
writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/11 01:04

Curious how everyone writes tracks with their boxes. I'm struggling to find an efficient way. Prior to picking up the Elektrons, I was strictly working in Nuendo and it was pretty easy to arrange tracks, but harder to come up with ideas. The trade off is that now I can come up with ideas much quicker on the boxes, but find it harder to actually arrange my patterns into tracks in my sequencer. I'm finding it harder working with audio than with midi and piano rolls, strictly for arranging purposes. I'm having to record multiple audio takes from the boxes to change things up, then string them together. It's especially hard when I have, for example a long decay and delay on the 15th step or so on my 4th bar where it will carry over to first bar and create interesting sounds that way.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by GeneralBigBag - 2009/09/11 01:08

Use song mode, it's fantastic. You can do 90% of the writing on the Elektron, and then add the final touches in yr DAW. As an example, check Azure ITT at <http://virb.com/ookpikk> - it's made out of three 2 bar patterns on the MDUW, and multitracked into Reaper.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/11 01:13

that is one section in the manual i skipped initially until i got a good handled on the boxes. i think it's about time to check that section out. How does song mode work if using both a MD and MNM?

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by earsmack - 2009/09/11 01:15

I tend to write first on the MM - lay out all my tracks and then come up with an MD pattern to match. I then play them both live into Ableton Live 8. Then I tweak the arrangement a bit in Ableton. I continue by layering additional instruments as needed. This allows me to get the joy of performance and grid-editing in each session.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by kirlian - 2009/09/11 01:35

man, i still have not used song mode and i've had the MD for well over a year and the MnM for quite a while. I think it's time...

I've run into the arrange problem too. it often just leads to abandoning cool patterns or endless tweakaing without actually capturing a performance or track.

i've heard some great stuff sone with it.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/11 01:51

reading some of song mode, it looks like this is def the best route. question on song mode, does anyone know if during song mode you can hit function+parameter for live tweaking or does that only work in pattern mode?

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Re:writing tracks with Elektron

Posted by earsmack - 2009/09/11 01:58

You can live tweak in song mode.

In some tracks I'm doing with an acoustic guitar player I'm using the MM - have all the tunes programmed in song mode so I don't have to deal with muting and unmuting and changing patterns. However, I can still live tweak any tracks and also enable/disable arps which is nice for doing build-ups and whatnot. Song mode can take some of the work off your hands allowing you to do other things.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektron

Posted by GYS - 2009/09/11 02:22

Song mode is where it's at. Love it to death. I wrote this all from the MD's song mode, sequencing the internal sounds plus external synths:

<http://soundcloud.com/gys/tyrants>

Did the efx and mastering using Logic, but the song structure and all sequencing was 100% from the MD.

I came from using Reason for everything. It was nice to see the "piano roll" and get a big picture, but I've found that song mode in the MD makes me work differently and get more creative with what I've got.

Try writing a few patterns, then cutting them up in song mode to create fills; for instance for a 16 step pattern, go 5-8, 1-4, 9-13, 15-16, 15-16. My track above uses a total of like 4 patterns, but cut up creatively using song mode. ;)

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Re:writing tracks with Elektron

Posted by polyslax - 2009/09/11 02:35

Audio is my clay. I just can't get with writing a full track by sequencer. I may sequence up a few lines on the MnM or drive it with some madness from Numerology, but I render them to audio right away. More often than not though, I just prefer to play the MnM from a keyboard - again this gets moved into the audio realm immediately as I don't like working with midi either. In fact, unless it's the main melodic anchor of a track I often don't even record the midi.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektron

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/11 02:40

cheers, this is great help. song mode homework reading this weekend for sure.

has anyone used song mode with both a MD and MNM simultaneously?

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Re:writing tracks with Elektron

Posted by earsmack - 2009/09/11 03:17

poly - i also stay away from MIDI for everything except sync and the occasional soft-synth triggering. When it comes to sequencing, I will sequence on the Elektron boxes but rarely if ever record MIDI in a computer-based sequencer.

I've played with the MD/MM song mode simultaneously you just program them both and start them at the same time and it's all good. I think of Song Mode as a third hand and part of a brain.

