Inspiring Music Composition with Logic Pro and Propellerhead's Reason

36th College Music Society

Northeast Regional Conference

Boston University

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Music Technology & Production

Student and Course Information

▶ Taught in computer lab: software-based.

▶ Often an elective course for technology credit.

▶ Students are not formally trained in composition.

▶ Musical experience varies – interested in technology.

▶ Course name varies by institution.

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Broad Course Objectives

Balancing Technology and Creative Musicianship

▶ Build awareness of basic meter and form.

▶ Develop basic understanding of sound synthesis.

▶ Guided exercises in music composition – short phrases and loop-based ideas.

▶ Critical listening skills, supplementary examples of electroacoustic pieces to study.

▶ Apply scoring concepts to visual media.

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Logic is a complete DAW.

Useful for teaching MIDI optimization.

Popular for music scoring and sound design.

Robust virtual instruments, effects, loops and sound libraries.

Functional score editor.

Professional-grade: used in industry.
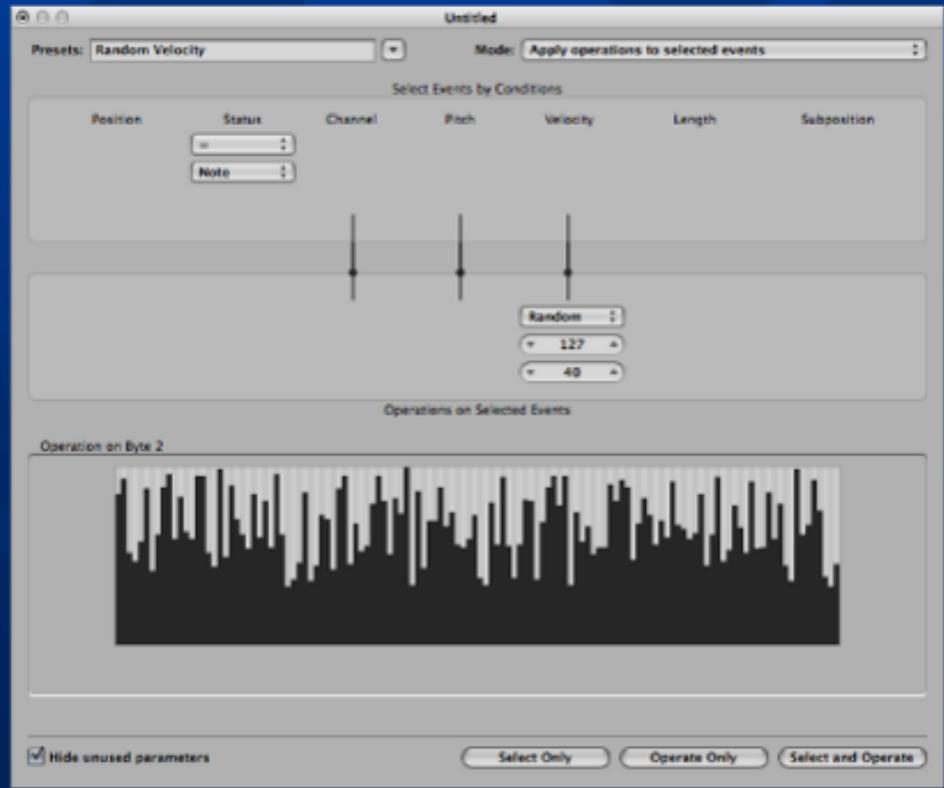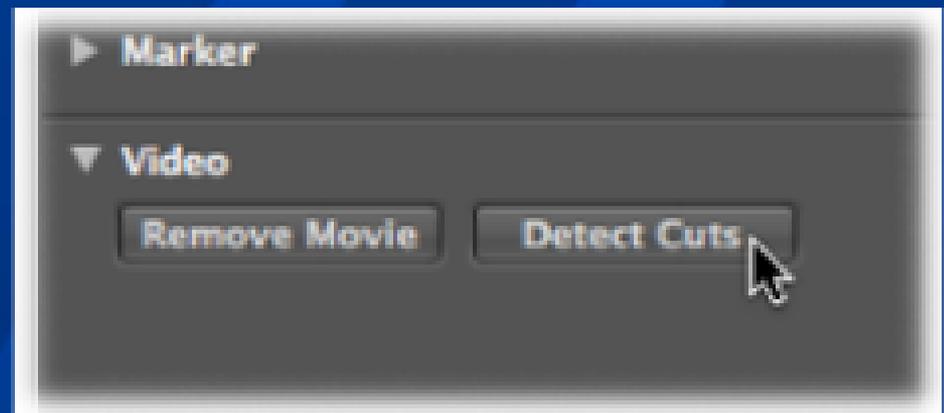
Images courtesy of Apple Logic User Manual

Reason's Virtual Patches

Reason's hardware-based platform teaches students how to route signal from one synthesizer to another.

Students press the "tab" key to flip the interface around and use virtual patch cables to send audio from one source to the next.

