Sound piece "Choaic transformation"

By Cora Zhang

Artistic statement

As a sound art artist, my journey has been full of unstable exploration and self-discovery. Coming from a background in fine arts, I found myself drawn to the ephemeral and intangible nature of sound, captivated by its ability to evoke emotions and create immersive experiences but at the same time find myself lost and confused about this new area that I'm exploring all the time which makes me question if this is the right place for me.

My first year in college marked a significant transition, not only in my artistic pursuits but also in my personal life. Leaving behind the familiar and venturing into a new country, I found myself navigating a world of unfamiliar sights, sounds, and cultures. This disorienting experience became the catalyst for my artistic expression, as I sought to translate the complexities of displacement and adaptation into sonic landscapes.

Through my sound art, I aimed to capture the essence of liminal spaces, those in-between moments where identities blur and boundaries become fluid. The juxtaposition of familiar and foreign sounds became a metaphor for my own internal struggles, as I grappled with the notion of belonging and the search for a sense of identity .

Embracing field recordings, found sounds, and experimental techniques, I crafted compositions that reflected the dissonance and harmony of my experiences. Each session represents a tapestry woven from the threads of memory, culture, and emotion, inviting the listener to embark on a journey through the depths of my personal narrative.

Despite the challenges and uncertainties that accompanied this transformative year, my commitment to sound art deepened. It became a means of self-expression, a way to make sense of the world around me, and ultimately, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of change.

# Inspiration from:

Pierre Henry work genre "Psyche Rock"

Pierre Henry's "Messe pour le temps présent" (1967) is a groundbreaking work that fused musique concrète techniques with psychedelic rock aesthetics. It is considered a landmark in the genre of "psyché rock" or psychedelic music.

Henry manipulated recorded sounds from various sources, including vocal chants, industrial noise, and natural elements, using tape loops and studio techniques. These transformed concrete sounds were combined with live rock instrumentation like electric guitars, drums, and bass, creating a surreal and immersive sonic experience.

Inspired by the Catholic Mass structure, the album featured movements like "Introit" and "Offertoire," but subverted them with avant-garde experimentation and psychedelic sensibilities. It challenged boundaries between musique concrète, rock music, and avant-garde composition, showcasing Henry's mastery of sound manipulation.

"Messe pour le temps présent" was a pioneering work that influenced later experimental and psychedelic rock artists, as well as the development of electronic and ambient music genres, inspiring composers and musicians to push the boundaries of sonic exploration.

Realisation and process of work

I also alternated fade in and fade out to smoothen out the sharpness of the start and end
toothbrush the pattern created is the twice as fast as the base pattern on the
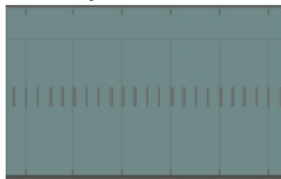
Lastly i also used the sharp clashing noise of the cutlery for the offbeats of the piece
alternating the filter provides a lower muffled clashing noise
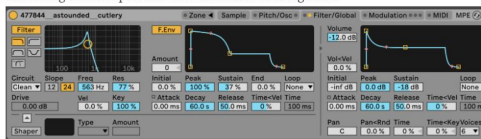
I then ended the experiment by adding a melody on the flute

Throughout this experiment I have learnt that any sound could be manipulated into an
instrument with a simplier and sampler

For this experiment in order for me to further understand the effects of the analog, wavetable
and operator, I am going to record one sound and alternate the sound into a piece that has a
bass melody, rhythmic beats, melody and supporting harmony. First i created a drum kick with
alternating the analog with the combination of fil1 and noise

Then I created a bass melody with alternating the envelop and frequency

And but alternating the wavetable by changing the sustain and release i created a smooth and
soft supporting harmony

Here is the final product of a short phrase for my experiment (add audio file)


Through this experiment I've concluded that I could use the wavetable to smoothen out or
sharpen part of my piece that i don't like and for analog I could use it effectively to make slight
changes to recorded sounds that i would like to make changes om.

