



Knowledge Organiser Key Stage 3

Subject: Music Year: 9

Topic Title: Dance Music



Lesson 1

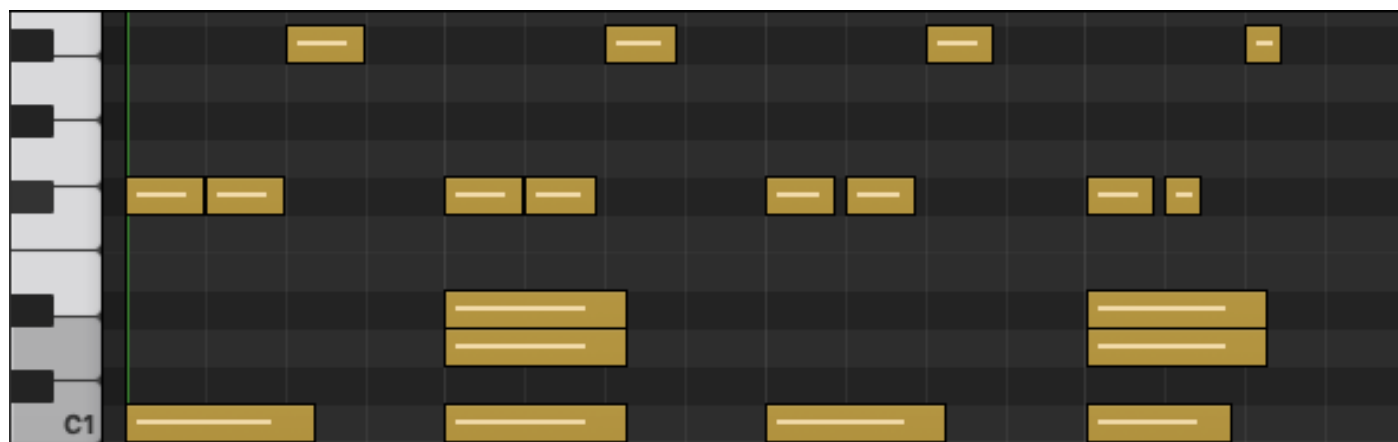
Key Facts from this lesson

- Club Dance music is musical culture that emerged in the mid-1980's in from Black, LGBTQ+ and Latin-American communities in the USA. The music is designed to be played in nightclubs, and is made primarily with electronic instruments. Songs are written to be mixed into one another, giving the effect of a continuous piece of music, so they are often written at the same or similar BPM's. Subgenres (genres within genres) of Dance music include House, Techno and Trance.
- A big part of Club Dance Music culture is the art of the remix. A remix is a piece of music that takes elements of an already-existing song (for instance the vocals) and sets them to new music.

Key words and definitions from this lesson:

- ★ **DAW (Digital Audio Workstation)** – A computer program designed for music creation, such as Logic Pro X or GarageBand.
- ★ **Audio** – Sound recordings. Audio exists as soundwaves, which are stored as files within the computer.
- ★ **MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)** – A code used to store musical information, such as pitch, rhythm, duration and velocity (how hard a note is hit). MIDI files can be accessed, read and edited using a DAW's Piano Roll window.

Diagrams to support learning:



Key:

C1 - Kick

D1 - Snare

E1 - Clap

F#1 – Closed hi-hat

A#1 – Open hi-hat



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Lesson 2

Key facts from this lesson

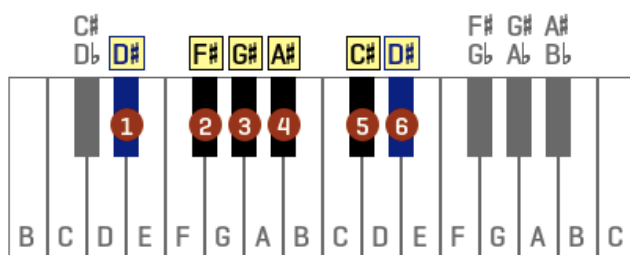
- Sound design is the shaping and adjustment of Timbre. We use sound design parameters within a synthesizer to change elements of the sound we are playing and to get it to sound the way we want it to.
- A synthesizer is an electronic instrument, usually with a keyboard layout that features sound design parameters. Unlike a normal keyboard, the user can model the sound in the way they want to. As well as existing as hardware (physical instruments), synthesizers also exist as software, which are essentially computer programs that digital emulate the features of an existing synth instrument.

