



# Ableton Live

Introduction course



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Made with  
love  
for ATIAM

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# 01 MIDI

Musical Instrument Digital Interface

# MAKING MIDI CLIPS

- ❖ Midi clips are launched and behave in a similar way to the audio clips.
- ❖ 3 ways to make notes in Midi clips:
  - Using your mouse
  - Using your keyboard
  - Using an external controller
- ❖ If you use your keyboard:
  - Press **M** to turn it on
  - Press **W/X** to up or down the octave
  - Press **C/V** to up or down the velocity



# IMPULSE INSTRUMENT

Make your own drum beat

- ❖ Create a midi track and insert a midi clip, arm your track.
- ❖ Drag and drop an “impulse” instrument and add your own samples.
- ❖ You can then play with your keyboard or chose with your mouse.
- ❖ Change velocities and chances to make some swing and craft your midi notes.
- ❖ Try several presets as well !

15 min

# MIDI EFFECTS

## RANDOM

Randomize the notes played, adding glitchiness or turning your clip into free jazz.

- ❖ Choices: determines how many random choices there are to choose from. (1 allows only the original, 10 allows for ten multiples of the Scale to be chosen)
- ❖ Scale: interval of the random note available. 1 means chromatic whereas 12 means octave of the note are the only available choices.
- ❖ Add, Sub or Bi determine if the random pitch is upward, downward or both.



## SCALE

Alters incoming note pitch based on a scale mapping, choose yours in presets !



# ARPEGGIATOR

Takes incoming MIDI notes or chords of notes and plays rhythmic and melodic variation of them in a pattern.

- ❖ Add movement !
- ❖ Create arpege form a chord: play with different styles -they determine patterns- and change the groove

“Down & Up”  
style



# CHORDS



- ❖ Every shift command adds a note to the chord. +/- 36 semitone compare to the midi note.

# MIDI EFFECTS

- ❖ Select an instrument that you like and put it into a Midi track. You can now choose between Analog, Collision, Electric, Operator, Simpler, Sampler, Tension & Wavetable.
- ❖ Play or draw some notes to create a melody
- ❖ Add Midi effects before your instrument:
  - Arpeggiator
  - Chord
  - Envelope <https://www.ableton.com/en/manual/live-midi-effect-reference/>
  - Random
  - Scale
- ❖ You can also add audio effects after your instrument !



02

# RECORDING

Make your own audio tracks

# THE IN/OUT SESSION

## Audio From

- ❖ **Ext. In:** to record an external audio signal (instrument, microphone...) in your audio interface
- ❖ **Configure:** Shortcut to Live's audio preferences
- ❖ **Resampling:** Anything playing through your main outputs is routed to the input of your selected track for recording.
- ❖ **[Name of your tracks]:** Similar to resampling, particularly helpful for instruments that take up too much resources.
  - You can then choose to resample Pre FX, Post Fx or Post Mixer.

## Audio To

- ❖ **Ext. Out:** if you need to route your signal to a different audio interface output from the one assigned to your Master (hardware processor, surround speakers...).
- ❖ **Configure:** Shortcut to Live's audio preferences.
- ❖ **Resampling:** Send to another track.



**Monitor** Allows to choose between hearing the track's input or output. Auto is probably the best for you.



03

# MIXING CONCEPTS

Give space to your sound

# USE A REFERENCE TRACK

Assuming you don't have a sonically treated space

- ❖ You can see if your track will sound good on different speakers.
- ❖ Pick up the track that sounds the best for YOU within the genre you are trying to reach.
- ❖ Put it into your DAW and drop the level of your reference track similarly to yours. Observe both spectrums.
- ❖ How wide and panned is your track compared to your reference ?
- ❖ What element dominates each frequency band of the spectrum ? Do not hesitate to filter the master and your reference track ! What are the missing elements ? Choose some samples consequently.
- ❖ What is the general approach to delay and reverb in my reference ?
  - Don't get demotivated if you don't get it completely right in the first few attempts.
  - Learning how to reference tracks while maintaining your own vision is a skill that you will develop over time.

# SAMPLE SELECTION

A great mixdown begins with great sound choices and arrangement decisions.

An amazing sample does not need ridiculously complex processing to make it sound good.  
A relevant selection will make your life easier.

# ORGANIZATION

Be careful with your labels, use colors schemes, add locators...

You could use lighter colors as you go up in the frequency spectrum.

# MINIMAL SOUND TREATMENTS

- ❖ EQ
- ❖ Compression
- ❖ Panning
- ❖ Reverb

All of these must have a purpose, they will add depth, clarity and movement to your song !

# VISUAL MIXING GUIDE

