

With the influential winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas behind us, it's time to look at the trends and products that are likely to make good for the remainder of 1982.

—MICHAEL SCHRAGE

Trends and trademarks

ATARI PRESIDENT Ray Kassar seems right on the money when he says that the consumer-electronics business is becoming a year-round proposition, not just a Christmas-season boom or bust. That means you'll be seeing more new products released throughout the year rather than a glut timed for the holidays. In fact, television commercials once targeted for November and December now seem to be saturating the airwaves.

Such companies as JVC and 20th Century-Fox Video are push-

ing stereo VCRs and videocassettes. Hardware and software manufacturers alike want to wed hi-fi to video to give people the feeling they're sitting in a movie theater, not in front of a TV screen.

Game cartridges compatible with either Atari or Mattel Intellivision game consoles are being produced by smaller firms such as Imagic and Activision, which promises a cornucopia of games spilling out on a monthly, or even weekly, basis. A footnote to the games craze: Mattel and a couple of other companies now offer voice options for the games that can cool warnings if aliens are chasing your tailpipe.



But it doesn't do windows....

COMMODORE'S ULTIMAX is a triple threat: it can be a video-game console, a personal computer that uses the BASIC language or an electronic-music keyboard. The video resolution of the games is better than Atari's, and the Ultimax can do all the things a BASIC computer can do—although its memory is limited. With a keyboard overlay, you

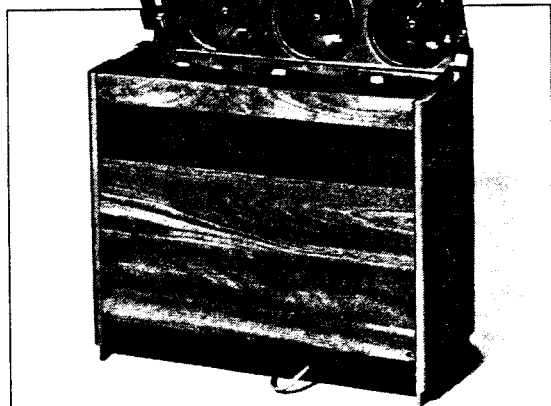
Games, programs and music

can turn the Ultimax into a piano, a harpsichord or a clarinet that actually displays the notes you've tapped on your TV screen. With a cassette-recorder attachment, you can store your compositions on tape ad infinitum. The Ultimax is priced at \$149.95, and it should be in the stores by summer.

Computer art breakthrough: painting by number

ASTROVISION OF Columbus, Ohio, has an interesting little product called the Zgrass-32 computer. Zgrass is a newfangled computer language that, while fairly easy to learn, is very powerful. It transforms the computer into a video paintbrush that draws according to your commands. The Zgrass-32 computer also has a Votrax speech-synthesis chip inside that allows you to create moving lips that actually "talk" and design video games with their own sound effects. It is expected to sell for under \$600.

Astrovision also sells a video-games-computer console with BASIC programs that mimic the Zgrass' ability to paint on the screen. This unit, called the Astro Professional Arcade, retails for \$299.



The very big picture

IT'S NOT QUITE PROJECTION TV for the masses, but Kloss Video Corporation's Novabeam Model Two is a good first step. Although \$2000 is a hefty sum, it's still a thousand bucks cheaper than anything else on the market. The Model Two is

Novabeam: compact, cheaper

fairly light and compact, and it is able to project an image directly onto your wall with excellent clarity. A five-foot diagonal flat image appearing four feet from the projector is possible with full picture brightness. Of course, video games are always more fun to play when they're as big as a pool table. □

Different drumming

FOR THE GINGER Baker in all of us, Mattel Electronics offers Synsonics Drums. They look like a quartet of hot plates and are arranged like a standard drum set—snare, tom-tom, cymbals and floor drum. You can play the drums using a set of control buttons on the side (definitely unhip) or by hitting the pads with drumsticks or your fingers. You can program automatic drum rolls into the machine (at up to 300 beats a minute) or generate them yourself. You can record your riffs and play them back, or hook the drums up to your stereo or portable cassette deck for Walkmanesque solitude. Synsonics Drums are easily portable, and the sound quality is generally good. They're expected to sell for about \$150 and, rumor has it, represent only the first in a possible line of electronic-music products from Mattel.

Fingers become super-drumsticks with Mattel's Synsonics Drums

