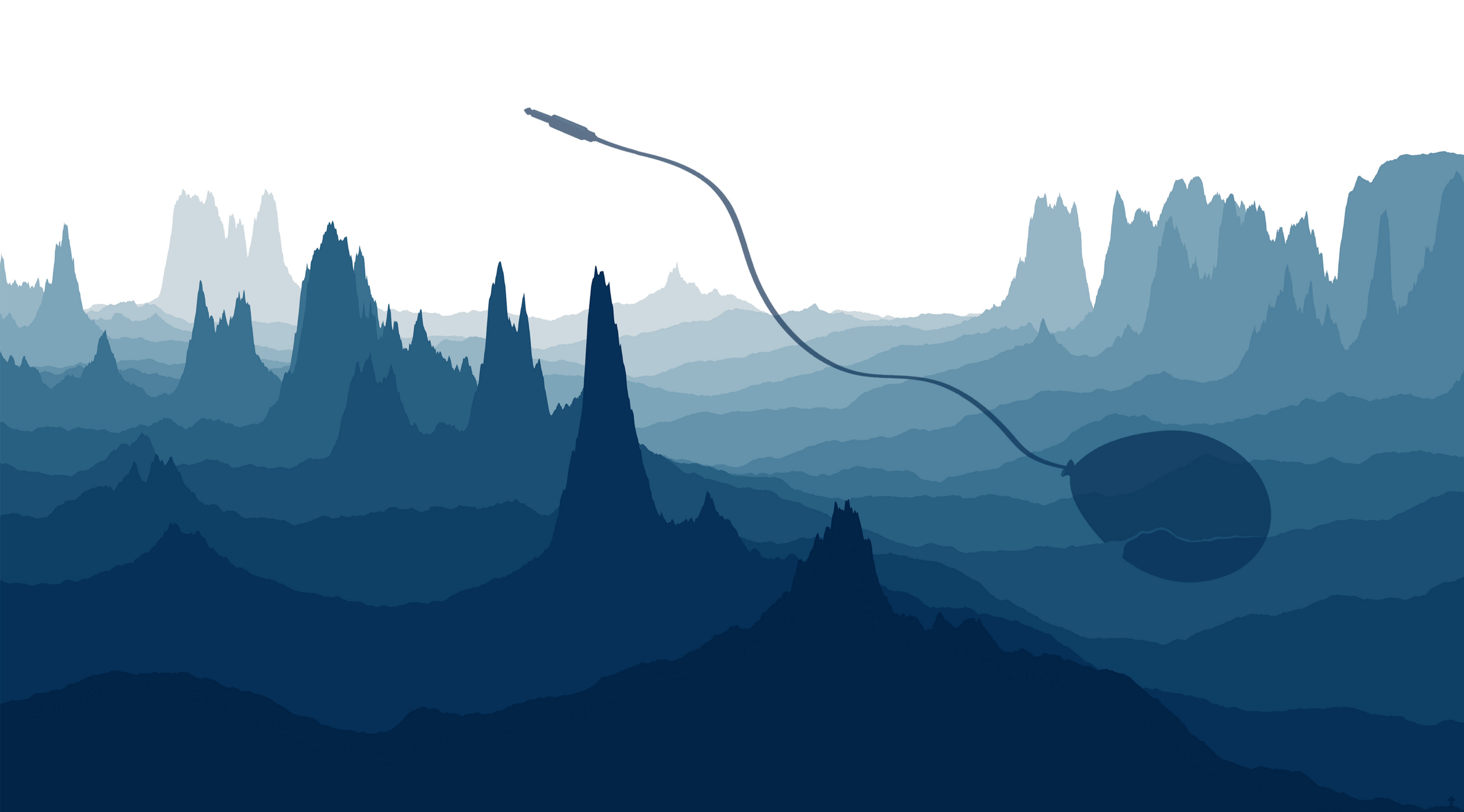




Meta Landscapes

by Homeless Balloon

Meta Landscapes by Homeless Balloon

"Meta Landscapes" is an ambient album with experimental electronic music based on sounds and effects created with MetaSynth. I have been a happy user of Eric Wenger's MetaSynth (U&I Software) since April 1998. In June and August that year, I used it to create sound effects and music for both a Radio Fantasy Series and a Television Documentary in NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Company) where I worked as a sound engineer. The music I composed for these projects has already been available on the first three CD's I released under the artist name Homeless Balloon, "Travel in Silence" (2007), "Ancient City" (2008) and "Oriental Spaces" (2008). "Meta Landscapes" is a collection of my core MetaSynth work that hasn't been released before. Since I first discovered MetaSynth, it has been one of my most inspiring tools when I needed to create sounds and music never heard before.

The fourteen tracks on "Meta Landscapes" are either new compositions, extended remixes or finished works based on sounds and ideas I have created and put aside or forgotten since 1998. The album has a total playing time of 1 hour and 44 minutes, and it is available on all streaming platforms on the web. The tracks may also be downloaded in 24 bit resolution from my official artist page at Bandcamp:

www.homelessballoon.bandcamp.com

The purpose of this pdf booklet is to tell the story behind each composition and how I created the music.

I am also sharing one or two creative methods I used for each of the tracks when I explored MetaSynth's many tools. This is not a tutorial for MetaSynth - and I am not an expert or gifted theorist - but you will find links to tutorials at the website of U&I Software, the developer of MetaSynth.

The audio content of some of the tracks on this album may also be studied by watching my "Meta Landscapes" music videos on Homeless Balloon's Youtube Channel.

Helge Krabye

Oslo, August 12, 2021



*"Only play what you hear.
If you don't hear anything,
don't play anything."
(Chick Corea)*

Track List

- 01 Shadow Work 7:00
- 02 Magic Room No 2 2:52
- 03 Riding On Meta Clouds (Remix) 4:45
- 04 Unreal Dream 2:10
- 05 One Drop is Enough 4:12
- 06 Tachyonic Antitelephone 4:44
- 07 Surreal Past 2:13
- 08 Fossils From the Dark Past 6:39
- 09 Frozen Waterfall 12:31
- 10 Carrying the Cross 6:21
- 11 Poetry Landscape 3:08
- 12 More Drops 4:44
- 13 Revisiting Japan Electronic Suite 41:14
- 14 Random Tones 1:24

All compositions by Helge Krabye (TONO/n©b)

The majority of the sounds and effects were created with U&I Software's MetaSynth. On some tracks I imported and manipulated samples of my own instruments or found sounds.

All graphics created by Helge Krabye with U&I Software's MetaSynth, ArtMatic Designer, ArtMatic Voyager, and with Adobe Photoshop.

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Watch the animated Spectrogram videos on Homeless Balloon's YouTube Channel:

[YouTube.com/Homelessballoon](https://www.youtube.com/Homelessballoon)

Want to download and listen to the music while reading the Booklet?

homelessballoon.bandcamp.com

Want to stream the music instead?

[Spotify](#)

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01 Shadow Work

When I did the sound design for the NRK Drama Film "Deadline Torp" and the NRK Brennpunkt Documentary "Slam - Gruvens Hemmeligheter" back in 2005, I used MetaSynth as my main tool when shaping many of the special sound effects. I recently discovered that I had unused audio files from these projects, and I decided to use them to create this new composition. The darkness of the track reminded me of the expression "shadow work" by the Psychologist Carl Jung. Tim Raed interprets the meaning of the expression:

«It's just very important to do your own deep inner work in a meaningful way so you really engage with shadow, and shadow being those parts of yourself that you don't really want to think about, the deep wounds, the defences that you put up against them. And if you don't engage with shadow, this tends to be the result: that shadow tends to be projected on to get it's own environment which can then be threatening.»

I first imported some industrial percussion samples from "A Poke in the Ear With A Sharp Stick - I" (1990) into the MetaSynth Sample Editor. I treated them in the Effects Room with filters and effects like Harmonics, Pitch & Time, Ring Modulator, Reverb etc. I rendered each sound to disk to avoid losing anything.

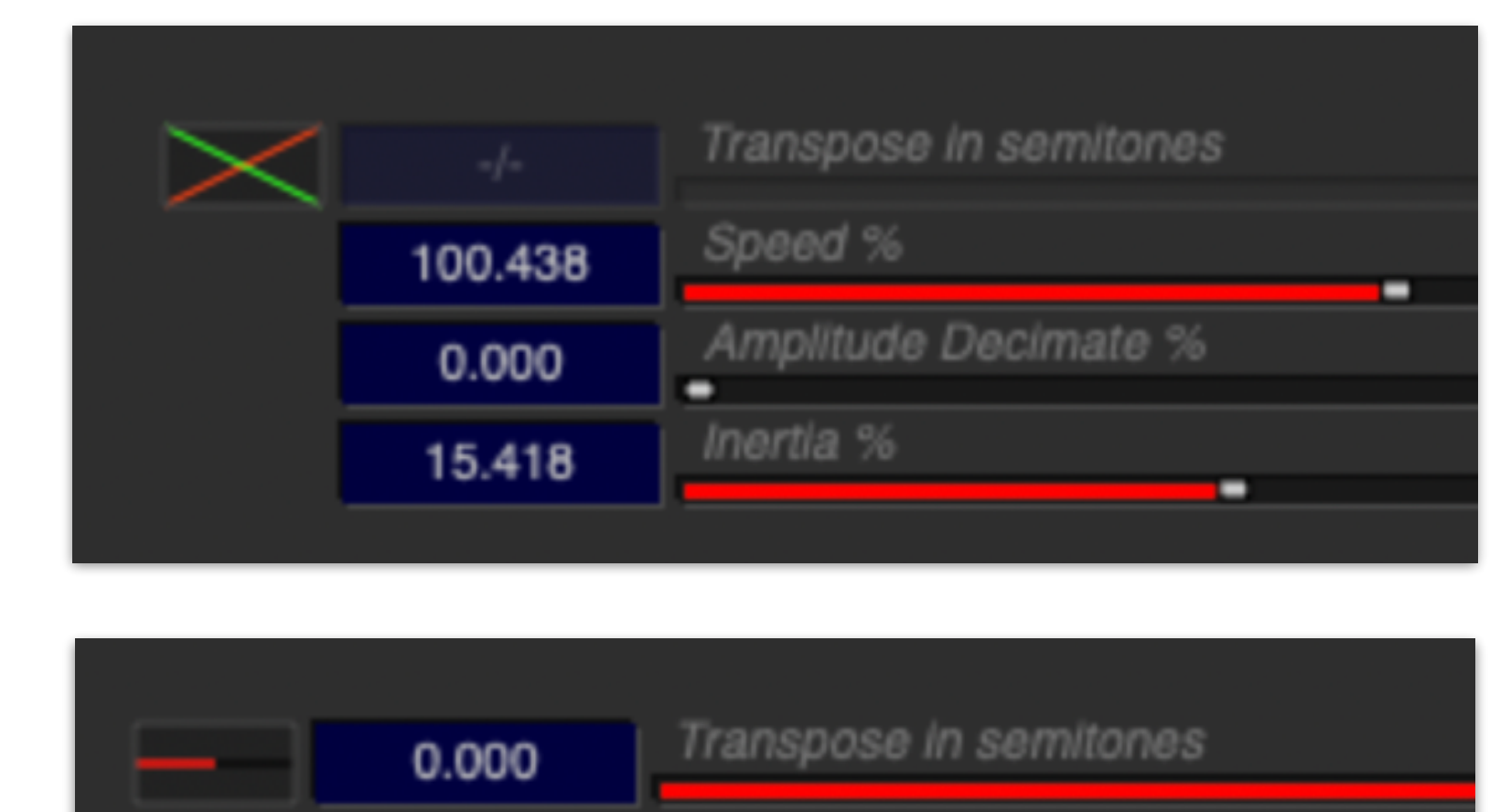


One of my favourite sampling CD-ROM's: "A Poke In The Ear With A Sharp Stick", released in 1990 by OSC, the Company that developed the first software that later became ProTools.

With the Pitch&Time effect, I set the "Transpose in semitones" to stereo so I could get a different amount (for left and right channel) of which the sound is transposed. (See the red and green curves in the image to the left.) I drew the envelopes by hand, but they can also be shaped with the tools in the upper pane of the effect canvas. What makes this effect so unique, is that both pitch and time (the "Speed" slider) can vary over time!

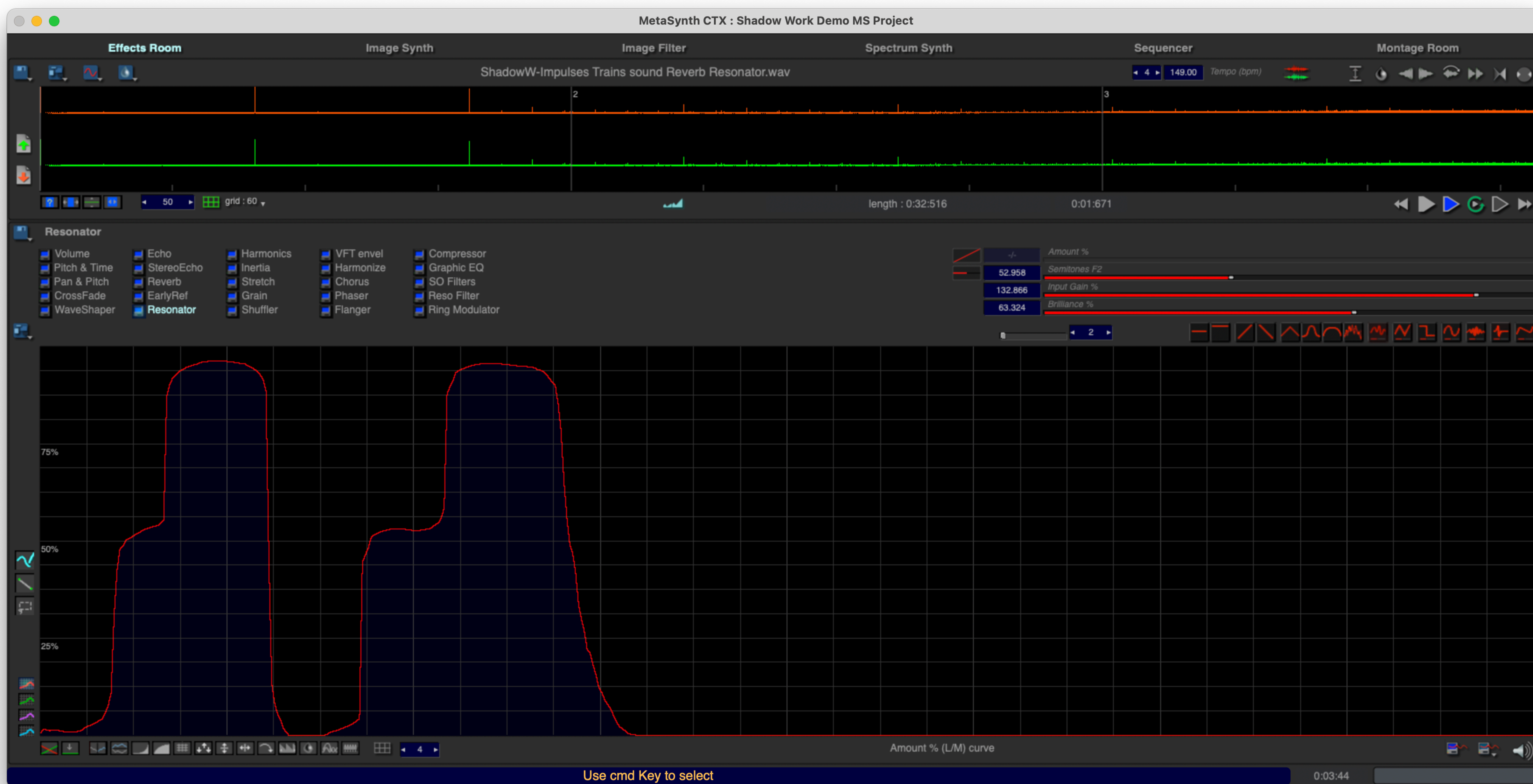
Most parameters in the Effects Room can be controlled either by a graphic curve or a constant slider.

By using the Inertia effect, resonances similar to early reflections will be added to the sound, which can make it even more interesting!

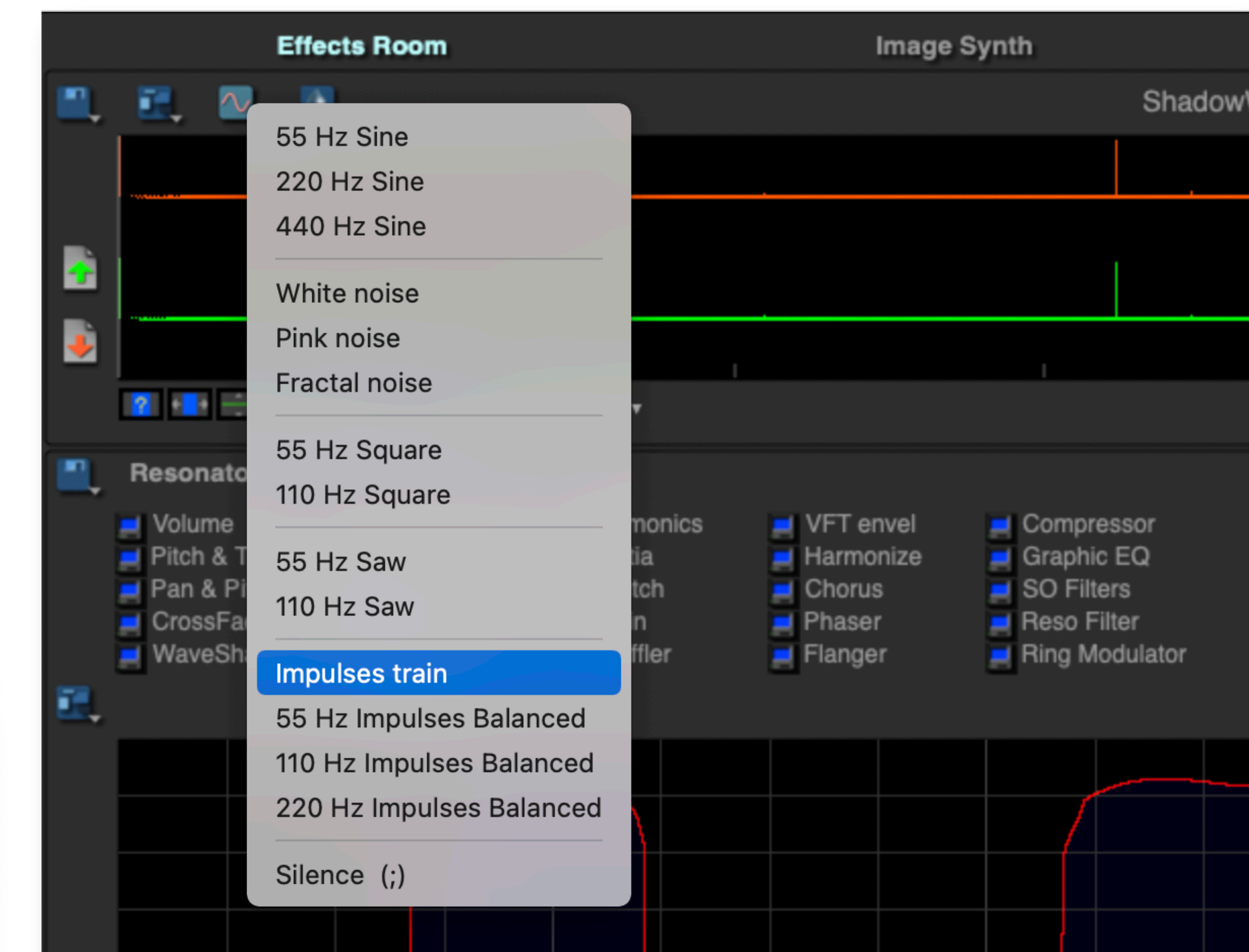


01 Shadow Work continued

I also created a small but interesting sound for "Shadow Work" by using one of the menus in the Sample Editor; the "Impulses Train" in the "Generate" menu. It's a simple audio pulse with long, silent gaps. I used the Reverb effect to add a tale of reverberation to each pulse, with emphasis on the higher frequencies. I then used the Resonator which will give a resonant sound (pitch) to the audio file in the Sample Editor. It makes the sound oscillate at certain frequencies, and the amount of this effect can be controlled by a fixed value or a curve like the one I draw in the Effects Canvas you see below. I used a mono envelope for the curve, but it can also be set to stereo in order to adjust left and right channel independently. - You can hear the result at 1:01, 3:15 and 5:22 into the track.



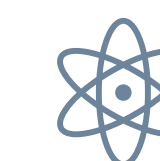
In the last part of the track I created a Techno inspired drum sequence. I used some favourite electronic drum samples and mixed them with percussive noise samples I made from scratch in the Image Synth. I could have used the Image Synth's Sequencer Room and painted the "notes" that would trigger each drum sound, but since I was already mixing the track in ProTools, I built the drum sequence there. I could also have used U&I Software's MIDI Sequencer "Xx", but this wasn't released for the latest MacOS when I composed this track. (A planned release is set to late 2021, according to U&I Software.)



The Generate Menu can also create sine, saw, square and various noise waves like white, pink and fractal. These noise samples are useful starting points for the tools in the Effects Room to shape them further.

The years I worked with sound design and needed short or long sweeps or whoosh sounds, I almost always made them in MetaSynth!

I ended up with a palette of dark sounds full of strong energy. For this composition, I imported the sounds into Avid ProTools, did the final adjustments with animated filters and added a Compressor on the Master Fader before bouncing the mix to disk.



«The only real danger that exists, is man himself!»
(Carl Jung)

02 Magic Room No 2

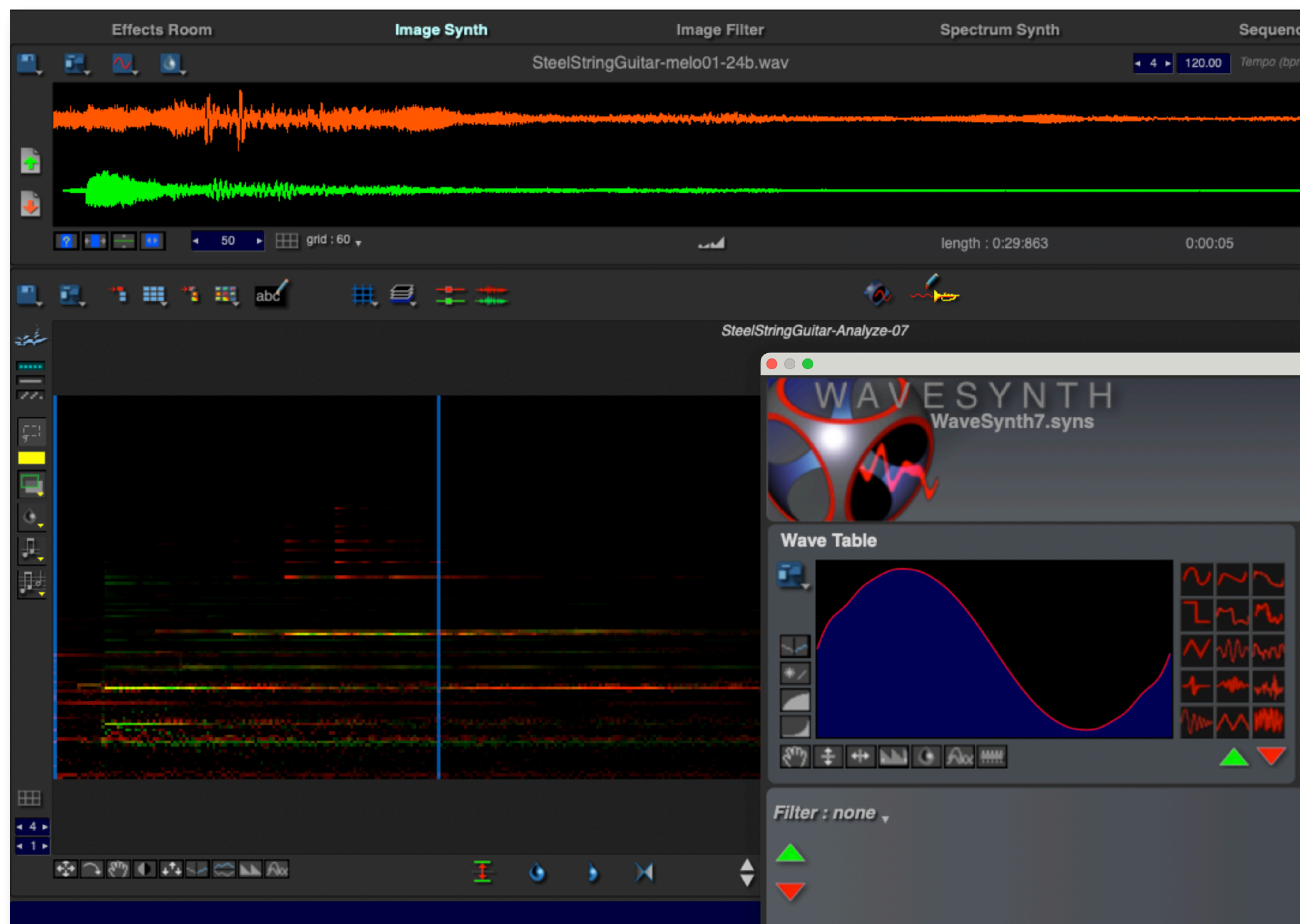
The first version of this short ambient track was made back in 2003 when I was doing the sound design and some music for a NRK Television Series for youth, named "SMS". It's an attempt to illustrate the timeless space within a "magic" room.

It starts with a Guitar sound which I recreated in the Image Synth Room by using Analyze Spectrum after importing a short phrase I recorded with my Martin acoustic guitar. When playing back the image in the Image Synth Canvas, I got an almost identical sound (but with a little more magic) by using a simple Sine Wave as the sound source (WaveSynth). I then added the Effect Room's Flanger to give the tale of the reconstructed guitar sound more movement in the frequency spectre.

For the longer middel part of the track, I painted some notes in the Image Synth Canvas until I got an almost random bell sound sequence where a MultiWave Synth with short attack and long release is the sound source. I rendered the Image Synth Canvas image to memory (which makes it fill the Sample Editor), and I treated it with heavy Reverb, some filtering and a little Chorus and Phaser. I repeated the guitar phrase near the end, but then played backwards, easily done in the Sample Editor. (More about painting random notes and making them musical in the description of track #4 and #14.)