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by tonnu - 2009/09/11 04:09

if you like a workflow of a DAW sequencer where all the patterns are nicely laid out visually for you, then you CAN do that with sequencing mnm pattern

all you gotta do is use PROGRAM CHANGE from your DAW to tell the mnm to change pattern. it's kinda like song mode, except you do the pattern sequencing from your DAW (which seems to me to be your preferred route)

basically, just send a blank midi sequence to the mnm with a program change at the start. for example, in live, you play blank midi clips with different programs in them. so for example the first clip can be program 1 (pattern A1 on sequencer) and the next 4 bars you set the clip to be program 2 (pattern A2 on sequencer).

:)

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Human Koala - 2009/09/11 07:57

i start one or two patterns to give me ambiance and sound direction on monomachine (sometimes it's a big part of trax, sometimes not)

record all the separate trax in wav on Live, add some new mono part and play along with other instruments (vst or ext synth)

monomachine give me the sequenced part, and i record audio from mopho or cz, played by hand or sequenced but the main part of the song is done in Live not in the Monomachine.

i have another way to compose is too make a maximum of sounddesign on the monomachine and the mopho without having a trax in mind and without turn on my computer and use it like material for songs after and a lot of time the sound leads the trax

song mode heuuu try it, use it sometimes to retrig pattern and mix them but often i don't use it

HK

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Tarekith - 2009/09/11 08:57

Another audio only freak here, everything I do i midi is rendered to audio as soon as possible. With the MD, I tend to work in two ways:

- Record everything as audio (stereo track only) live in one pass into my DAW. Doing all the part muting, tweaking, you name it all happens live for the length of the song. Obviously this means you have to balance all the parts of the MD internally, but I have no issue with that.

- Record different mute combinations of my main pattern into my DAW as audio, then use the DAW to arrange and edit these together. For instance I might have a 4 bar pattern with just the percussion, or some percussion and HH's, or all the drums and any samples, etc. Just different combinations I think work well together as a song structure base.

Sometimes I use a combination of the two methods too. I always record the MD at th same volume, so it's easy to go back and record a new pattern into the DAW if I think of a different idea.

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by tIB - 2009/09/11 10:03

Audio only... I do everything in the box in song mode, usually on both machines and just record tape player style into DAW. If Ive made a big mistake Ill edit it out sometimes... though usually it stays.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/11 12:30

song mode is new my best friend! thanks for the tips all!

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by tIB - 2009/09/11 13:11

^ Its a great friend to have... get stuck in you will soon figure it. Function and down/up arrows help.

Tempo fixes can be fun depending on what style youre doing- I often set glitchy bits using short sections repeated at double or triple (or random) clock.

Also dont forget to use the mutes and transpose on the mnm. B)

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/11 14:07

it took me a bit to figure out the how the LN setting works, but I figured it out. i only dove into the MD song mode tonight. i'll try it out with the MNM tomorrow. but this is exactly what i was looking for.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by EmTeX - 2009/09/11 19:09

@ general bigbad: really nice work. especially little rave.keep it up. are you on soundcloud? check soundcloud.com/emtex. greez

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by mistakem - 2009/09/12 11:35

GYS wrote:

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I came from using Reason for everything. It was nice to see the "piano roll" and get a big picture, but I've found that song mode in the MD makes me work differently and get more creative with what I've got.

Try writing a few patterns, then cutting them up in song mode to create fills; for instance for a 16 step pattern, go 5-8, 1-4, 9-13, 15-16, 15-16. My track above uses a total of like 4 patterns, but cut up creatively using song mode. ;)

I love this track :)

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by LIVESEQ - 2009/09/14 21:59

tIB wrote:

Function and down/up arrows help.

Bloody hell. This one I missed in the manual. What an enlightenment. :blush:

good old EU. thanks TIB

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by CircusofMind - 2009/09/15 02:07

I too have had issues smoothly integrating the elektrons into my current songwriting process.

Usually I get a solid loop or two on both boxes and record a few sessions of live tweaking, muting, etc. Then I go back to my familiar DAW environment to sequence other gear, synths, etc.

Song mode is something I always avoided, but this thread has inspired me to crack the manual and work it out. I think breaking a comfort level with a particular workflow can open some creative doors which have been ignored.

I am moving my studio soon will only leave the MD and MnM unpacked during the process. I think this will force me to focus purely on these two machines. I would love to be comfortable with them both in song mode to write a modest track using only these machines.

