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# What is MIDI?

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## A brief history

Back in the late 1970s, when digital music was in its formative years, synthesizers could produce only one sound at a time. If a musician wanted to play two sounds at once, he needed both hands and two synthesizers. For every additional voice, another keyboard and synthesizer was needed. A few companies, guided by Roland Corporation (now the parent company of Rodgers), got together to overcome this problem. They developed a digital language called "MIDI" that would revolutionize music.

## What does MIDI do?

MIDI, which stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, is a computer language that conveys musical instructions. For example, when a MIDI keyboard is played, messages are sent which describe what notes are played, how long each note is played, and much more. This information is sent to other MIDI instruments or devices where it's reconverted into music. All kinds of electronic instruments, and even acoustic instruments such as pianos, guitars and windblown instruments, can be equipped with MIDI capabilities. MIDI sound modules, keyboards and sequencers are all considered musical instruments since they all contribute to the creation of music.

## What equipment does it take to use MIDI?

Fundamentally, one MIDI device is a "master," or controller, and another is a "slave." The master sends musical information to the slave and it responds by producing music as instructed. All Rodgers organs are MIDI controllers. They can trigger electronic keyboards, sound modules, electronic pianos, MIDI controllable lighting, sequencers, and more. With MIDI, all these devices can be played and controlled right from the organ console.



A device that works in conjunction with a MIDI controller is a sound module. The Rodgers MX-200 sound module contains over 1,100 digital that can be selected and combined to create all kinds of music and effects.

There are even MIDI devices which have little or nothing to do with music, such as lighting systems and audio mixers. So after a hymn, preceding the sermon, the organist can press a button at the console and automatically dim the lights in the sanctuary, bring up a light on the pulpit, or turn on the preacher's microphone.