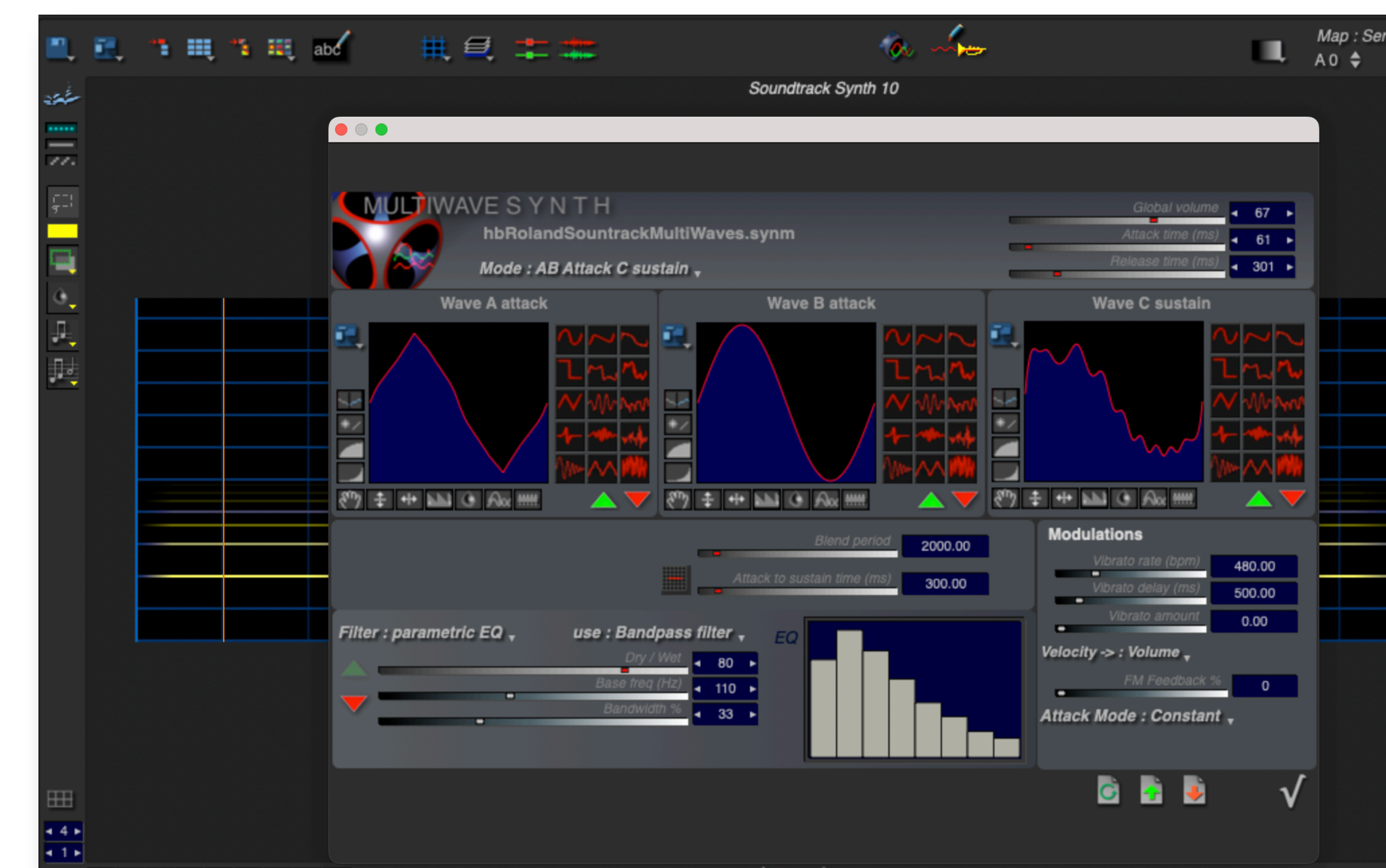


*My Vintage
Series Martin
OM-28V
acoustic guitar
with steel strings*

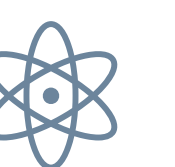


In the Image Synth Canvas, the colour control the stereo position for each pixel. Red is left, Green is right, Yellow is center. Orange becomes centered leaning towards right. In the guitar intro, observe how the frequencies dance between the left and right speaker!

There is also a warm Pad Synth under the bell sequence, and this is my old (now sold) Roland JX-8P (1985) with the classic "Soundtrack" patch. Factory Patch #17, by the way. Theoretically it is possible to create a similar synth sound in MetaSynth:



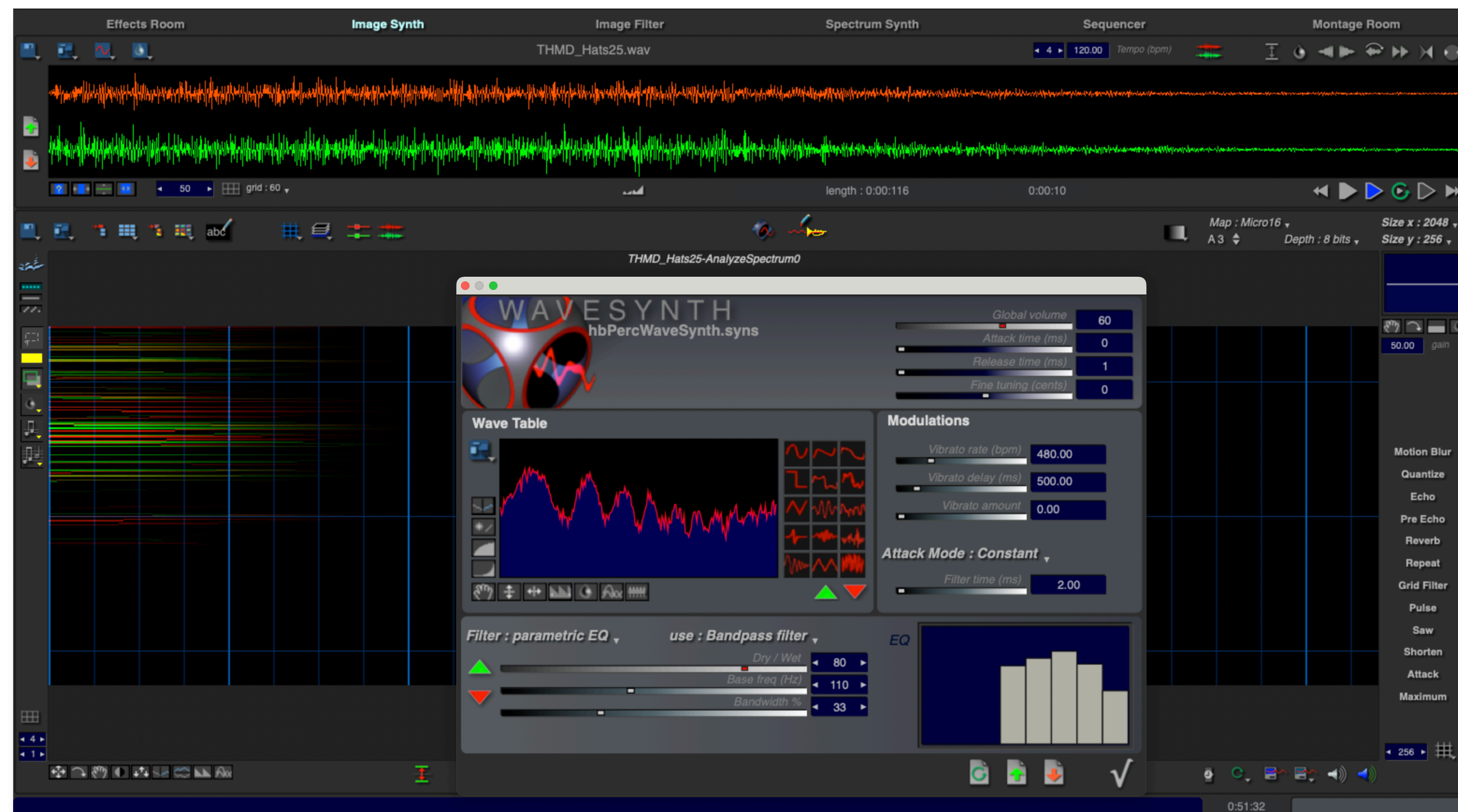
By combining Sawtooth and Sine waves in a MultiWaveSynth Instrument in - and use the Chorus in the Effects Room - you can get that classic warm Roland synth sound.



03 Riding On Meta Clouds (Remix)

In 2001 I wanted to show how the tools and effects in MetaSynth could sound, so I collected unused MetaSynth sounds I had created earlier and began playing around with all kinds of treats and effects. The track ended up becoming an ambient psychedelic trip through strange clouds filled with voice snippets, backwards and/or pitched down political statements, swirling synth sounds, frequency sweeps and shuffled drum-sequences. The track was never released, except for an early version I uploaded to SoundCloud. The remixed version on "Meta Landscapes" has been improved with some new sounds and a better audio mix.

*"I think we agree, the past is over."
(George W. Bush)*



For the basic groove I imported a few Tech House samples and added effects to make them more unique. Example: I used Analyze Spectrum in the Image Synth to re-create the frequencies of an ordinary Hihat (see the image to the left). This made my new Hihat less realistic and more interesting. I built a new WaveSynth Instrument with a noisy wavetable to use as the sound source for the Canvas image.

I also imported various voice samples into the Sample Editor where they were pitched down, played backwards, filtered and manipulated in different ways. As you may have heard in some of my other compositions, I often use voice samples from talks and movies to make my music more ideological or "political". For "Riding On Meta Clouds" I used voice recordings by George W. Bush. He is known for his "Bushisms" - the unconventional statements, pronunciations and semantic or linguistic errors in his public speaking.

"Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we." (George W. Bush)

The George W Bush Public Domain Audio Archive is a database of all recorded speeches of President George W. Bush (president of the United States from 2001 to 2009). Every phrase from each his major speeches has been made into an individual audio file.

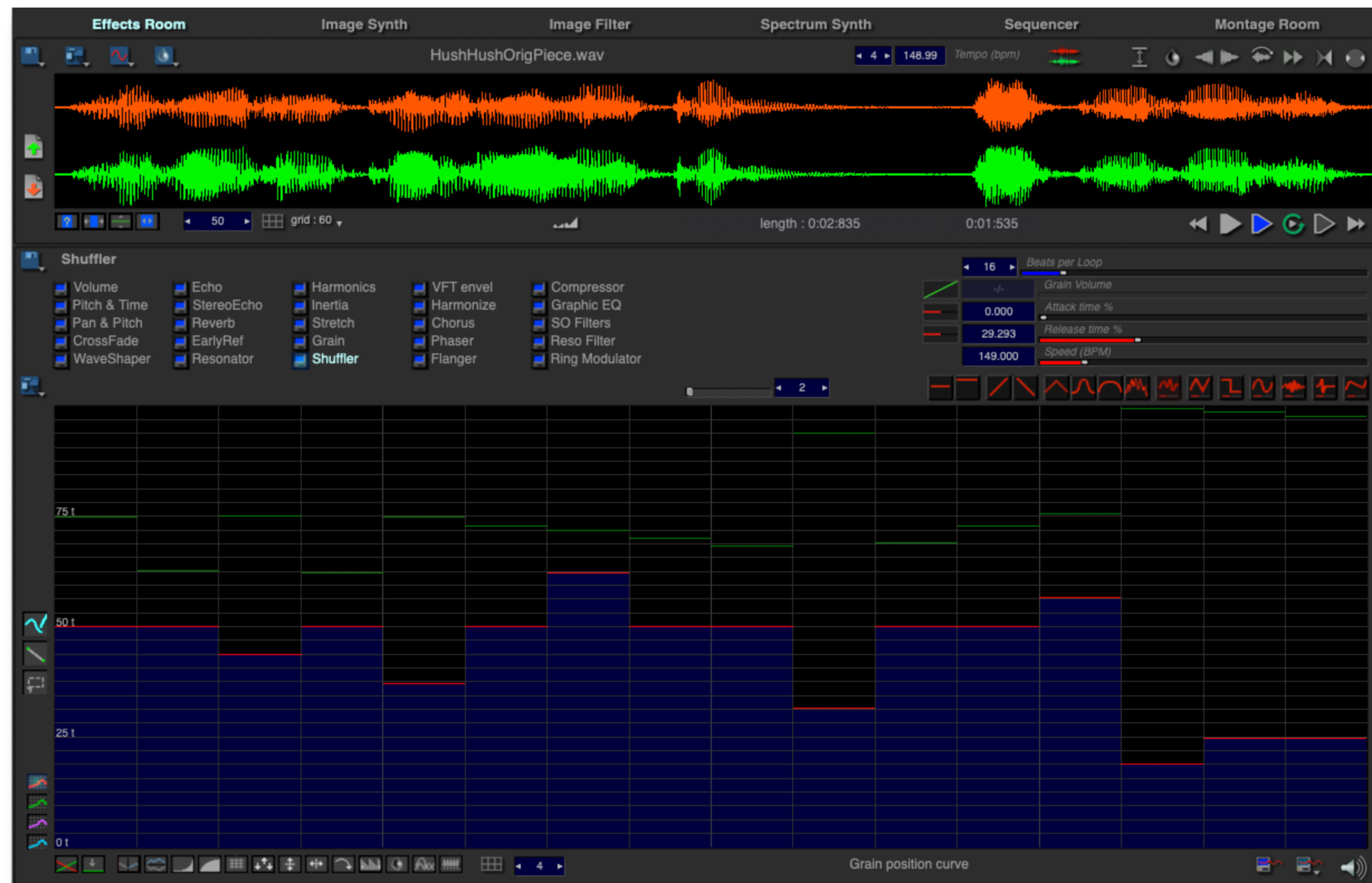


03 Riding On Meta Clouds (Remix) continued

I have used the Shuffler in the Effects Room to create loops from various sounds. Below you see how an African voice from the sampling CD "Spiritual Voices" became a percussive loop that still sounded "African". I selected a part of it in the Sample Editor and created a repetitive and strong rhythmic sequence by using the Shuffler Effect. You can hear how I manipulated the African voice sample with the Shuffler Effect at 1:43, 2:18 and 4:03 into the track. The Shuffler is also used on percussion samples and Image Synth sounds several other places in this track.



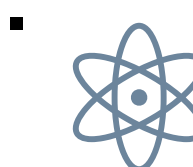
The Sampling CD "Spiritual Voices" (2000) by Best Service has some great authentic recordings of ethnic voices.



The image (left) shows the Effects Room with the Shuffler which creates a loop based on the 16 steps (any number between 1 and 128 can be used). Each step represents a slice of the audio in the Sample Editor, and the red envelope selects which part of the audio file is played back. If I set the envelope to 50% for a step, the slice starts halfway into the file. 0% is from the start etc. When using the ramp-up tool, the slices play back in the original order, while ramp-down will play the slices reversed.

The Attack time is how fast the grain volume reaches it's maximum, while the Release time sets the duration of the slice. If a fixed value for attack and release doesn't do the job, I can set these parameters to be controlled by envelopes (pink is attack, blue is release). This gives me all the tools I need to create a new and unique loop where only a single sound is the source.

When I am pleased with the result, I always save the Shuffler settings as a preset, even if MetaSynth remembers these settings the next time I open the Project. When I render the loop to memory, it replaces the original audio file in the Sample Editor, and I always use "Save Sound As..." in the disc-menu ("S"). ("s") will overwrite the audio file if it was saved to disc previously.

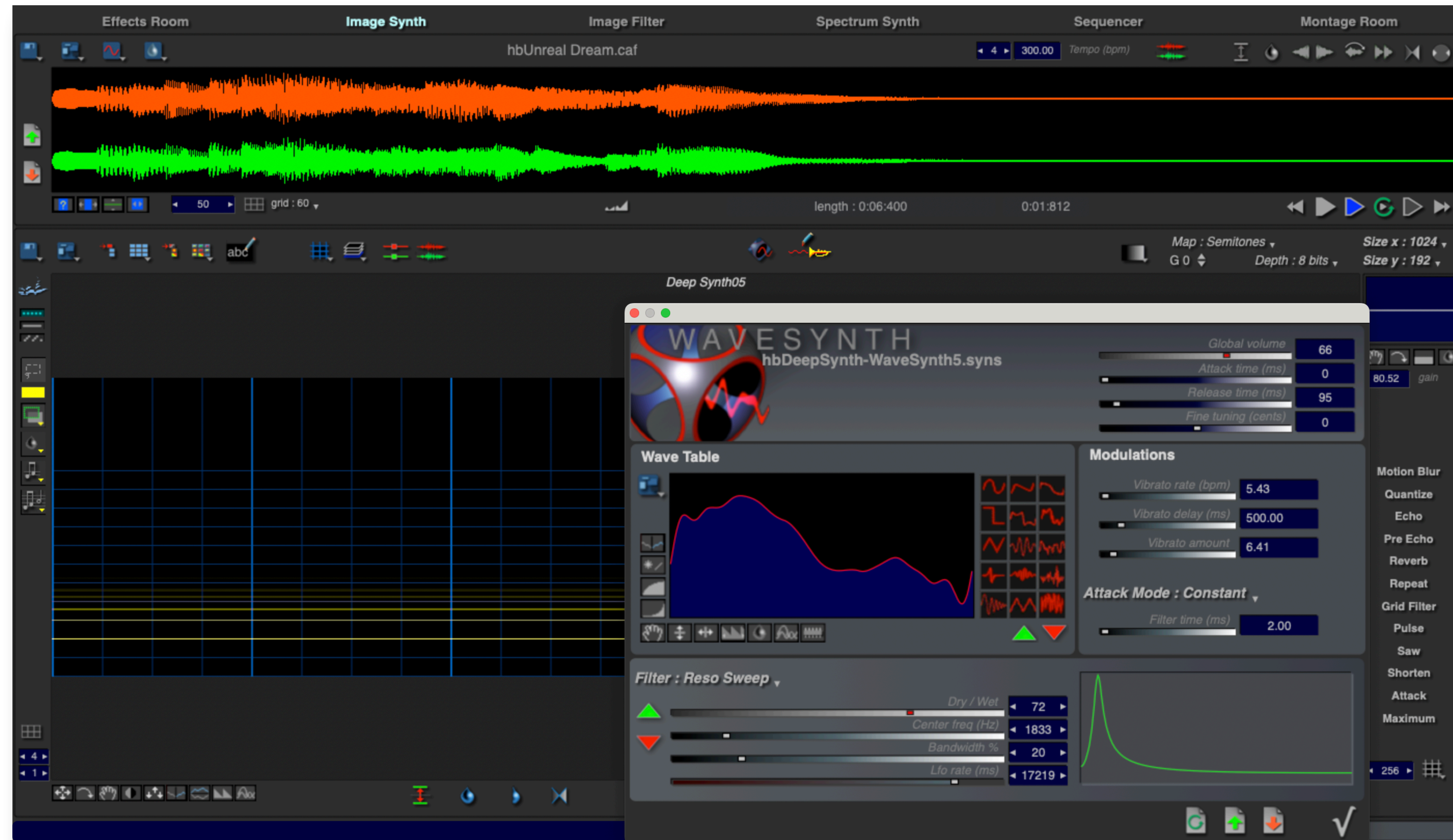


"I'm telling you there's an enemy that would like to attack America, Americans, again. There just is. That's the reality of the world. And I wish him all the very best." (George W. Bush)

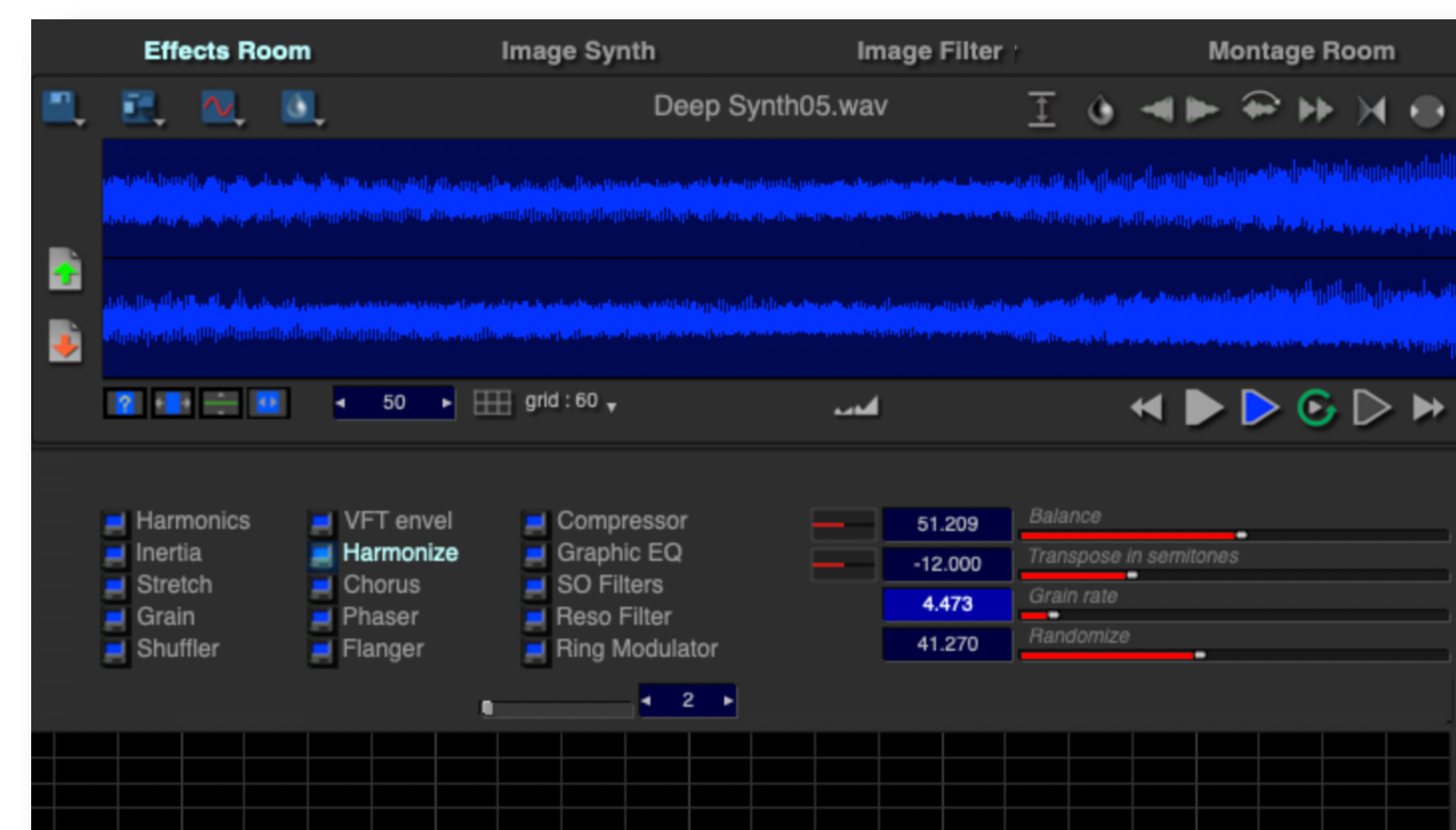
Watch the Spectrogram video on Homeless Balloon's YouTube Channel: [YouTube](#)

04 Unreal Dream

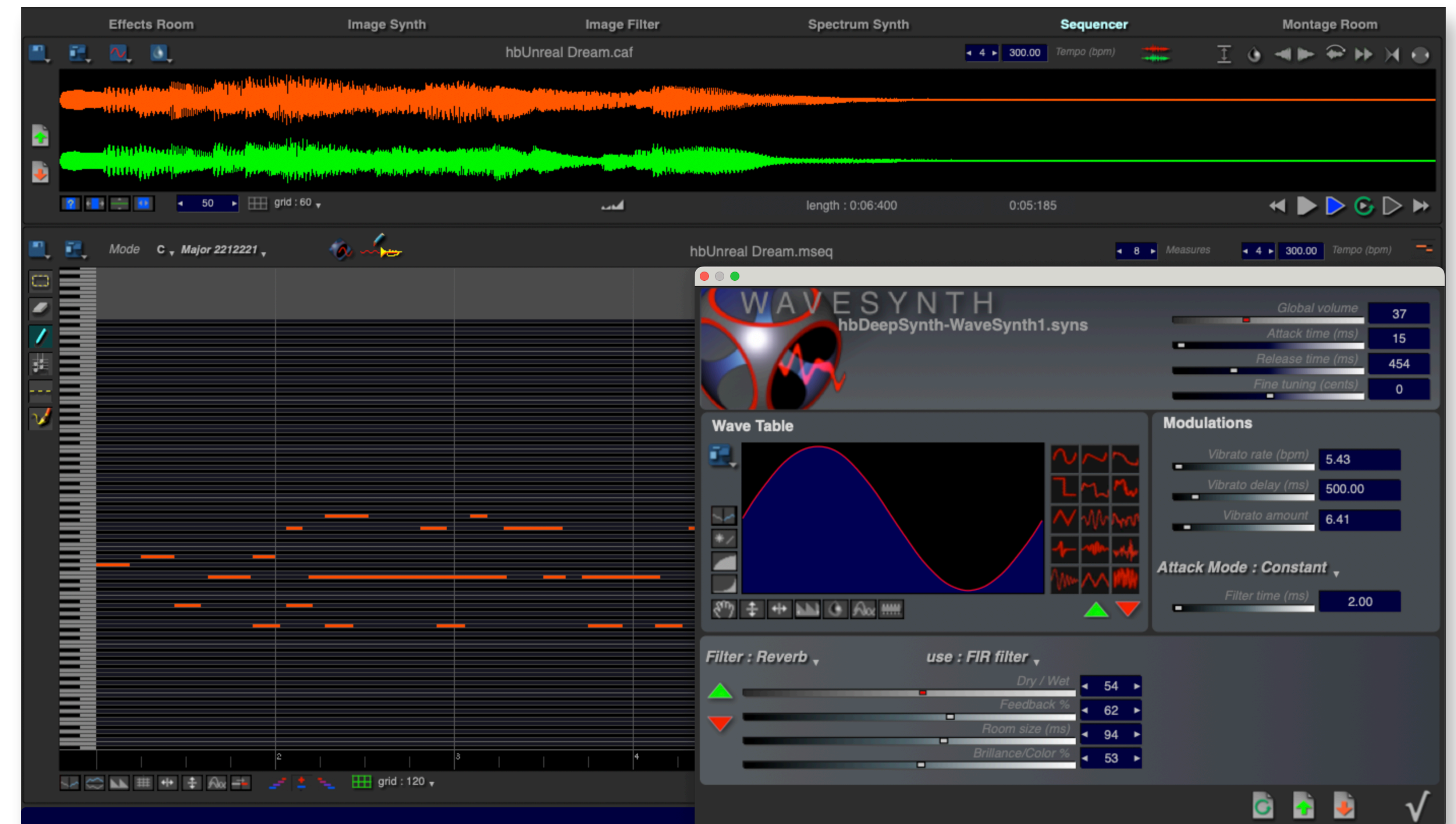
This is an ambient atmosphere I made for "Bokprogrammet" ("About Books") in NRK (National TV) in 2012. I wanted to illustrate a scene in a short documentary about how the content of a book can be timeless. The music needed to be abstract and dreamy, and it should have character but still work in the background. My idea was to mix a synth that sounded sharp and deep with one that was light and dreamy. I created both in MetaSynth.



