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Max Assessment 3 Writeup.

My aims for this piece was to create a track that closely resembled the music that I make in my spare time. It is inspired by a UK Hip-Hop artist 'Jam Baxter' who has songs that are dark and gloomy with fluid bass parts that modulate in an unnatural way. I am also inspired by other artists such as 'Frank Ocean' who uses clever production techniques to change the feel of a track by using a method called 'beat switching'.

To create the samples I used Reason 12. By creating a 16 bar loop I could record and export samples and hear them together within the DAW. This allowed me to begin to imagine the tracks' structure. The track has 2 parts, the first part is in the time signature of 15/4. I wanted to step outside my comfort zone so picked this time signature as it was new to me. I worked on this part separately and managed to create a minute of music that despite the time signature, sounded natural. Following this I created the full 3 minute second section that was slightly easier due to the 4/4 time signature. This part contained drum samples from part 1 to maintain a level of continuity throughout the track. Some of the samples in this section had effects applied on reason before exporting, such as the delayed piano. Others, such as the overdriven and reversed guitar or the reverberated texture was processed through max by creating subpatches that either automated elements of the FX or had settings that could be changed(such as the size of the reverb). After I had finished the track I had trouble getting It to finish without looping so used the sfrecord~ object to record the length of the second section using a counter. This sample plays with no sound and when playback finishes, stops section 2.

Finally, after creating both sections I had to blend them together. I used a distorted piano sample that I processed through max using the degrade object and automation. The sample enters the track halfway through part one with a bit depth of 10 and sample size of 0.6. As the drums from the first part fade out, I used a subpatcher to automate the sample size and bit depth to decrease(using the line object), creating the effect of distortion. As the sample becomes almost unrecognisable, a metro triggers the sample to begin at a rate of 8 times a second. This creates a glitching effect for 1 second before triggering the bang that starts part 2 and open hats.

The open hats are played both in reverse and forward. The reverse hats go through a delay unit (using the tapin~ and tapout~ objects with increasing delay times) with no reverb applied and live gain dials that increase over time, creating the effect of them moving towards the listener. After the reverse hats finished, they are followed by hats that have been sent through the same unit. However the second outlet of the unit has reverb applied and live gains that decrease over time, emulating the effect of the sample moving away. The rest of the part 2 flows naturally after this.

Ultimately, I believe I met my aims for the patch. My biggest aim was making the blend from part 1 to part 2 natural yet surprising. I feel like the time signature does blends from 15/4 to 4/4 naturally while the increasing distortion followed by none whatsoever meets my desire to create a satisfying 'beat switch'

Video tutorial help: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_Fhvx5mLA&t=390s

Live processing and automation Techniques include:

Reverb - OpenHat & OpenHat reversed, Texture
Delay - OpenHat & OpenHat reversed

Automated Distortion - PianoMid
Automated Overdrive - Plucks01(Guitar)

Pitch Correction using pitchshift~ and gizmo~ - PianoP1, Sub01
Automated LPF - Sub01