

TECHNO DELAYS

by Francis Preve

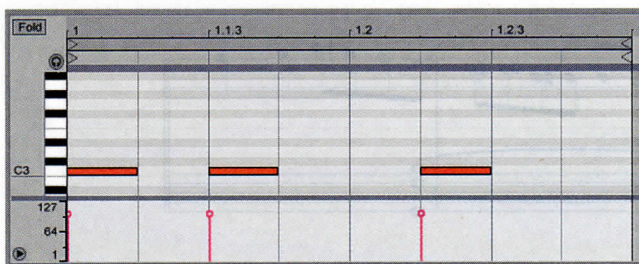
Last year, I became fond of a popular techno technique for keeping a simple, repetitive riff interesting: using dramatic delays as the part evolves over the course of a track.

This trick is so effective that it can be used in a wide variety of contexts. For

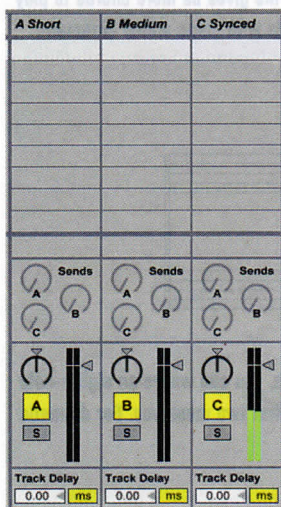
example, [renowned producer] Wolfgang Gartner and I used it to enhance the lead in our Toolroom release, "Yin." A few months later, I revisited the technique in a much more obvious way for my remix of Josh Gabriel and Dave Seaman's "Heyaah."

A bunch of people have asked me how it was done, so this month I'm ripping away the curtain and delivering the goods on this handy little maneuver. ☒

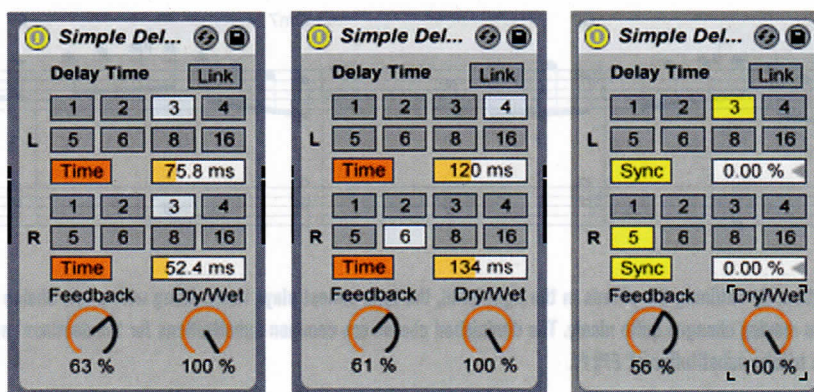
Audio examples for this tutorial are at keyboardmag.com/How-To.



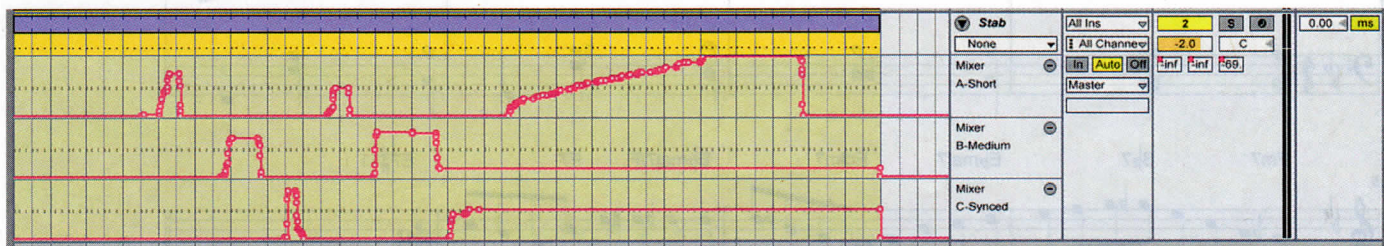
Step 1. Create a stabby lead patch to be the highlighted sound in your track, then create a simple repetitive pattern with a bit of syncopation. The key here is leaving enough space to hear the results of the delay effect. Too many events (e.g., a sixteenth-note pattern), and the delay will be masked by the notes.



Step 2. Create three effects returns. Each will host a different delay.



Step 3. The first delay should be quite short: 40–80ms. The second delay should be a bit longer, in the 100–150ms range, without being too obviously synced. The third delay should be tempo-synced with some syncopation, like dotted eighth-notes.



Step 4. Once you have your delays set up, let the sequence play for a minute or so. If you have a control surface (a Korg NanoKontrol or something similar), you can "play in" the automation moves and record the results. Otherwise, you can use a mouse for the sends, or just draw the automation by hand. Once you have a pass or two that you like, just edit and arrange as needed.