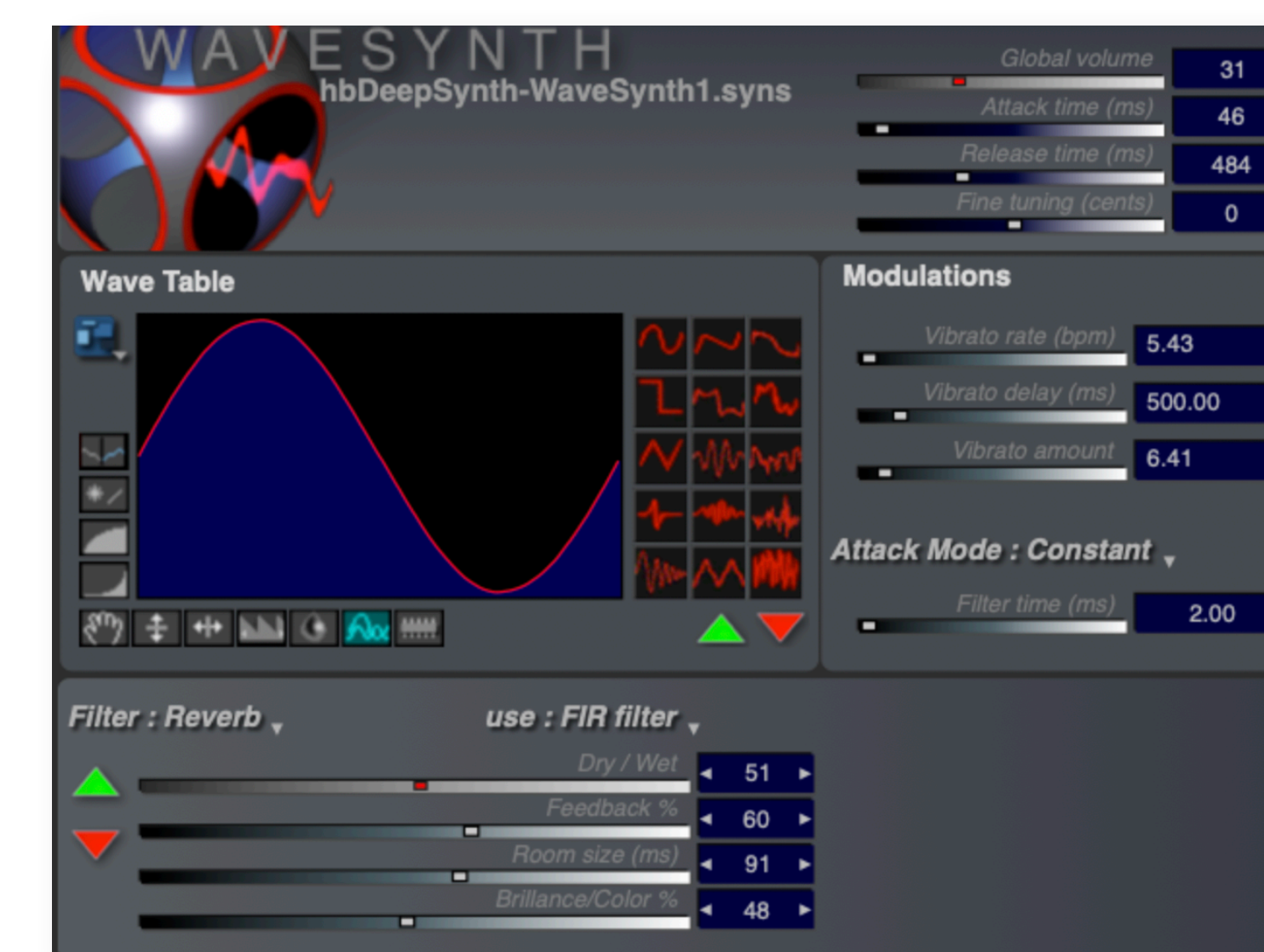
For the sharp and deep sound, I created a single WaveSynth in the Image Synth (image above). This rich waveform filtered through the built-in Reso Sweep filter in the Instrument window, was a good starting point. I then used the Harmonizer in the Effects Room, and after experimenting with different settings, the sharp and deep tone was there!



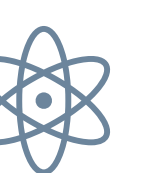
The Harmonizer can adjust how many Semitones the frequencies in the sound file are transposed, the Grain value (makes it more dirty), how much to Randomize and how strong these new frequencies should be mixed with the "dry" sound.



To make the second synth sequence light and dreamy, I painted some random notes in the Sequencer Room. I chose a Major Scale instead of Minor to avoid that the result became too melancholic (even if I personally love Minor...) I then used Option + Spacebar to listen while I edited the notes until I felt the sequence sounded good; still random but musical.



I listened with the default Instrument, a WaveSynth with a basic Sine wave. I wanted a little lighter sound, so I used the Add Octaves -button just below the waveform to give it a little spark. I also increased the Feedback and Brilliance Colour in the Reverb. I then rendered the sequence to memory and saved the audio file in the Sample Editor.



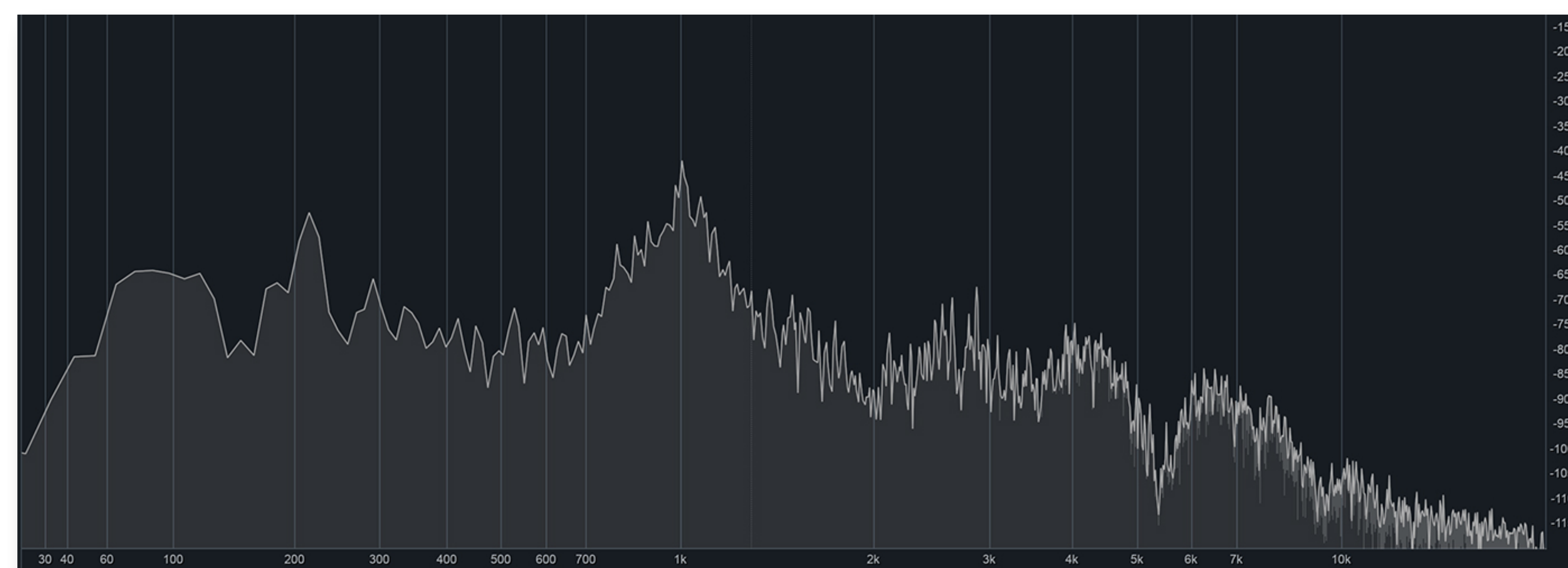
05 One Drop Is Enough

In 2005, composer and MetaSynth pioneer Glen Bledsoe and U&I Software wanted to release the CD "MetaSynthia 2", as a follow up to the double "MetaSynthia" CD (2000) where I participated with "Japan Electronic Suite". When I considered what I should submit this time, I remembered that since I started making music on the Mac in 1987, I had dreamed about creating a full musical piece with only one sound source. Since the greatest rivers and waterfalls are nothing but water molecules - and they produce sound scapes with an enormous amount of energy, variation and sound - I decided to use a single drop of water. MetaSynth was the best tool I could wish for to manipulate this sound!

I described the process of creating this music in a tutorial in the CD Booklet that came with "MetaSynthia 2". The text below is based on that tutorial, but I have updated the images because the user interface and graphics in the current version of MetaSynth have gone through some changes.

Recording the sample

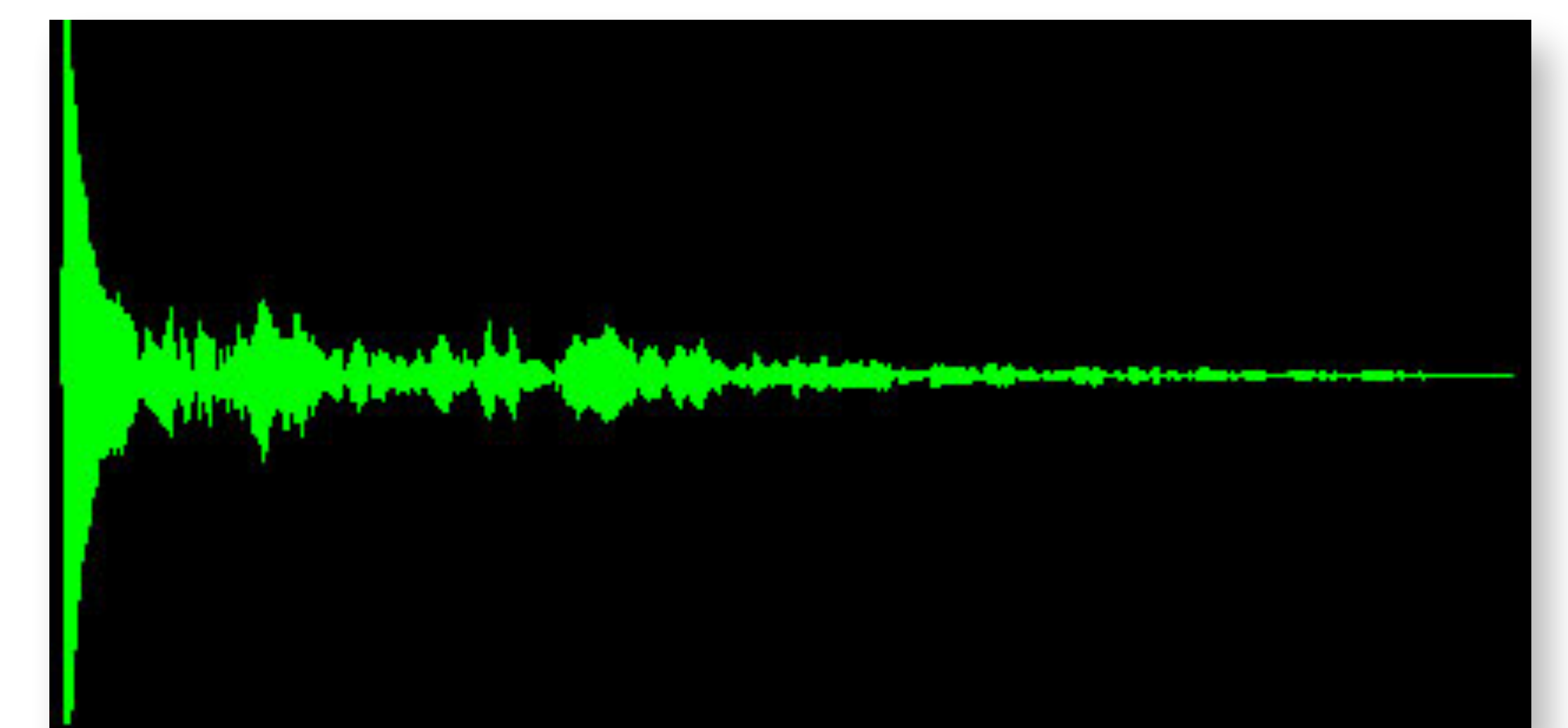
It was June 2005, and my Macintosh G3 with MetaSynth and ProTools PCI was ready for making a composition out of the sound of a tiny water drop. I started off by trying to record the drop falling into a glass bowl full of water. I soon found out that the neighbour's restless dog was disturbing my recording; even my own breath was too loud! After placing the bowl in a room with hard walls, holding my breath and hoping that the neighbour's dog had found rest, I was able to catch my drop!



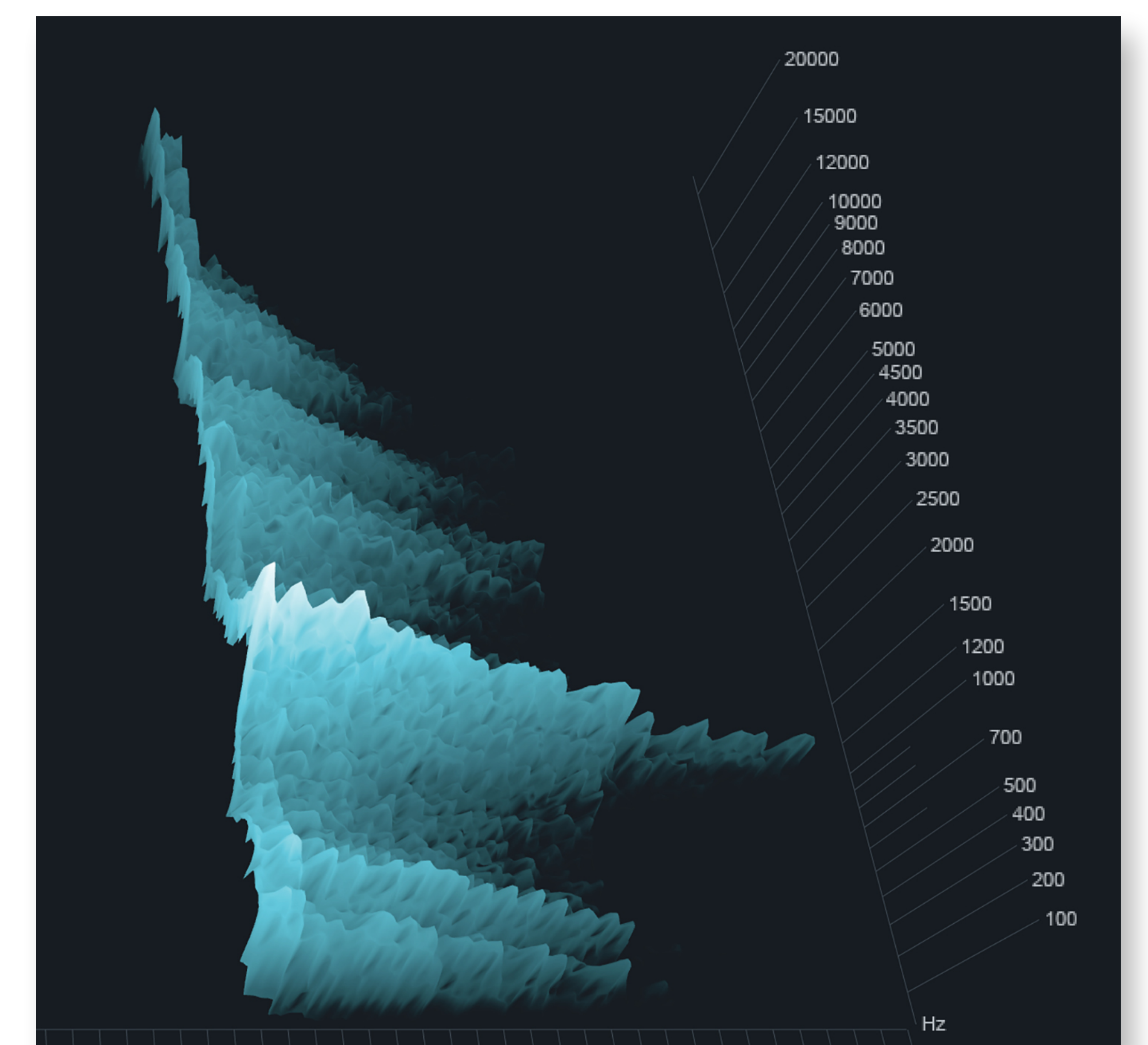
A drop of water has a high kinetic energy when it hits the surface of the water, and it expands to its maximum diameter. Most of this energy is transferred into deforming it so it becomes flat. If the energy is high, the striking drop may create a crater on the fluid surface, followed by a crown around the crater. A central jet (Rayleigh jet) protrudes from the center of the crater. If the impact energy is high enough, the jet rises to the point where it pinches off, sending one or more droplets upward out of the surface. This process will produce sound, and the sound is rich and can fill up most of the frequency spectre!



The first CD in the "MetaSynthia" series, released in 2000. The artists Eric Wenger, Tommi Lindell, David Coffin, Len Sasso, James Brody, Todd Barton and me (Helge Krabye) submitted music to the CD.



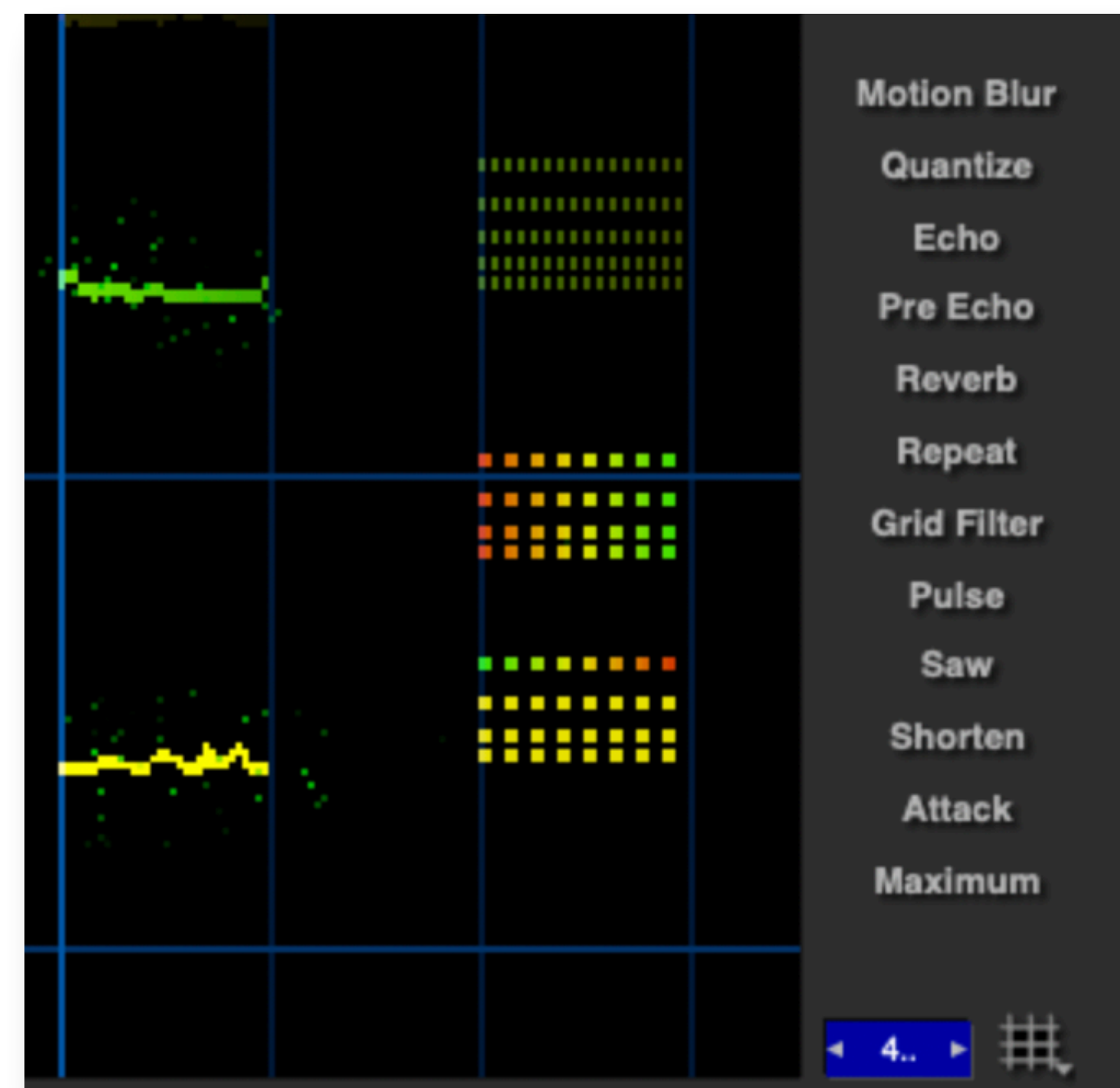
The waveform (top) and frequency spectre of the water drop with a little reverb, measured with a Spectrogram (bottom). This is one frame from the animation of "One Drop Is Enough", which you can watch on Homeless Balloon's Youtube Channel.



05 One Drop Is Enough continued

Creating new sounds in the Image Synth

I loaded the drop sample into a Sampler Instrument in the Image Synth (image top right) and played around with it in the Canvas. By painting several horizontal lines I could create percussive sounds, sustained sounds, distorted sounds etc. I also used micro scales, because they make it possible to create frequencies between the notes in a traditional (musical) scale. I got interesting harmonics by adding more horizontal lines above the fundamental frequency, chorus effects by drawing my lines thicker or very close to each other, percussive effects by using the Pulse tool to cut the lines in short pieces, controlled the attack by applying fade filters to the beginning of the lines, and more. I also fattened up some sounds by painting a new line one octave below the fundamental frequency. The shortest way to do this was by marking the line with the select tool and holding down the Option key while clicking on the octave down or up -arrow.

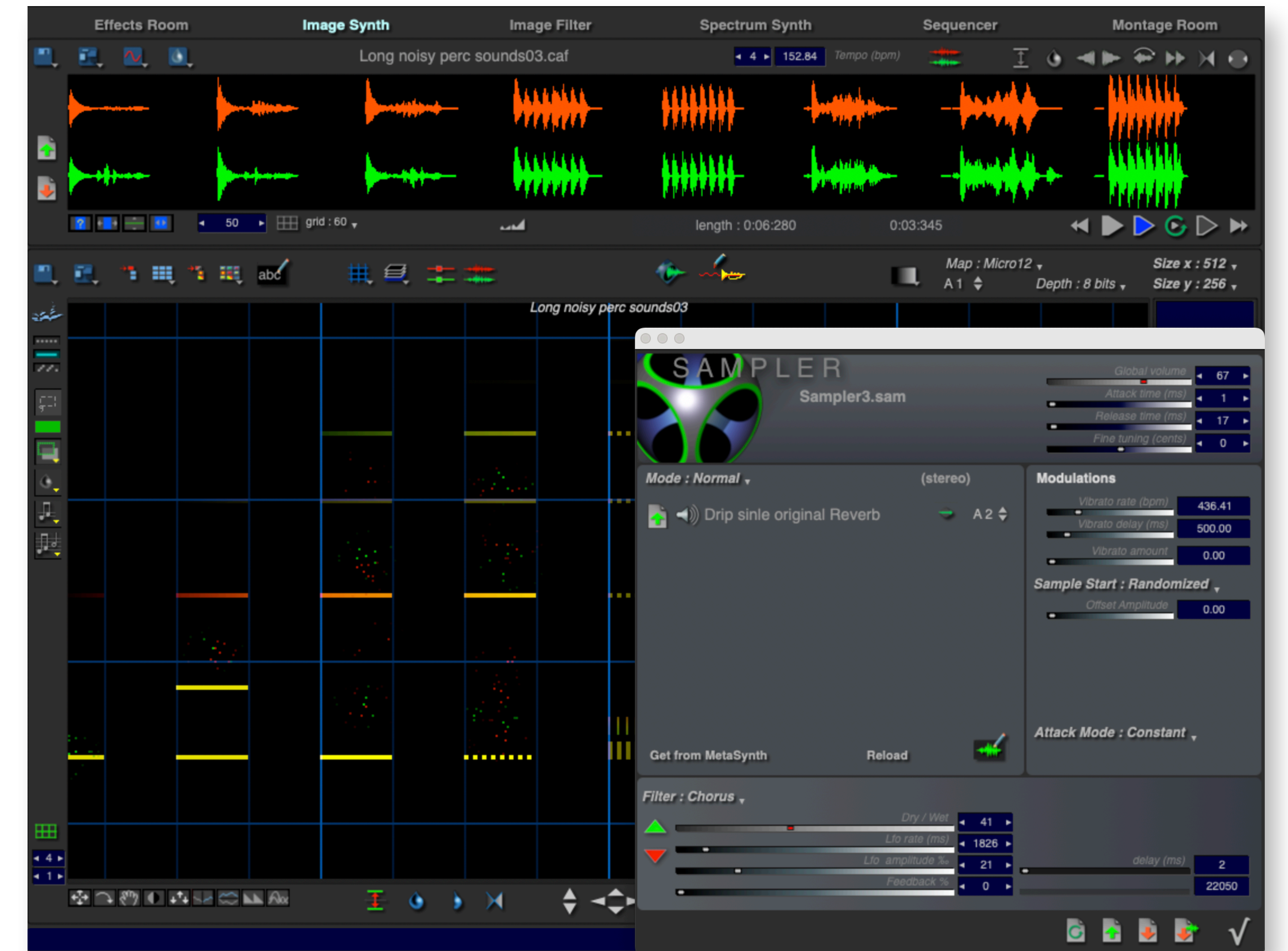


The tool bar on the right Pane have tools for chopping up the graphics, like the Pulse tool. The value of the Grid controls the size of the gaps.

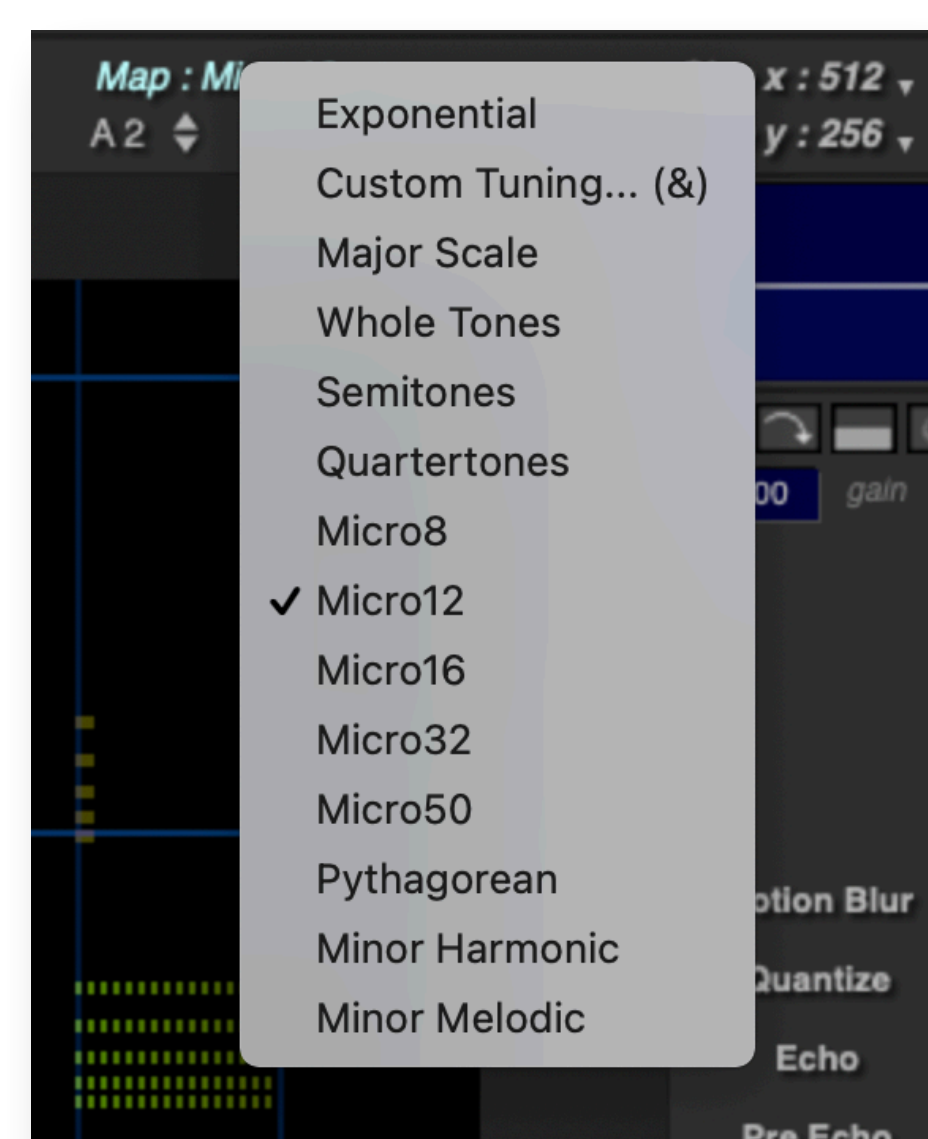
You may also use other effects, like blur, graphical reverb (which sounds great, by the way!) etc.



