



Warp Academy

 **Ableton** Certified Training Center



Warp Academy

An Introduction To Max for Live



CONTENTS

Introduction

- Max for Live p4
- What Is Max for Live? p5
- How Do I Use Max for Live? p7

Expanded Features

- LFO p9
- Multimap p9
- Device Randomizer p10

Three Incredible Instruments

- Poli p10
- Granulator II p11
- More Simplr p11

Crazy Effects

- Buffer Shuffler 2 p12
- Convolution Reverb p12
- Deep Chorus p13

Honorable Mentions

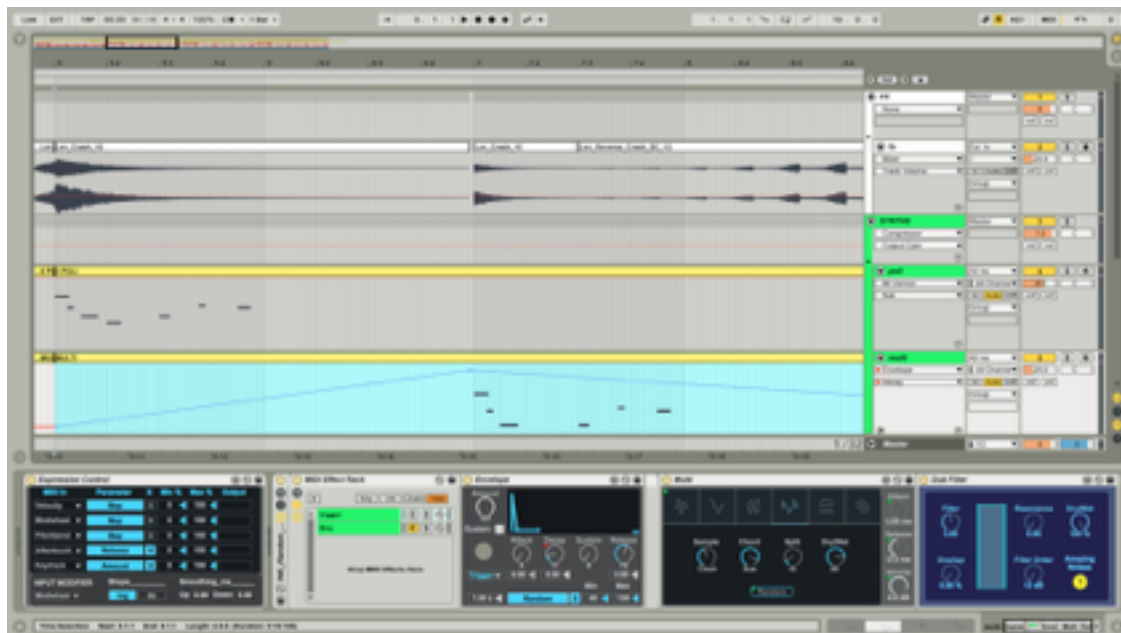
- Multi, Bengal and the Max for Live Connection Kit p14

Resources p15

Warp Academy p16



Here at Warp Academy, we LOVE Max for Live! Whether designing crazy bass sounds, creating complex instruments, or connecting Ableton Live to the outside world, Max for Live is a regular part of our production workflow.



We feel like there is a bit of confusion around what Max for Live is, what it can do, and how you can use it, so we thought we'd put together this brief quick-start guide to give you folks a better understanding of this excellent part of the Ableton ecosystem.

