Alan Moody

Section 1

April 11, 2016

Electronic Music Production

Writing, playing, mixing, and mastering electronic music is a process that takes a lot of time and effort. The rules and ideas behind it all are precise, well thought out, and are put in place for the end goal of producing a product that is enjoyable. This kind of production is much different than writing traditional music, and the majority of it requires more technical knowledge than knowledge of music theory and musical notation. Just like this process of producing an electronic dance track, the process of using a programming language to develop a product has the same sort of upbringing and purpose. Each is a combination of symbols that together represent something larger. The order of things matters, and the predetermined conventions and rules exist to produce a functional end product.

Electronic music is built around digitally synthesized sound. The options for adding effects, and modulating sound are endless. For example, filters and oscillators can be placed over an existing sound to create a new sound, and the order of these filters matters quite a bit in the long run. In the same way, programming languages are made up of symbols that give instructions. These symbols are words or characters that define something deeper, whether that be a memory location, a pointer to a memory location, an object, a list of styling properties, etc… There are also various types of loops that will direct the computer in different directions, depending on how the program is designed. In both of these cases, it is clear that there is much more going on behind the scenes than what immediately meets the eye.

There is, however, a certain amount of flexibility involved with both types of languages once the writer has become experienced enough. A musician, after having mastered a piece of music, has the freedom to stretch the rules a little bit in order to enhance the quality of the final outcome. While software programming is still a much different game than programming a piece of music on a synthesizer, there is still a similarity here. When a programmer has become well versed in HTML5, CSS, and Javascript, for example, he understands that a website is great when it both works properly, and looks good. There are so many different ways to make a website look good, just like there are many ways to produce an electronic music piece, even though there are still rules to follow. The programmer can now be flexible, given his understanding of the rules, and give the website a good look and feel in whatever way he chooses.

The most important thing to remember in both programming and electronic music production, is to not let the details distract you from the end product. Both can be very tedious and involved, but both live to server a larger purpose. The end product of a musical composition is a piece that is fun to listen to, and in some way makes the world a better place. For programming, code that is written is meant to make someone’s life a little better, or a little easier. It is through the small details and nuances of the language and its symbols that we can produce something great.