The Brush/Tool menu in the Image Synth is what I use when deciding what to paint in the Canvas

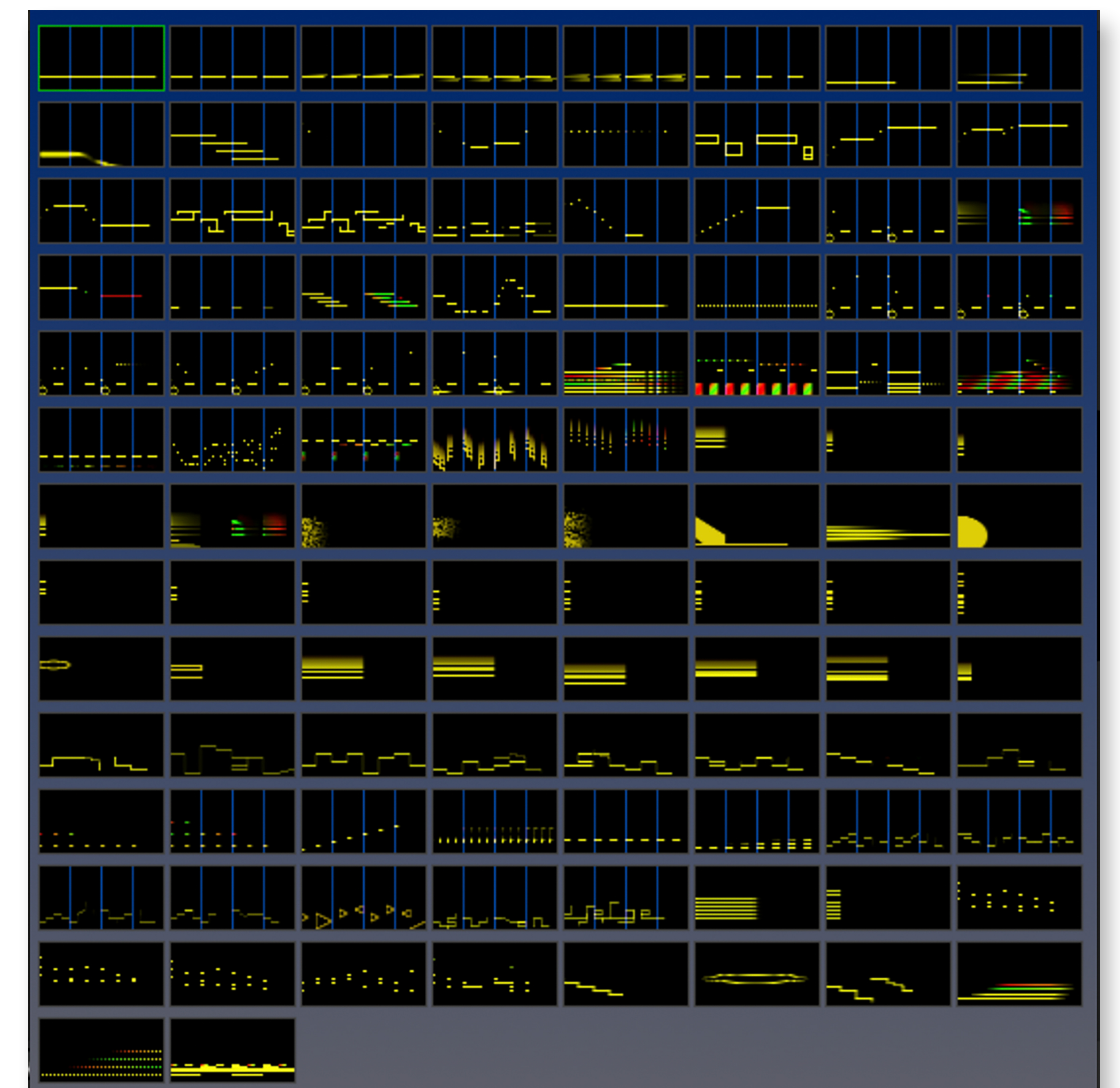


This is basically how I created the different versions of my drop sample, and I stored them all in the Image Synth Presets bank (see image). These had various Image Synth Instruments, but for most of them I used the Sampler Instrument with the water drop audio file loaded. I also experimented with single WaveForm Instruments. I added panning information by either painting over the image with colored brushes or by using filters with color information.



In the upper pane of the Image Synth Canvas, I often mapped the image to use a Micro12 scale. Microtonality is music with intervals smaller than a semitone, also called microintervals. These will often create intervals not found in the customary Western tuning of twelve equal intervals per octave.

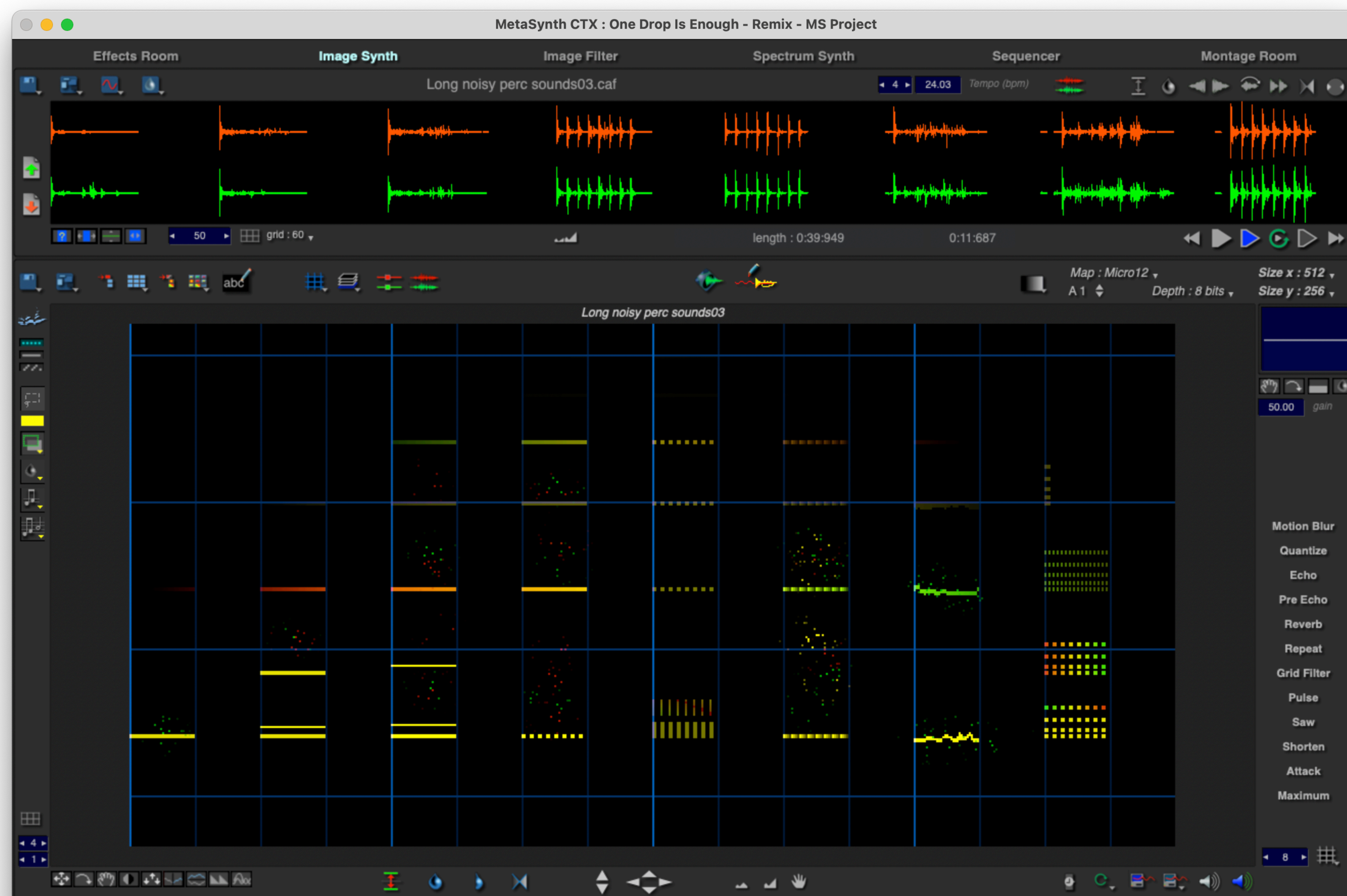
The Image Synth Presets Files Bank stored the graphics I paint in the Canvas with the Instruments I used as the sound source for playing or rendering the preset.



05 One Drop Is Enough continued

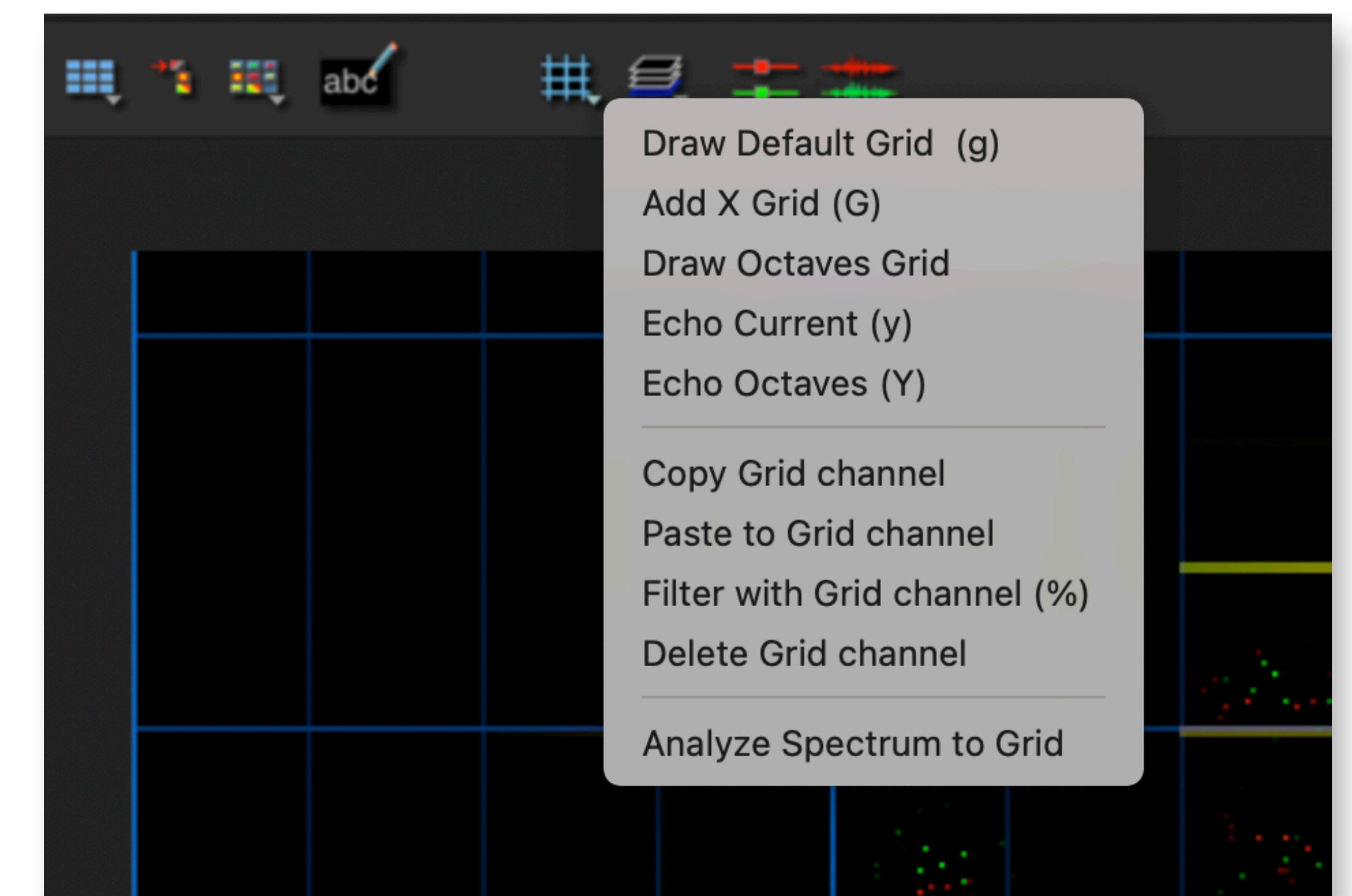
Creating rhythmic patterns

There are several ways to control the tempo when making rhythmic patterns in MetaSynth. Because I chose to paint the rhythmic components in the Image Synth, I first added a blue grid (by clicking on the blue Grid Layer Menu on the upper Pane of the Canvas). The grid will not affect the playback; it is only a visual guide. How the grid will look, depends on the Grid size I set. By click-dragging the mouse over the little watch icon in the lower Pane of the Image Synth, I could adjust how long it would take the Image Synth to play the whole image from left to right. At the same time I could see and adjust the tempo (beats pr. minute). I set the speed to 120 bpm, created a horizontal line, set the grid to 64 and clicked on the Pulse button (on the tool bar on the right Pane), and my line was chopped into pieces starting each second. By setting the tempo to 240, 60, 40, 80 or a similar number, I could create slower or faster patterns in sync with my other patterns. - I did this with my original drop sample as sound source (the Sampler Instrument), but also repeated it with my second and third generation of samples. In the mixing process, I also had fun adding several rhythmic patterns with different time signatures, but which still played in sync.

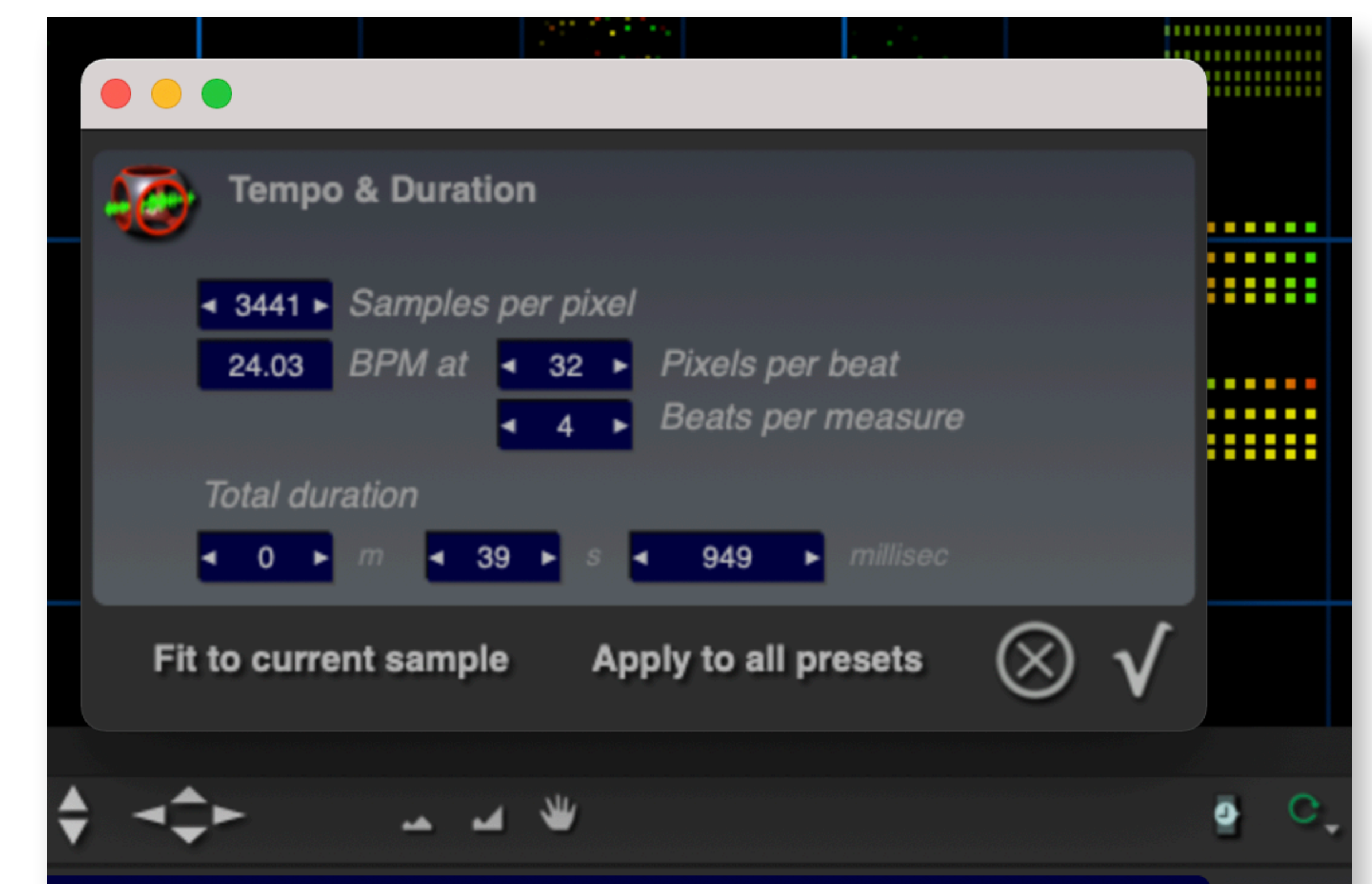


I can listen to the pitch of my note by holding down the Ctrl + Option key when clicking in the Canvas.

To move a graphic element, I select it by holding down the Command key while dragging, and then the arrow keys on the keyboard to move the selection.



The Grid Menu let me display a blue grid in the Canvas. This is helpful guide when positioning graphic elements in sync with the playback tempo.



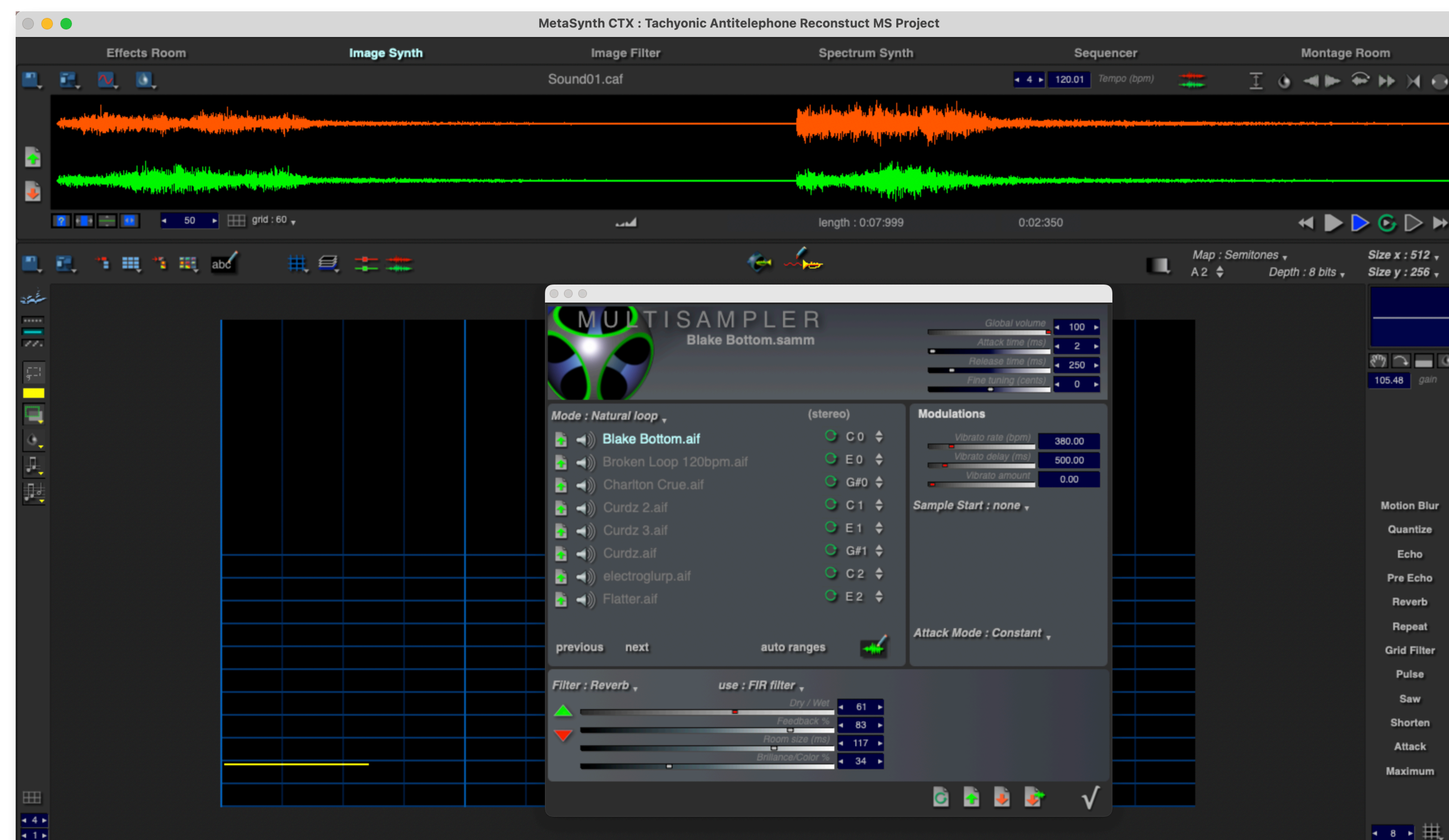
When holding down the Control key while clicking on the watch icon in the lower Pane, a special Tempo & Duration will pop up. Here I can adjust even more parameters.

Watch the animated Spectrogram on Homeless Balloon's YouTube Channel: [YouTube](#)

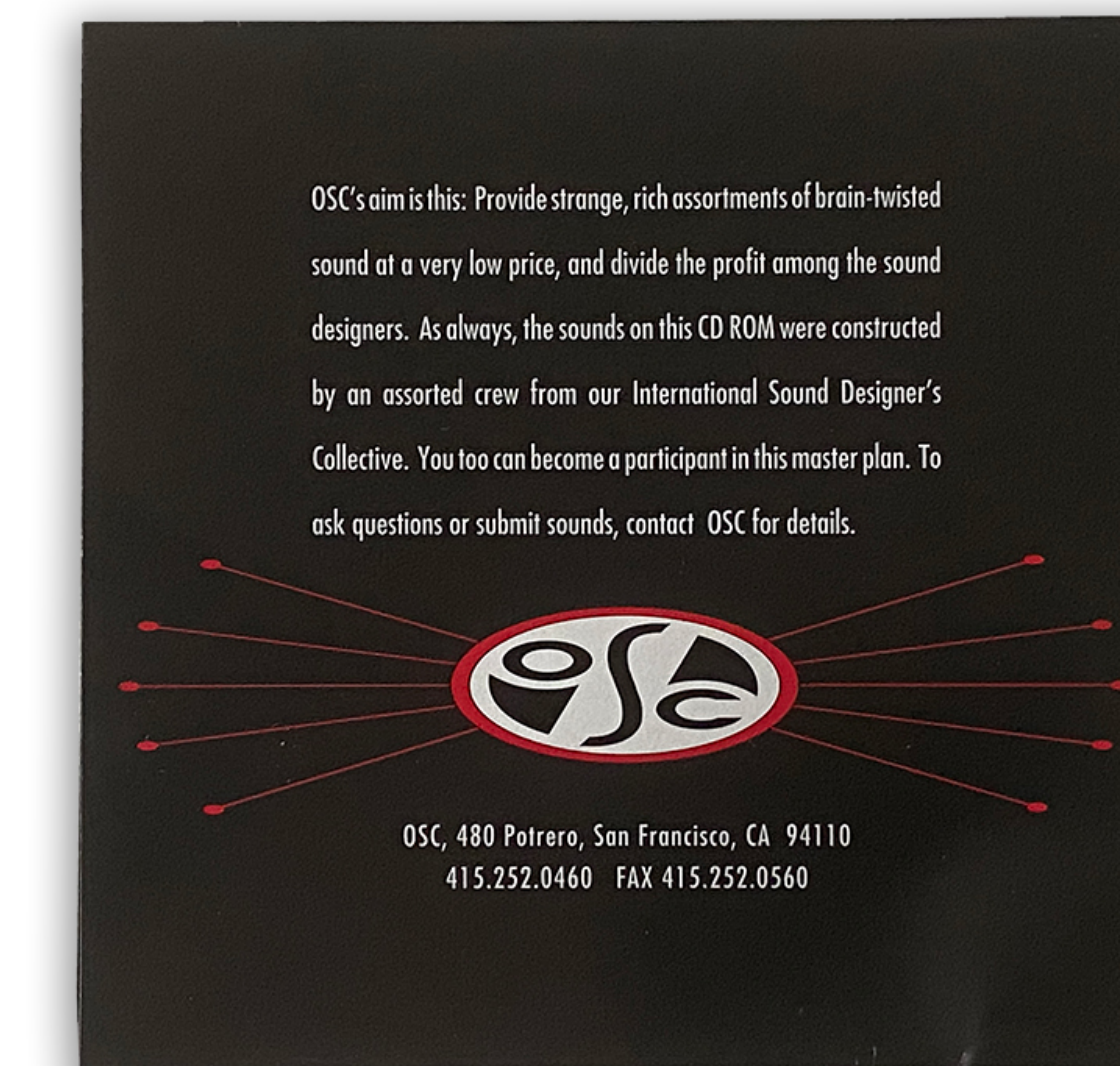
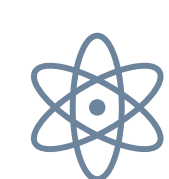
06 Tachyonic Antitelephone

MetaSynth is capable of creating some nasty and quite scary sounds. In 2009, I sat down and tried to make dark and uncomfortable sounds, and I used a few of them in two TV Documentaries. I have now arranged them together in a new composition which gives me associations to what is known as the Tachyonic Antitelephone, a device that makes it possible to go "back in time". The more we think of the possible consequences of a device like this, the more frightening the idea becomes!

