Make an EP in 30 Days
Ableton Course
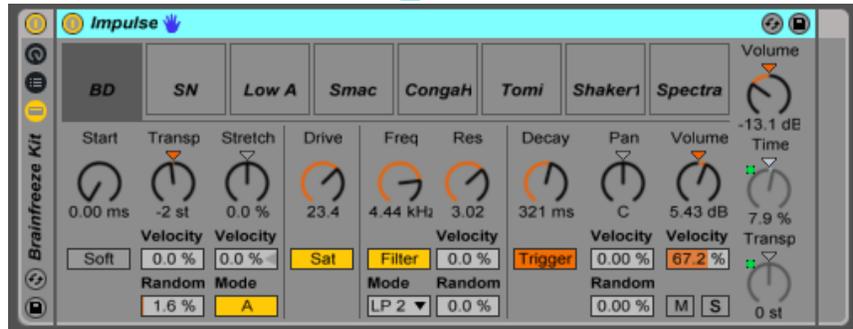
Day 4

Ableton's Instruments & Effects

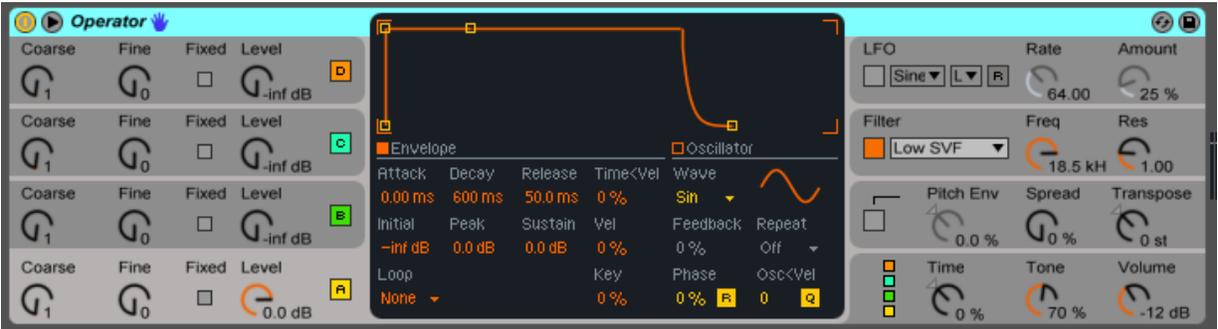# Ableton Instruments

Drum Instruments

Impulse

Simple but full featured drum instrument
8 slots for sounds

Drum Rack

An intuitive, yet deep drum instrument
128 slots for drum sounds, samples or synths
Each Drum slot can hold up to 128 layers as well!

Synths
Operator

An incredibly versatile FM synth
Great for all kinds of essential sounds

Analog

Very good reproduction of an analog synth
Makes great basses, pads, strings, leads etc..

