

## In Live 3, a loop is what you make of it!

By Dave Hill Jr.

Have you ever been excited by a great sounding loop? Of course you have. You feel compelled to move your feet, nod your head and maybe even shake your lower parts. But after awhile, a loop's innate repetitiveness can lead to serious boredom, disinterest, or even induce sleep. Here to the rescue, Live 3's clip animation gives you the power to add variety to stale loops, create altogether new sounds from old piles of audio, and re-synthesize your samples. Last month we talked about how to use Live 3's volume envelopes inside a clip to chop up a quickly repeating drum sample. We discussed ways to program complicated percussion rhythms from a single and tiny sound. This month we are going to go the other way, to explore how Live 3 enables you to resurrect a stale loop, create variety in a static pattern and/or otherwise add spice to sounds that seem to have a case of the doldrums.

### Get Your Loop On

First we will need a blank slate with a single monotonous loop that we can creatively destroy. Launch Live (if you haven't already done so), and press Ctrl (Cmd) + N to open a new file. Next load the loop called "piano.wav" from Live's content folder, which is likely located in your Program Files/Ableton/Live 3.0/Content/Sounds or on Applications/ Live 3.0 OS X (on a Mac in OS X). Set your project tempo to 120 and then play the loop. You will hear two repeating piano chords and a single passing tone before the first chord. Note that the original BPM of the loop is 121, and that when played at 120, you will hear a slight warble to the sound. This is the sound of Live's warp engine working. Since this loop is primarily a tonal loop (as opposed to percussion), let's change the Warp mode to "Tones" by double-clicking on the clip to open clip view and then selecting Tones from the drop down menu as shown in Fig.1. You will immediately notice that the sample now plays much more smoothly (without the sonic ripples).

Fig.1



After hearing the piano chord a few times, you may begin to feel a little bored. Let's add some excitement by automating a few of Live's basic clip settings. First, let's create a basic chord progression so that there is some harmonic movement to the loop. To do this click on the Transpose button in the Clip Envelope Editor and then click once on

the button that says, "Linked"-this is called the Link/Unlink Envelope button by the way and will now toggle to read, "Unlinked." You can now set the length of your Transpose envelope to be whatever you like. In the Length box, just to the right of the Unlinked button, type "8" so that your screen looks like Fig.2.

Fig.2

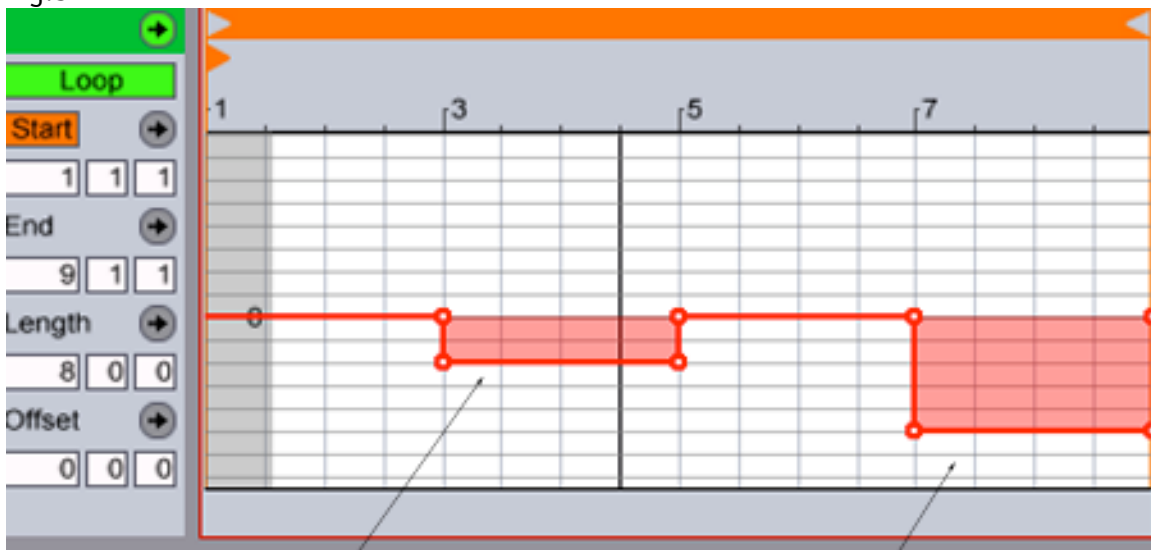
### Make sure your transpose envelope is Unlinked



type "8" bars as the length

Now we'll draw in the chord progression by activating the draw tool -Ctrl (Cmnd) + B- and then executing the following line: -2 semitones in measures 3 and 4, and -5 semitones in measures 7 and 8 as you see in Fig.3.