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by 214 - 2009/09/15 02:23

for those reluctant to or avoiding song mode, try it out. after all the feedback on this thread, i spent some time on song mode and it's another reason I continue to love these machines. does exactly what i was looking for, and it couldn't be any easier to use song mode. it really is very intuitive using this feature.

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by kirlian - 2009/09/15 05:45

CircusofMind wrote:

I think breaking a comfort level with a particular workflow can open some creative doors which have been ignored.
quote]

amen.

i've been trying new workflows all week and it starts out pretty uncomfortable, but leads to much more experimentation which usually leads to something interesting.

still need to try song mode...

Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Roecker - 2009/09/15 06:01

i still have not tried song mode either. i generally build a few patterns into the md + mnm + mpc and start improvising while recording all the separate tracks into Logic 9. i then will cut chop and mix the audio in there and add more synths/drums if need be. i keep logic synced to the mpc all the time. i love this work flow, but i do need to try out song mode in both the md and mnm. take a week or so with each unit and just get lost. ;)

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Sinsonido - 2009/11/06 11:39

Hello everybody, this is my first post! I just got an MD Mk2 and as you can imagine I was programming patterns like crazy today! I need to rest my ears now... :side:

Tarekith wrote:

Another audio only freak here, everything I do i midi is rendered to audio as soon as possible. With the MD, I tend to work in two ways:

- Record everything as audio (stereo track only) live in one pass into my DAW. Doing all the part muting, tweaking, you name it all happens live for the length of the song. Obviously this means you have to balance all the parts of the MD internally, but I have no issue with that.

- Record different mute combinations of my main pattern into my DAW as audio, then use the DAW to arrange and edit these together. For instance I might have a 4 bar pattern with just the percussion, or some percussion and HH's, or all the drums and any samples, etc. Just different combinations I think work well together as a song structure base.

Hi Tarekith! I'm not sure I follow you. Are you saying that you don't really process every MD element in your DAW individually? The basic sequencing part is one of the strengths of the MD, so that can be done without a DAW, but a whole mix? Maybe it is too early for such a statement, but my first impression tells me that I won't be eq'ing, compressing and reverberating anything inside the MD, unless it's a live situation...

Tarekith wrote:

Sometimes I use a combination of the two methods too. I always record the MD at th same volume, so it's easy to go back and record a new pattern into the DAW if I think of a different idea.

Does this mean that you work with extremely low levels inside the MD and your "Master Volume" is at max. all the time? Or do work with MD internal levels that are as loud as possible and attenuate the output somewhere along the way into your DAW? Just wondering how you work...

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by stufflinear - 2010/07/19 19:57

tIB wrote:

Tempo fixes can be fun depending on what style youre doing- I often set glitchy bits using short sections repeated at double or triple (or random) clock.

Hi guys, first post here. great forum.(lots of muffwigglers here btw!:kiss:)
Have my MnM for a week now. >>:woohoo:

Tib; "random clock"?? do you mean "whatever clock" or ...?

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Tarekith - 2010/07/19 23:03

Yes, I do everything in the MD usually, and just record all the parts playing at the same time via the stereo outs in my DAW. Pretty rare I need to do any EQ or other dynamics processing once it's recorded in the DAW, though of course that's always an option.

My master volume is always at max and I turn down the levels of the individual machines to compensate. I wouldn't say it's extremely low level, though if I get heavy handed with the EQ or filters it might look that way. Still nice and loud coming out of the MD though.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Augment - 2010/11/28 12:21

Song mode is awesome. Being able to program in all the mutes, tempos, pattern repeats (as well as how much of the pattern you want it to play) gives incredible flexibility when it comes to writing and arranging. When you need to have a dozen MD and MnM tracks simultaneously mute, it's a bit easier to let Song Mode take care of it than try and be a 4 handed ninja on the Function and Mute buttons!

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by hageir - 2010/11/29 20:44

As much as I love Song Mode (hate/love relationship),
I think I'd love a software editor more,
it gets a little hectic as soon as you've got different lengths on each machine (MD/MnM).

Sometimes the song-pointer-position is completely wrong!