Electric

Electric piano & organ sound

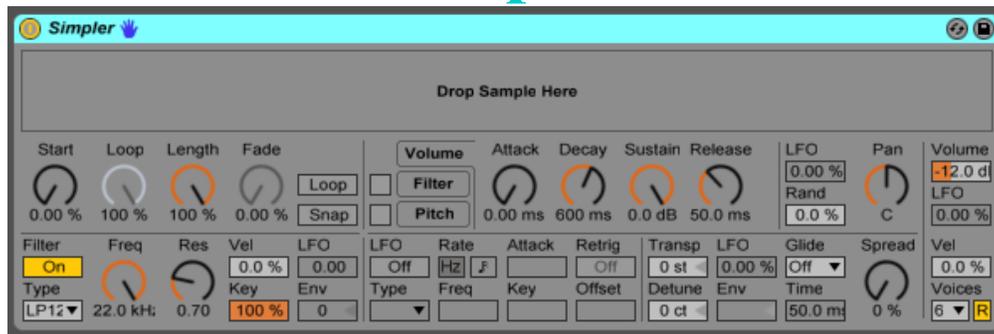# Collision

Great for creating percussion & drum tones

Tension

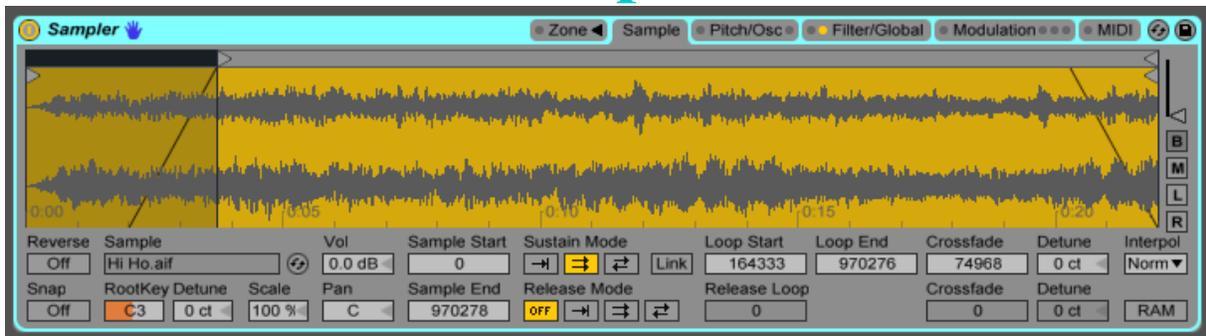

Great for guitar sounds, drones & soundscapes

Samplers

Simpler

A quick & simple sampler instrument

Sampler

This is an incredibly powerful Sampler much more in depth that Simpler endless possibilities!

Ableton Effects

Spectrum

Great way to see your frequency spectrum visually, although EQ8 makes this mostly unnecessary

Utility

Deceptively simple tool that will certainly become a *must have* in all your music production. Great for quick volume changes, stereo widening, mono & solving phase issues.
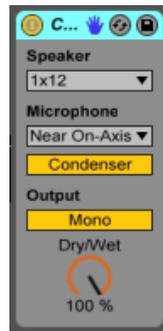
Speakers & Distortions

Amp

Like running your sounds through a guitar amp

Cabinet

Like running your sounds through a speaker & back through a microphone.

Dynamic Tube

Mimics the sound of a Tube amp & offers several types of tube saturation and distortion
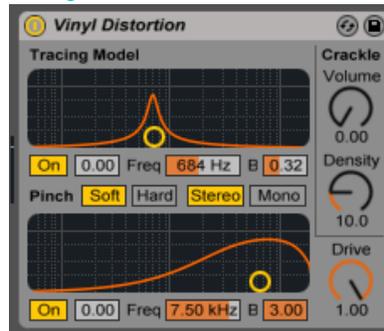
Overdrive

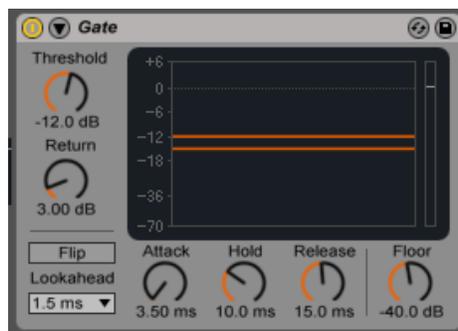**Modeled after guitar distortion pedals**

Saturator

Adds dirt, grit or harmonic presence. Modeled after tape saturation but with several more features.

Vinyl Distortion

Mimics the noise of vinyl. You are able to add crackle & density. Great for adding high frequency content.

Gate

A great tool for removing noise of guitar or vocal tracks. Also good for controlling reverb or delay effects.

Auto Filter

An essential tool in electronic music production. Similar to EQ in it's ability to enhance a certain frequency band as it sweeps through. A very versatile effect you can't do without.
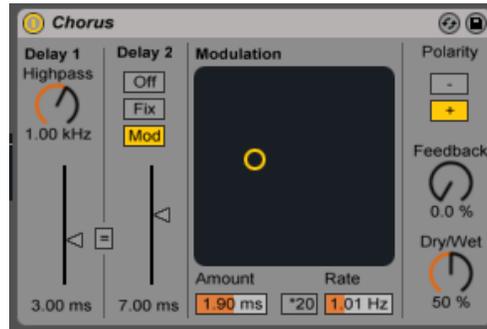
Auto Pan

A self explanatory & very useful effect with several unexpected tricks up its sleeve.