Key words and definitions from this lesson:

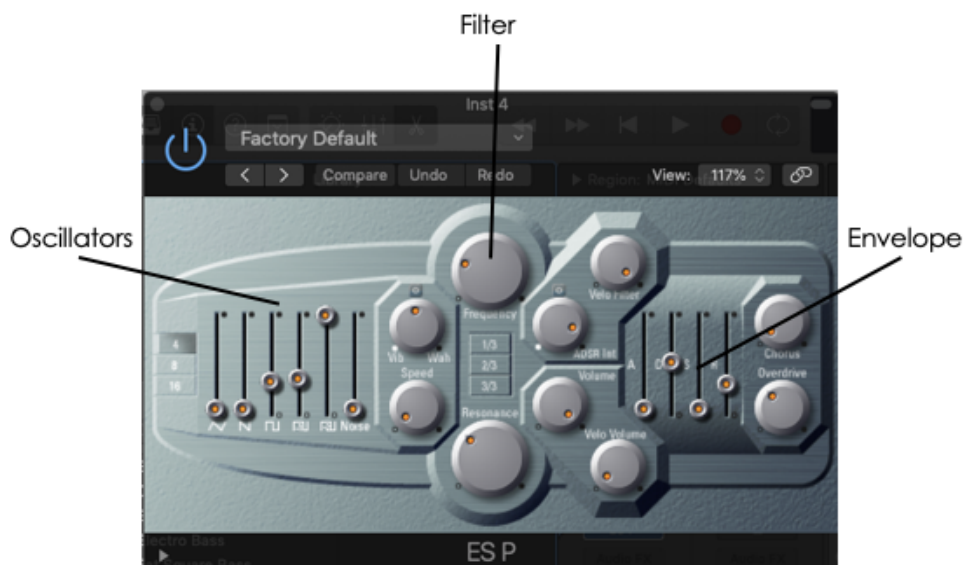
- ★ **Oscillator** – The initial waveform that is altered by the other synthesizer parameters. The oscillator controls the shape of the sound wave; these can be sine waves, square waves, triangle waves, sawtooth waves or noise waves.
- ★ **Filter** – The synthesizer parameter that controls the harmonic content of a synthesizer. Each pitch has high and low frequencies within in, and the filter removes/adds frequencies to adjust the tone of the instrument.
- ★ **Envelope** – The set of synthesizer parameters than adjust the dynamics of the sound over time. They include Attack (how long it takes for a note to reach it's maximum volume), Decay (how long it takes for the sound to drop off to the level at which it is held), Sustain (the volume level at which a note is held) and Release (how long it takes for a note to fade away after the key is released).

Diagrams to support learning:

D-sharp minor pentatonic scale



D-sharp minor pentatonic scale





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Key facts from this lesson

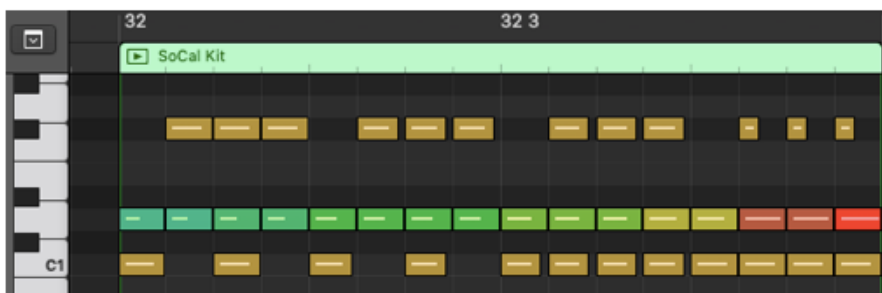
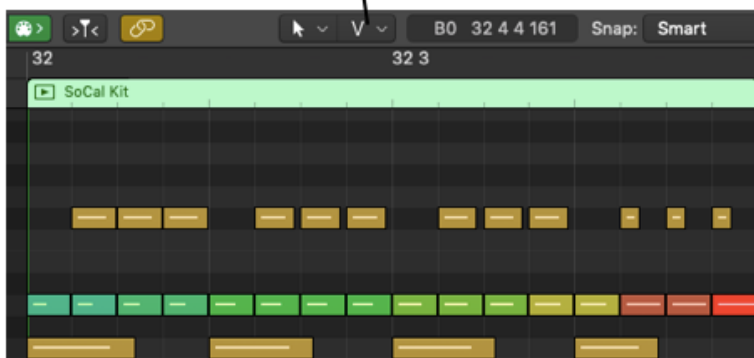
- Like most music, Dance Music is built around the ideas of tension and rest. In Dance Music, producers often build tension in an extreme way, by using fast drum rolls and building up extremely high pitched sounds. The tension is released when the bass and kick drum enter; this is known as a drop.
- Dance Music is also based a lot around repetition and development of ideas. Because loops can become quite boring if they are just repeated over and over, producers make changes to the loops and the timbres playing them constantly. A good metric is to introduce something new or make a change every four bars.