First I decided on the sound object that I am going to use, which are clashing cutlery sounds, sound of me brushing my teeth as well as a basketball sound, first i manipulated the sound of the tooth brush with a simpler and and created a looped beat as the bass rhythm of the experiment
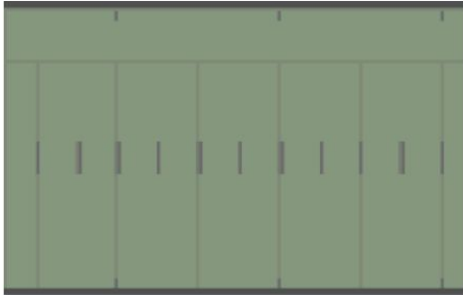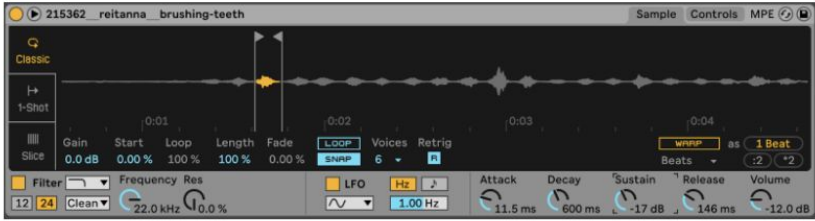
After that using the 1-shot mode i created a percussive sound with the use of the sound of a bouncing basketball by first trimming the sound then decreasing the transparency
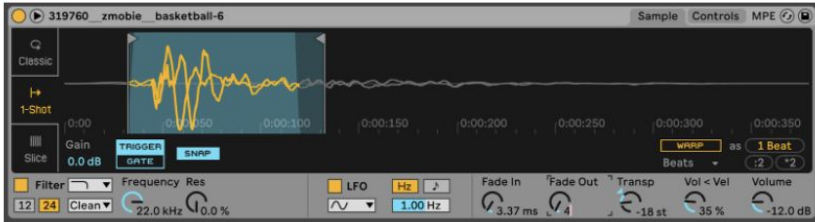
While experimenting with the drift, I found that this is a perfect tool for me to use as vibrating sound effect as alternating the oscillator mix for the second oscillator creates a perfect sound of vibration, I also found that alternating the noise oscillator mix is the perfect tool for creating the sound of disrupted radio as well as waves which could be very useful for my final product

After experimenting with the collusion feature, I have concluded that as the dot is under the object it resonates the most

Since i have had a general idea of the theme i want for my final project, I then looked for combinations that i would use that that would be useful for me to create a creepy theme and this is the perfect combination for me

(note that tune can be manipulated from -6 to +7)

Evaluation

During this experimentation, I first started off by reviewing the reading materials and initially found it quite confusing. After some research and listening to sample pieces, the piece that I was most interested in was the musical concrete of Pierre Henry titled "Psyche Rock." The introduction of the piece manipulates a combination of a clock chime, wind background with the flute playing the melody, creating a haunted and creepy theme with the use of dissonance intervals as well as a slow tempo on the flute. Soon I was able to grasp an idea of how sound objects and harmonies could be combined together, but I failed to come up with my own interpretation or idea.

I first recorded the clash of cutleries and the rolling sound of pottery mugs on a wooden surface. My initial idea was to somehow mimic the creepy and haunted theme, but then after some experimenting, I realized that the theme is more reliant on the instrumental melody than the sound effects. I would have to first create my melody, then look for suitable sounds, and this became my approach for my second experiment.

To help me further understand and improve the effectiveness of my approach, I then listened to the audio materials provided. The one that I found most interesting was the podcast of "Holly Herndon on Self-Sampling and Emotions Through Music | Red Bull Music Academy." From her podcast, I realized that my piece does not have to include instrumental harmonies of any kind and could manipulate the theme and emotion only based on the sampled sounds. As she said, "I can take that signal and smoothen it, make it very beautiful, make it sound like a violin, or map it to an instrument or do anything with it." This got me thinking about the final idea for my piece, which is to compose something based only on recorded sounds, manipulating them into melodies.