

Report

Jack Deacon 10116281

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Sounds

The 3 sounds I picked for my etude were “Break”, “Creak” and “Noises”. I felt they gave access to the full frequency spectrum between the three of them. I decided to use Logic Pro for my composition, as I am very comfortable with this DAW and I have access to it on my laptop, as well as in college.

Processes

The approach I took to this composition was to first and foremost create a bunch of sounds and effects, and *then* to start composing my etude using these sounds.

I explored the sounds at regular speed by starting playback from different points in the sound-file. I picked up on points in the sound that were interesting to my ears, and then I isolated them in Logic but cutting up the clip. I then processed each of these smaller clips in turn, to create effects to compose with. This was my approach for each sound.

I started with “*Break*”.

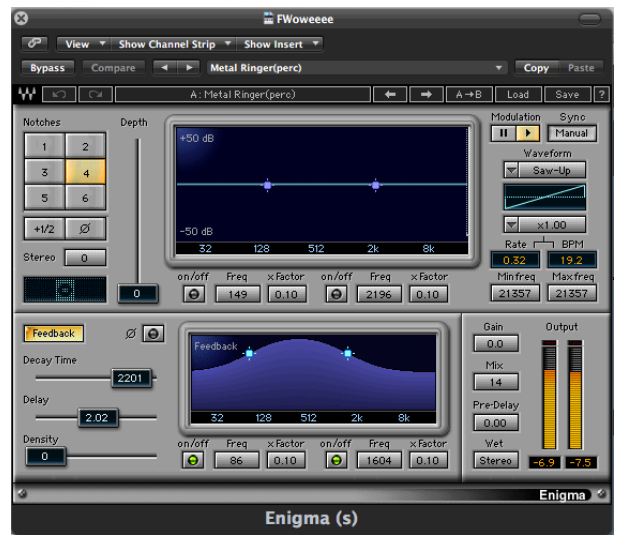
Ffff-woweee:

The first sound I came up with was a sound I named phonetically. I took two very small sections from Break; one was a small scraping sound and the second was a small attack. I then crossfaded them together (pictured) so that they ran into each other creating a kind of reversed attack effect.



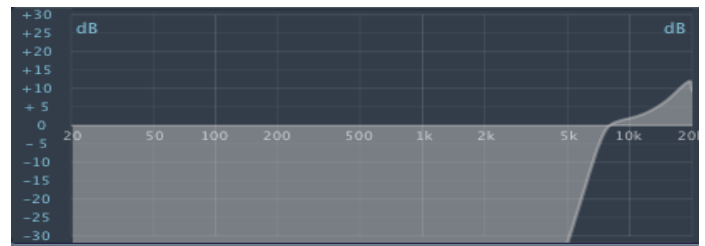
I then ran this through a plug-in that I have called Waves Enigma (pictured below). It is a plug-in that Waves designed by basically putting together “a complex phasor/flanger with a reverb/feedback network with some complex filtering”. (That is a quote out the user manual. But they also start off the manual with “How can you have a guide to a mystery?”) They don’t even know everything it can do, but it can create some really bizarre and wonderful sounds. There are some modulation settings, but I turned these off so as not to involve any other synthesized sounds.

I tried different presets in the plug-in and listened to them. I really liked the sound that the Metal Ringer(perc) preset gave. It gave a kind of pitched note sound. I then time-stretched this output, and pitch-shifted the result to give the ringing sound used for the melodies in my etude.



Sparkle:

I used the ending of Break where the pieces of the glass are bouncing around, and passed it through Enigma. I then put it through a high-pass filter (pictured), to get a sparkle sound, with no low-end rumble, almost like a cymbal.



Beeps and Bloops:

Using the beginning attack of Break, I put it through Logic's "De-noiser" plug-in, and set the threshold quite high. This just returned the higher-velocity, higher-frequency transients. I then put it through Bit-Crusher (pictured), and brought it down to 8-bit. This gave me some very 8-bit-music-esque beep and bloops. I then time stretched the result and spliced it up into 3 separate parts, giving me 3 different sounding beeps/bloops.



I then moved on to "Creak".

Kick

Using the very very first attack of Creak, I ran it through an EQ, boosting up the low frequencies to give more punch and low-end. I then boosted the gain.

Bass Bloop

This is one of my favourite sounds, simply because it was so easy to achieve. I put the ending 3rd of the un-stretched Creak sound though a Denoiser (pictured), and this sound came out. When using it to compose with, I chopped it up and reversed it, but by-and-by there was very little done to achieve this sound.