This is a great way to introduce analog concepts.
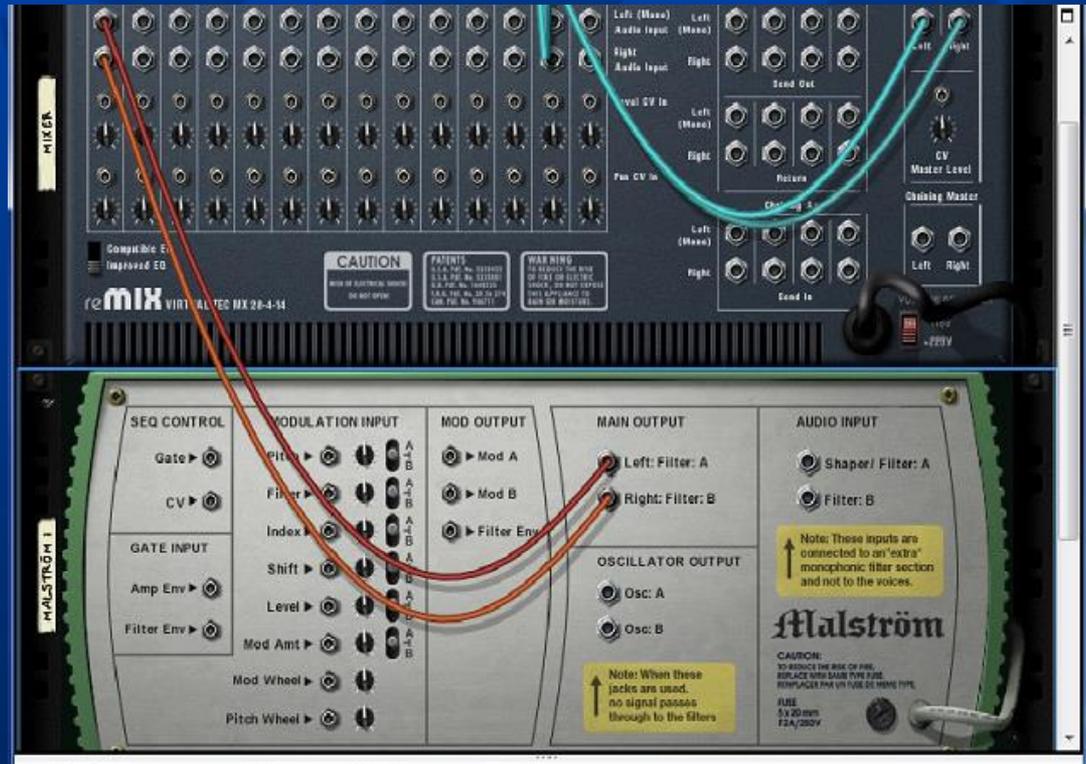
Reason and Synthesis

Malström and Granular Synthesis

- Malström introduces basic granular synthesis.

- Popular sound design technique for video games and visual media.

- Easy to use and experiment with.

Logic and Reason Combined

Working Together

- Logic becomes the main DAW.

- Reason will link to Logic via ReWire.

- Tracks from Reason are routed via auxiliary tracks in Logic.

- Great for teaching modern production concepts.

Image courtesy of Apple Logic User Manual
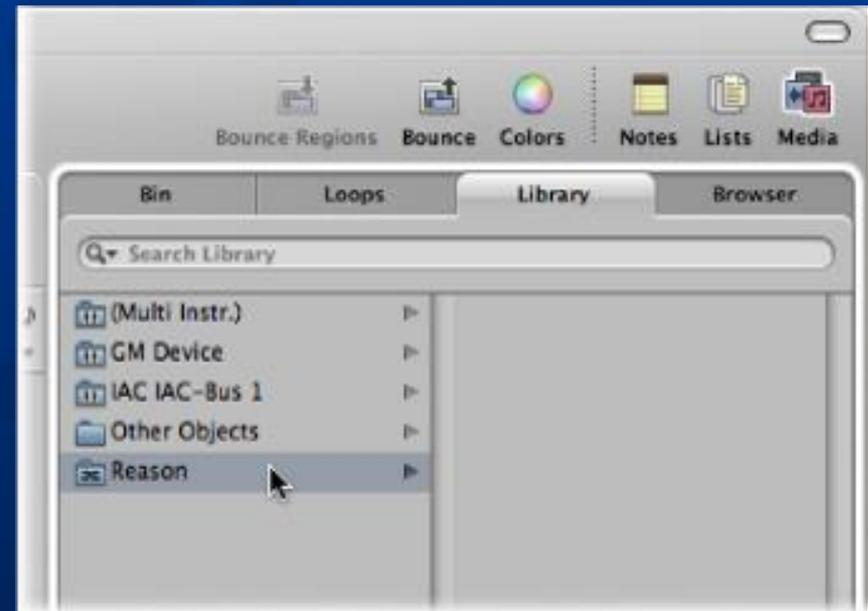
DAW's as an Intermediary for Composition Pedagogy

Kardos' (2012) and Marrington's (2011) Shared Aims:

- Technology bridges musical learning gaps in diverse student populations.

- Flexibility in workflow: Some will start with notation, others with DAW's. Both are viable.

- Reinforce modern production concepts with supplemental listening and reading of a broad range of electroacoustic work.

- Use the technology to build awareness of fundamental music concepts and apply through guided composition.

- Welcoming and nurturing classroom environment that respects student musical interests and tastes.

- Balance sonic and musical composition approaches.

- Encourage experimentation with mixing and use of plug-ins.

- Foster multisensory learning (visual, tactile, auditory) by incorporating visual media.

- Do not be a "technology snob"!

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References

Kardos, L. (2012). How music technology can make sound and music worlds
      accessible to student composers in Further Education colleges.
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      Journal on the Art of Record Production, 5.
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Thank You!

Email: Daniel_Walzer@uml.edu for a copy of the full paper.

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