composer/guitarist/inventor Keith McMillen has spent decades advancing the fortunes of string players.

Now Keith McMillen Instruments, the new company established by the creator of the world-standard Zeta violin and Mirror 6 guitar controller – among many other groundbreaking inventions – has announced the release of McMillen’s latest innovation: StringPort, a polyphonic string-to-USB 2.0 converter coupled with a unique, powerful, and extensible software suite. StringPort greatly expands the synthesis and processing palette of guitarists, violinists, bassists, and other stringed instrument players.

StringPort will be introduced to the musical masses at booth 6227 in Hall A of the upcoming Winter NAMM exhibition, to be held on January 15-18 at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, Calif.

“StringPort solves a decades-old conundrum for string players,” explains McMillen. “Stringed instruments simply don’t fit the simple event model on which MIDI is based, leaving players of some of the most expressive instruments ever created struggling to wring emotion out of the computer musical instruments that have exploded onto the musical scene over the last 25 years.”

StringPort avoids this limitation of MIDI technology by bringing the actual sound of each string into the computer as an audio signal, where included software applies sophisticated analysis algorithms to extract a string’s sonic properties with low latency and high resolution. The resulting data is used to control software synthesis with an unprecedented degree of intimacy and expressivity. The entire system is optimized for the characteristics of string behavior and produces much more information than simple MIDI conversion.

StringPort’s software suite goes beyond analysis to provide complete flexibility in signal processing applied to the sound, and even provides output in the form of readable and accurate notation or tablature suitable for use with standard scoring programs.

While existing devices for processing polyphonic polyphonic pickups have opened the door for guitarists, they have been inflexible, heavy, and expensive. StringPort, which retails for only $499, includes the VST Wall, a matrix that enables players to make chains of any selection of standard VST plug-ins, arranged in any order and applied to one or all strings.

The software suite also includes SMECK, a unique phase-driven wavetable processor with rich sonic modulation capabilities, and a six-channel phase vocoder bank that enables a player to polyphonically impose the sonic qualities of his or her instrument onto any set of audio files.

StringPort’s capabilities can be clearly experienced when it is used with the bundled demo copy of Synful Orchestra – a special version customized for use with StringPort.

As if this were not power enough, the software is compatible with Max/MSP and other sound engine software, and can be freely modified and expanded on by third parties and knowledgeable users. StringPort requires input from a stringed instrument with a polyphonic pickup. This input is accepted through the industry-standard DIN-13 connector, creating an easy upgrade path for guitarists who already
own a guitar controller using a polyphonic pickup such as those from Roland, Axon, RMC, or Yamaha. StringPort is compatible with most Zeta instruments as well.

In addition to being both considerably more powerful and less costly than existing string-to-MIDI systems, StringPort is also much smaller, being housed in a quarter-rack space chassis. An optional rackmount adapter allows up to four StringPort units to be mounted in 1U of rack space.

StringPort will ship in Q1 of 2009, and be available directly from Keith McMillen Instruments, which can be found online at: http://www.keithmcmillen.com

A portion of the profits from the sale of StringPort will go to the BEAM Foundation (http://www.beamfoundation.org), a nonprofit corporation founded by McMillen to spark a new Western classical music movement based on the technologies and aesthetics of the 21st century.

Please contact us for more information, high-res photos, product reviews, and interviews.

Press Contact:
Chandra Lynn
Glow Marketing
650.464.5708
chandra@glowmarketing.com

Company Contact:
Keith McMillen
Keith McMillen Instruments
510-502-5310
keith@keithmcmillen.com

About Keith McMillen
Keith McMillen has been an innovator in audio and music technology for nearly 30 years. He started Zeta Music to build what has become the “gold standard” for electric and electronic string instruments. McMillen has also pioneered guitar synthesis systems; founded and headed G-WIZ (an R&D lab for Gibson Guitars); led the effort to devise ZIPI (a musical instrument control language that avoided many of MIDI’s limitations); and founded Octiv, Inc., an audio signal processing company that addressed the problem of inconsistent volume levels and audio quality across delivery platforms, and produced the popular Volume Logic multiband processing plug-in for iTunes. In addition to running Keith McMillen Instruments and BEAM Foundation, McMillen also performs with TrioMetrik, a string trio using McMillen’s technology to create a new genre of music he calls “NuRoque.”

www.keithmcmillen.com