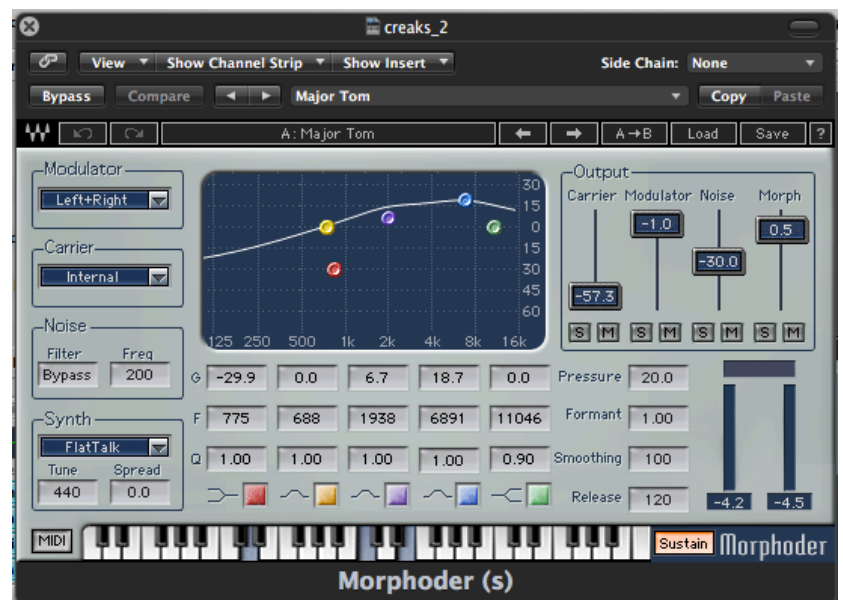
Doppler Bass Effect

This low, panning, heartbeat-like sound was made using most of the Creak sound. I first put it through a Doubler to fill out the sound. I then used a plug-in called Waves Lo-Air. This is used to create LFE content from a source by generating “sub-harmonic content lowering and filtering designated audio content by one octave” (...from the user manual). This gave me a great low end “whhoof”. I then used Waves Doppler plug-in (pictured) to pan the sound from left to right in an interesting way. I also reversed the panning direction and saved the resulting sounds with both pan directions.



Tremolo Chords

These were made using the time-stretched section of Creaks. I used two plug-ins for this. The first was Logic's Tremolo. This was to make the chord more rhythmic and dynamic when I inserted the next plugin, Waves Morphoder. (pictured). This works very like a Vocoder, except it also has a built-in EQ. It is a very powerful plug-in. I used it to generate chords



from the Creak sound. Pictured are the settings for the 4th chord in the progression. (D7sus2...I think!)

I boosted the high-mid frequencies for the sound to cut through the mix more, as the creak sound as it was, was very muddy and full of low end.

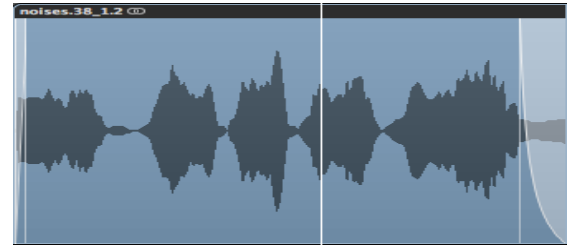
Last but not least, “Noises”.

Weird Spectral Pitch Shift

This long sustaining build up was done using a very time-stretched portion from the end of Noises. I put it firstly through a variable pitch-shifter called Waves SoundShifter. I automated this so that it went from +200 cents to -200 cents over the duration of the clip. I then put it through Enigma TWICE, just to try and make the weirdest sounding clip I could. The result was a sound where the pitch was perceived to be going up and down at the same time, while still building in dynamic. This was used for build ups in all three movements.

Mouse Talk

Looking at the waveform of Noises, I spotted a tiny section that had 5 little transients that looked very like a sine tone. I isolated it, and time-stretched it out (pictured), and these weird noises, like a robotic mouse squeaking, came out. I spliced up the 5 transients and I got my sounds.



Scratches

These are simply sections of “Noises” that I isolated during my initial splicing of the sound. No other processing done!

Static Crescendo

A near silent section of “Noises”, gained up, reversed and with the bass frequencies boosted. Used along side the Spectral Pitch Shift for many of the build-ups.

Overall Musical Effect

My idea from the start was to create a piece that sounds like an idea, or the coming together of an idea.

First comes moment of inspiration which can be very sudden, or slow and steady. Then there are the building blocks of the idea, which I represented using different motifs and elements within my movements. Each part of the idea is separate, having different timings and beat placement at first, but at towards the end everything comes together in harmony and in-sync. The ending of each movement represents the idea coming together in someone’s head, and becoming clear.

The piece is structured into the Main Theme (1), the Fast Variation (2) and the Slow Variation (3). The fast movement is an idea where that moment of inspiration strikes at the very start and the idea comes together quickly, with lots of different elements to it. The slower movement is an idea that the person may be struggling to realize, and it all comes together very forcibly, hectically and slowly, with the person having to even step back once or twice and start again, not really knowing where they are going to go next. But in the end, an idea is formed, however good or bad it may be.