

## MacGram #42

SoundMaster - Custom Sounds For Your Mac  
BackDrop - Custom Desktop Display For Your Mac

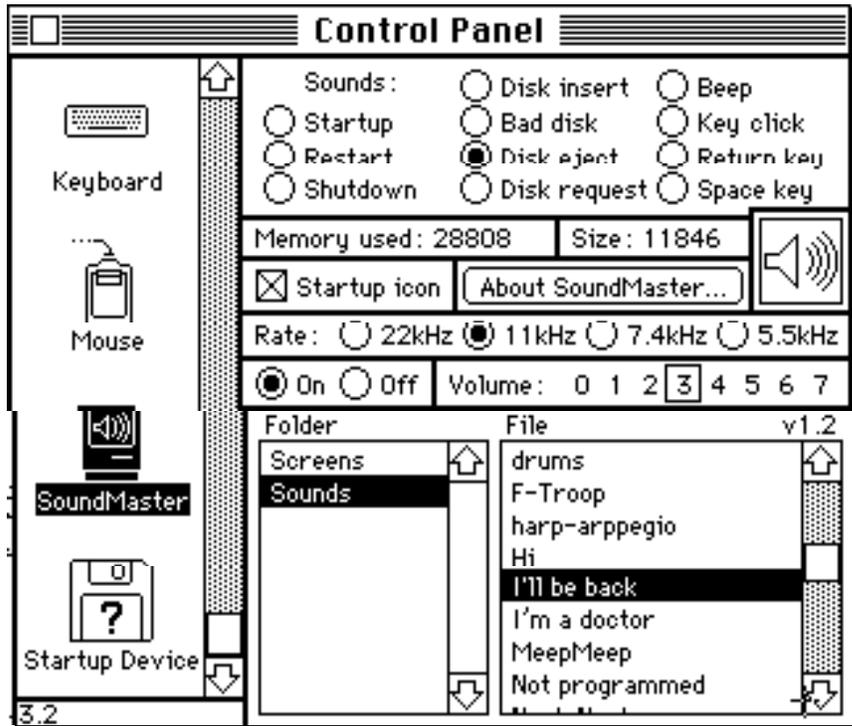
Not all items in your Mac have to be useful in the productivity sense. Some items can just be plain fun and allow you to personalize your Mac to differentiate it from all the others out there. SoundMaster and BackDrop are two entertaining items that fall into this fun category.

**SoundMaster** - is a shareware product written by Bruce Tomlin that allows you to assign various digitized sounds to functions that your Mac performs. It installs code in your Mac at startup that will later play sounds when things happen such as a disk eject or a standard beep. Long sounds can take substantial disk space so SoundMaster is best suited for hard disk owners.

Before you can use SoundMaster you will also need a set of sounds to use. SoundMaster can play SoundCap files (and perhaps others). It cannot play SND resources. SoundMaster does not provide any sounds so you will have to get these from a separate source. Potential sources of sounds would be a friend that uses SoundMaster, a local BBS (like A32 at 408-263-0299) or a national BBS like GEnie or CompuServe.



SoundMaster is a Control Panel Device (CDEV). To use SoundMaster on your Mac place the SoundMaster file in your System Folder, create a folder called Sounds (or use what ever name you prefer) within the System folder and then copy your sound files to the Sounds folder. Call up the Control Panel from the  menu, use the scroll bar to bring the SoundMaster icon into view and then select it by clicking on it. You will get a display as shown below:



To use SoundMaster to assign a sound perform the following steps:

- click on the button in the Sound section at the top to select when you want the sound played (Disk Eject in the example above)
- click on the folder that contains the sound file (Sounds in the Folder section), note that only folders within the System Folder are displayed
- click on the file containing the sound ( 'I'll be back' in the File section)
- select the playback rate and the volume you want it played at
- click on the speaker icon to make sure that it sounds right (sometimes you will have to adjust the playback rate and volume

for best results)

- perform the above steps for any other sounds that you want to assign
- close the Control Panel
- reboot your Mac for the sounds to take affect.

The sounds that you select are stored in memory at startup for later use. Thus having many large sounds selected will take substantial memory away from your applications. The one exception to this is the Startup sound, it is used once at startup and then discarded, thus it does not take any memory after startup.