Modulation Effects

All these effects are created by adding a delayed sound to the original sound creating a unique type of thickening/sweeping effect.

Chorus

Great for thickening sounds or strengthening vocals

Flanger

A very distinct sweeping sound. Bands like The Cure used it on guitar to great effect. Great on pad sounds too.
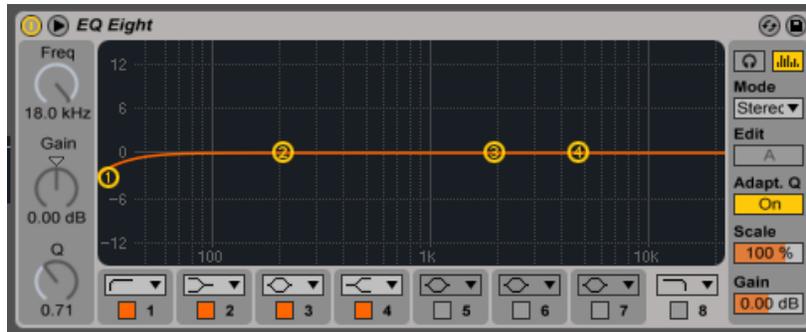
Phaser

Similar to a flanger in that they both create a swooshing sound & work best on frequency rich sounds. Experiment with both & you'll hear the difference

EQ's

An absolutely essential effect that offers many ways to increase or decrease the level on certain frequencies, thus molding each sound to work within a song.
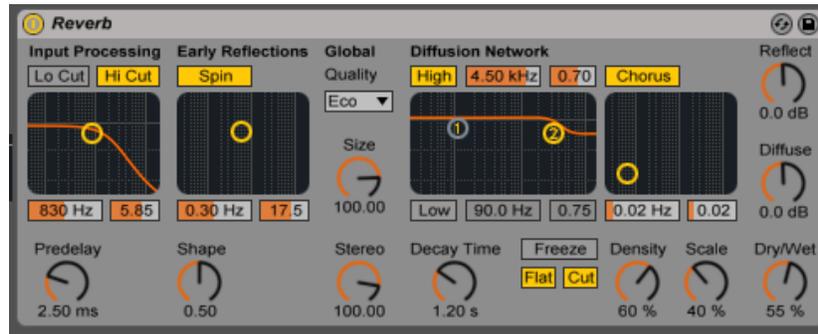
EQ8

This will be your "go to" EQ in Ableton. Very versatile & great sound.

EQ3

The EQ3 is modeled after EQ's on a DJ mixer. Typically used when DJing in Ableton.

Reverb

**Another must have effect adding space and dimension to the elements of your mix. This will give your songs depth.
You can't live without it.**

Compressor/Limiter

Compressor

I use this compressor enhance transients (the snap or click at the beginning of a sound), hardening sounds or for sidechaining.
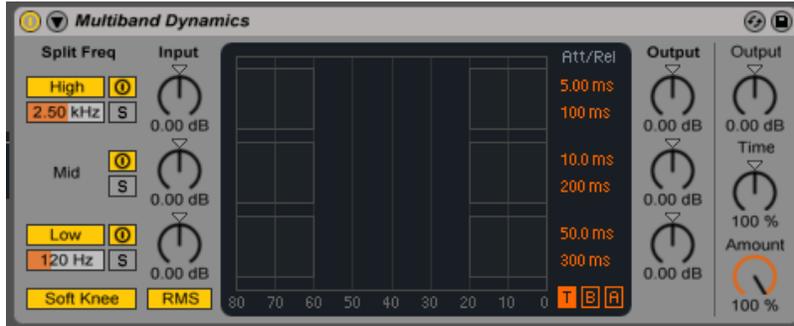
Glue Compressor

I really like using this on anything needing more punch or to enhance bass or kick. It honestly sounds great on about anything.

