

WaveDNA Liquid Rhythm Beat Creation Software

By Paul Lau

Throughout the years of test-driving new music-making technologies, I've seen a number of watershed moments by way of new product releases that change the game for different product categories – or create entirely new ones altogether.

I'm getting such a feeling about Liquid Rhythm by WaveDNA. When I was first introduced to Liquid Rhythm, my interest was piqued on two levels. Yes, it is a Canadian innovation, but secondly, I was intrigued by this new company and what they were reportedly offering.

After my online demonstration with the folks at WaveDNA, I was able to get started on Liquid Rhythm on my own. It was immediately clear that this isn't just another beat maker. Whether used stand-alone or integrated with Ableton Live 9, I believe after using Liquid Rhythm and really understanding how it functions, users will have an entirely new outlook on beat production.

I was totally blown away by how easy it was to start and create a beat/groove, but more importantly, how it sounded. Simply put, I was able to go from 0-100 pretty quickly. On top of that, the many variations that you can create almost instantaneously are awesome.

Initially, the layout of Liquid Rhythm can seem complex, but whether you're a novice or seasoned programmer, picking up the functionality is very easy! This is straight-up, hands-on software; you learn by doing! The program offers numerous levels of manipulation and functionality. The most basic are actual note values that are represented by symbols, blocks, and various colours (a lot of R&D went into creating this matrix of visual representation).

As with most sequencers, note values, velocity, positioning etc. are at the ready, here under the Library heading. There are instrument tracks that can host numerous MIDI performances of different rhythms and beat variations. How they are represented and edited is where the magic is.

Let's take only one track and dissect the parameters. Liquid Rhythm already has pre-programmed MIDI performances for individual parts that you can select "instantaneously," and they are musically sound. What you do with these performances is where you come

in. There is a Beat Builder section with a BarForm List that you can click through to audition variations, all while the beat is playing, so no stopping and loading.

You do have help choosing performance parts with the Suggested Filter and the Similar Filter, which gives you a list of more matching grooves that you can store as Favourites.

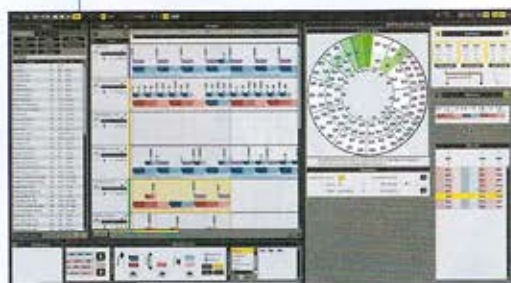
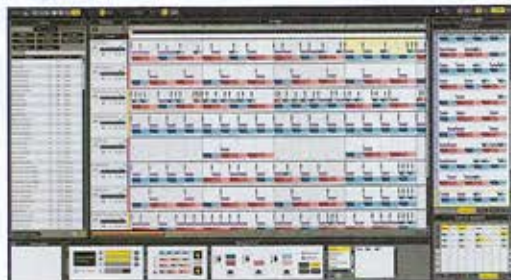
ALL Filter offers all possible eighth note patterns. Connected to this are the Molecule Tools, which run in a horizontal bar below the tracks. There are four parts of the Molecule Tools for the manipulation of the track – Randomizer, Bar Transform, Accent Modifiers, and Barform Palette. The Randomizer is very interesting with the "Surprise Me!" button, which gives endless variations of the selected region with the parameters you've selected – and there's another under the BeatForm Sequencer, which shuffles the BeatForms in the sequence. Love it. Bar Transform has a ReGroove function, which offers more groove variations.

The third section is the Accent Modifiers – a very powerful tool. This is where you can humanize the feel factor in a region via velocity and groove controls which can be applied to the BeatForm and BarForm.

Lastly in the Molecule Tool section is the BeatForm Palette, which has various categories for auditioning further variations, like Triplet Swing and Glitch. Liquid Rhythm also allows you to select multiple instrument tracks and use the functionality of the Molecule Tools simultaneously.

Other features that caught my attention are the BeatWeaver Rhythm Synthesizer and the BeatSeeker filter system. The programmers at WaveDNA have developed a colour-coded ring that lets users simply choose the "highlighted" parts of the most commonly occurring pattern for the instrument they are working on. In other words, someone else has done the work; you just audition and be creative in your selection and combination!

Groove makers using Ableton Live 9 Suite with Max For Live will not be able to live without Liquid Rhythm. The



integration is seamless and powerful. The workflow in Liquid Rhythm is so easily recorded and translated into Live in real time, offering the opportunity to use Liquid Rhythm as an instrument.

I had the pleasure of test-driving this program with a very experienced Ableton Live user, who commented that it "gives a speed boost to creativity without sacrificing inspiration."

Liquid Rhythm straddles the line between a tool and an actual instrument. Whether you are a seasoned programmer, inputting note values and editing feel factors, or someone that just wants to easily create grooves by what they hear, Liquid Rhythm will surprise you with what you can come up with.

It's been a long time coming, but I know that this new workflow and process within Liquid Rhythm is the perfect balance musicians and groove makers are looking for, without the tedium of drum programming and the repetitive staleness of sample drum loops we all know too well.

Liquid Rhythm by WaveDNA allows you to manipulate your compositions the way you'd like, with new ideas you may not have thought possible.

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