Fig.3



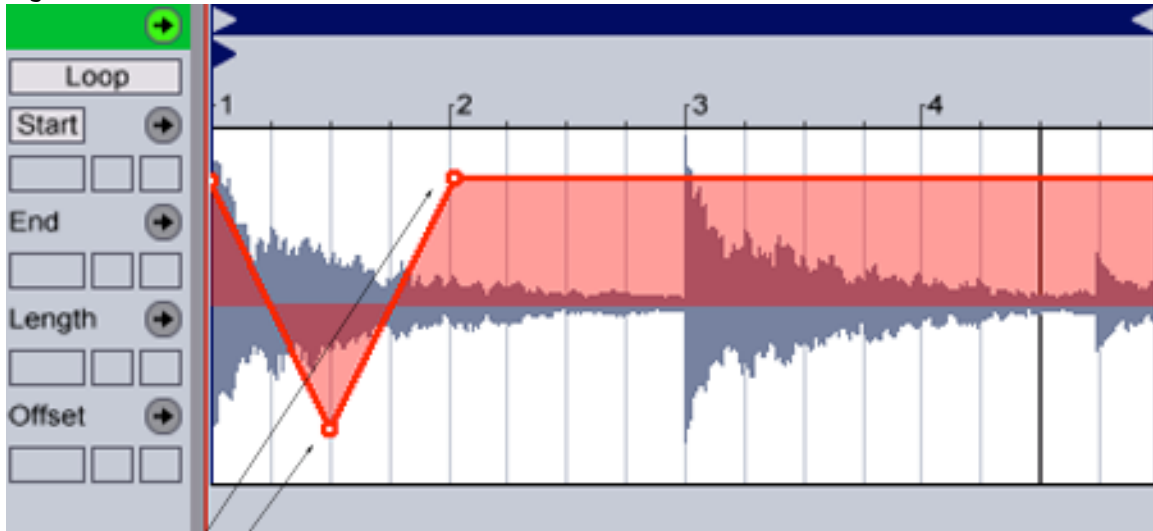
-2 semitones

-5 semitones

You will now hear a somber but much more interesting harmonic progression. Note the original sample is still in tact, and all of your changes are instant. Very cool! Let's now

take is a bit further by creating a recurring left to right panning envelope, to simulate a Leslie speaker flutter. To do this, click on Pan in the Clip Envelope Editor and toggle the draw tool off by using the same keyboard shortcut Ctrl (Cmnd) + B. Now try to approximate my envelope in Fig.4 by creating three specific breakpoints and swinging them left and right like so.