Limiter

A simple tool that keeps your volume from clipping or going in the red.
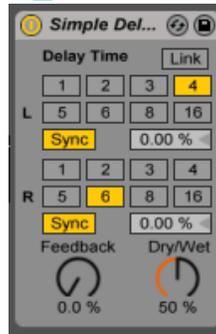
Multiband Dynamics

Like the compressor effect but separated in 3 frequency bands. This way you can compress the low, mids and high frequencies differently.
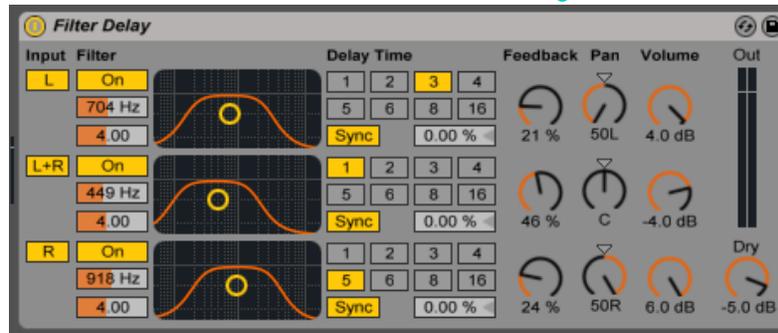
Delay effects

Simple Delay

A delay offering separate delay times for the left and right side. It can sync to tempo or by milliseconds. Also has a cool repitch feature
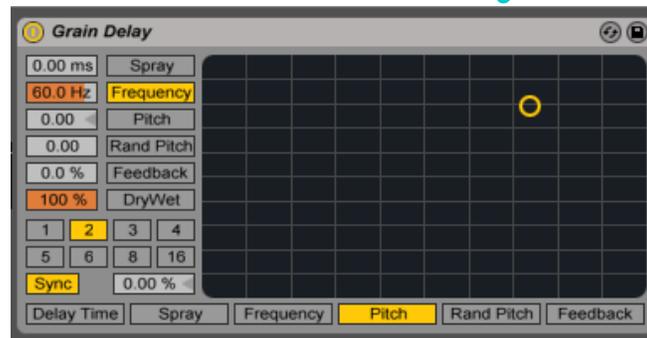
Ping Pong Delay

A delay that bounces back & forth from left to right. You can also choose which frequency the delay effects.

Filter Delay

3 panned delays in 1 each having it's own frequency, delay time, feedback & volume.
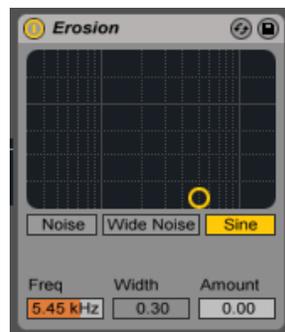
Grain Delay

A very cool sound design effect. It samples tiny particles(grains) of your sound & delays those particles in different ways. It also effect pitch, which it very cool. Must experiment with it to get it.

Frequency Shifter

Great for pitching drums or for interesting shifting of a sounds frequency.

Erosion

I use this effect when I need to add "dirt" to a certain frequency. Great for adding high frequencies to a dull sound.

Redux

Degrading a sound or reducing it's bit rate adds harmonic noise. Good for adding sound grit or for creating video game sounds.
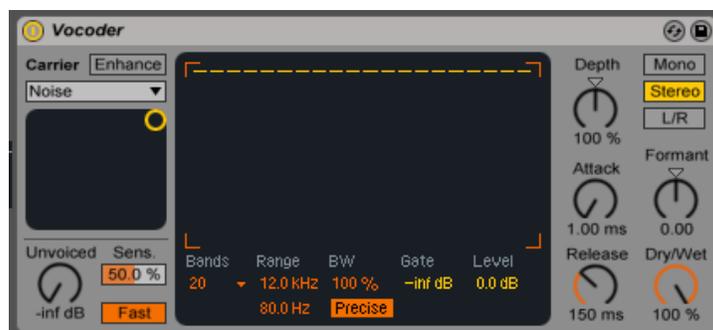
Corpus

A unique and powerful effect. It models characteristics of several acoustic objects. This allow you to run your original sound through these characteristics. I use it often to enhance kicks.

