

**Tutorial – Use Ableton Live for a live set**

Material needed : - Ableton Live  
 - Some finished tracks

**1. Introduction**

This tutorial will show you a way to play live sets and improve the interaction with your music. It has the following advantages :

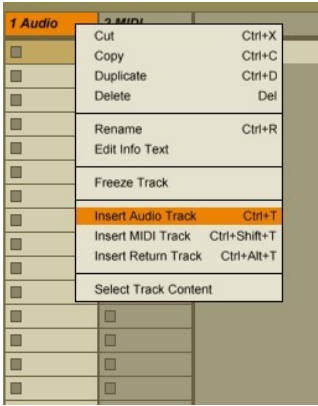
- No prepared live sets (not playing play and doing nothing)
- You choose how much you want to interact. (Minimum you have to do is to mix your tracks together. Then it's up to you to do more)
- Growing projects. (When you finished new tracks, you don't have to re-arrange your live set. Just add your new track to the existing Live project and it's ready to use anytime.
- Change tempo on the fly. (You can change the tempo of your project and everything follows synchronized)
- Improve your live set. (This example is just an idea, but it will for sure let you think how to manage your own live sets for your needs)... Hundreds possibilities to do it.

**2. Setting up Live**

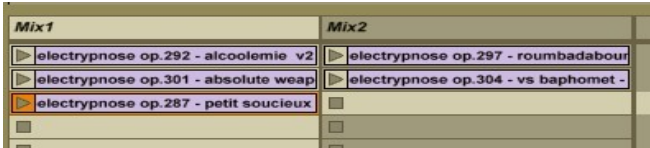
I won't explain much here because that's not the aim of that tutorial, but check in the "Options" menu - "Preferences" that you are using the right "ASIO driver" (in the Audio section). And verify also that your midi connexions are well enabled. (If you have midi controls).

**3. Main audio tracks**

Please note that with this way of working we won't use the arrangement section at all. We will only use the clips section. We will here use 2 audio channels first to mix your finished tracks. Use the context menu on the main title section to add tracks. Insert a new audio track.



Use the file browser on the left to pick your tracks. Insert the ones you want to use in the audio tracks or your project.



Insert now in the EQ on both tracks 1 and 2.  
 (After you can have more tracks, up to you, but lets start with typical 2 channels.)

- Select your first audio track.
- Go to Live Devices (Live plugins)
- Drag and drop the EQ Three plugin in the fx area.
- Repeat the operation for the channel 2.

Now, the best would be to have a midi controller, to be able to EQ with knobs and not with the mouse.

Or another way is to have a sound card with 2 stereo outputs, so you can use the dj mixer to mix your 2 channels.

Details about midi controls assigns:

Make sure your midi connexion is working.  
 (Please refer to the manual)

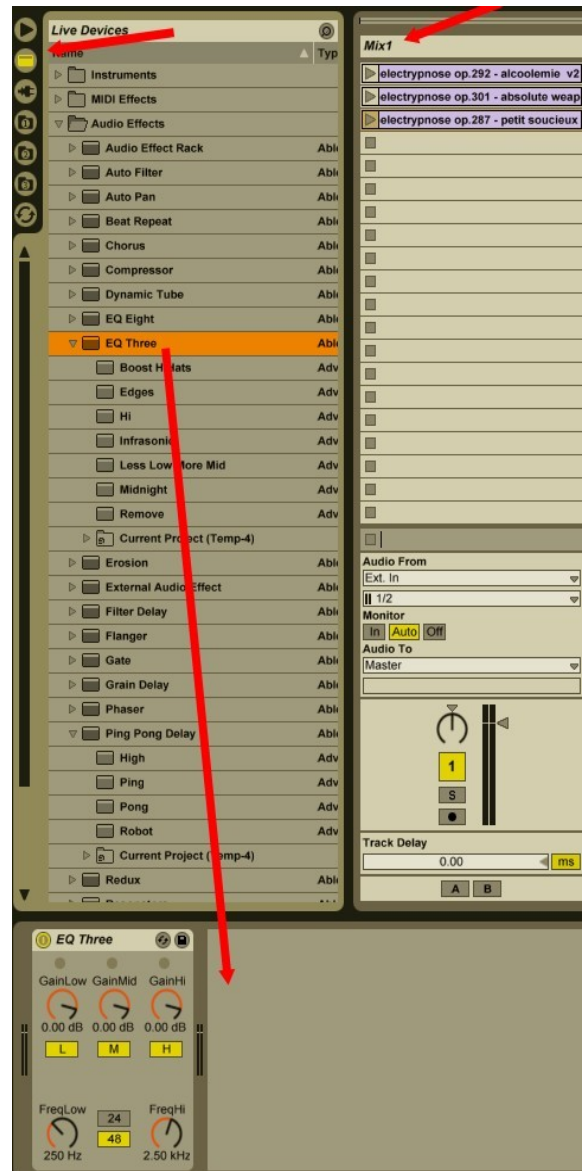
- Hit the Midi button to start to assign controls.