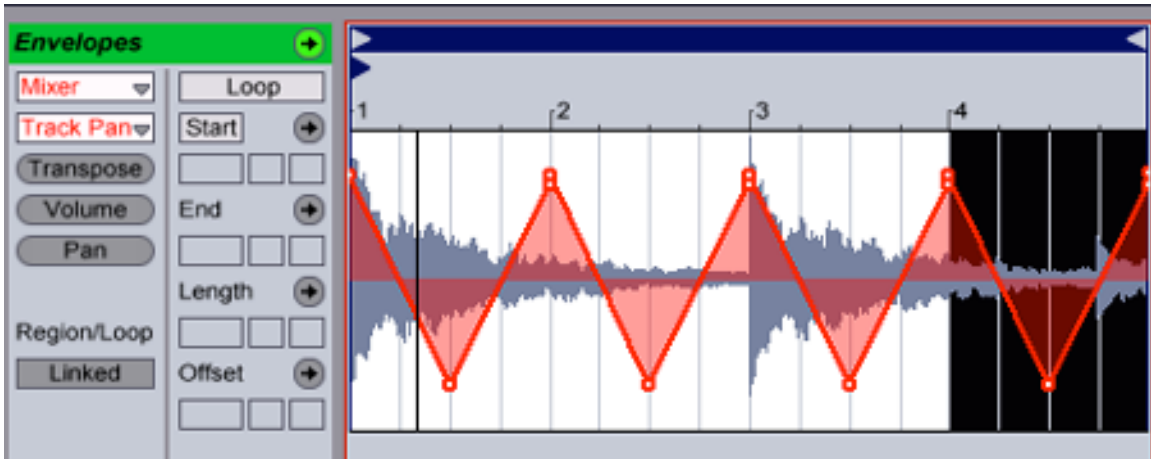
Fig.4



create breakpoints and drag them up and down (left and right).

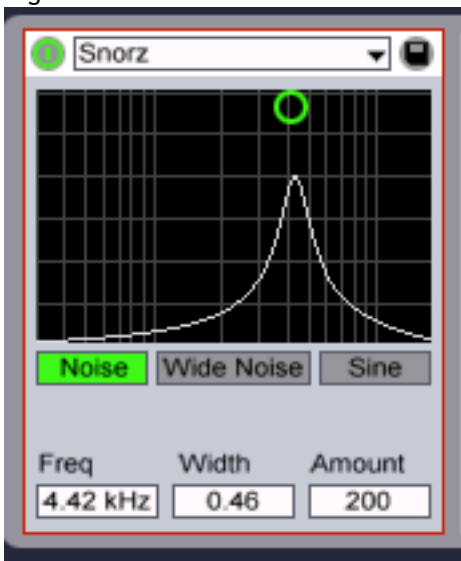
Next, duplicate your efforts by mouse-clicking on your new envelope and then using the extremely useful Live duplication command, Ctrl (Cmnd) + D. Do this three more times until your pattern looks like mine in Fig.5. Now listen to your piano with some headphones on to really hear the motion. If you like, go ahead and add the drum loop called, "electro" on another track just to give you some perspective.

Fig.5



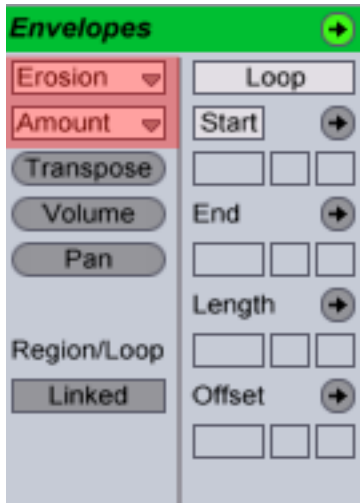
For even more fun, add an Erosion effect to the track with the piano loop on it. To do this, click on effects and double click on Erosion. It will now appear in the bottom portion of your screen. Select the preset entitled, "Snorz" –your effect's shape should look like mine in Fig.6.

Fig.6



Now let's automate the Erosion's "Amount" parameter to give the sample a rhythmic distortion pattern. To do this, select "Erosion" in your Device Chooser and "Amount" in your Modified Control Chooser as shown in the red box portion of Fig.7.

Fig.7



Using the pencil tool again and then zoom in on the loop to see the first full beat (to grid marker 1.2). Then chop up an alternating rhythmical pattern similar to mine in Fig.8. You can just do the first beat and then duplicate the envelope (as we did above) to save time. Of course my idea is just a guide, so be as imaginative as you can. When you play your sample, you will hear the synthesized “Snorz” follow your envelope. Remember we started with a single piano sample! One hint for drawing dynamic envelopes is to gradually increase and decrease the volume of each drawn column. Also pay special attention to how far you zoom in to do your cutting. The closer you cut the faster and shorter your rhythmical pattern. For more ideas within this same context, try automating other effects parameters such as the wet/dry control on Live’s delays or chorus effects, or your VST effect controls. Also, don’t forget to check out Live’s new replace feature (my personal favorite trick). To hear this, simply drag another sample to our newly modified clip’s clip view and listen. The new sample will assume the old sample’s parameters. If you read last month’s tips and tricks, you may have already thought to do this on your own. Congratulations!

Fig.8

