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ACEcapism - Vanilla Percussion - THRAKosaurus

I find patching stuff pretty rewarding and always fun. This is especially true when putting together the highest quality, most interesting, and most exploratory projects I can think of, with the goal of passing the results along to others. If these sets are useful to you, please consider provisioning more stuff via xh.sounds@gmail.com via [PayPal](#). (Sandwiches, CPUs, etc.)

suggested:

([u-he ACE](#)) [ACEcapism](#) - Free
([u-he Zebra](#)) [Vanilla Percussion](#) - \$5
([u-he Uhbik](#)) [THRAKosaurus](#) - \$5

Something else is always churning. Requests are welcome.

Please enjoy! - Andrew (xh3rv on KVRaudio.com forums, xherv on SoundCloud)

What goes where?

Invisible Architecture - Uhbik-A
THRAK ak ak - Uhbik-D
fRAK - Uhbik-F
THRAg - Uhbik-G
phRAK - Uhbik-P
THRAq - Uhbik-Q
Rawr - Runciter
THRAsH - Uhbik-S
tHRAK - Uhbik-T

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The best advice (from Howard Scarr, author of the manual):

"Please read the manual."

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An observation from KvR member zerocrossing on Adrian Belew (played on King Crimson's THRAK, makes dinosaur noises, and has an absolutely stunning discography)

"Adrian, on the other hand, only needed a slight opening and he'd be ecstatic someone wanted to chat about his rig. Not on a pompous way, in a very innocent, "Look at the cool stuff and look what I figured out!" Like an excited kid. He was super nice. Anyway, I learned a lot but more importantly how important it is to just experiment and futz about and not pay too much attention to anything like 'rules.'"

The Uhbiks really are brilliantly designed for tweakages - robust, up-front, and good-sounding, with giant knobs. I may have included some interesting sounds but early on the goal quickly shifted towards something a little different - suggesting a map or a grid for the range of effects possible with Uhbiks, something that would help someone get at the sounds that energize them quicker, rather than dictating anything. Ultimately, think about anything in here as just a collection of knobs that are an initial nudge or a hint at a certain direction. Unless you stumbled on one of the good ones ;)

Specific notes on THRAKosaurus presets:

Pulse gates / Uhbik-T

The pulse gates and many other patterned gates in tHRAK / Uhbik-T are very structured. The basic pattern is at the vertical middle (50.00 on the pattern knob), and is mirrored and evolved above and below, with subtle variations. As a result there's a ton of variation and character to be reached by tweaking the channel separation as well as offsetting the pattern knob higher or lower. Check the presets for examples. There's also a template, tarncce the night away!

Suggestions not to follow for the obliQue intonated set in Uhbik-Q

Most Instrumentation - between second and seventh preset.

Bass - one to three or four

Leads - four and up

Vocals - four to seven

One instrument in a marching band - eight

I've found these obliQue curves useful and very fast relative to starting with a default patch. Or, like Brian Eno's Oblique Strategies, canned wisdom that's occasionally uncanny.

Loudness / Uhbik-Q

Fletcher-Munson loudness curves provide some insight into non-linear response of the human ear across the range of audible frequencies. Presets here were constructed to match the change from 70 db +/- 60 db (so, from 10db to 130db). Again for clarity - that's the change from one curve to another, and not the actual curve.

Uhbik-G

Glitch tones is self explanatory. Thwack are effects constructed with percussion in mind.

Uhbik-G is very flexible and plays well with all the other Uhbiks.

Runciter Is Extreme

I chose to avoid the gnarliest stuff here on the premise that it's easy enough to crank up, but the limits really dependent on program material's frequency and dynamics content. More than other presets stuff in Rawr tends to be skeletal, some idea is in place but needs to be tweaked.

Sending MIDI to Runciter is cool. It does need to be tweaked the same way, and with the same care, as a filter in a synth patch would. Rather than fail too hard with generic setups, I've included a set of patches that map out all the possibilities for MIDI mapping. These can be very init-like, or a good reference when MIDI-fying something that's already set up in another Runciter patch.

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Random:

- 1) Bad sounds can be fixed post-production but bad sound can't.
 - 2) Bad sounds and bad sound can both be made in post production.
 - 3) Good sounds can be made with effects. Good input is needed.
 - 5) Good sound can be ruined by effects.
- (4 was redundant).

I had a dirt cheap and mostly awful digital FX unit in high school. As with most things that are fun at that age, it led to trouble with the police.

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UNSOLICITED AND POSSIBLY BAD ADVICE:

By design, THRAKosaurus has increasing effect depth within many categories. This is a bit loose - order is often also weighted by various other parameters, and different inputs will introduce some irregularity. Still, browsing should give a sense of changing effect depth. On average, effect depth in THRAKosaurus can be milder than not, but I feel it's more robust to preview a bit lower and tweak higher than the other way around.

