ELECTRONIC MUSIC ARRANGEMENT

by

zencha*music*

Sample Copy

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How to Arrange Electronic Music

This book is dedicated to all my friends and mentors from Pyramind Training. You guys push and pulled and inspired my growth beyond anything I could've done alone. Without you guys, I'd have no idea what I'm talking about.

Thank you.

Introduction

Arrangement is an interesting topic. It's also one of my favorites.

It's importance is often overlooked and misunderstood. I find that many electronic producers don't put enough focus into it. It's skipped over in favor of "how to make that wobble bass" or "how to make an alien-lead."

This is saddening.

Arrangement is how you tell your story — and this is true in all art.

Imagine if Voldemort was slain in the first Harry Potter book. That'd be boring.

What if Darth Vader was revealed to us in the first movie? That'd kill a lot of the mystery and suspense.

Done well, as those stories are, a good arrangement speaks nothing to the listener. A good arrangement is the invisible glue holding your project together — without it, everything falls apart.

Arrangement is how you flow from one moment to the next, from one idea to the next. It's **how** and **where** you take your

listeners.

How you take them describes the literal arrangement you've decided on — sectional organization (verse, chorus, etc.). It also describes the literal changes you make between sections and the transitions used.

Where you take them describes the abstract journey. It's the arc of emotion and change that you've created, the flow of mood and tone. The shift and change in energy.

Now, it's important to note that I don't think arrangements are good or bad. I'm not trying to teach you how to make a "good" arrangement, as opposed to a "bad" one.

Rather, I like to think of arrangements in degrees of effectiveness. Any piece of music has a story it's telling, but your skill with arrangement changes how effective that story is told and how much impact the emotional journey has.

The goal of this book is to make your arrangements more effective through a basic lens of understanding. This book is written for someone who's barely skimmed the surface of arrangement to someone who find themselves familiar with common arrangement knowledge.

If you tend to "feel your way" through a track, this book will give you a map.

If you get stuck often, unable to escape an 8-bar loop, this book will help break the curse.

If you find your music is missing an emotional edge, this book will amp it up.

If you've never considered arrangement, or never focused on it, this book is a great starting point.

If you do understand arrangement, I think you'll find the perspective in here refreshing and unlike what you're familiar with (the trinity, primarily).

The most common piece of arrangement advice given is to bring a track of an artist you like into your production software and mimic the arrangement.

While this is a useful exercise, it doesn't help you beyond a few attempts. This exercise shows you the what — and with proper examination, the how.

What it's missing is the "why?" I hope to share that with you.

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Struggles

Arrangement wasn't something that came easy to me. I've spent a lot of time banging my head against the wall trying to arrange things in my sequencer as perfectly as possible.

I spent way too much time nit-picking over the small details of my transitions and whether or not things flowed flawlessly from one thing to another.

Deadmau5 was my target. I wanted to be the next Deadmau5. I wanted to be as good as Deadmau5.

Basically, I wanted to *be* Deadmau5.

Now, there's nothing wrong with an ambitious goal, but there is something wrong with trying to be someone you're not.

I am not Deadmau5.

This may be an obvious statement, but it sure as hell eluded me for quite some time. When all your efforts are being pushed towards a certain direction, it's hard to question whether you're going the right way in the first place.

I realized that by trying to be someone else, I was resisting myself. I was resisting my artistic potential by throttling it through

this bottleneck of progressive-house land. I spent nearly three years trying to be someone I was not.

I was holding myself back.

Shortly after this realization I began producing songs that were not progressive house. These songs were electronic but strongly influenced by hip-hop. [Microfracture](#) is one.

I dropped all notions of how strict arrangement had to be. I dropped all notions that things had to be perfect. I embraced the error and human nature of writing music.

What was wrong now appeared tasteful. What was imperfect now appeared to be unique and interesting.

Essentially, I unlearned what I once thought — and striped away the make-up and the idealism.

This book on arrangement is my perspective on arrangement after all of this transpired. You'll find that the discussion in this book is mostly high-level (in a fundamental sense) with some grit.

Furthermore, I've tried my best to write this content in a way to not influence your creative direction. As previously noted in my story, being someone you're not is a frustrating process. This book is crafted to provide insight into arrangement but not to push you into any nook or cranny creatively.

I want you to simply be you.

— —

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Hopefully the contents of this book interested you if you made it this far.

I'd like for you to continue reading the book and learning, [so you can click here to purchase the full thing for 25% off.](#)

Who Am I?

Hey there, my name is Zac Citron, artist name Zencha, and I'm an independent author and producer trying to make some noise — one piece at a time.

I maintain a blog at www.zaccitron.com which is focused on the creative process of music production. Mindset, arrangement, and workflow are some of the topics I talk about.

My [YouTube channel](#) is where I post video-blogs about these same topics — such as my "[How to Escape the 8 Bar Loop](#)" video.

The most reliable place to find my music is at [zencha.bandcamp.com](#). You can follow my [Twitter](#) here.

If you're stuck and need someone to talk to: [zenchamusic@gmail.com](#). I'm here to help, so please e-mail with

any questions, music related or not :).