What I did in MetaSynth here, was to first copy some weird samples from the second "Poke In the Ear With A Sharp Stick" Sample CD into the Sounds folder within the Project Folder on my disk. This is to avoid losing contact with them later. I then loaded them into the Image Synth Instrument MultiSampler and draw various shapes in the Canvas to see what would happen. Working without complete control and being aware of happy accidents is a great method when making electronic music!



Whenever I heard some interesting results, I rendered the Canvas to memory (which fills the Sample Editor in the upper pane of MetaSynth) and saved each audio file to disk. I also treated the samples heavily in the Effects Room. Some of the effects I used to get the long drones, cold attacks and dark sweeps were Pitch & Time, WaveShaper, Inertia and the Shuffler.



Another great sampling CD-ROM from OSC: "A Poke In The Ear With A Sharp Stick II" (released in 1992).

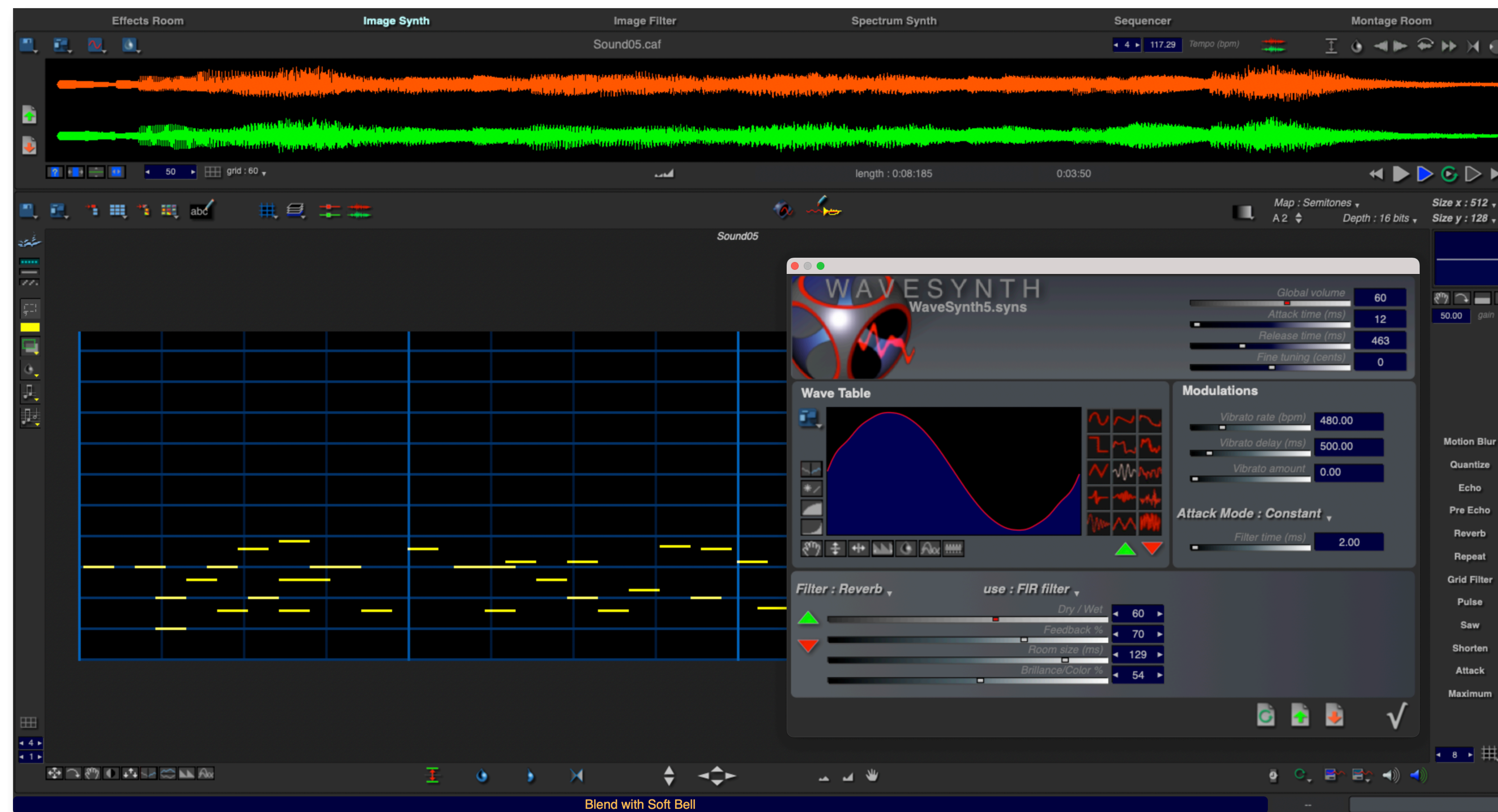
Albert Einstein got an idea in 1907, now known as a Tachyonic Antitelephone. It's a device using tachyons (theoretically existing faster-than-light particles) that would allow the user to "telegraph into the past". This means that I can actually communicate with myself - in the past. This hypothetical situation is a "paradox of causality" because if it was possible for me to influence the past, I could change things in a way that I might not exist in the future, and then it would no longer be possible for me to call myself from the future.

07 Surreal Past

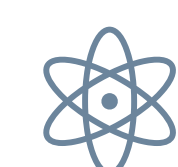
This is another short piece where I just painted random notes in the Image Synth Canvas. I chose the Semitones Map because I wanted more traditional (Western) harmonies than for instance the Micro scale maps will produce. I painted a lot of notes, and after listening to the result I deleted some notes and moved other notes.

There is of course nothing that is random. Everything is an effect or a result of something, even if that "something" is not known. One of the advantages of letting randomness be a part of the creative process, is that unexpected results will happen, and if they are interesting, they are usually worth keeping and developing further. Who cares how great ideas occur? It's how well we protect them, that matters.

*"I'm fascinated by musicians who don't completely understand their territory; that's when you do your best work."
(Brian Eno)*



I used a simple WaveSynth with the basic Sine Wave to play back the notes in the Canvas. I blended the Sine with the Soft Bell waveform to give it a little spark (bell-like overtones) without losing the warmth of the sound. I also gave the Instrument a slower attack and a longer release. I added the Reverb in the Filter section below the waveform display to create a more dreamy and ambient sound.

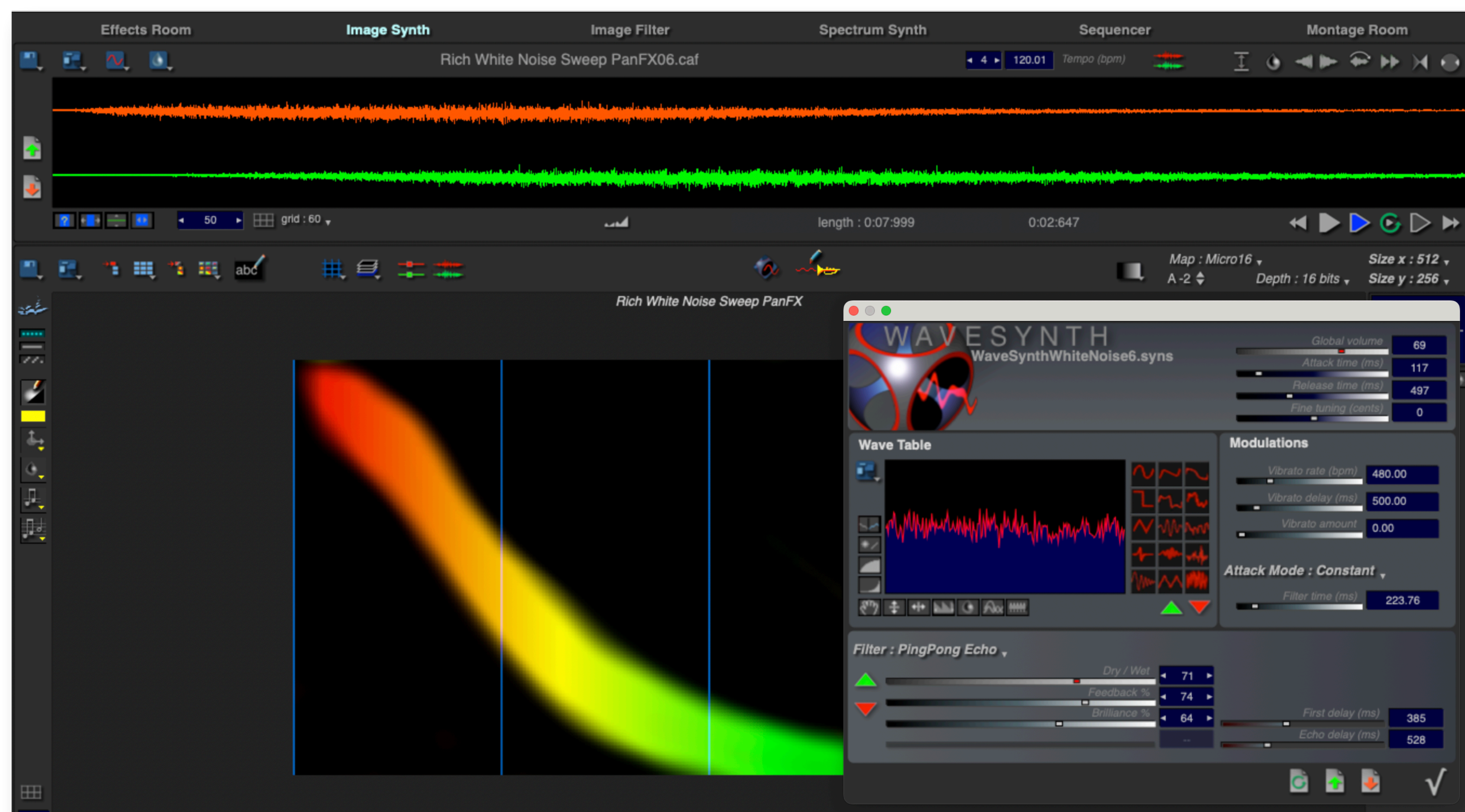


*"Luck is being ready!"
(Brian Eno)*

08 Fossils From the Dark Past

In 2001 I composed music and did the sound design for the television documentary series "Mysterious China" ("Det Gåtefulle Kina"). Arild Hagen wrote the manuscript and was the producer. Arnfinn Sørensen (Christensen at that time) was the video editor and animator. The music was released on Homeless Balloon's CD "Mysterious China" in 2007. "Fossils From the Dark Past" is a new composition where I used some of the leftover sounds from the project.

MetaSynth was a very helpful tool for both the special sound effects and the music. The opening sound is a classic filter sweep from high to low frequencies. There are many ways to create this type of sweep in MetaSynth, but I chose to simply draw the sweep with a broad, yellow brush in the Image Synth. I then used one of the panning-filters in the Apply Filter Menu to make the sweep move from left (red) to right (green).

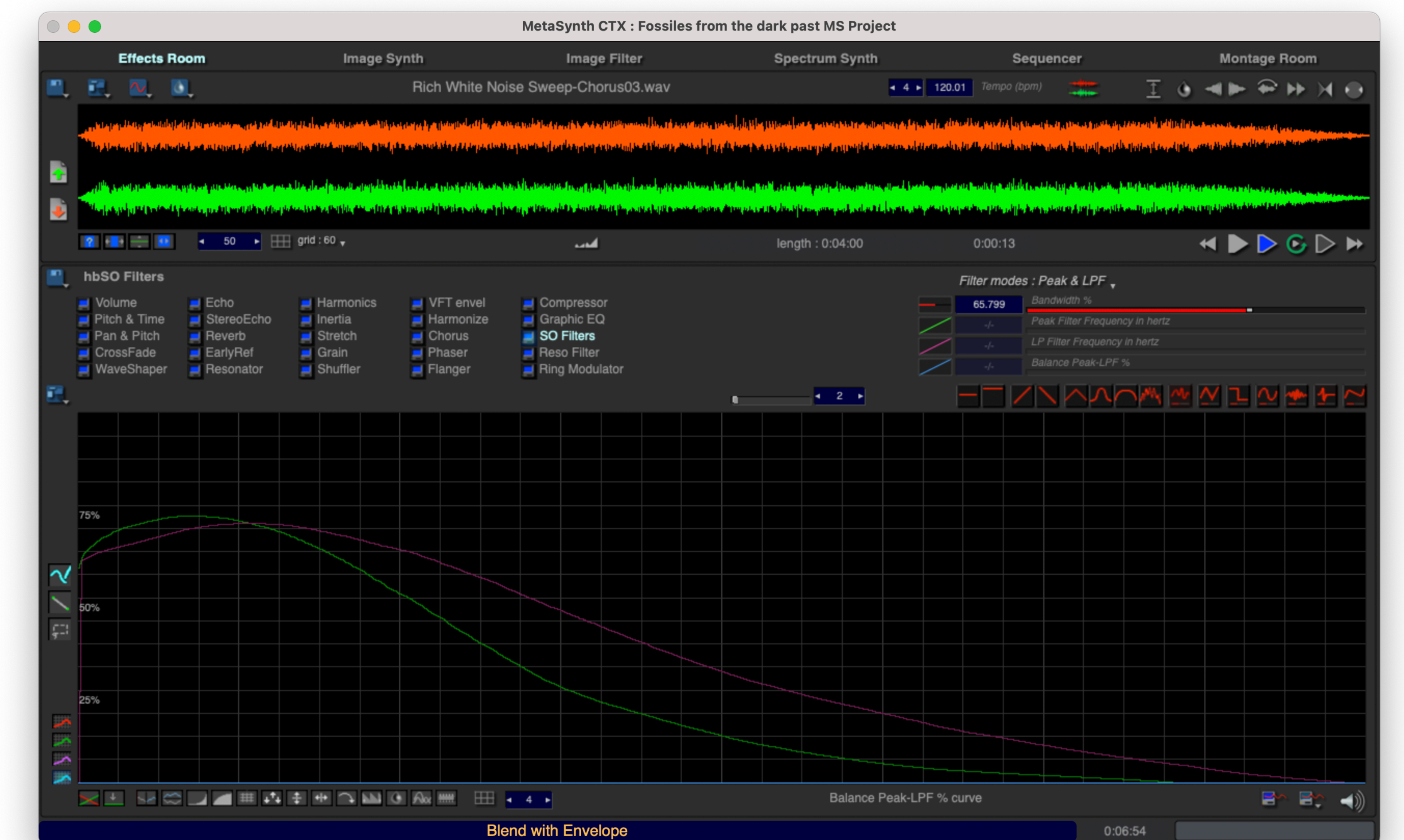


I created the Image Synth Instrument by using a single WaveSynth Sine wave and blended it with the Random waves (noise). To make the sound broad, I also added the PingPong Filter.

Another method I used to make filter sweeps, was to create a white or pink noise audio sample in the Sample Editor, using the Generate Menu. The sample is mono, so I toggled the Mono-Stereo button in the Effects Room. To make the white noise sound warmer and broader, I used the Chorus, rendered the result to a new audio file and used the Smooth-button (upper right corner of the Sample Editor). The sound was still not sweeping, so I used the SO Filter and painted how I wanted the sweep to sound, which means adjusting the Peak Filter Frequencies and Low Pass Filter frequencies over time (the green and pink curves in the image to the right).

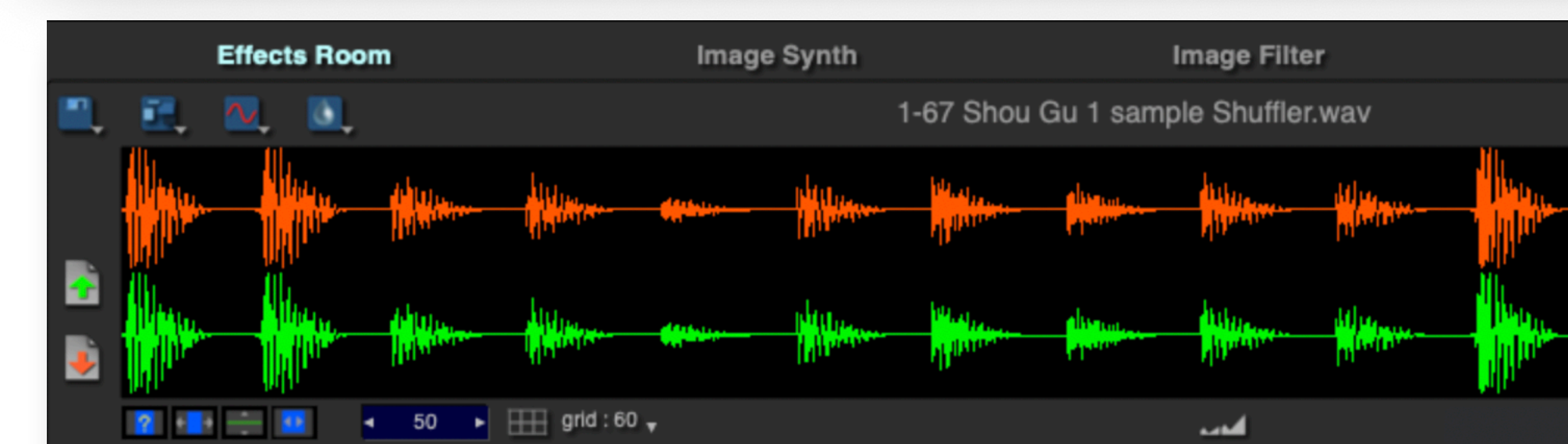
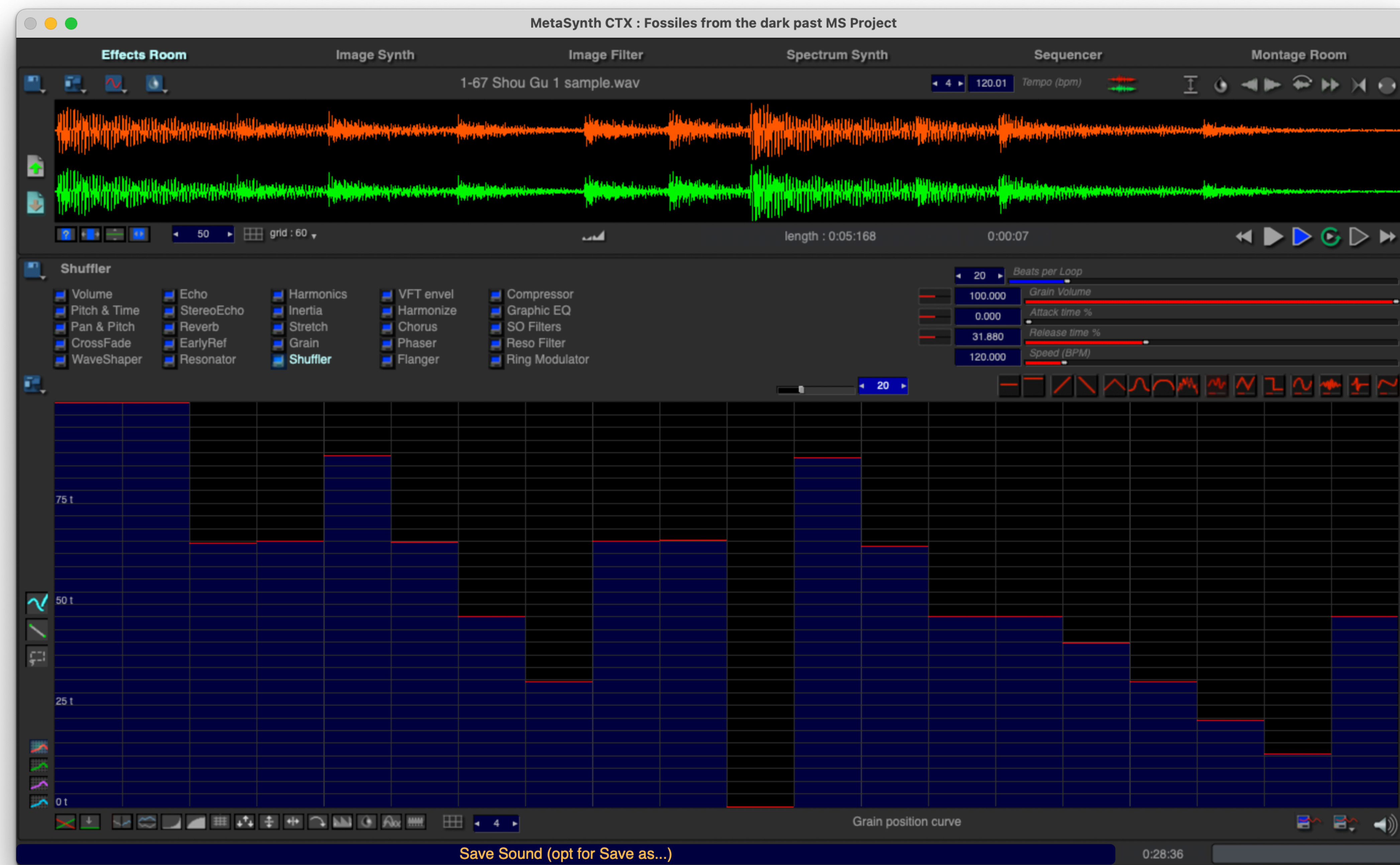


China has many geographical areas where unique and well protected fossils have been found. The picture is from the TV Series «Mysterious China», but it has been manipulated by me, as you will discover if you look closer. (Photo © Arild Hagen)



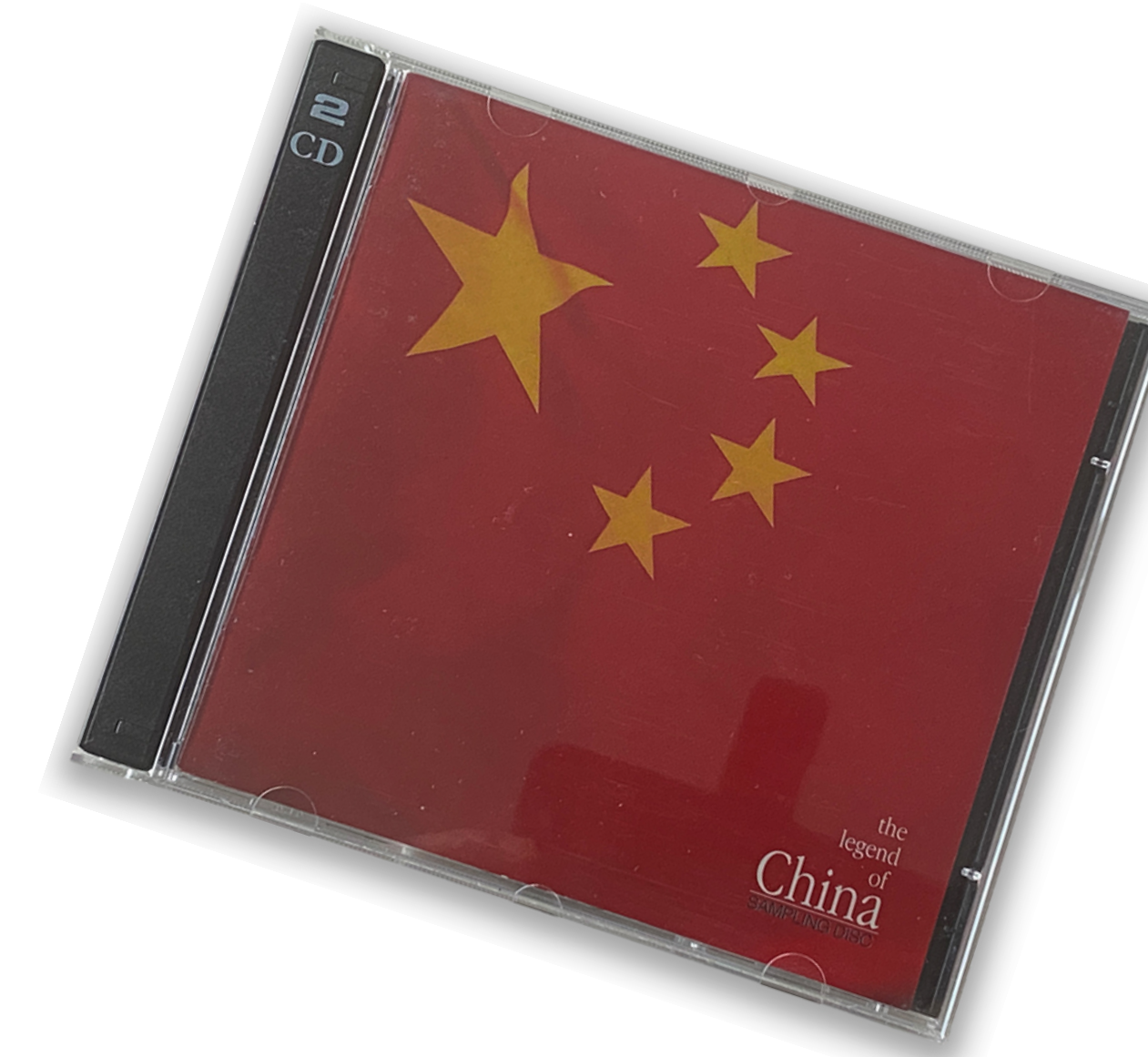
08 Fossils From the Dark Past continued

I also made percussive loops where I mixed a combination of traditional Chinese drum sounds with metal sounds and noises of various shapes. I loaded the samples into the MetaSynth Sampler area and experimented with them in the Effects Room. An example is shown below, where I use the Shuffler effect to sequence random parts of the sample "Shou Gu 1" from "The Legend of China" sampling CD. I chose to set the Shuffler to play 20 beats pr. loop instead of the traditional 8, 16, 24 etc. When this loop is played together with the traditional 4/4 beat, the sequence becomes much more interesting!



This is how the audio file in the Sampler looks after the Shou Gu samples was used as the sound source for the Shuffler in the Effects Room

In addition to the sweeps, percussion and manipulated drum-sequences, I also created ambient soundscapes mixing sounds from Chinese instruments with MetaSynth sounds. These ambient beds made the atmosphere dreamy and illustrate that we are going back in time, to the time before the humans entered the world scene.



