

The Covert Seq

About

The Covert Seq is a 16 step sequencer made in and for Live 6.
It is operated by a combination of MIDI effect racks, MIDI effects and MIDI clip automation.

The sequencer is very flexible and easy to operate. There are 4 ways to operate the sequencer:

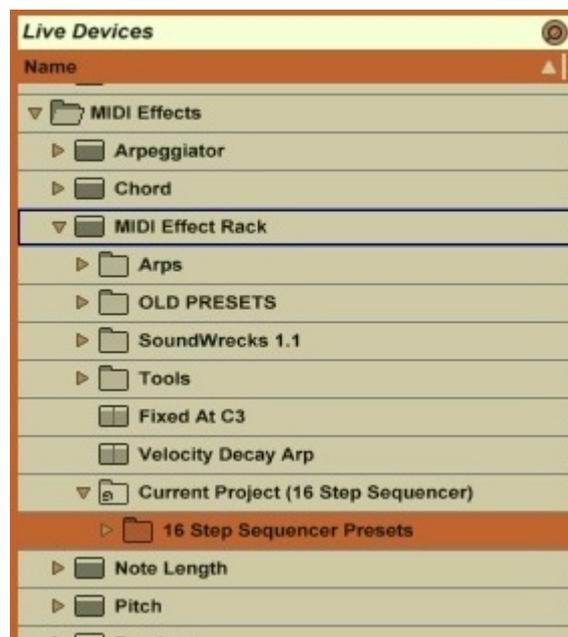
- Using the mouse
- Using clip automation
- Using a MIDI controller and the "MIDI Learn" protocol.
- Using a MIDI controller and the "Automapping" protocol.

The Covert Seq: Installing the Presets

In the Covert Seq project folder, there are 2 folders.
The first folder is the Ableton Project info folder, which contains the data for this project.
The second folder is the presets folder.

There is an easy way to install the presets:

- When you load the project named "Covert Seq 2.0", there will be an extra folder in the device preset browser (current project folder). You will find the presets in the "current project folder" of the MIDI effect rack device.
- Drag (or copy) the "Covert Seq 2.0 presets" folder to the MIDI effect rack device in the browser.



The Covert Seq: The Pattern Section

The Covert Seq has 3 main parts. The Pattern section, the Global Control section and the Control section.

The Pattern section is made out of several groups of MIDI clips in the first (and only) track of the session view. It contains various patterns to drive the 16 steps of this sequencer.

The patterns are made by a combination of notes and parameter automation.

The steps always receive the same note. The decision of which step will be triggered, is made with automation.

Currently, it contains pattern modes such as: Forward, Reverse, Forward+ Reverse, Random,.....



We have also provided a way so that users can create their own patterns. We'll see more on that later. Lets have a look at the Control section first.

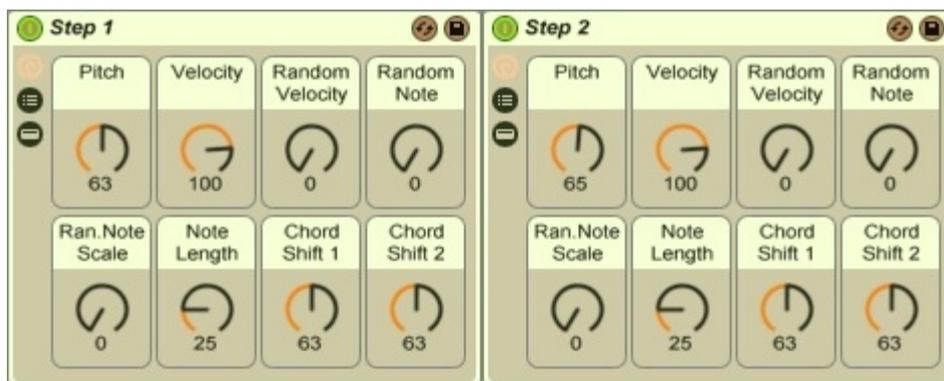
The Covert Seq: The Control Section

The Control section is a MIDI effect rack named “Steps” with 16 MIDI effect racks in it. Those 16 MIDI effect racks represent each step of the sequencer.

Each step has a Pitch, Velocity, Random Velocity, Note Length, Random Note, Random Note Scale and 2 Chord Shift parameters mapped as a macro by default.

Here's a brief overview of what the parameters do:

- **Pitch:** This changes the pitch of the note. When the pitch parameter on the step and on the global section are set to “63”. You will play a “C3”.
- **Velocity:** This controls the velocity of the note that is being sent out to the synthesizer.
- **Random Velocity:** This randomizes the velocity of the note.
- **Random note:** This knob increases the chance of a random note being sent out.
- **Random note scale:** This widens the range of octaves that a random note will occur in
- **Note length:** This knob allows you to control the length of the note that is sent out
- **Chord shift 1/2:** These knobs allow you to add more notes to a step. “63” is the middle. When it is set to the middle, you will only hear the original note. If you move it below “63”, it will output a note that is pitched below the note already being sent out. Move it above “63” and you will get a note pitched higher than the note that's already being sent out.