Controls now turn into blue. Means you can assign controls to any parameter.  
 Just select the parameter you want to assign, tweak once the know that you want to control the parameter.



A little white square will appear with a value (midi channel / CC) once the parameter is assigned.



You can then find your assigned controls in the Midi/Key mappings. (Last shortcut when the Midi or Key assignment option is turned on).  
 For example, with my midi controller, When I turn the knob hard right, I want to EQ to be at 0dB. But here by default it will be at +6dB.

With this Midi mappings, I can set the min and max values so the EQ will reach 0dB maximum.

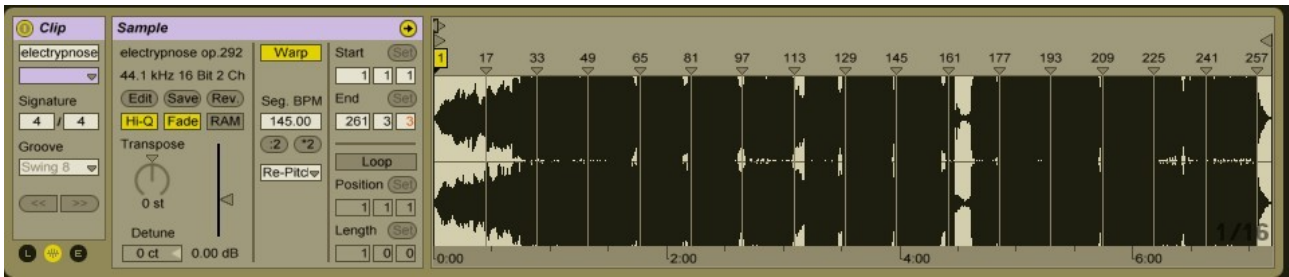
You can now set your Bass/Mid/Highs controls for both channels, and maybe also the channel volumes. So you would have about the same controls like on a dj mixer.



### 3. Warping your tracks

One very important thing to do! This will make that your audio clips will be synchronized to the main project and in the mean time, synchronized all together.

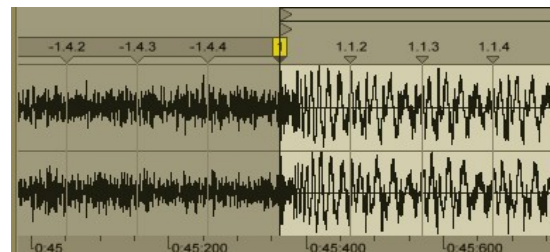
Double click on one of your inserted tracks. At the bottom, this window will show up.



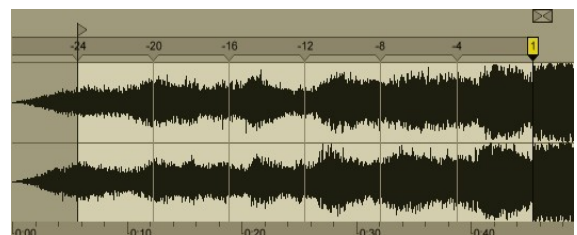
I won't detail everything here, but will tell you the things to take care of.