Track	DESCRIPTION	KEY	LENGTH (min/sec)
16	二胡 4 / ER HU 4	Bb	0:25:13
17	二胡 5 / ER HU 5	Bb	0:25:01
18	二胡 6 / ER HU 6	Bb	0:49:00
19	二胡 7 / ER HU 7	Bb	0:25:12
20	二胡 8 / ER HU 8	Bb	0:25:12
21	二胡 9 / ER HU 9	Bb	0:25:12
22	二胡 10 / ER HU 10	Bb	0:25:12
23	二胡 11 / ER HU 11	Bb	0:25:12
24	二胡 12 / ER HU 12	Bb	0:25:12
25	二胡 13 / ER HU 13	Bb	0:25:12
26	二胡 14 / ER HU 14	Bb	0:25:12
27	二胡 15 / ER HU 15	Bb	0:25:12
28	二胡 16 / ER HU 16	Bb	0:25:12
29	二胡 17 / ER HU 17	Bb	0:25:12
30	二胡 18 / ER HU 18	Bb	0:25:12
31	二胡 19 / ER HU 19	Bb	0:25:12

The sampling CD "The Legend of China" (2000) by Discoveryfirm is a beautifully recorded collection of traditional Chinese instruments. I used many of the samples in "Mysterious China" and also in the new track "Fossils From the Dark Past"

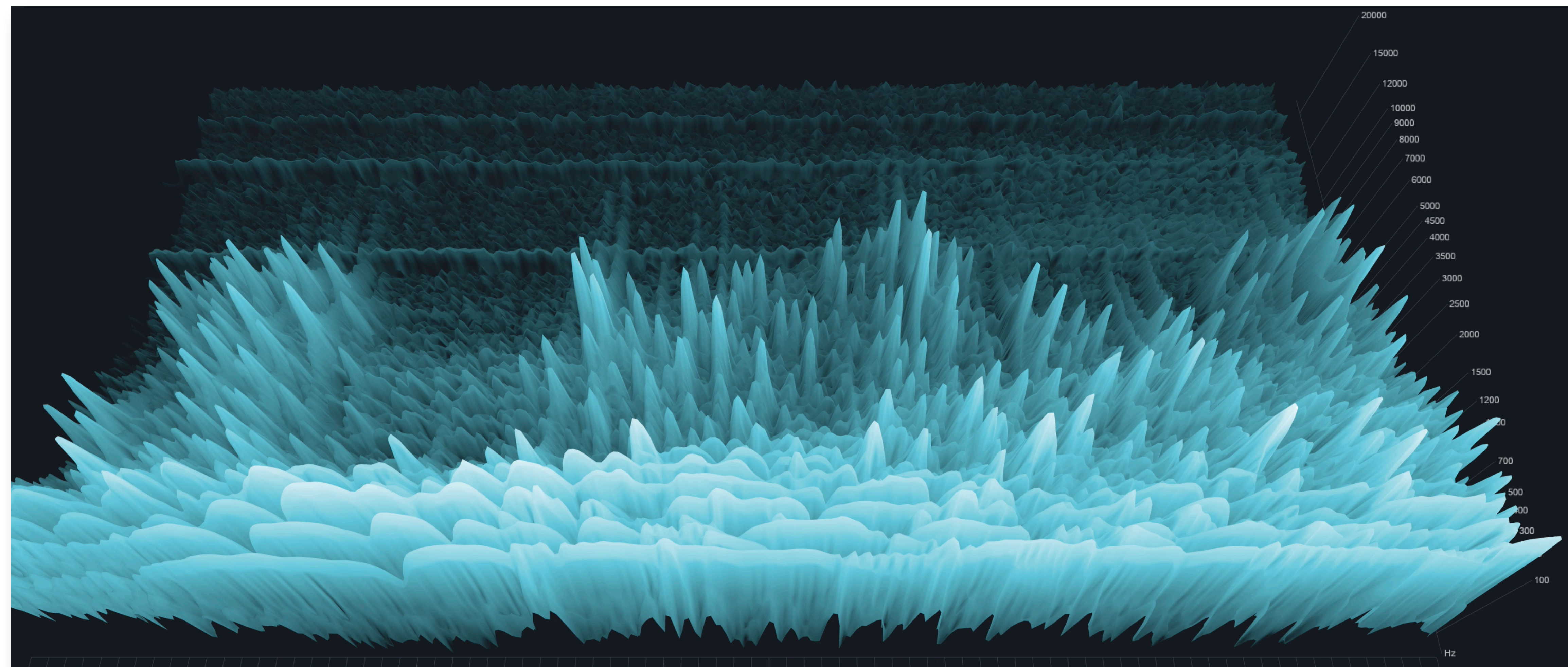


(Photo © Arild Hagen)

09 Frozen Waterfall

One of my most interesting projects was to compose original music for the Radio Fantasy Series "Order and Chaos" ("Orden og Kaos") that my friend Arnfinn Sørensen (Christensen) wrote and produced for radio (NRK) back in 1998. I have found many unused sounds and musical pieces from that project, but I had a hard time converting the original audio files from their old SoundDesigner format that SoundTools (which later became ProTools) used at that time. However, there is one piece of Software which is still reading and importing SoundDesigner II audio files: MetaSynth! I have now picked up these audio files and created "Frozen Waterfall". I have tried to illustrate how a waterfall freezing to ice can sound. The purpose is not to create a realistic sound, but to let the listener feel the power of the water and the drama that unfolds when a waterfall is freezing to ice. I have used recordings of both running water, splashes and waterfalls, and I have combined them with heavy drum sounds and screaming metal pitched down or stretched (in the Effects Room). From my work with sound design through the years, I have learned that if I want a really heavy sound, I should stack several similar sounds on top of each other. If any of the sounds compete in the low frequencies, the solution is to keep the low frequencies of the best sample and filter out the same frequencies in the other (stacked) samples. The "best sample" in the low frequency band (bass) is usually a sound that is warm and full and yet audible when listening through smaller speakers.

Two effects I used often when building up the heavy waterfall sounds was the Pitch&Time and the Resonator. The Pitch and Time shift effect allowed me to change the pitch and duration of each sound independently. To stretch out a sound and not changing the pitch - or vice versa - can create original and useful drones and noisebeds. The Resonator creates cool stereo resonance effects, and I used it to pitch noisy sounds to make them sound musical.



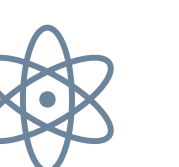
This is how a Spectrogram displays the rich frequencies that the sound of tiny bits of ice may look like when they are freezing. You can hear these sounds from 3:05 into the track.

The screenshot is from the Homeless Balloon's Youtube Channel where the tracks on "Meta Landscapes" have been analysed.



I also recorded my Fender Strat electric guitar and used the Ebow to create long, sustained notes with a lot of overtones. I treated these rich audio files in the Effects Room in MetaSynth as well, as you can hear in "Frozen Waterfall".

The Ebow is an amazing hand-held device that uses electro-magnetism to create sound effects on metal strings. It's held in the right hand to replace the plectrum or the fingers. It's small and battery-powered, but it can produce a big sound when the magnetism makes the strings vibrate. It has been around since 1976, and I have read that Jerry Garcia (Grateful Dead) was the first guitarist to use it.



10 Carrying the Cross

This composition is inspired by the painting "Christ Carrying the Cross" by the 16th century Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch. The second windy noise that comes at 0:16 into the track, is a direct render of a slightly distorted version of this painting (see the next page). - Why has Bosch's painting inspired me to make a musical composition, and how did I create it?

Hieronymus Bosch (1450 to 1516) usually painted with oil on oak wood, and his paintings mainly contains fantastic and macabre illustrations of religious concepts and narratives. "Christ Carrying the Cross" was probably painted in 1515 as a gift to a friend. Today, Bosch is seen as a hugely individualistic painter with deep insight into humanity's desires and darkest fears. His paintings can be seen in the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent, Belgium.

"Painted a year before Bosch's death, "Christ Carrying the Cross" is practically a manual in itself of physiognomic principles. A flat plane confronts the viewer. The only landscape is that of human faces emerging from the dark. A total of 19 faces populate the panel – from Simon of Cyrene's foreshortened upturned face to Jesus' resigned, sorrowful yet serene face, to a diverse crowd of faces twisted in agony or rage — each one is a study in character and emotion." (Elizabeth Berdann, 2016)*

"Everything is in the face, and the face in turn is dominated by the eyes...the face is the mirror of the soul...for this is the only part of the body capable of as many expressions as there are emotions." (Cicero, 1st century, BC)

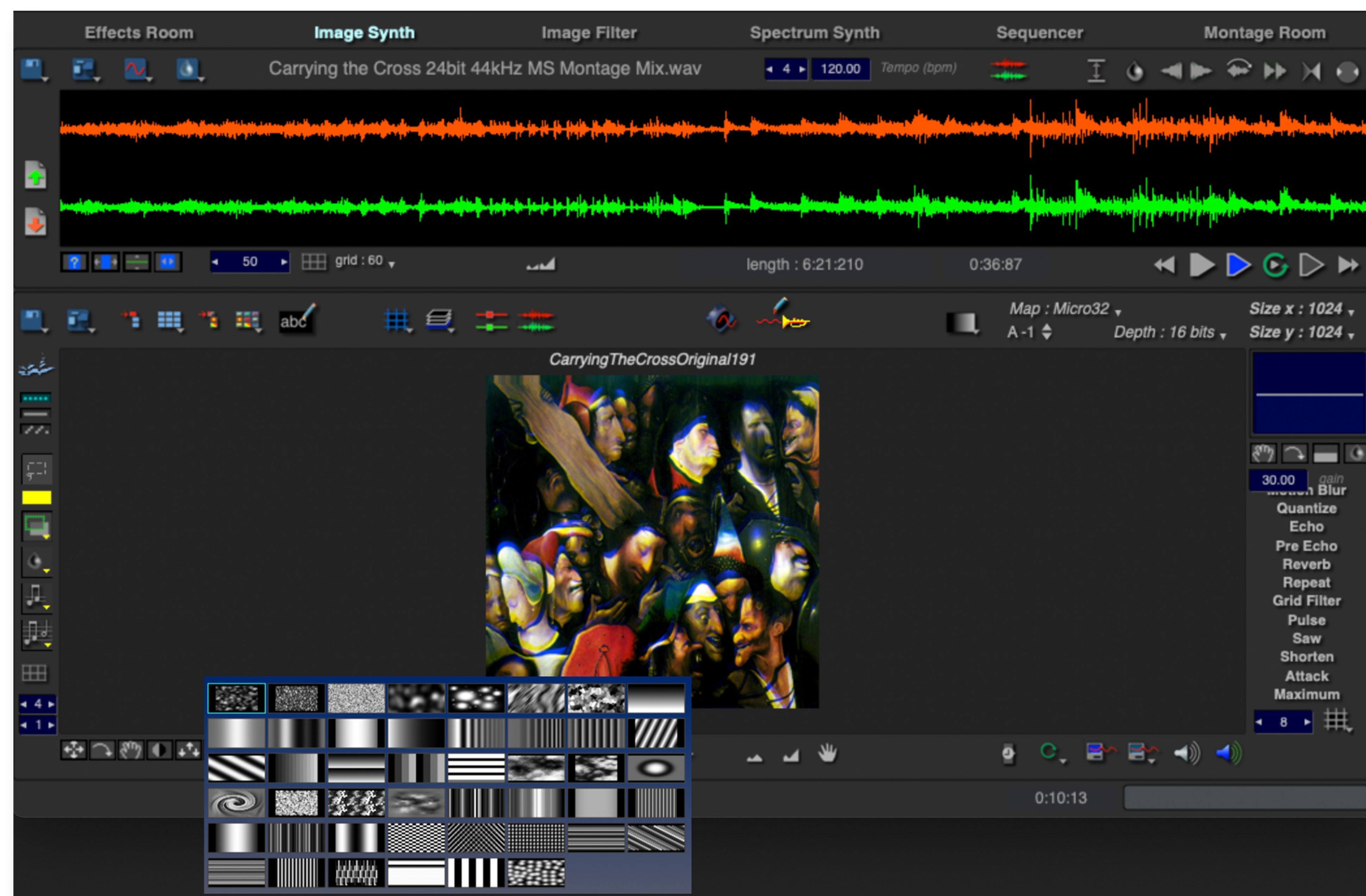


**The Science of Physiognomy asserts that the face reflects a person's behavior, moral qualities and inner character.*

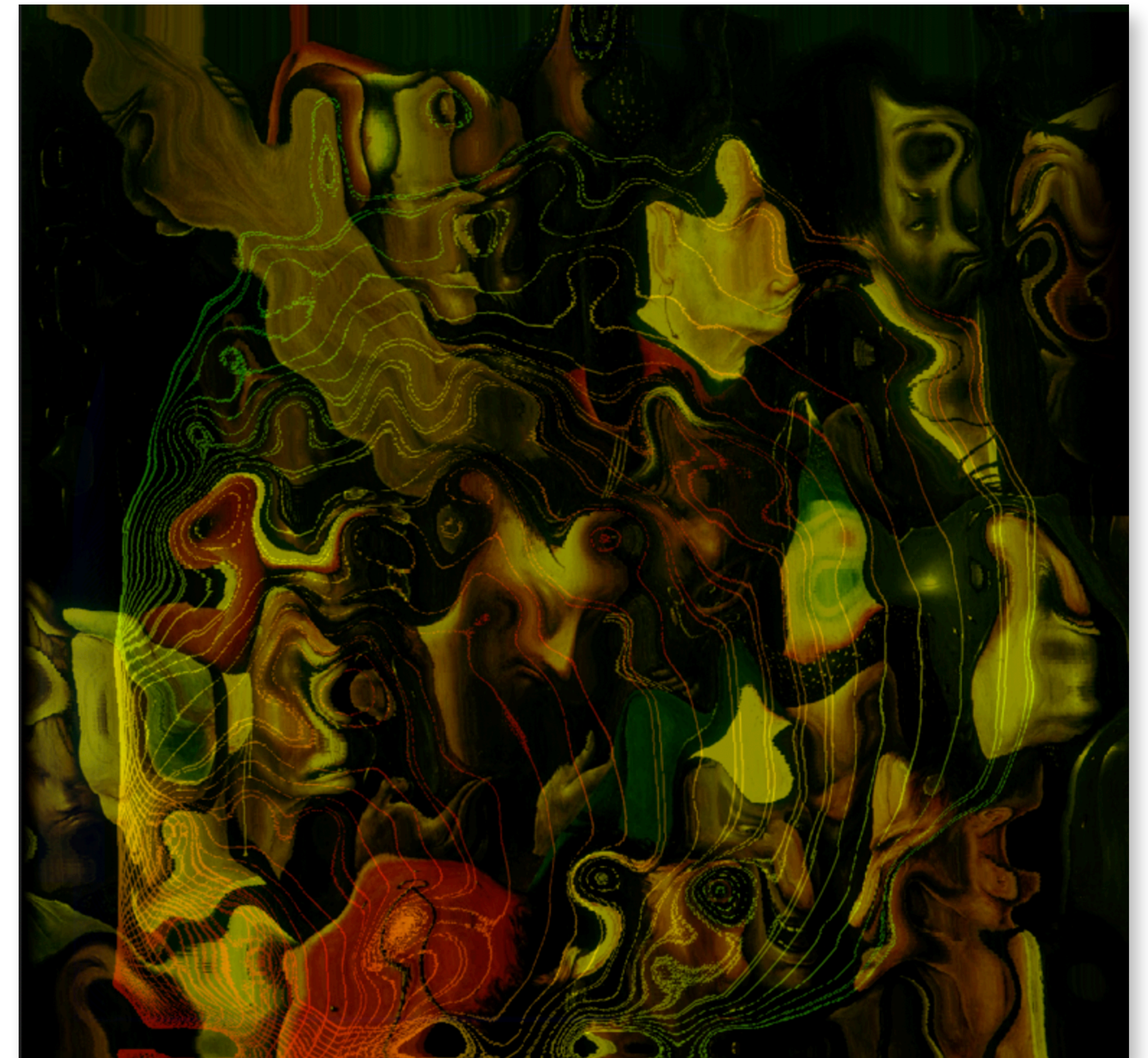
"The difference between the work of Bosch and that of other painters lies in the fact the others depict man as he appears on the outside. Only Bosch dared to paint him the way he is on the inside." (José de Siguenza, 1605)

10 Carrying the Cross continued

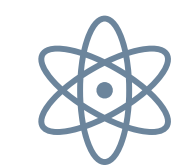
So, how how will this image sound when transferred to audio? The Image Synth can not only import images but also manipulate them. I imported Bosch's painting and used the Displacement Map menu to distort it. It was fun to experiment with different graphic patterns in the Displacement Map Menu, and the faces in the painting were distorted in a way that changed them dramatically. When creating an interesting sound by rendering the Canvas image in MetaSynth, there is no connection between what *looks* good and what *sounds* good. The clue is to understand which graphic shapes create the most interesting sound with the chosen scale and sound source (Image Synth Instrument). With the distorted version of Bosch's painting, we see that there is a lot of information in the image I ended up using. The colours are also important for the stereo "image" of the sound.

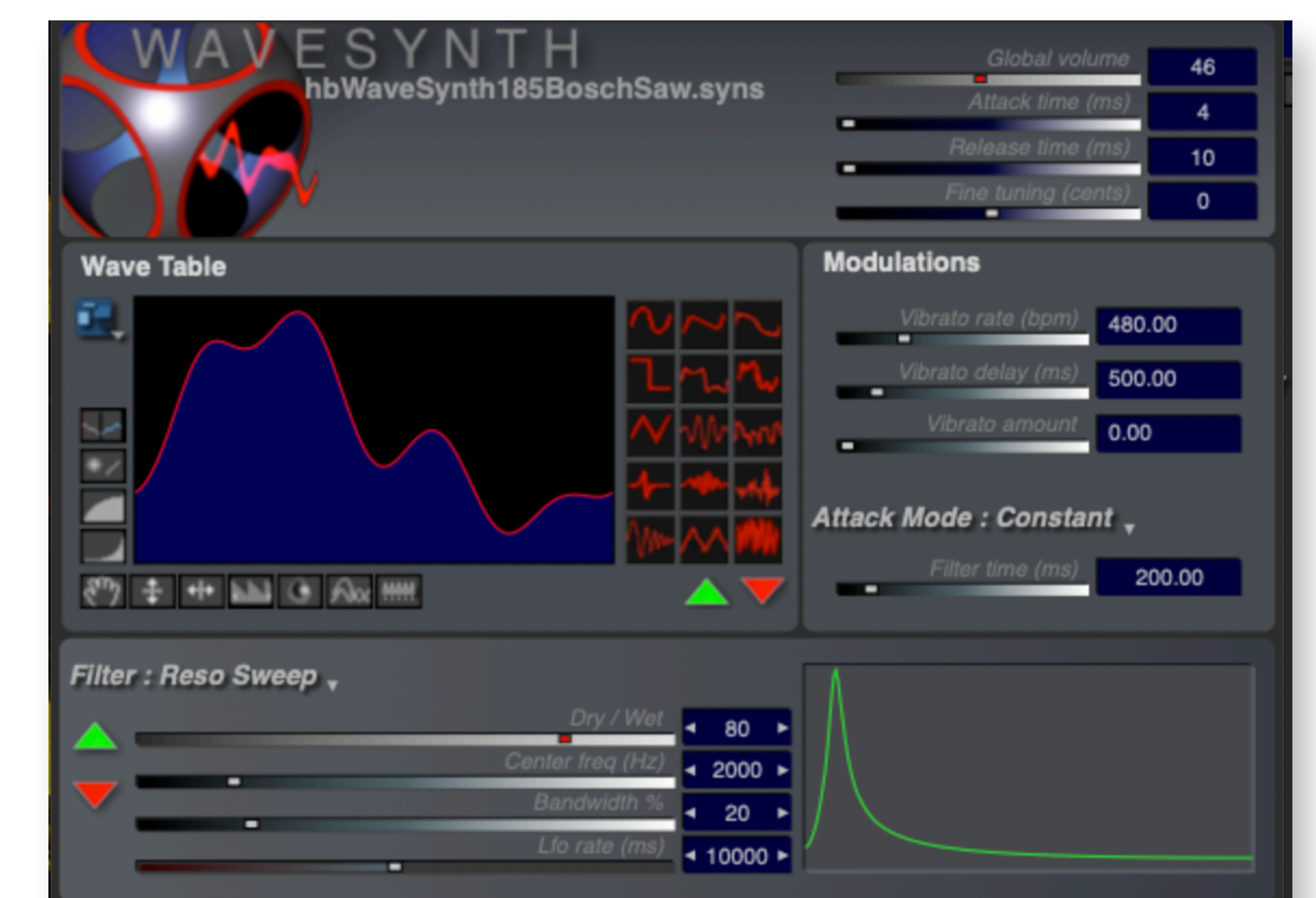


The painting after I distorted it with the Displacement Map in the Image Synth



The Displacement Map contains various graphic patterns that will distort the image in the Canvas

Since the Image Synth plays back any image in the Canvas, I wanted to see how interesting the distorted painting could sound. I played it back with a Micro32 note scale and a Saw Wave blended with a bell like waveform in the Image Synth's Wavesynth-Instrument to make it a little warmer. The sound that was rendered reminded me of a dramatic wind blowing away dust and dirt from the dark corners and making everything clean again. I think it suited Bosch's painting, and it became another way of interpreting his picture. 

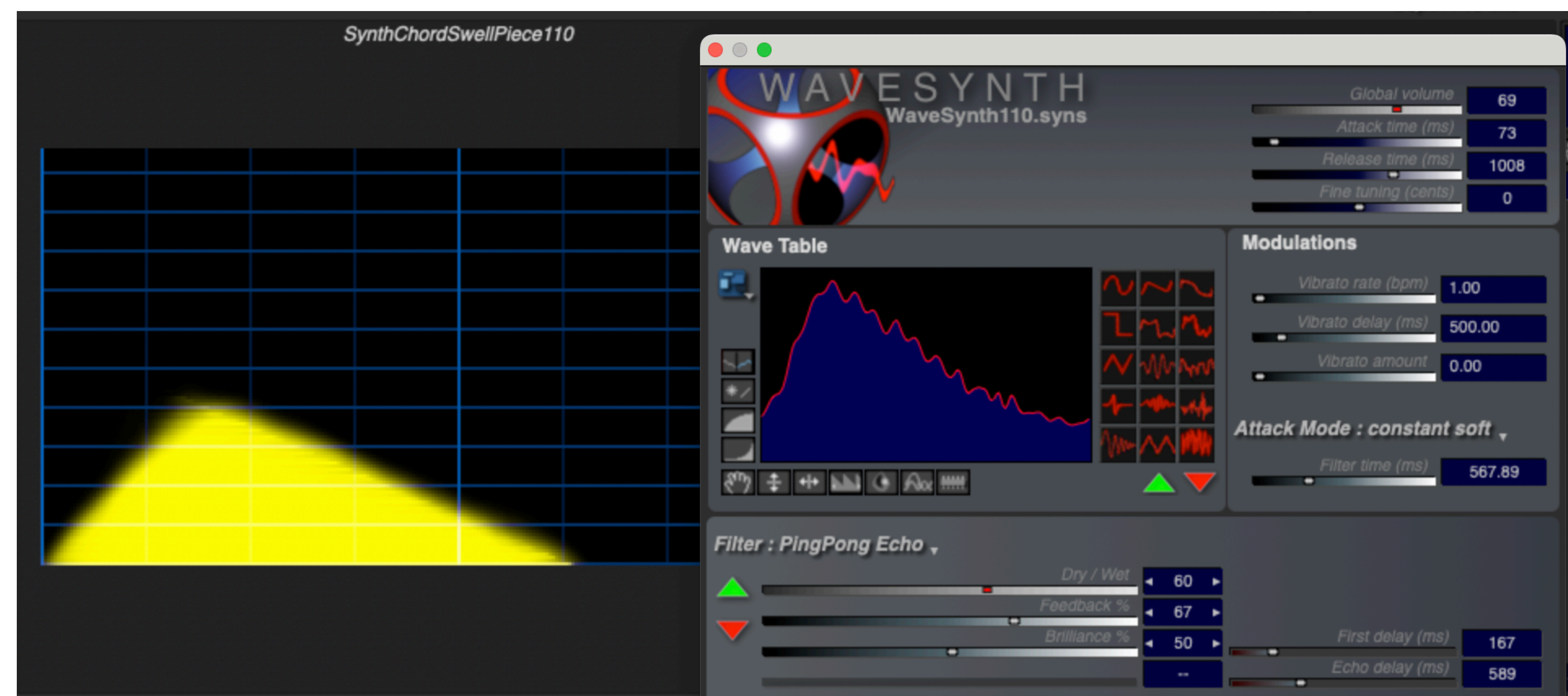


In the Image Synth Instrument window, I blended a Saw Wave with a bell- sound waveform and added a Reso Sweep Filter

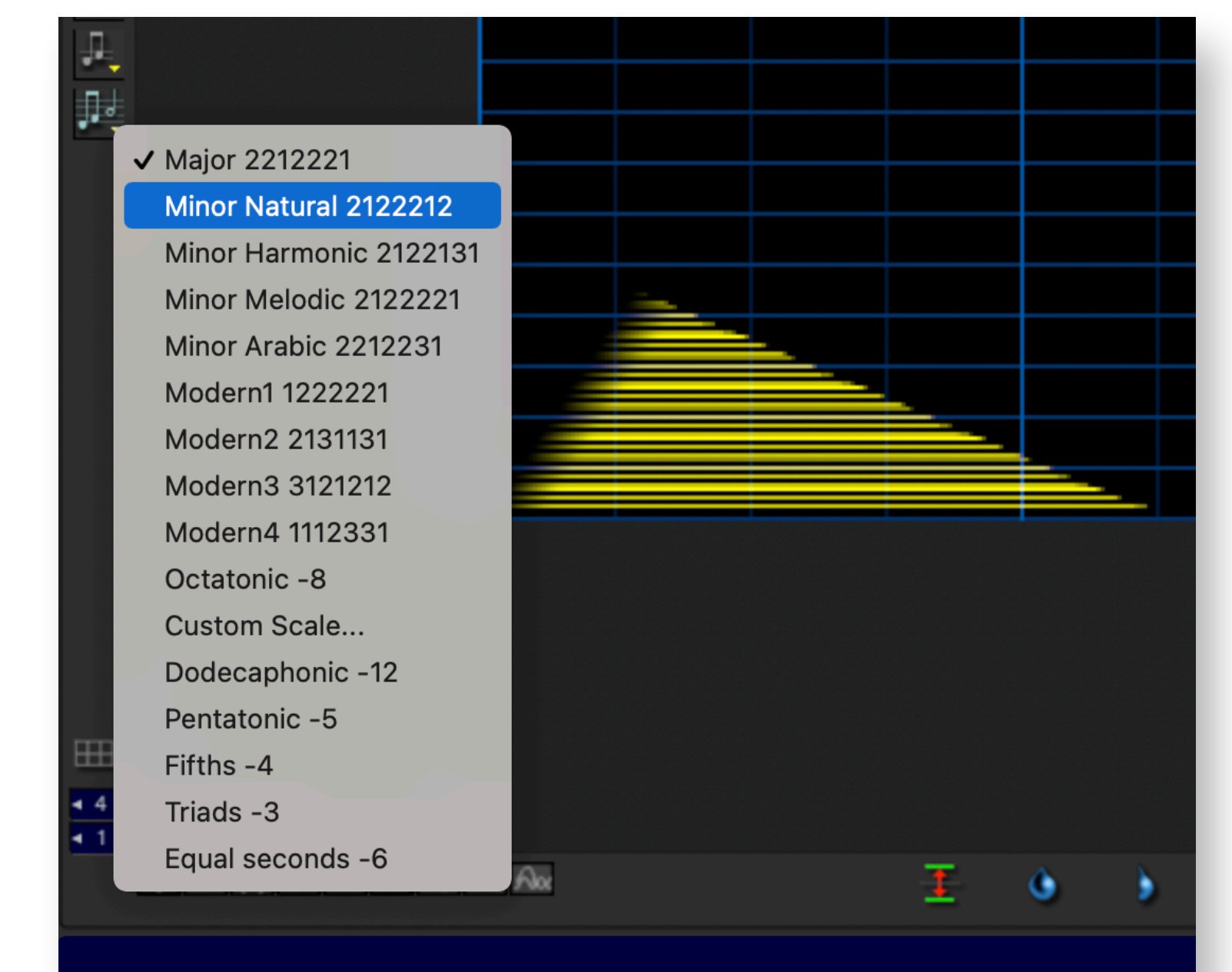
11 Poetry Landscape

When I was participating in the Test Team for the new MetaSynth CTX in the spring this year (2021), I created a new MetaSynth Project to test sounds, effects and features. I used some of these sounds to compose "Poetry Landscape". It's a simple montage of sounds created and shaped in the Image Synth. - Instead of exporting the sounds out of MetaSynth and importing them in ProTools or Ableton Live - which is the workflow I usually use - I decided to use MetaSynth's Montage Room to arrange and mix this composition. More about this on the next page. I will first show two methods I used to create the musical sounds and tone patterns in "Poetry Landscape".

*«In music, silence is a space for our imagination.»
(Composer David Bruce)*

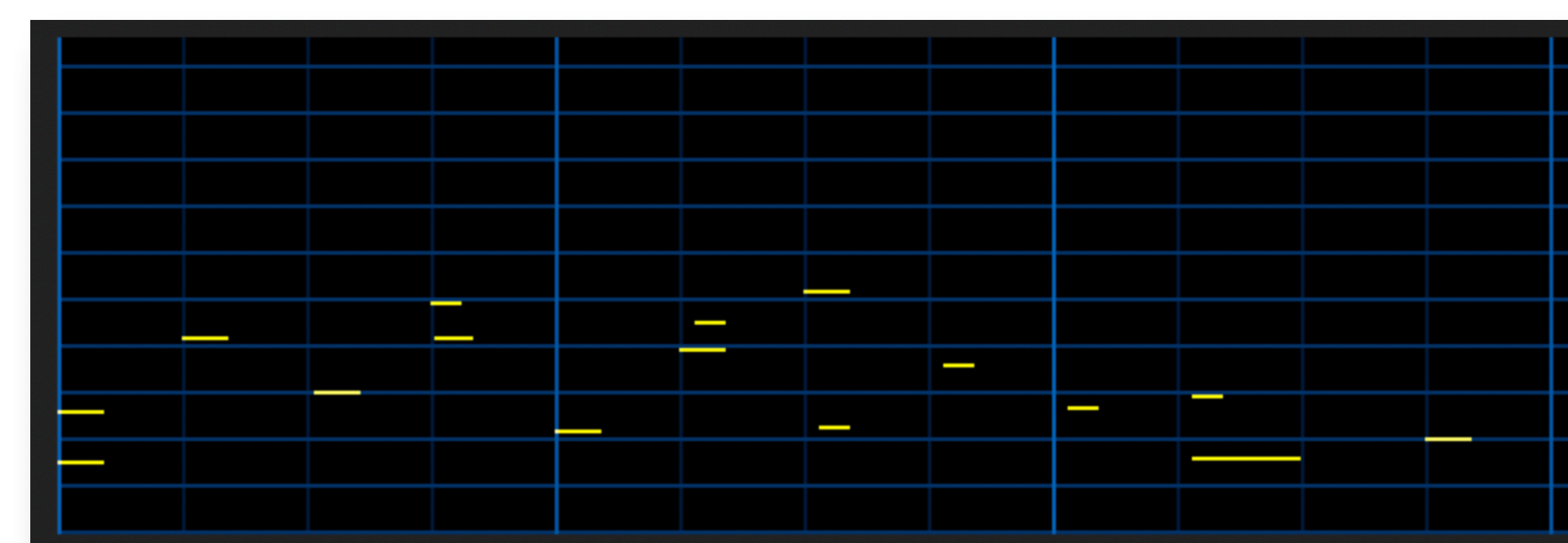


After 0:30 there is what I would call a harmonic or musical noise sweep. To make it I started with a broad brush and painted a solid triangle. The scale Map of the Canvas was set to Semitones, and I used the "Fit to Given Scale" -menu on the left pane of the Canvas to filter my yellow triangle so only the pixels within the Minor Natural scale would remain. The image no longer sounded noisy, like a traditional noise sweep, but it became more musical and suited the other sounds well. - This method can be used to adjust single dots (notes) in the Canvas as well.

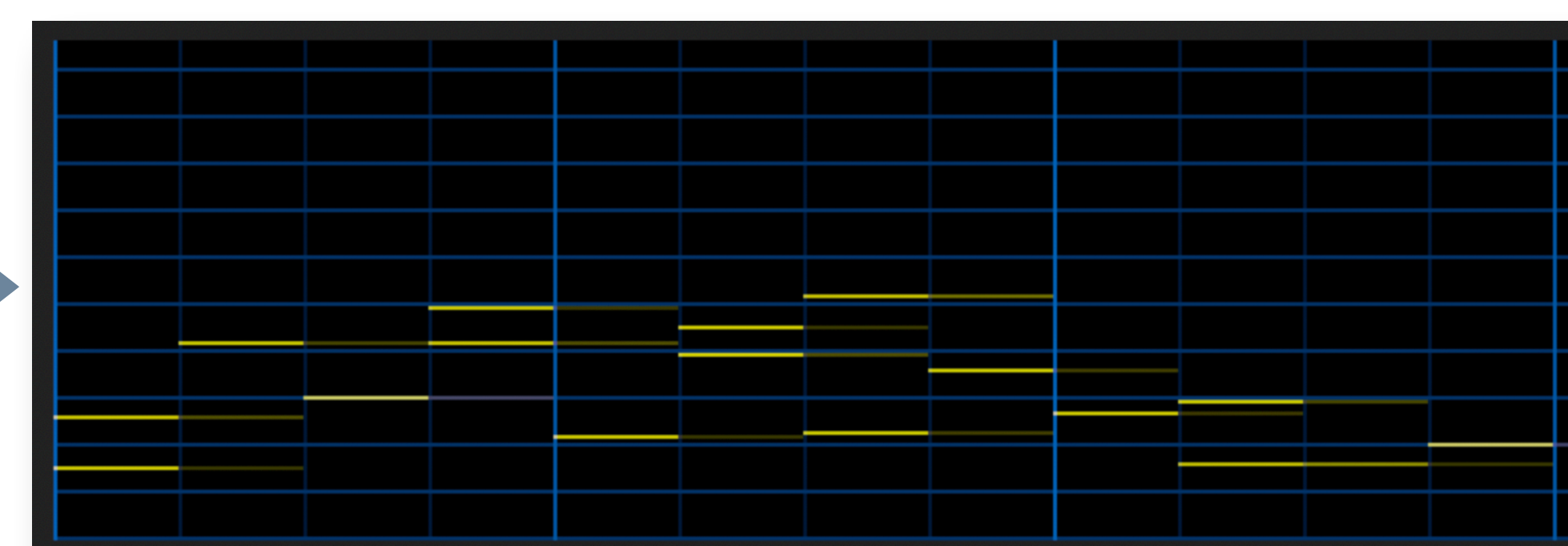


The Fit to Given Scale -menu also has some interesting Modersn scales!

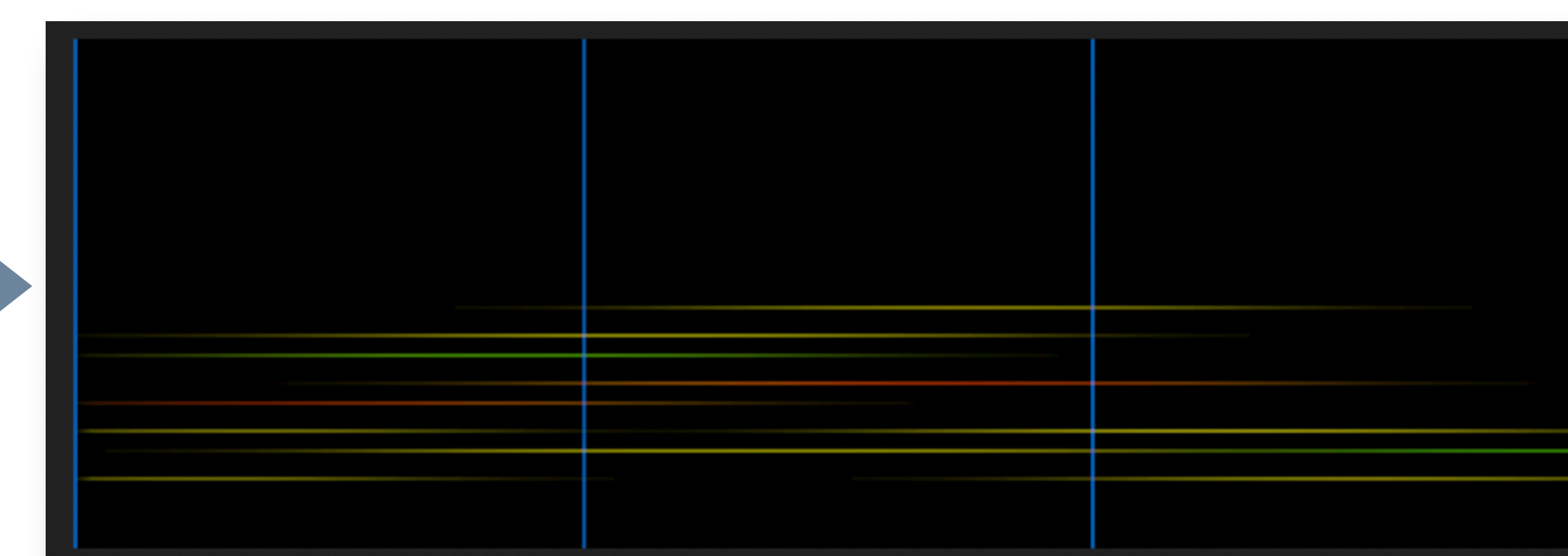
The other example is how I painted notes for a melody with a few chords in the Image Synth Canvas. Each step is described below:



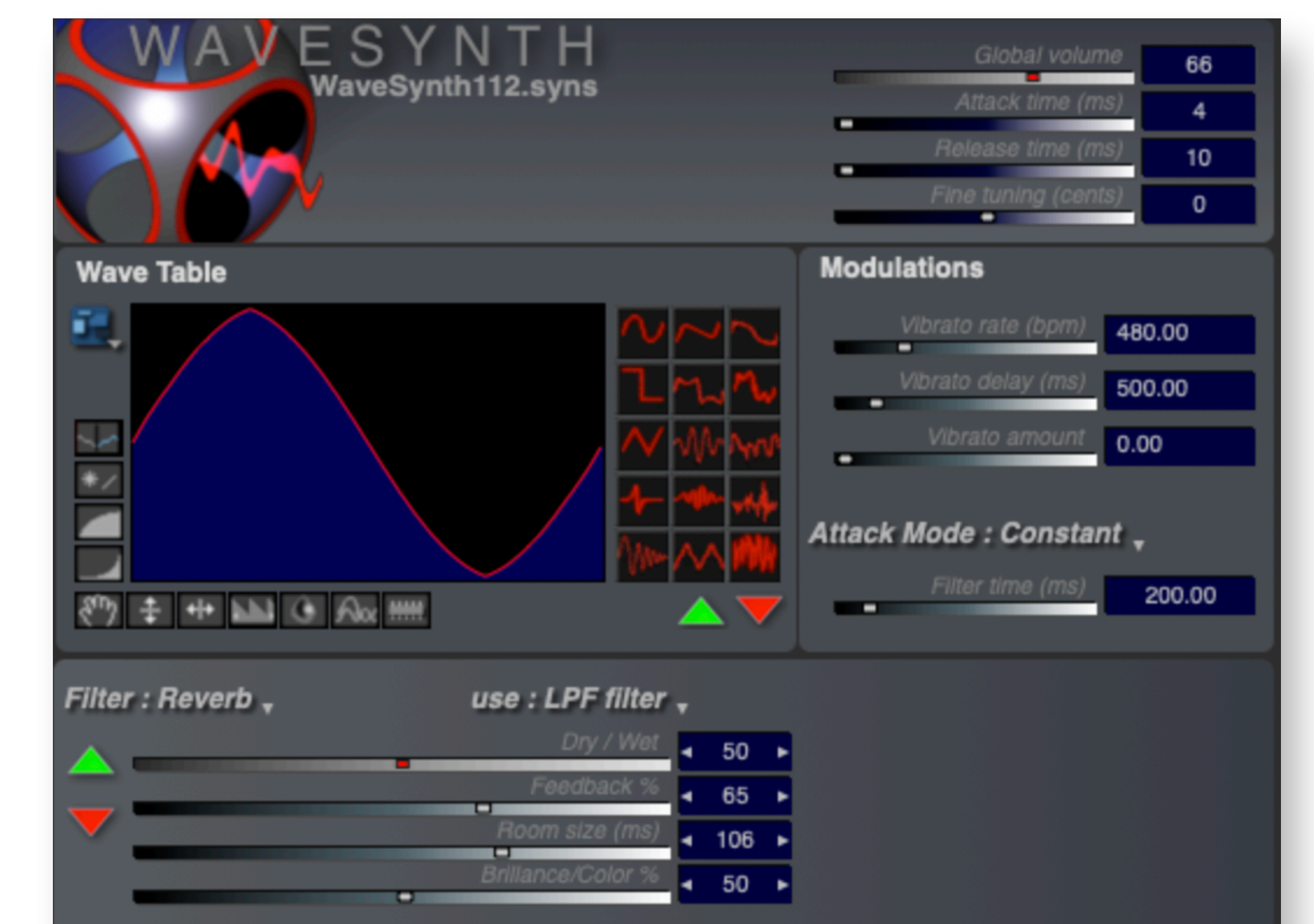
I first painted dots (notes) using the blue grid as a guide (and previewing the sound of the note holding down option+control on the keyboard)



I then used "Quantize" to move the painted dots (notes) to the exact place on the canvas grid. The grid setting on the bottom of the right pane in the Canvas decides the resulting length of each note



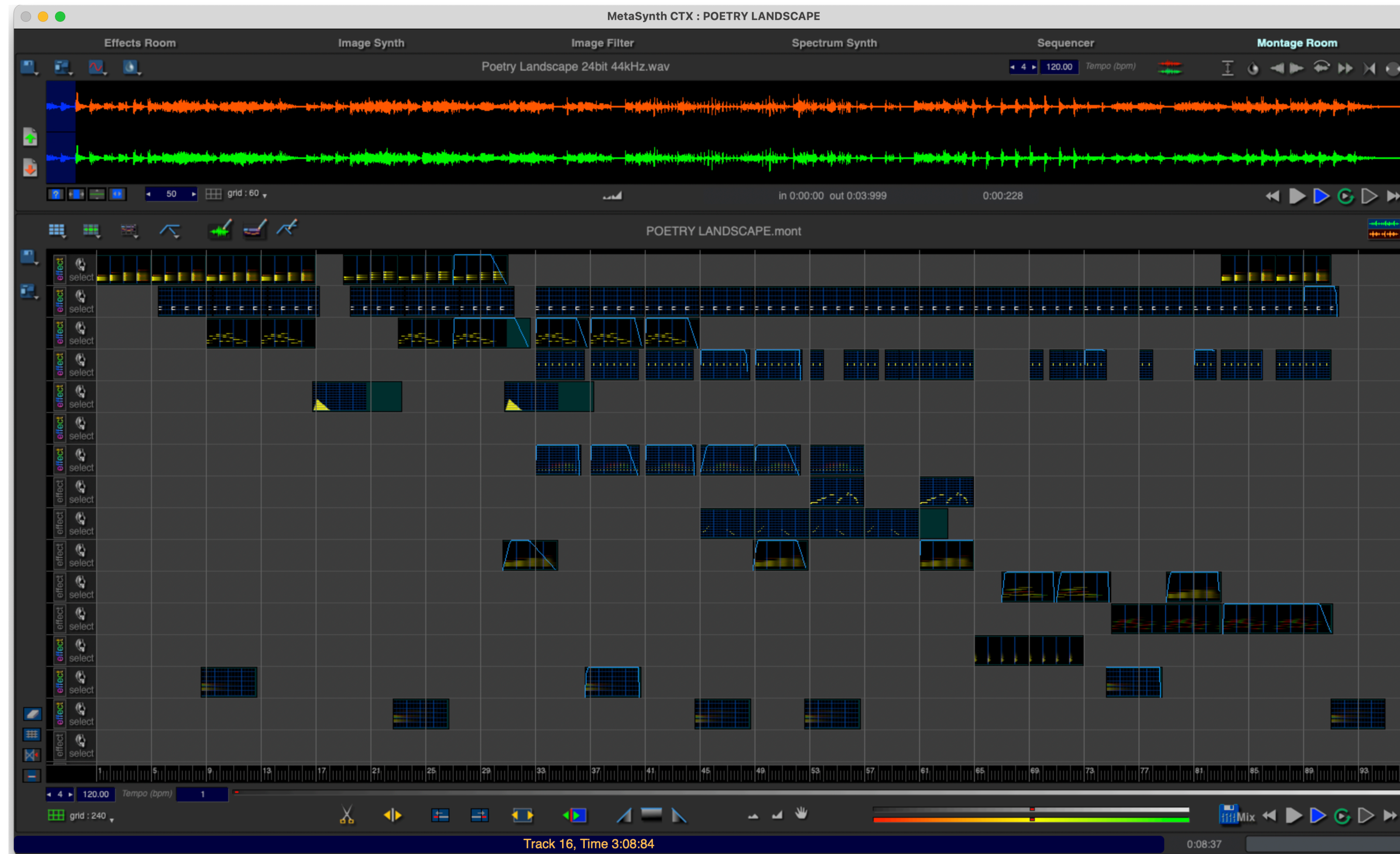
I wanted to make long, ambient notes and used the Motion Blur in the tools menu on the right pane of the Canvas to blur the quantised notes. I also used a coloured filter to spread the notes in stereo



I wanted a warm, clean sound and created an Image Synth Instrument with a single Sine Wave blended with a little Saw Tooth wave

11 Poetry Landscape continued

Below is the Montage Room in MetaSynth where I arranged and mixed "Poetry Landscape". At first the Montage looks like a traditional audio mixer or sequencer with 24 tracks, but what's special here is that I can open the Image Synth presets bank and select the presets I want and use them immediately. I just drag them down to the tracks. When I play back the mix, any presets that need rendering will automatically be rendered. This speeds up the work flow! If I need to adjust any of the presets, I can re-open them in the ImageSynth, edit, save and they will be rendered and updated in the Montage.

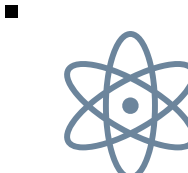


What kind of mixing tools are available in the Montage Room?

I can adjust the audio volume and panning for each track, but I can't set different levels for clips (sounds) on the same track individually. I hope clip based animation will come to the Montage Room in a future update!. If I want a clip to sound louder, I need to place it on a track with a higher output level, or I need to edit the clip in a different Room in MetaSynth.

What about effect plugins?

Only the built in effects can be used in MetaSynth, no VST or AU plugins. The same effects that are available in the Image Synth and Sequencer Room, can be inserted on the tracks in the Montage.



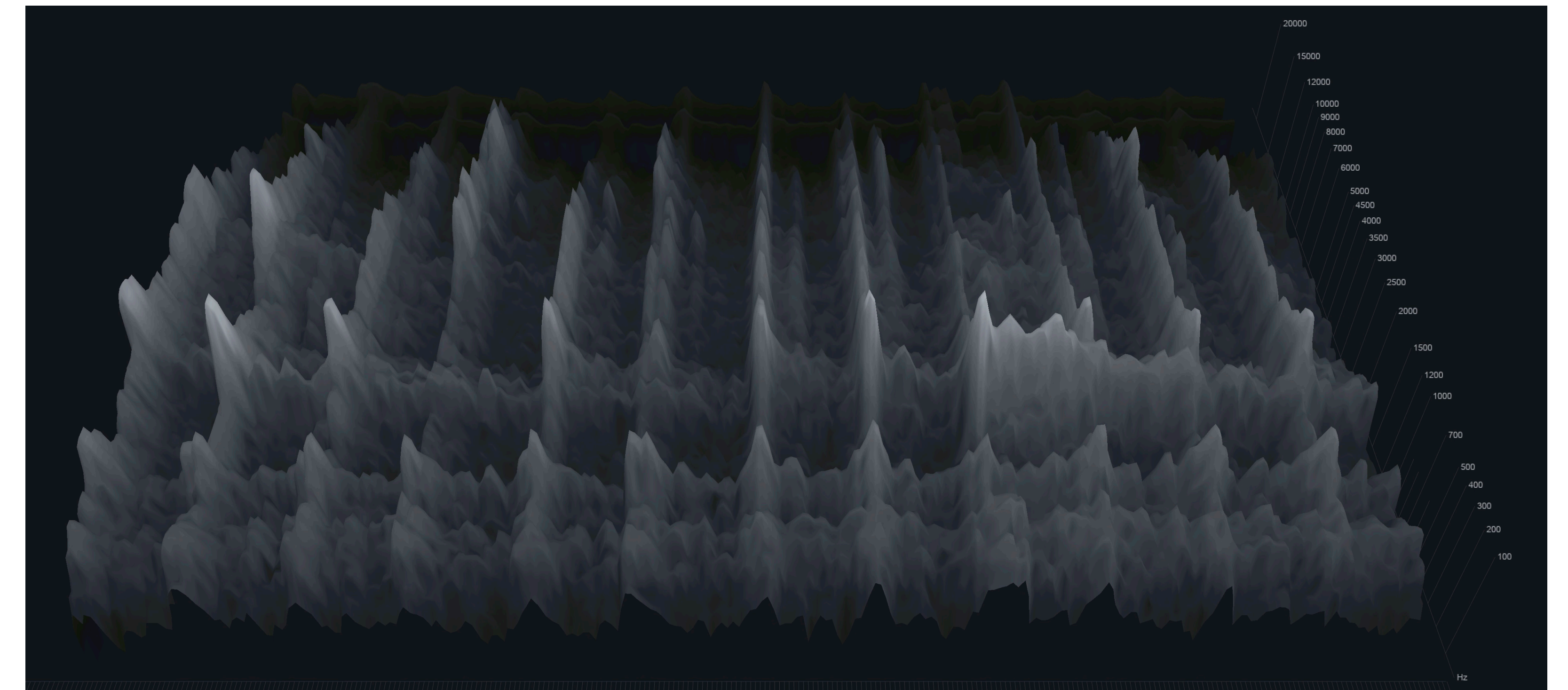
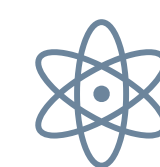
The Montage has 24 tracks but no Master Fader. Because I always Master my finished compositions outside MetaSynth (usually in ProTools), I try to be careful with my levels in the Montage Room. MetaSynth is using high resolution internally,

12 More Drops

Since I created "One Drop Is Enough" in 2005 (track #5 on this album), I have become even more fascinated by water. I have been aware that water - and the behaviour of water - has something to teach us about living without stress.

Like with "One Drop Is Enough", all the sounds in "More Drops" are built on recordings of water, either dripping water, running water or splashing water. Different amounts of reverberation create different distances for the water, like in the entrance of a cave. Some sounds are slowed down or pitched down. Other sounds are speeded up. MetaSynth has excellent tools for manipulating these delicate sounds without getting too much artifacts and distortion!

I arranged and mixed "More Drops" in Ableton Live (see the image below), probably my favourite DAW when I have a musical idea and want to realise it fast. Avid's ProTools is the king of audio surgery. MetaSynth is the queen of creativity and the best tool for creating sounds and music never heard before!



Dripping water can create an interesting rhythmic pattern, and our ears are always searching for "meaning" in what we hear. A steady rhythm has meaning. Is it also beautiful, we call it music. Is the rhythm sophisticated, we call it jazz!

- "Does having the Pacific Ocean in your backyard helped you process the Covid-19 pandemic in a spiritual way? There is a theory called "blue mind" which believes that living near water is a health curative."
- "Yeah, I can believe that. "Cool Water," "Many Rivers to Cross," "How Deep Is the Ocean." I hear any of those songs and it's like some kind of cure. I don't know what for, but a cure for something that I don't even know I have. A fix of some kind. It's like a spiritual thing. Water is a spiritual thing. I never heard of "blue mind" before. Sounds like it could be some kind of slow blues song. Something Van Morrison would write. Maybe he has, I don't know.»
(Bob Dylan, interview with NYT June 2020)

13 Revisiting Japan Electronic Suite

As I wrote earlier, when composer Glen Bledsoe and U&I Software should release the double CD "MetaSynthia 1" in 2000, I was invited to submit a track. I had just started composing music for a television documentary ("NRK") about Japan, and I used the best pieces and made a long montage titled "Japan Electronic Suite". The "MetaSynthia" CD is no longer available and very hard to find online. However, a short version is available on Homeless Balloon's CD "Travel In Silence" (2007).

This spring (2001) I opened the old project and found a lot of extra files from the "Japan" project. I imported these into ProTools and created a brand new extended version which is 41 minutes long and titled "Revisiting Japan Electronic Suite". I remember that I experimented a lot with all the tools and possibilities in MetaSynth (version 2.6). I always make notes, so I know that I mixed the sounds with ProTools 24Mix on my PowerMac G3/400. Below is my new ProTools Session with all the clips.



My 41 minutes long ProTools Session needed 1304 Audio Clips, and I managed to squeeze most of them into 7 stereo tracks. Each clip is a story in itself, with planning, experimenting, shaping, rendering and placing every clip at the right spot on the timeline.