The Global Control Section

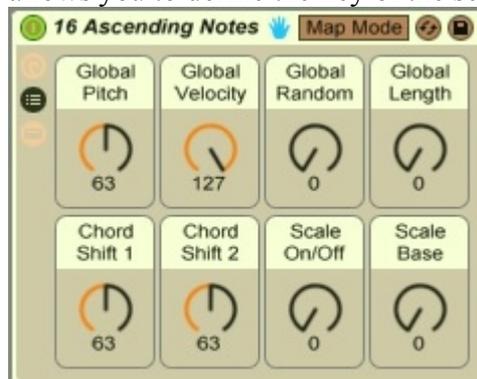
These MIDI effect racks that control the steps are encapsulated by 1 main MIDI effect rack that has the global controls.

You can control the Pitch, Velocity, Random Note, Note Length and 2 Chord Shift parameters that apply to the steps just before they go to your synth.

There is also a knob to switch a Scale device On/Off and a knob to control the Key Base of the Scale device.

Here's a brief overview of what the parameters do:

- **Global Pitch:** This will pitch up/down the whole sequence of notes that is being sent out by the steps. "63" is the middle, which relates to "C3" being sent out.
- **Global Velocity:** This parameter allows you to control the velocity of all the steps. But only relative to velocity being sent out of the step. It doesn't override the velocity settings you have made for the steps.
- **Global Random:** If you turn this knob up, it will randomize the output of all the steps. Turn it up gently for subtle variations.
- **Global Length:** This parameter overrides all the settings you have made in the steps. All notes will be of equal length. When it is set to "0", the effect is turned off and the original note lengths can be heard. When it is set at "127", it will output 60 second notes.
- **Chord shift 1/2:** These knobs allow you to add more notes to all the steps. "63" is the middle. When it is set to the middle, you will only hear the original note. If you move it below "63", it will output a note that is pitched below the note already being sent out. Move it above "63" and you will get a note pitched higher than the note that's already being sent out.
- **Scale On/Off:** This will turn On/Off the scale device at the end of this rack. A scale device allows you to correct the outgoing notes according to a predefined musical scale. You turn the device on by turning the knob past the middle.
- **Scale Base:** This parameter allows you to define the key of the scale device. It goes from C to B.



If you click on the save button of this rack, then it will store all the settings of all the parameters.

You are also able to hide the 16 steps and the global macro's by clicking on the show/hide buttons on the left side of the global rack.

This could be useful if you want to edit a soft synth that is on that track.

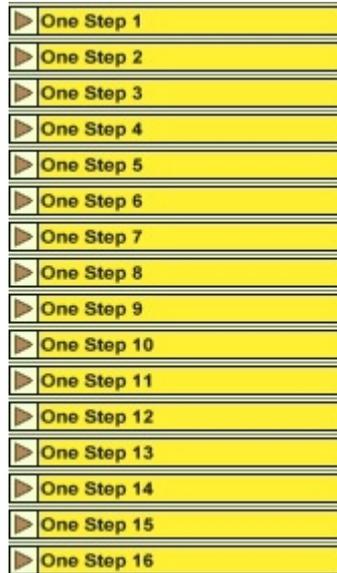
You could also send the MIDI signal to another MIDI track or even a hardware synthesizer.

The Covert Seq: Making Your Own Patterns

Although this step sequencer relies on clip automation, it does not imply that you have to automate each new pattern you make.

We provided a simple method for you to make your own patterns.

In the Pattern section, you'll notice some clips named "one step 1" to "one step 16".



You can copy these clips to the arrangement view and rearrange them in any order you wish.

For example: Make a pattern that goes 1-2-5-6-16-15-12-3.

Now select all those clips and consolidate them. (Shift-click to select multiple clips and Right-click to consolidate)

This pattern can now be placed into a session view slot and be used to drive the sequencer.

The Covert Seq: Tips & Tricks

Let me give you some tips that are useful to operate this sequencer:

- C3 is the default note that the steps receive. When the pitch plugin parameters on the global control and the steps is set to "63", it will output C3.
- The step sequencer comes with presets that can be accessed in the presets folder of this project. You can also import this project into your library. In that case, you can import the project into your library and access the step sequencer presets from the device browser.
- Steps can be muted by setting their velocity to "0".
- You can change the preset of the scale device, without affecting any other parameters of the rack.
- If your controller is supported by Ableton as an automapping device, then you can control the whole sequencer with 8 knobs and 2 arrow keys. When you click on a device, a little hand will appear. Once a device is selected, you can navigate thru the whole rack with the left and right arrow keys on your computer keyboard. You can also access the Pattern section if you hold alt and press the up arrow key.