Using your MIDIboxSID V2 with hardsid.dll

MIDIbox SID V2 is more than just a synthesizer. Well, it is now atleast, thanks to nILS! He wrote a special DLL-file that makes use of the ASID protocol…. but, what does this mean to us MBSIDV2 owners? It means that we can use our lovely MBSIDV2 as a dedicated hardware sound device when using C64-related software. Yes, it sounds like a really nice idea, and it's even very easy to do now!

But first you might want to know a little about HardSID and ASID protocol

HardSID
HardSID is a well-known commercial piece of SID hardware. In fact it was so popular that several C64-related PC applications allows to use it to output real SID sound rather than using an internal SID emulation. Imagine using a C64 emulator and having a real SID generate the sound instead of relying on the builtin SID emulation software. This is realised by using the actual software along with a special DLL-file called hardsid.dll

ASID protocol
SIDstation is another well-known commercial piece of SID hardware. It can be used to play SID tunes using a special player named ASID64 (originally known as ASIDXP). The player will output MIDI data according to the ASID protocol, which the SIDstation will pick up. This feature has been adopted by MBSIDV2 thanks to TK, and therefore the ASID64 player can be used to play real SID tunes on MBSIDV2 hardware.

Technically, what happens is that nILS combined these two 'technologies'. His DLL-file is named 'hardsid.dll' for the C64 app to find and use it. The app will then output it's data to the DLL-file, where it is converted into ASID data and sent to any MIDI port that you select yourself. If you powered up your MBSIDV2 and connected it to the selected MIDI port, then you're in for a real treat :D

What do I need to make this work?

- Obviously you will need a MIDIbox SID V2 synthesizer (any model or build will work. One SID is enough)
- A fast MIDI interface. GM5-based interfaces has proven to be excellent for this use, but other interfaces can be used also
- The hardsid.dll file
- Some C64 software, games or SID-files
- Some software that supports use of the hardsid.dll

The MBSIDV2 can be of any model or build; SammichSID, MB6582, even a self-built modular version will work. The important issue is that it uses the MBSIDV2 firmware, which includes the SID-player routines. This means that MBSIDV1 firmware will not work since it does not include the needed SID-playing abilities. look here for details on how to upgrade your MBSIDV1 to MBSIDV2.

The MIDI interface must be atleast semi-fast descent quality or you will experience choppy playback.

GM5 and GM5x5x5 has both been tested thoroughly and proved to work very satisfying. You can try whatever MIDI interfaces you may have, and add them to the whitelist or blacklist underneath depending on your experience.

The hardsid.dll is managed, updated and provided by nILS. Download it here!

You can find C64 games and apps at c64.com and Arnold FTP. You can find thousands of SID-files at SOASC and hvsc.de. There are also a lot of C64 scene-websites that has a lot of nice demos, both classics and all new productions.

HardSID compatible software

Vice Emulator - One of the best, if not the best Commodore 64 emulators out there.
GoatseTracker 2 - A crossplatform music editor for creating Commodore 64 music.

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