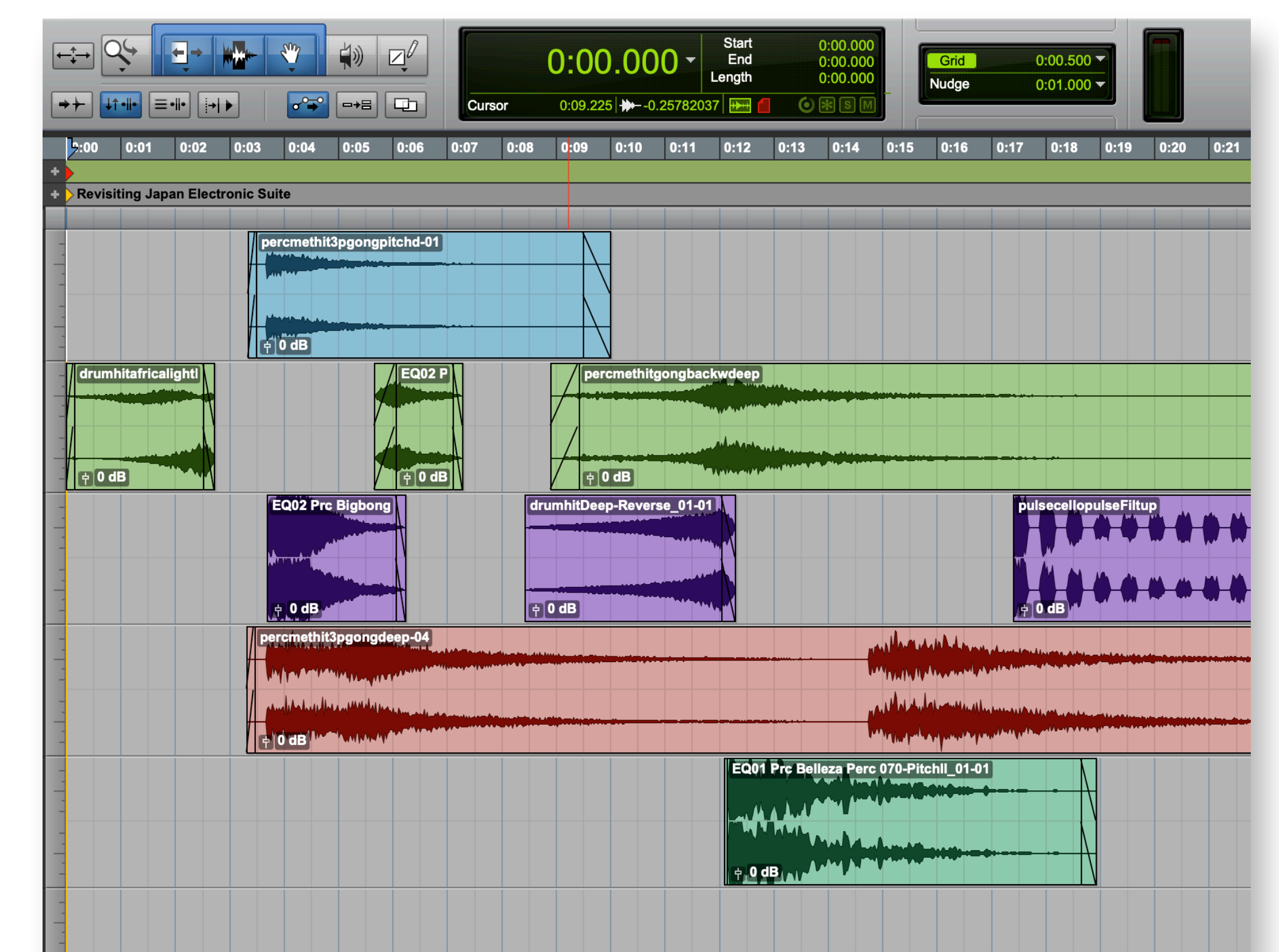


```
SESSION NAME: Revisiting Japan Elektronik Suite
SAMPLE RATE: 44100.000000
BIT DEPTH: 32-bit float
SESSION START TIMECODE: 00:00:00:00
TIMECODE FORMAT: 30 Frame
# OF AUDIO TRACKS: 7
# OF AUDIO CLIPS: 1304
# OF AUDIO FILES: 768
```

The first CD in the "MetaSynthia" series, released in 2000. The artists Eric Wenger, Tommi Lindell, David Coffin, Len Sasso, James Brody, Todd Barton and me (Helge Krabye) submitted music to the CD.



The opening part of the track with a closer view of the audio clips.



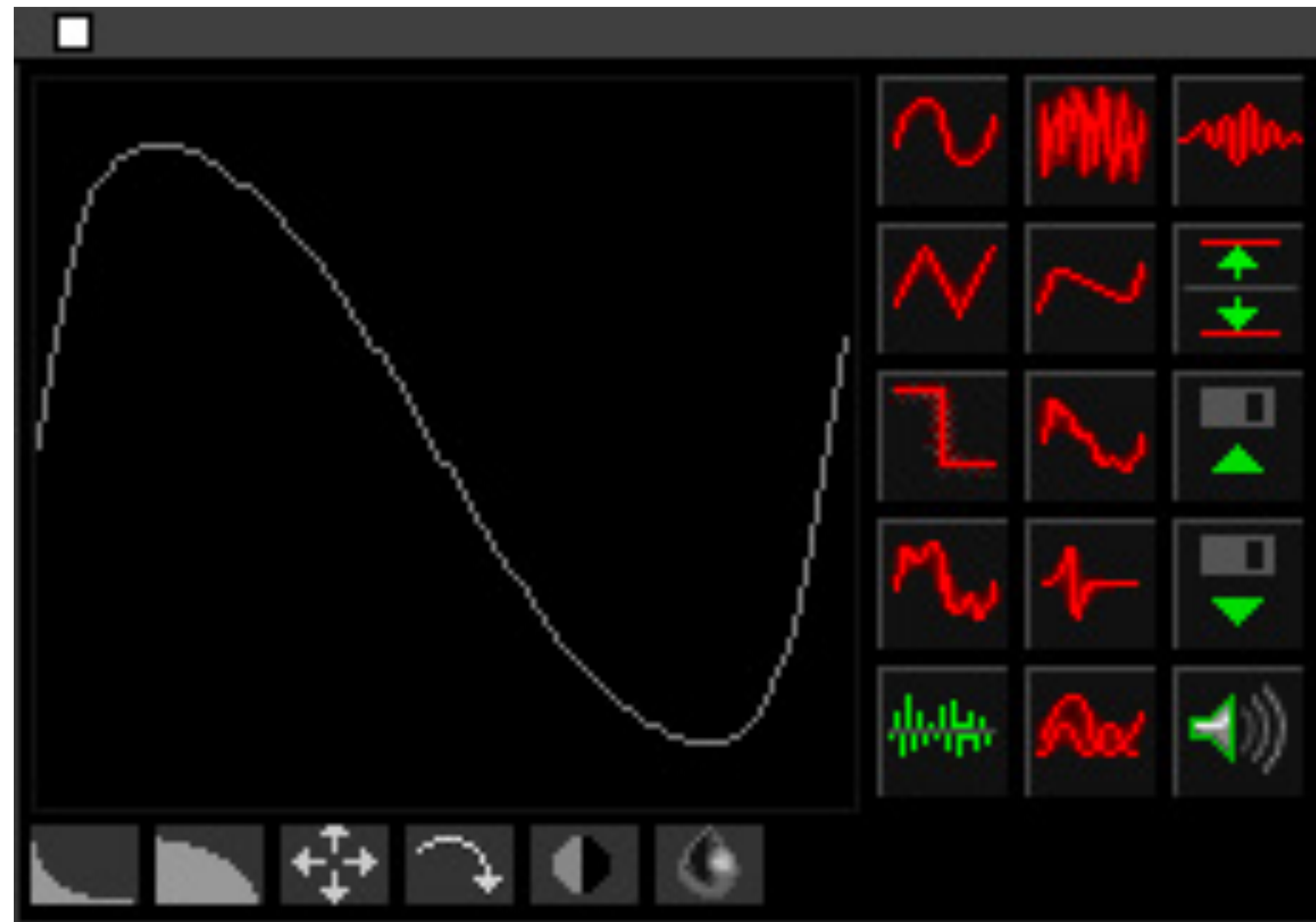
"A quick note to tell you that I 'm very impressed by your music. I just listen to the MetaSynthia CD and Japan suite is my favorite piece from the 2 CDs. All sounds are beautiful and the atmosphere is deeply involving. Nothing pleases me more to see my tools being used for such artistic achievements. Bravo. Best, Eric." (Eric Wenger, Aug 28, 2007)

It was an encouragement for me to receive this personal email from Eric Wenger in 2007!

14 Random Tones

I composed "Random Tones" as my second submission to the "MetaSynthia 2" Project in 2005, and I was permitted to include a tutorial with pictures and text to show how I had used MetaSynth. You can see some images from this tutorial below. Be aware that MetaSynth has gone through many changes since 2005, and that the images are less than accurate compared to how today's MetaSynth CTX look. When I started composing "Random Tones", I first created a suitable Image Synth WaveSynth (image #1) that I could use when pre-listening to the notes I was about to draw on the Canvas. The old pictures below show my workflow. With later updates to MetaSynth, I could have arranged and mixed all the unique audio files I created in the Montage Room, but I imported the audio files in ProTools, arranged the clips, adjusted levels, added some filters and bounced the mix to my hard drive.

1

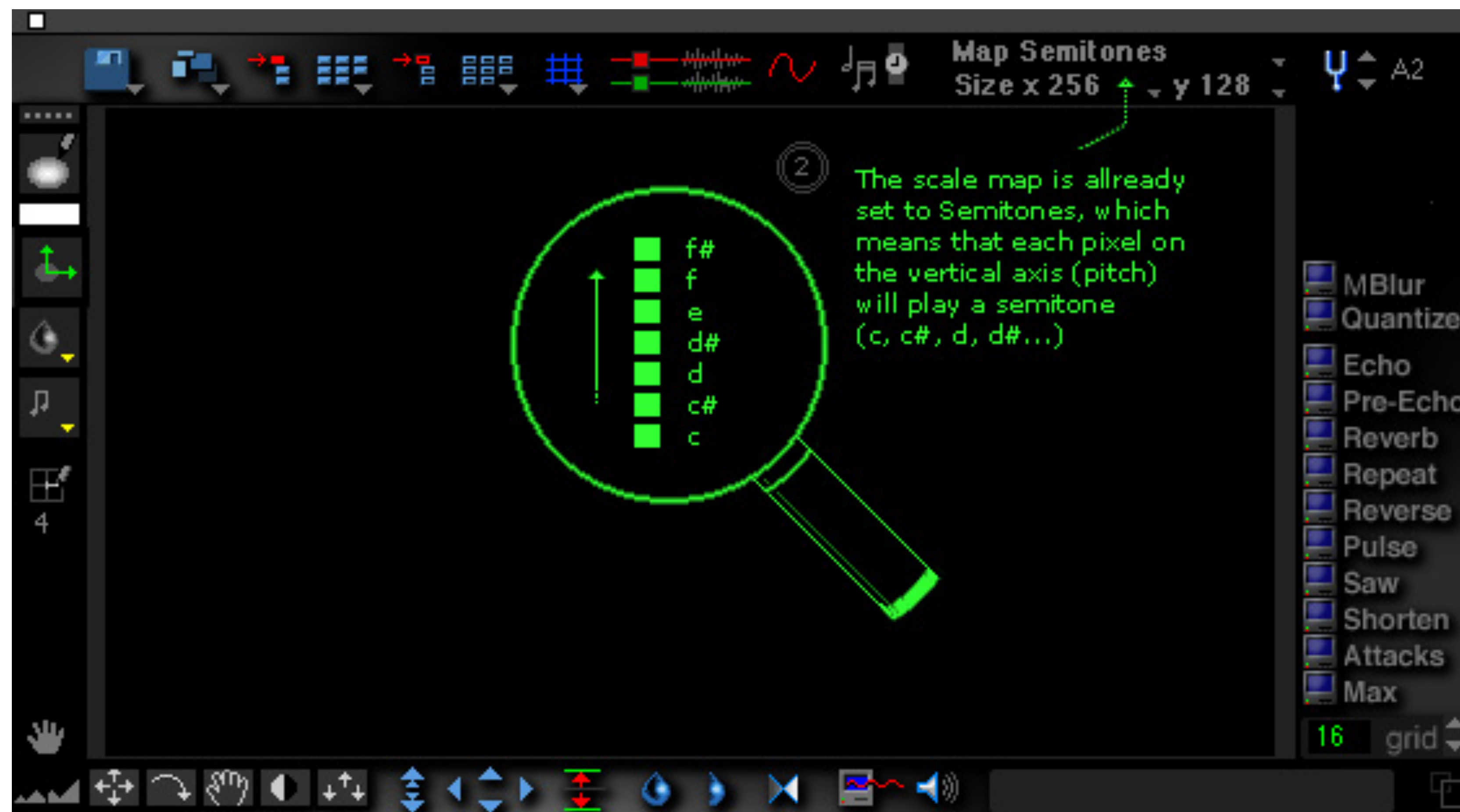


Blending a Sine Wave with other waveforms will create nice synth tones for the Image Synth Instruments

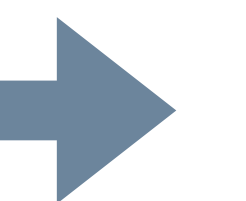
2



3



4

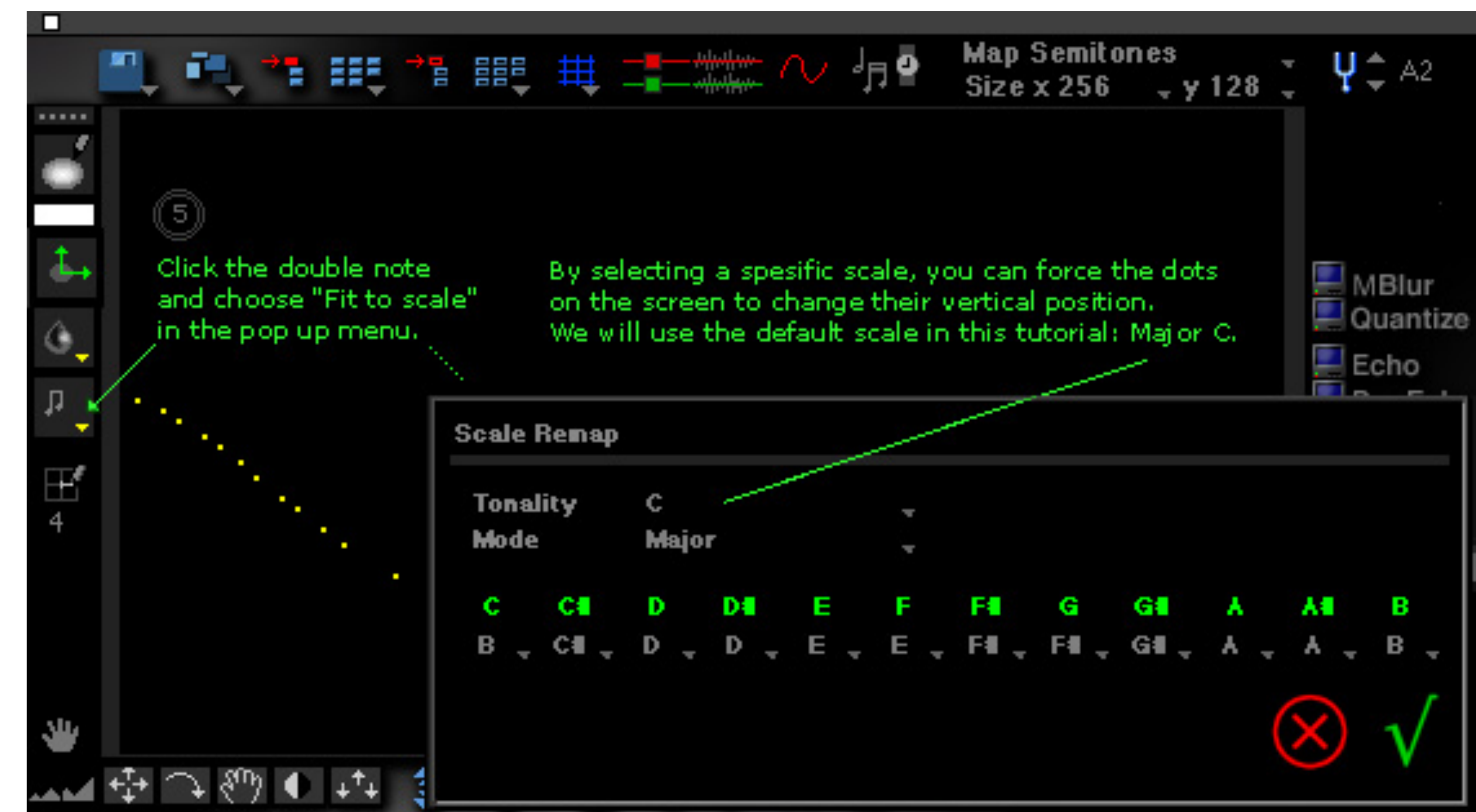


14 Random Tones continued

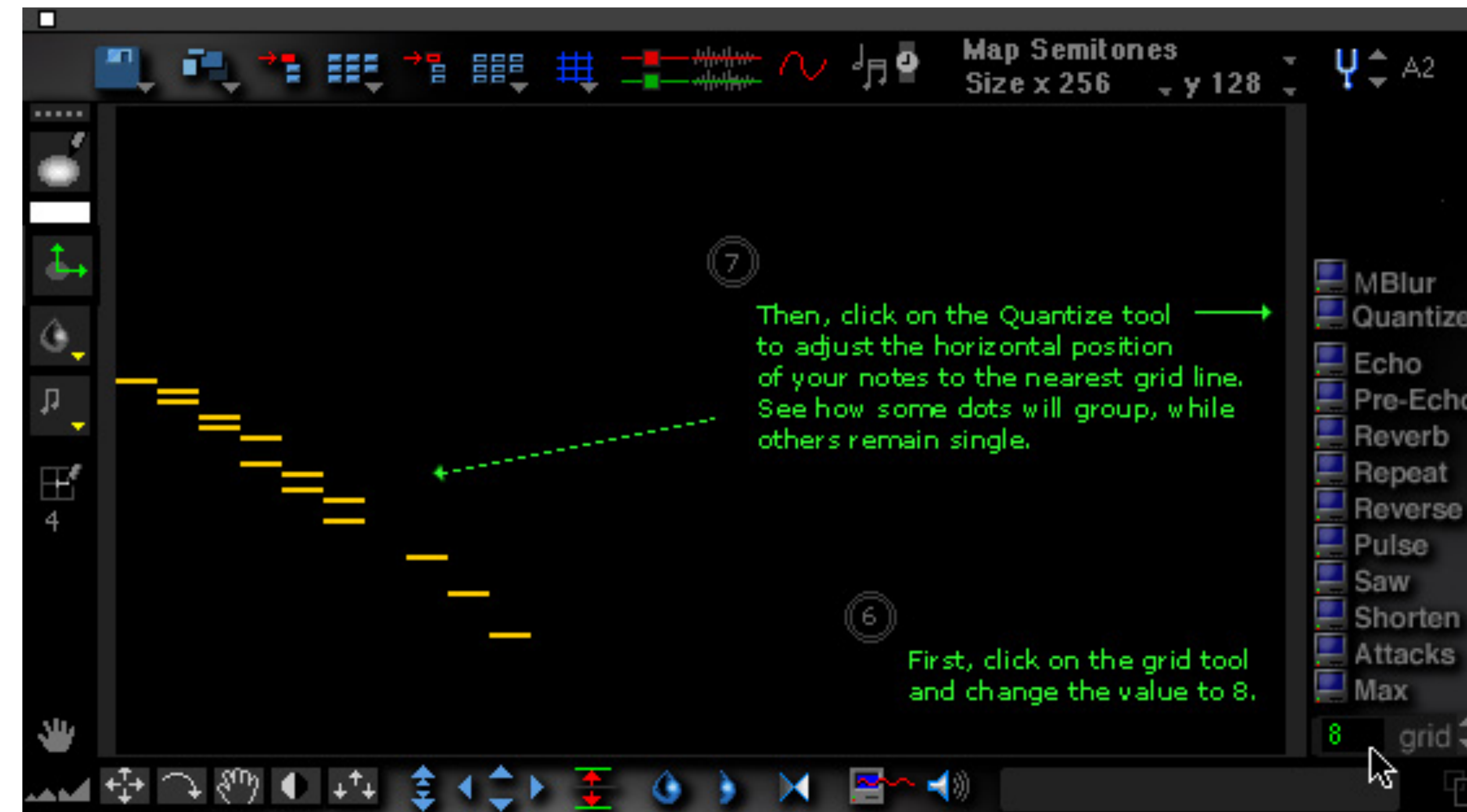
5



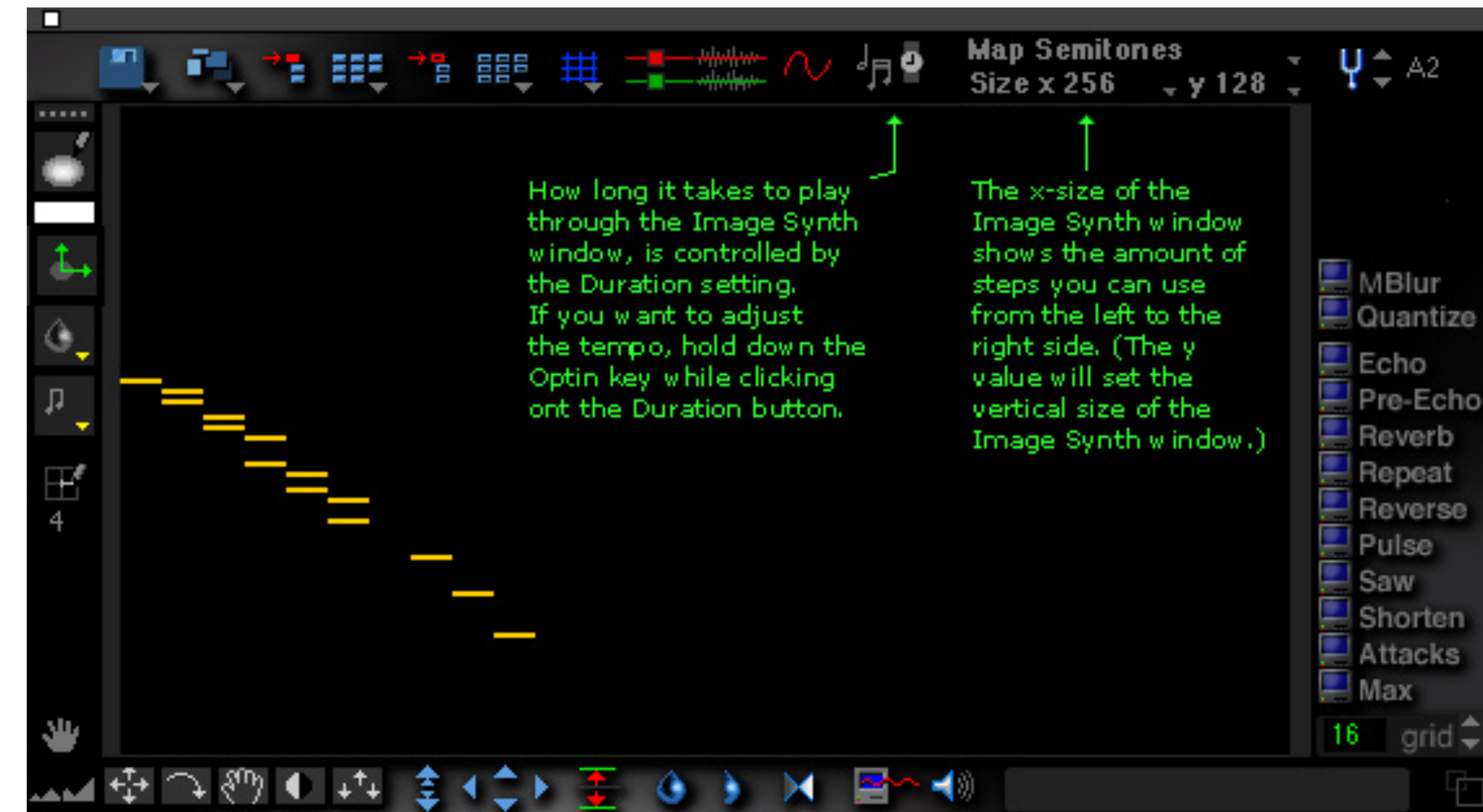
6



7

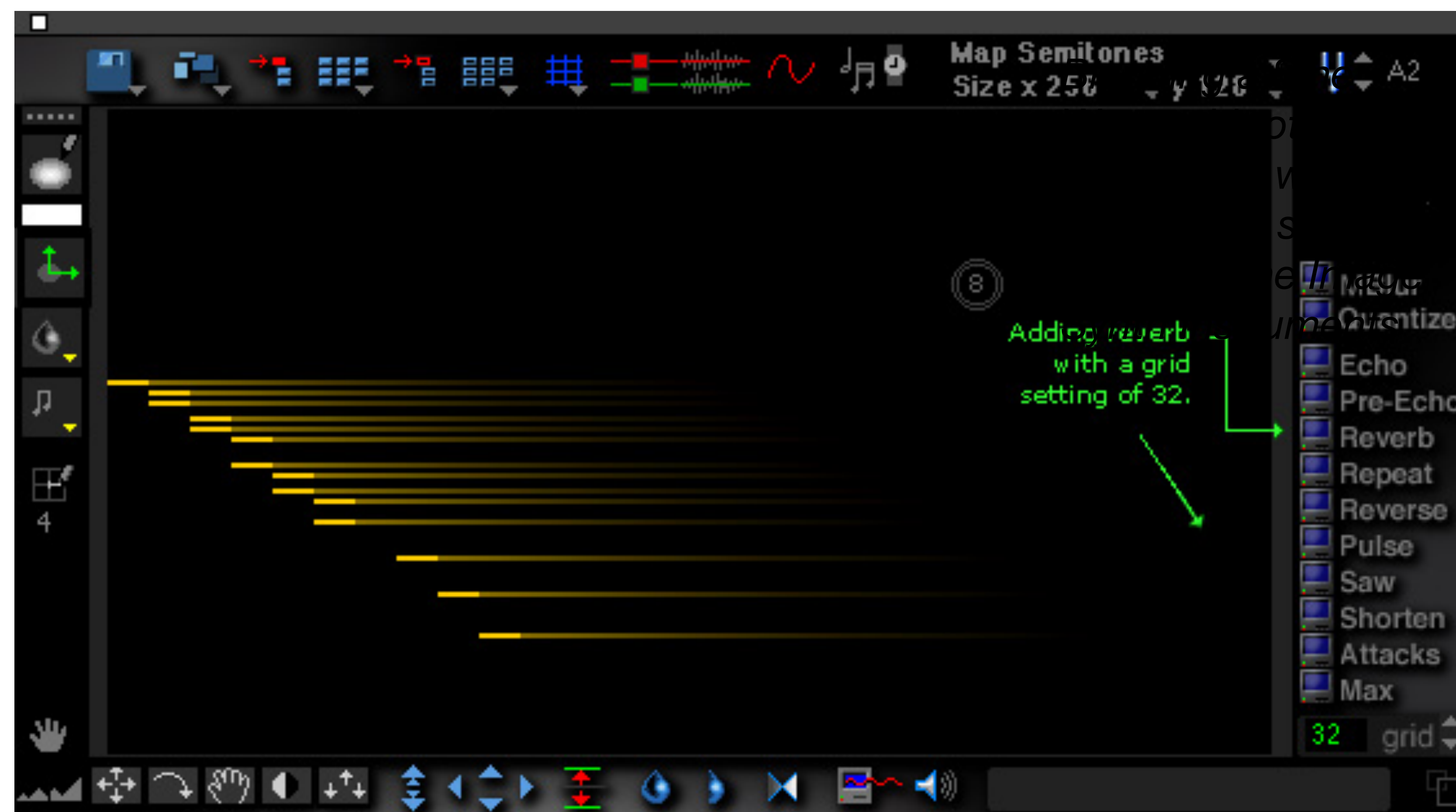


8



14 Random Tones continued

9



10



11



12



With later versions of MetaSynth, I could have arranged and mixed all my unique presets in the Montage Room, but I chose to render and export the audio files to disk and then import them in ProTools where I arranged the clips, adjusted levels, added some filters, put a compressor/limiter on the Master Fader and bounced the mix to my hard drive.