Resonators

A very cool way to create harmonic parts out of percussive sounds, but can work on almost anything. A cool techno sounding device.
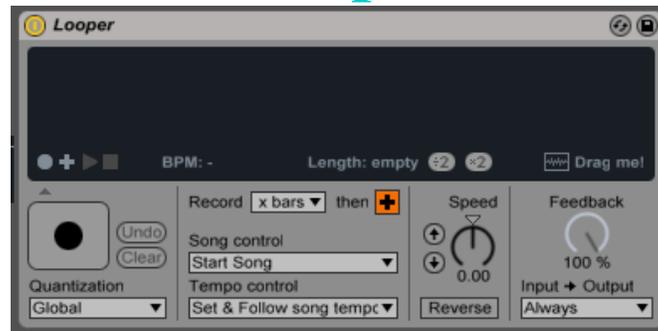
Vocoder

Makes vocals sound robotic. Think Daft Punk. Cool on drums too!

Looping/Beat Shuffle Effects

Looper

Although more often used in live performance. Looper is a pretty incredible looping & layering effect. Surprising how quickly you can create cool soundscapes.

Beat Repeat

This is great for glitching out drums for random effects or manipulating just about anything rhythmically.

Midi Effects

Where audio effects work on both audio and midi tracks. Midi effects only work on midi parts. You'll find several of these useful
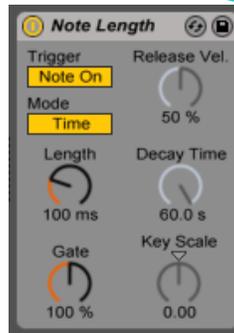
Arpeggiator

Hold down a chord or collection of notes and the arpeggiator will play those notes 1 at a time in many unique and interesting ways. Used a lot of trance music but not limited to an 1 style.

Chord

Play 1 note and this tool will turn it into a chord. You can combine up to 6 notes. Works great with the Scale effect I will explain shortly.
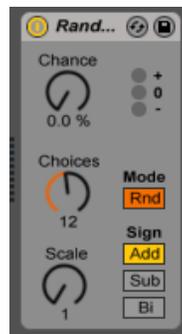
Note Length

If you have a sequence of midi notes, this can alternate the length of the notes. Automating the length can create some great rhythmic results.
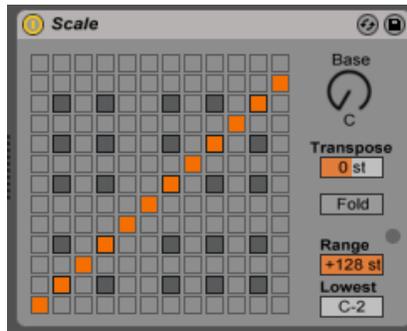
Pitch

Sometimes you want to quickly want to transpose the midi part being played on a synth. This is so much faster than manipulating midi notes.
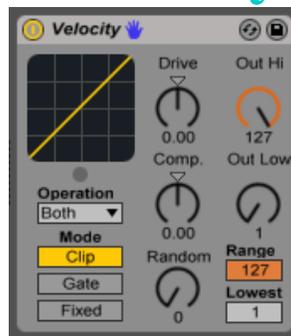
Random

Having trouble coming up with melodies or just want to add something random with a midi instrument? This will randomly change the incoming notes & can be set up to stay in key.

Scale

**A very cool and useful tool for non-musicians. This will correct any note you play to fit into a scale that you choose.
Never hit a bad note again!**

Velocity

This effect can change the velocity (volume) of an incoming sound. This can be done randomly or in a more strict controlled way.

Max for Live

Lfo

A simple yet highly useful effect to modulate just about any parameter. I like to use it on decay times on certain sounds so they don't sound static throughout the song. It has endless uses though.

Convolution Reverb

An extremely cool reverb effect that uses reverbs & samples from tons of different environments that you can apply on any instrument you like.

The difference between this and Ableton's Reverb effect is that regular reverb is a process directly effected by it's input. Convolution reverb is essentially blending a sample as a reverb for the original sound. Any sound can be used, not just reverbs. This can create incredibly unique results.

Envelope Follower

This allows you to use the volume of an instrument to control any other knob in Ableton. You can map it to filter frequency, reverb decay, delay level or anything you can think of. Super cool!

Homework

1. Make a list of which effects you think are the most important for your style of music & pick the ones that aren't necessary. Less choices means faster workflow