

Title: Chomsky Hash

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1. Project details

“Chomsky Hash” is a piece for improvisation, electric guitar, and live electronics. The piece utilizes traditional guitar effects processing with a variety of unconventional effects for the instrument, along with a surround panner setup for quadrasonic sound. The laptop and electronic elements also act as improvising agents, with a variety of chance operations that allow the computer to make decisions for itself in performance. Processing effects in the guitar rig are controlled to LFO’s at randomized rates to change various parameters on a variety of processing effects in the guitar rig, along with simple machine learning plug-ins that utilize Markov Chain’s to trigger information to a variety of MIDI Instruments. The title is a reference to the famous debate between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault. Famously, Foucault asked to be paid in a large amount of hash for his participation in the debate. Friends would say that on special occasions Foucault would break out “that Chomsky Hash”¹. The relevance of this debate to the piece is the elements I’m working with and transforming. The electric guitar itself has a long history in American popular music and has a lot of specific cultural connotations that could seem traditional even though at times it’s been a counter cultural symbol. With the use of DAW’s such as Ableton Live or Max/MSP, the electric guitar can be further altered and expanded upon. Noam Chomsky is considered a radical and countercultural figure in American politics, but within the debate with Michel Foucault comes off as traditional and conservative compared to Foucault’s Dionysian and hedonistic character traits. The debate itself is an interesting synthesis of the two thinkers' ideas. The main driving factors of the piece are improvisation, timbral transformation, live electronics processing, and spatialization. Since 2019, I’ve been working on bringing together my instrumental background as a guitarist and improviser with my interest in electronic music. This piece is a part of a series of pieces for electric guitar & live electronics.

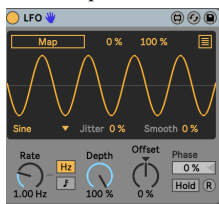


Fig. 1. Max For Live LFO



Fig. 1. Granulator II

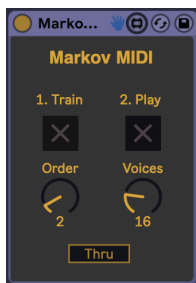


Fig. 1. Markov MIDI.

¹ Wolters, Eugene. “That Time Foucault Got Paid in Hash to Debate Noam Chomsky Critical-Theory.Com,” December 12, 2013, accessed April 17, 2023, <https://www.critical-theory.com/that-time-foucault-got-paid-in-hash-to-debate-noam-chomsky/>.

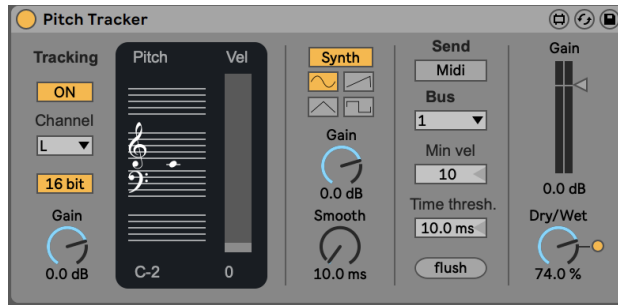


Fig. 4. Max For Live Pitch Tracker

2. Performance Notes

The piece utilizes a number of plug-ins necessary for the interactive section. An array of Max For Live LFO's mapped to an array of effects in the guitar rig (Figure 1), The Granulator II created by Robert Henke (Figure 2), the Markov Chain MIDI Plug-In developed by leisurewear based off of Benjamin Day Smith's ml.star Max Package (Figure 3), and a Max For Live Pitch Tracker (Figure 4). [2].

Table I. Simulation Configuration

4. Media Link(s)

- Video: https://youtu.be/QzXaHD_s77g
- Audio: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cHlzxeNz4w3ZDFmghCI3BuresupOsoBoH/view?usp=share_link

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REFERENCES

- [1] Wolters, Eugene. "That Time Foucault Got Paid in Hash to Debate Noam Chomsky Critical-Theory.Com," December 12, 2013, accessed April 17, 2023, <https://www.critical-theory.com/that-time-foucault-got-paid-in-hash-to-debate-noam-chomsky/>.