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By: Florin Tibu, Editor, Software Reviews



AlgoRhythmia

Demented Dada Drums

I'm confused, very confused. I am a musician, a composer, I also write lyrics for my songs and make musical arrangements and try my best to be as accurate in my musical judgments as possible; I have even argued with other players with whom I was rehearsing over matters of theoretical exactitude and musical rhythm precision, and shouted while writing measures on the walls. As a guitarist, I shouted to the drummer while the bass player was screaming at me and so on: after some moments of madness we cooled down and re-analyzed what we were playing. We easily spotted the trouble-causing phrases and rewrote them; and saw that finally... things were OK. So, when I first tested the AlgoRhythmia, I was shocked: a MIDI drum machine which produced random beats and phrases! I would like to think about myself that I am an open-minded musician and not a stubborn person who only accepts what he does...but the results AlgoRhythmia produced under my very eyes and in my very ears left me a bit disoriented. In a musical world that is ruled by order and mathematical calculation to integrate the melody in the numerical theory, I was really struck by such lack of order and demented rhythm. After laughing as hell, I even tried to think of the possible uses for this drum machine and, except for noise (rock, metal and whatever genre you might think of), I could not really find any reasonable use. Maybe in a moment of exceptional mood and inspiration for noise/grindcore I will set this software in motion at home or the rehearsal place and try to play some phrases on my guitar and record it. Should I do such a thing, I promise I will make public all my "works".

The Looks Saying that AlgoRhythmia has some looks could be a bit exaggerated: indeed no effort has been made towards creating the GUI, other than to set some order among the multitude of checkboxes, dropdown menus and buttons. The Windows98 native interface has been used, with the calm grey color and this is really a good thing: I am afraid to think how AlgoRhythmia would look if a bit more "inventive" color schemes were used...The program has a tidy - but rather crowded - window (the only window) which sometimes could be hardly grasped by eye at first sight; nevertheless, it's easy to operate it, as soon as you get acquainted with its general appearance. No shortcuts are available and, if you thought of operating it by Tab and Spacebar, forget about it: repeatedly pressing Tab will only make the selected field jump randomly in the main window.

The Works I will be extremely brief at this chapter, since there is really nothing too much to describe: whatever you do, after pushing Start, everything sounds wrong. Randomly-generated rhythms are going to bash your ears, on the MIDI channel number 10. Optionally - if you think this isn't enough - you can add a sample to be played at the same time with one of the 8 simultaneous drums available. You can mute every one of the 8 drum channels, set the density and load wave-files of your choice, as well as set up the rate at which AlgoRhythmia randomly mutates the (already dumb) rhythm; you can even establish whether the new "creations" will be close to the initial one or even more astray (if possible). Of course BPM (I even tried 500 BPM), measures/pattern and signatures and mutate/x measures options are available, thus enhancing your weird experience. I am already laughing my a** out (again) so I guess I'd better finish here.

The Good The only good things about AlgoRhythmia is that I extended the range of my knowledge on what digital music could mean (not that I was really missing such an experience) and I had a good laugh.

The Bad To my (and I guess - your) big surprise, nothing is bad in this little program: it really works amazingly well and smooth. Maybe it could use a more distinct and personal GUI, but remember what I told you about coloring...

The Truth "The truth is out there" I must quote. I feel myself overwhelmed this time, therefore I have to ask you to try this software for yourselves and share the

experiences. A good program, but a useless one as well. Dare and look how AlgoRhythmia looks: