

Logic Guide: Alchemy

Logic has many decent plug ins and synths but one of the best and often most unexplored is Alchemy, something which was only added to Logic X not so long ago. It's got a wide range of sounds and exploring these can really pay dividends in your writing. In this hand-out I'm going to break down some of the areas of Alchemy you might not have explored fully.

Choosing the right patch

The first thing to think about when using Alchemy is what type of sound you want. The menus on the main area of the synth allow you to really zone in on the type of sound you want. Use them to filter down the list of patches on the right to get the sound that you want.



There's also a ratings system on the right where any sounds you like, you can give them a higher rating (or downgrade ones you don't like).

Making the synth do the work

It's worth exploring some of the synths in the 'Arpeggiated' and 'Rhythmic' menus as you can get some great parts with very few notes if you play around with the sounds themselves. You can also move the blue box around in the bottom left and it will change the sound of the patch that you've loaded to give you more control in getting the right sound. You can also tweak any of the individual settings by hand on the right (as well as move the blue balls around on the two graphs).



An interesting technique to create a really organic sound is to set your channel strip to 'write'.

In 'write' mode, the next time you press play on your track, it will remember any settings that you play around with as the song is playing. This allows you to create moving synth parts that have a human feel to them as they change.

After you press stop on your track the 'write' bit will now say 'touch'. In 'touch' setting you can tweak any of your changes by playing the song and then changing that part when your track gets to it. If you're happy with it all though, you can just set it to 'read' and it will read the automation data that you've programmed in and you don't need to worry about accidentally changing anything.

Exploration is the key

Alchemy isn't the only synth in Logic but it's one of the most powerful with the widest variety of sounds. If you explore it, you can really get some interesting sounds.

There are also many other different plug ins and it's great to try to play around with them. There are far too many to produce detailed hand-outs for each but if there's a synth or technique that we've not gone over in class and you want to know more, youtube is a great resource to explore for 'how to' videos and tutorials.