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Leccius - 2010/11/29 21:50

I finally got the time to write ...
I think that this post is hiding behind the quality of a song ... I do not deny that he had the same problem ...
I solved it in 12 months writing the song on my MONOMACHINE ... I have an ESX for the drum that I write on the daw (midi).
The midi = MICROKORG. For the only song in MONOMACHINE compose mode. :)
I have not got to play the song ... but I think the machines should be Elektron sutilizzata Mode song, is a point of considerable strength.
The difference in method, different patterns versus a song is remarkable.
Leaves much more space to your imagination to develop real-time factors that you can not be assessed during a performance with more patterns ...
Well ... Song Mode lifetime. is harder than perhaps ...
But it is easier then execute those projects live.
Greetings

Ps. Grr... google Translate.... grrr

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by bauer - 2010/11/29 22:01

one of the great things about the song mode is that if you switch back to pattern mode, the MD keeps playing a loop of the last step/s of the song, complete with mutes etc.

- perfect for a live set where you want the MD to 'autopilot' for some parts, and then be able to take control and tweak

away before continuing with the song... at least that's how i'm planning to use it once i've got a few songs set up.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by blackshark - 2010/11/29 22:54

Leccius wrote:

Ps. Grr... google Translate.... grrr

I understand only parts of what you are talking about, but your soundcloud music sounds great! :)

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by ik01 - 2013/01/11 17:40

I compose in pattern modes. I prepare patterns on MD and Octatrack, scenes on OT and find right sounds on my other sound sources (Korg Polysix with MIDI, Roland TR 626, Jomox Mbase 01, Vermona Mono Lancet). trying to tune all elements as good as possible but also using all outputs on MD to have more option later in the mix. Also using outboard to process some elements before AD, and when sound is right, i use DAW as multi channel tape recorder and play 15-20 minutes live. Later, when edit I simply remove all parts I do not want to use in a song. Sometimes i record more circles then needed because it is simply not possible to change parameters on Elektrons, analog synths and external effects at the same time.

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by Mr. J - 2013/01/12 21:24

To me, the biggest lack of song mode as compared to DAW-arranging is that in song mode on all Elektrons you need to sequence complete patterns (A1 => A2 => B1, etc.) which each consist of different tracks, in stead of being able to sequence individual track variations over an arrangement visually.

When trying to arrange a complete production-ready song (studio producing, not live) just using song mode on Elektrons, it easily becomes very confusing which pattern holds which track variations on each track.

The biggest advantage of Elektron gear to me is that I can create descent creative patterns in a matter of minutes. But if you listen to (e.g.) Dataline's productions (I think Cenk is the world's "fastest fiddler" on Elektrons), the amount of variations he creates within a song aren't nearly as complex in terms of individual track variations compared to (e.g.) an Avicii or Swedish House Mafia song. Bare in mind subtle effects, subtle percussion alternations. That's hardly possible to achieve on Elektrons using song mode, yet it is possible on a DAW-style arranging process.

Currently Elektron is mainly focusing - at least to my perception - on live usage of Elektron gear. Yet I like to produce finished songs studio style AND use Elektron gear for that purpose because of the creative process. However, proper integration of DAW-style arranging within one and between several Elektron instruments is completely lacking.

To me it would be great to control and arrange individual tracks using a DAW (I use Logic Pro now) on my 27" iMac by "getting inside the Elektrons" from the DAW. That could be achieved on USB-enabled Elektrons (OT, A4) with an "Elektron DAW" (software) and an OS-upgrade on the Elektrons. If such an "Elektron software DAW for Mac" would exist, I'd use it immediately and hook-up 2 OTs and 1 A4 (and maybe some other gear, a Doepfer Dark Energy and a desktop version of an Acces Virus TI, controlled by the OTs and A4) never to use any other software solution anymore.

Please Elektron: close the gap between live and studio production this way!

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Re:writing tracks with Elektrons

Posted by zeropoint - 2013/01/18 01:17

^^ had a machinedrum for a couple of years and the OT arrived last week. i've been thinking exactly this over the past few days. for me it would have to incorporate a mode for "unlinked" controller envelope patterns, such as exist in ableton. the additional unlinked pages could live below the "slots" mode and operate in a similar fashion - i.e you would set the number of unlinked controller pages you require and, if there are more than 4, they would then appear and be editable using the page selector in additional cycles of 4 pages. don't know if the chip/memory would support this (how many parameter locks are possible??) but it would open up amazing opportunities for long evolving pattern variations based on a single 1-4 page pattern....

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