- Turn the "Warp" function on. Normally it's already turned on and will calculate almost the right bpm directly. From my experience, the best Warp algorithm is "Re-Pitch". This is working like the pitch on a CDJ player. It will pitch your track up and down (the tune as well) regarding if you go faster or slower. Other algorithms will stretch your track to keep the tune, but the audio quality will be affected.
- Leave other settings by default and check in the manual to know more about them.
- Now, find a well marked Kick in your track, like when it starts after a break.
- Place the yellow "1" of the upper grid on that kick. Zoom in to be more precise. (One personal suggestion : Even if it automatically calculated the right tempo, re-enter it manually. Sometimes some very small delay might appear if you don't do it. Also, you can zoom in around the end of the track to see if the grid is still on time with the kick.)

- Check now the "start" value. It has moved to the same spot as the yellow "1". That means that if you start playing your track, it will begin at this point.
- We would like the track to start at the beginning. We just need to adjust the start point.

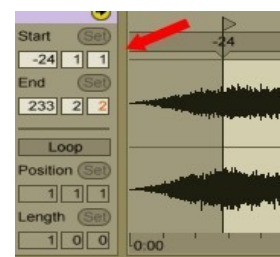


- This is now very important ! Adjust the start point to a minus value, which is a multiple of at least 4. (8 is even better). This is because, when you launch a clip, you want it to be synchronized with all other clips. You will understand it better after playing a bit around with your live set.

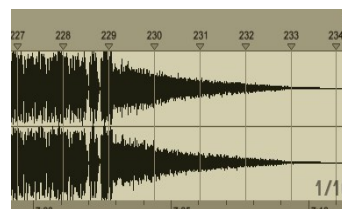


- If you want your track to start at the very beginning, but (like on this picture) the next 4 multiple isn't available (here would be -28). You will have to edit your track with another software (like Sound forge, Wavelab, Cubase..) to put a silence at the beginning.

- To set the start point. I recommend you to do it manually using the "start" value. Just type in the value you want your track to start from.



- Check also the "End" flag. Sometimes live put it before the really end of the track.



- Make this operations for all

tracks you have imported  
in your project.

#### 4. Start playing!

You can now start playing with your tracks and mix them together.

You'll see that if you did the preview steps correctly, your tracks will play perfectly together. Now up to you to mix them how you want.

Of course, you can play only one track from one channel at the same time. To mix 2 tracks together, use one from channel 1 and one from channel 2.

You can change the tempo of the project (top-left corner of the main window), and all you play will go faster or slower.

Check also the global quantization value. This will let you choose how you want your tracks to be launched.

If you put it to 8 bars, when you press play on one of your tracks (clip), it will wait the beginning of the next 8 bars to start playing.

This is why I told you to put your start point on a 4 or 8 multiple. So your tracks will be synchronized on the beat, but also on bars.



#### 5. Limiter on the master channel

There is no a right way to setup your live set. Some people will do like this and others like that. My way is to use mastered tracks in the live set. Try around and develop your own working way. But what is sure, is that you have to be careful with your master output level.

Put a limiter on your master output to not clip over 0db.

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*Up to now, you can use this method to mix your tracks.*

*This would also work if you want to make a DJ set using tracks from other artists.*

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#### 6. Add elements to your live set.

Now the more personal work starts.

You can create new channels and add for example :

- Audio loops of any kind (Kick-bass, drum loops, fx loops...etc)
- Audio samples (1 shot hits, cymbals, wooshes...etc)
- Midi tracks controlling a Vst instrument.

For audio loops, use the same warping way like with the audio tracks. You'll see that live works very well with loops. Most of the time it will detect automatically the right tempo, and most of your inserted loops will be ready to use straight away.

Don't forget to use FX on different channels to modulate the loops.

Then imagine, you run your live set...

Start with a sample using much reverb, do an introduction with it. Start playing a track you've just finished the day before. Cut the bass frequencies of that channel, launch another Kick-Bass over that playing track. When the track ends, launch a few samples and loops to fill the break. Go on with a Vsti plugin and tweak it + some fx you have on it... Then launch another track of yours to have a break and to prepare what you'll do next... and so on, and so on.

Up to you to do much, up to you to do less.

*Okay, this tutorial showed you the basics of running your own liveset.*

*There are for sure a lot more advanced functions.*

*There are Ableton Live templates  
available for Electrynose members.*

Liveset controllers setup  
Faderfox modules.

- 2 modules with buttons to arm loops and samples
- 1 module with knobs to mix tracks, tweak fx...etc



A part of my live set screen.



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