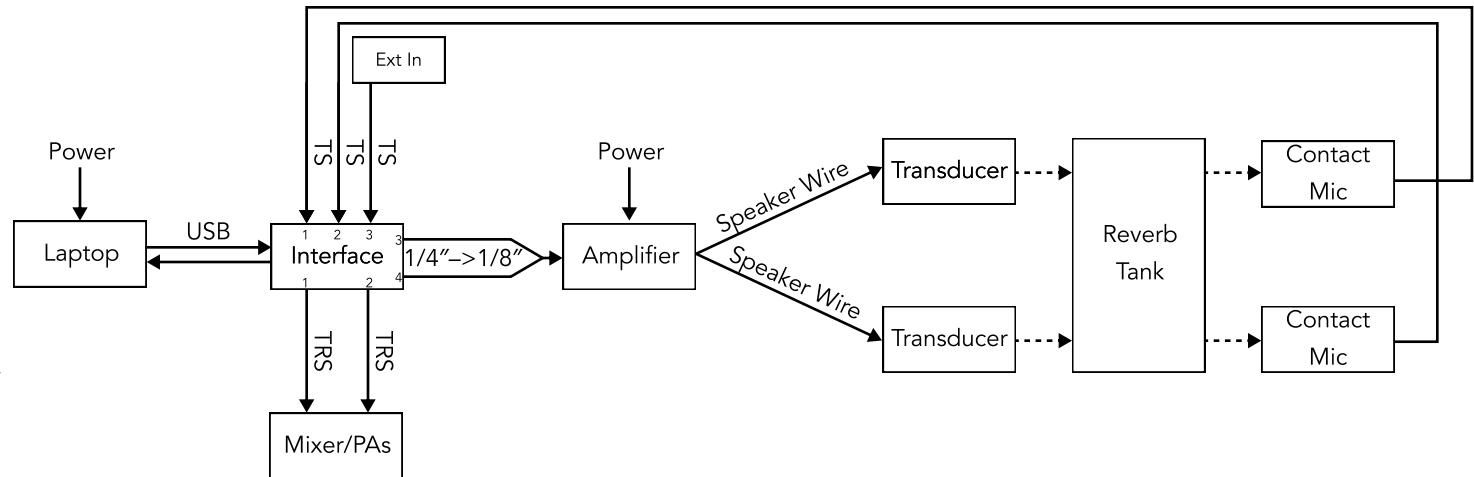


Springless Spring Reverb Technical Documentation

Alexander Wu

Materials

Computer (w/ custom Max/MSP patch)
Springless spring reverb tank
Contact mics (2)
Surface transducers (2)
Miscellaneous objects (e.g., superball mallet, vibrator, cans, etc.)



Program Notes

My first DIY instrument was an old spring reverb tank. I would process the output of the reverb with EQ, delay, and a number of other effects and send it back to the reverb, thus creating a kaleidoscope of feedback sounds. My somewhat aggressive playing soon broke all three of the springs off from the reverb tank, and the components necessary to reattach the springs were hard to find.

Having experimented with a variety of homemade setups, a few months ago I decided to give the nonfunctional tank another chance. With two contact microphones attached to the bottom of the tank and two surface transducers on the top, my springless spring reverb is a very lossy system for a reverb but a fairly versatile system for live improvisation. In principle the new instrument is similar to the old one: a digitally mediated feedback loop between the contact mics and the transducers. In practice the springless spring reverb allows for more engagement with environmental sound, since the contact mics are better at capturing the room than the springs. The system also has a lower signal-to-noise ratio because of the fidelity loss between the mics and transducers, which means the feedback is more fragile, and therefore I have more ways to interrupt it.

About mod f

mod f is an electronic improvising duo of Alexander Wu and Maxwell Gong. In their music, the material world is distorted, physicality decoupled from sound waves; metaphors feed back into one another and into themselves. mod f constructs fragile moments of tranquility within chaotic systems and carves out a dissenting space from the static humming of electric current.