Key words and definitions from this lesson:

- ★ **Riff** – A short, repeated melody
- ★ **Synth lead** – A synthesizer part that plays the main melody/riff in a piece of Dance Music
- ★ **Build and drop** – A section in a piece of Dance Music in which tension is built up (normally over 4, 8 or 16 bars) before being released, normally when the kick drum and bass re-enter

Diagrams to support learning:

Velocity Tool (cmd+click)



Doubling kicks (use alt+drag)



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Lesson 4

Key facts from this lesson

- Parameters are anything that can be altered or varied within a DAW, for instance volume and effect or synthesizer settings. We can use a tool called Automation to draw paths for parameters to be automatically changed over time.
- Pitch is measured in Hertz, which is the amount of cycles per second (or frequency) that a sound wave has. If a sound has more cycle per second, it has a higher frequency. We can increase or reduce the frequencies present within a sound by using equaliser, or EQ.

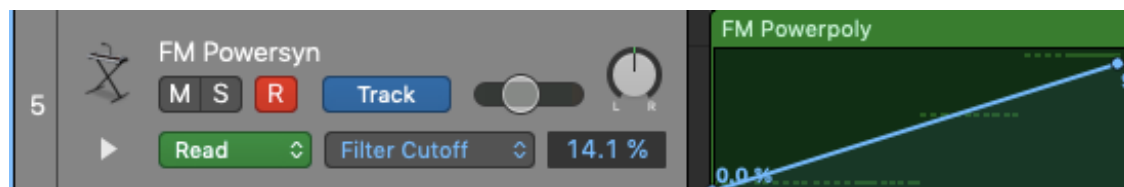
Key words and definitions from this lesson:

- ★ **Equaliser** – An effect within DAW software that can boost/reduce frequencies within a sound
- ★ **Delay** – An effect within DAW software that creates an echo of the sound by repeating it a set number of times
- ★ **Reverb** – An effect within a DAW that gives the feeling of the sound being played in a different sonic environment, like a concert hall or church

Diagrams to support learning:



Creating a filter sweep using automation:





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Lesson 5

Key facts from this lesson

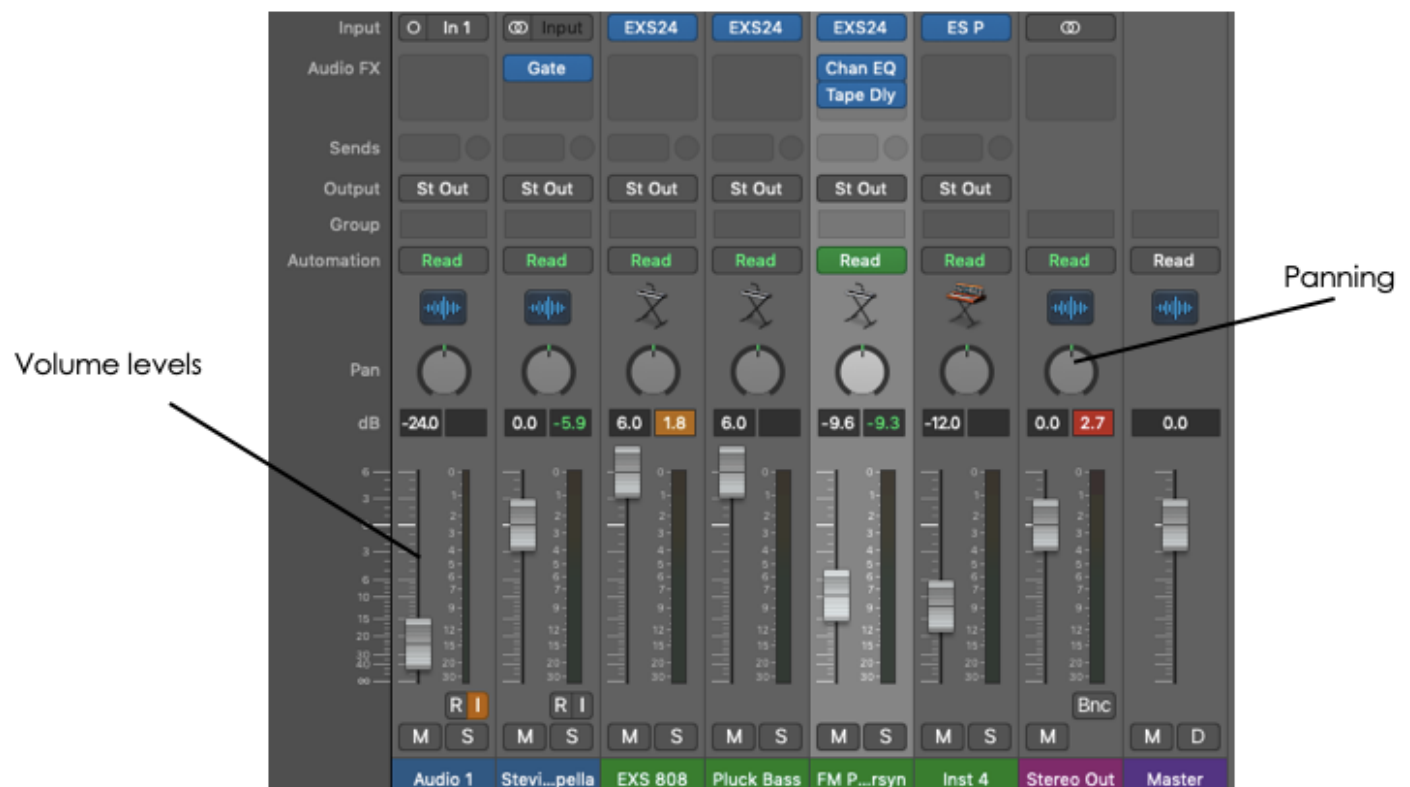
- To achieve contrast in our music, we can introduce a new section. In Dance Music, that would mean created and using brand new loops for all of or almost all of the parts (drums, bass, lead etc)
- The final stage in the creation of your track is mixing. At this stage, we focus on the volume levels and stereo placement of each element in the track. If a track is mixed well, we should be able to hear every part clearly, and have a range of placement across the stereo field, with neither side (left or right) being clearly dominant

Key words and definitions from this lesson:

- ★ **Levels** – The volume level of each track (individual part) in a piece
- ★ **Panning** – The placement of sounds in the stereo field (left, centre, right)
- ★ **Automation** – A DAW function that can set paths for any parameter (including volume, panning, effects and synth parameters) to be adjusted over time

Diagrams to support learning:

Mixer window (cmd+2):





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Lesson 6

Key facts from this lesson

- Mastering is the stage we undertake after mixing a track. It involves *exporting/bouncing* an MP3 file from our Logic Project file, so that it can be played on any device or uploaded to streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music etc.

Key words and definitions from this lesson:

- ★ **Export/bounce** – The process of creating an MP3 file from a DAW project
- ★ **Master** – The file created from the DAW project to be sent to streaming services, stores etc. The original MP3 that all others are created from is called the Master Copy.
- ★ **MP3** – A type of audio file that can be uploaded to streaming services and online stores or burned to CD.

Finishing my track:

Step 1: Add any final creative touches (new instruments, new melodies, making sure there is variation, etc)

Step 2: Do a final levels and panning mix

Step 3: Set the end point of the track (make sure you allow for FX tail-off)

Step 4: Go to File>Bounce>Project or section, or press cmd+B

Step 5: Uncheck PCM and check MP3, click ok

Step 6: Name it as "MY NAME – Dance Music" and set file location to Desktop

Step 7: Click Bounce

Step 8: Listen back to your masterpiece and email it to your friends and family!