Controlling depth is a key factor in getting the most out of audio effects. Depth is easily heard in progression from inaudible to complete destruction of the original signal, and useful effects can occur anywhere in this range. Finding points of inflection and balance on this scale are part of the constant search for sonic aesthetics. The optimal points are subjective and situational; they change with aesthetic objective as well as program material, signal chain, or mixing context.

Effect depth is not simply loudness; it can be broken down further along fundamental terms of gain, dynamics, and spectral emphasis. These are all related through measures of amplitude, and adjusting parameters for depth in one will often have consequences for the others. Balance among these is key to the most impact. Any given parameter has the potential to influence all three to different degrees.

Effect efficiency is a related concept. Effects require bandwidth and headroom for signals that encode their character. In a mixing situation it's often desirable to maximize the amount of character for a given amount of space available. Since well-trimmed effect depth contains no extraneous noise, managing effect depth is critical to good efficiency.

Some notes:

Gain:

- For modulation effects based on duplicating voices, an even dry / wet mix is closer to the the highest effect gain than fully wet.
- Maximum effect depth solely in terms of gain often changes the nature of the effect. When fully wet, Uhbiks G and S become pitch and frequency transposers; Uhbiks F and P are more like slightly exotic filters; Uhbiks A and D become more like spatial texture generators.
- Runciter can introduce a lot of gain with resonance and drive. The output knob compensates for this. It's a good practice to occasionally find the cutoff frequency with the highest gain and set the output knob such that a fully wet signal approximates the same gain as the dry signal. This makes the mix knob more efficient, and provides some headroom for final tweaking.

Dynamics:

- An effect's dynamic output is often a composition of the input dynamics and a dynamic envelope particular to the patch. If it feels like the dynamics are close but tweaking just doesn't get it right, usually that's a sign something needs to be done earlier in the signal chain.
- The scale / shape / swing knobs for LFO shapes are dynamics controls. Sometimes the perfect sweeping effect needs automation in manual mode, where phase becomes an automatable modulation index. Assigning MIDI controls other than knobs - PW, MW, a crossfader, gadgety stuff - can be inspiring.
- Feedback has dynamics, and modulating feedback tuning can affect these dynamics. This is used very clearly on the 'sitar comb' patch for Uhbik-F. Generally feedback in modulation effects exploits this concept more subtly. On a larger time scale, delay and reverb also can be thought of as having dynamic envelopes.
- Uhbik-D's output and feedback loops are separate; taps can be ducked or muted in overall volume. This is really powerful for shaping dynamics, amongst other uses.

Spectrum:

- Changing spectral balance changes dynamics - specific frequencies have their own dynamics and overall dynamics are a summation of all of these. Changing the relative levels of frequencies changes this summation.
- Controlling for gain, distortion is perhaps most clearly a spectral effect.
- Several Uhbiks can be thought of as interesting filters. It's beyond scope to fully explore that here, but useful for understanding spectral results of effects. Occasionally it's useful to think of an effect as somewhat like an EQ band, as this offers a different perspective on how to set effect depth. This is especially true for Runciter.
- Uhbik-D's high-damping cuts off a large chunk of very high frequencies from 10.00 to 9.00. The low and high damping meet when both are closing off at maximum, but don't overlap.

- Uhbik-A's bass / treble damping is very gentle and capable of a lot of subtlety. The efficiency of these knobs can be upset a bit by large changes in decay time. The hf-range is much more drastic.

- Uhbik-P has a lot of poles, and can touch everything in the full spectrum. As a result effect depth can be pretty high without much depth or feedback, and overall coloration can have a slight vocoder quality. Phasers can be spacy, Uhbik-P I find is more atmospheric - subtly different.

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Uhbik Scrabble

Stacking effects can breed endless variations (and consume endless time ...) with possibly interesting results. Both similar and dissimilar effects can be stacked in interesting ways. Keeping things coherent musically generally requires some design. Aggregate effect depth of stacked effects often scales oddly, just by basic physics. Units can convert and additive / multiplicative / logarithmic scales can interact. How knob travel affects depth will be warped in more exotic signal chains.

A very few interesting stacked effects:

- * Reverse delay from Uhbik-G followed by Uhbik-D
- * Uhbik-A followed by sweeping modulation from Uhbik-S
- * Multiple diffusion effects in serial, parallel, or combinations thereof
- ** Uhbik-A followed by a side-chained gate; gate side-chain keyed to the pre-effect input signal of Uhbik-A
- ** Runciter followed by a side-chained compressor; compressor side-chain keyed to the pre-effect input signal of Runciter

Just by the physics, effect depth with multiple effects can scale in ways that might not be intuitive, so it will often require more aggressive management.