To help you monitor memory usage SoundMaster displays the total memory used by all sounds that you have enabled and the memory used by the currently selected sound. In the above example my sounds use a total of 28808 bytes of memory and the sound that I have selected for disk eject uses 11846 bytes of memory. According to the instructions 'you need to keep the total size (memory used + startup sound size) of your selected sounds to somewhat less than half of the memory installed in your Macintosh due to the memory constraints of the startup environment'.

The About SoundMaster button will bring up a set of instructions and the address for your \$10 shareware payment. The instructions are rather extensive so I won't repeat them here.



SoundMaster requires that you use System version 4.1 (or



newer) and Control Panel 3.0 (or newer), I have used SoundMaster extensively on a Mac SE HD 20 running Finder 6.0 and System 4.2 with great success and I have used it somewhat on the latest system software (Finder 6.1 and System 6.0) and it seems to work fine also.

SoundMaster itself is not very large (only 26K) but sound files can easily be over 100K. Thus for most items you will not want to select large sounds, besides who wants to wait 5

seconds for every beep sound. You might want to use your longest and best sound as the startup sound, that way it doesn't take any memory away from your applications.

I currently only use a few sounds in my system. The ones I have selected so far are:

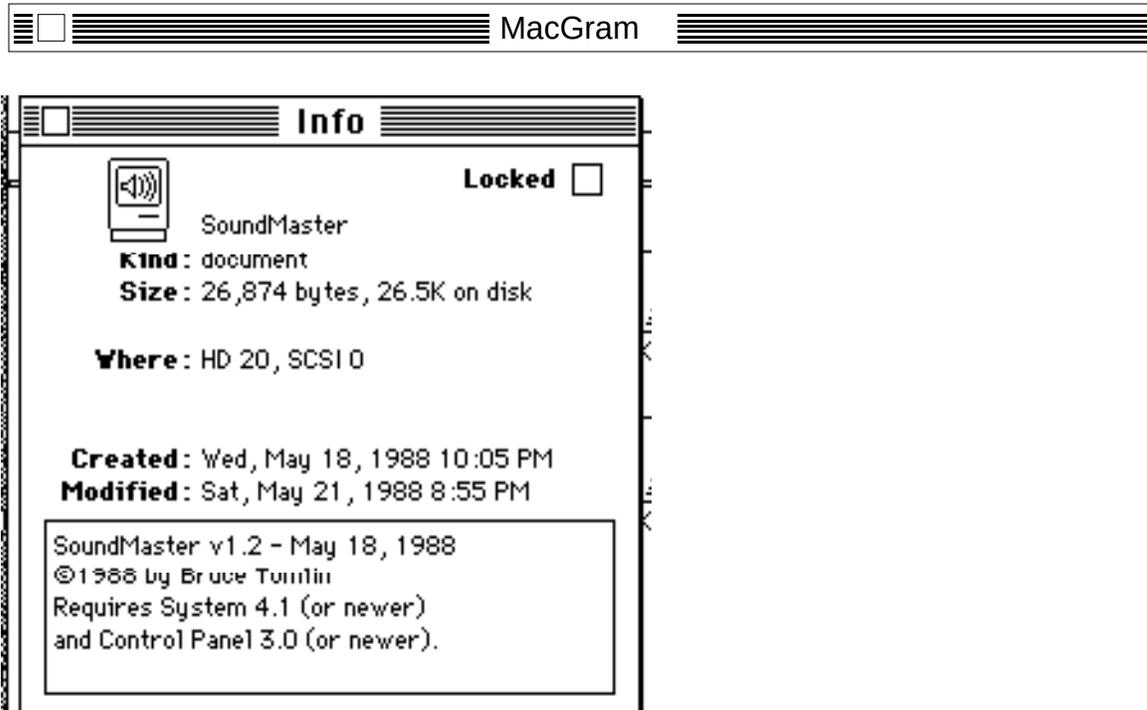
- Startup - Welcome to Macintosh
- Disk Eject - I'll be back
- Disk Insert - guitar wail
- Beep - car horn

I keep a lot of other sounds around on the hard disk for experimentation.

Here is a partial directory listing of some sounds that I have on my hard disk (displayed by size).

Name	Size	Kind	Last Modified
Dragnet	169K	document	Wed, Jan 7, 1987
Superman	101K	document	Mon, Jan 19, 1987
Stoogies	79K	document	Wed, Feb 18, 1987
Yabba Dabba Doo	66K	document	Mon, Dec 15, 1986
StarTrek	59K	document	Fri, Feb 27, 1987
F-Troop	56K	document	Wed, Dec 17, 1986
Not programmed	55K	document	Wed, Mar 18, 1987
Catch the Wave...	45K	document	Wed, May 20, 1987
Nyuk Nyuk	41K	document	Wed, Feb 18, 1987
I'm a doctor	39K	document	Sat, Mar 14, 1987
Welcome to Mac...	37K	document	Wed, May 20, 1987
drums	34K	document	Mon, Jan 12, 1987

There are two enhancements that I would like to see in SoundMaster. The first is that I would like SoundMaster to automatically highlight which items that you have sounds selected for in the Control Panel display. Currently the only way to do this is to select each sound item and then see if a file is selected for this. This can take a few seconds for each selection as SoundMaster searches through your folders and files. The second is that it would be nice is SoundMaster would play a sound if you double clicked on it instead of having to use the speaker icon.



**BackDrop** - is a public domain product written by Tim Maroney that will randomly select one out of a collection of pictures to display as your desktop background (instead of the normal pattern). If you have seen a colleague's Mac with an elaborate picture displayed instead of the usual grey desktop they are probably using BackDrop. Since the BackDrop pictures can take a fair amount of disk space BackDrop is primarily intended for hard disk owners. If you are familiar with the Mac concept of a startup screen (an image that appears while the Mac is booting and then disappears) BackDrop gives you a permanent startup screen displayed on your Mac.

To use BackDrop you need to have a Mac 512K Enhanced, Mac Plus, Mac SE or Mac II.

The BackDrop utility is distributed as a set of three files, BackDrop, BackDrop DA and BackDrop Information. BackDrop is an INIT that runs when your Mac is booted and it installs the picture for your desktop. BackDrop DA is a desk accessory that allows you to select a new backdrop picture at any time. BackDrop Information is a set of documentation in MacWrite format.

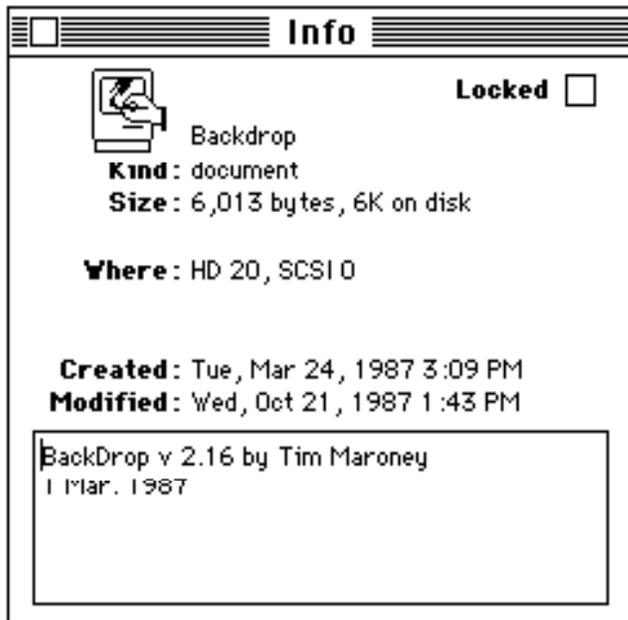
Before you can use BackDrop you will also need a set of pictures to use. BackDrop can use MacPaint and FullPaint pictures. BackDrop does not provide any pictures so you will

have to get these from a separate source. Potential sources of pictures would be a friend, a users group or a bulletin board.

Since BackDrop comes with its own documentation I will not try to repeat it here. What I will do is to give you a set of short instructions on how to install it on your Mac. To install BackDrop:

- place the file named BackDrop in your System Folder
- use the Font/DA mover to install the BackDrop DA into your system (optional)
- create a folder called Screens inside your System folder
- copy your MacPaint or FullPaint files to the Screens folder
- reboot your Mac
- and last but not least, read the BackDrop Information file.

I have used BackDrop extensively on a Mac SE HD 20 running Finder 6.0 and System 4.2 with great success and I have used it somewhat on the latest system software (Finder 6.1 and System 6.0) and it seems to work fine also.



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June 20, 1988  
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