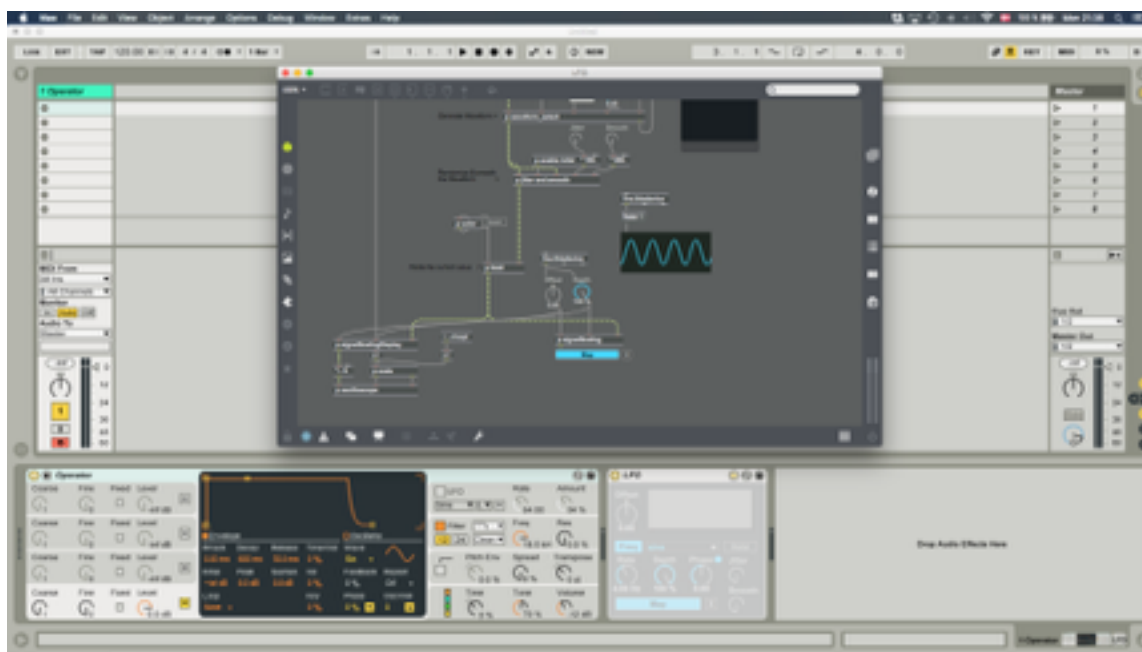
A lot of our students, upon installing Max for Live, can't find the devices that come included with Live 9 Suite.

That's because they are bundled into Packs, that are freely available in Ableton's website. Pretty handy, really, as there are quite a lot of devices available from the word go!

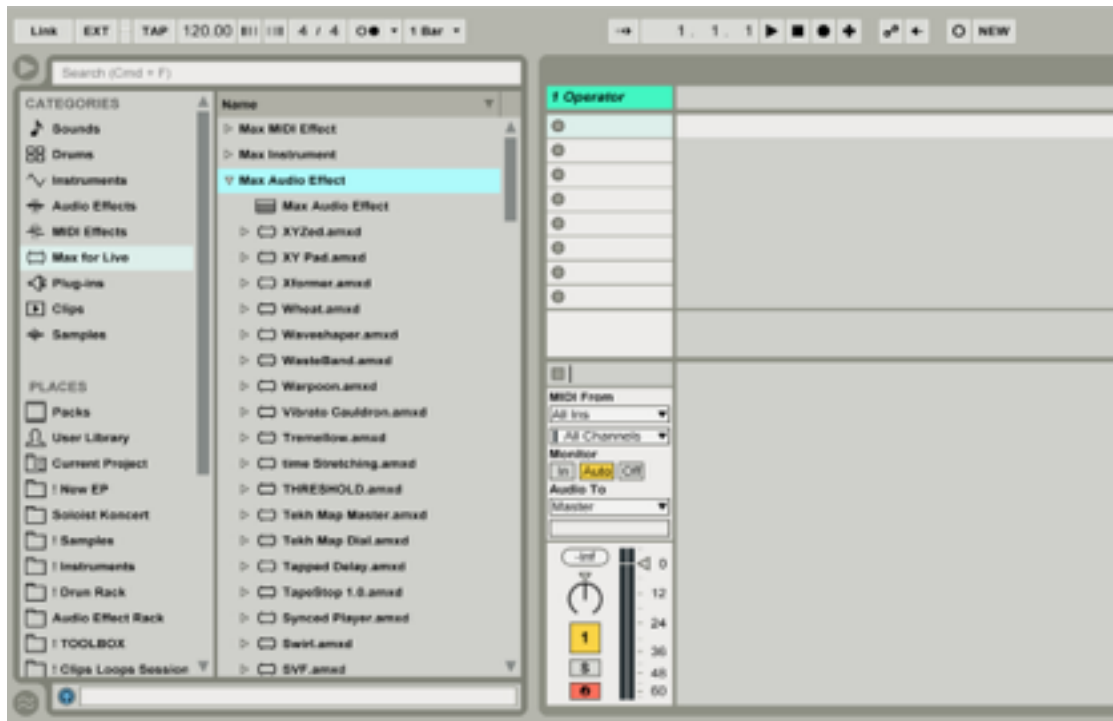
So what is Max for Live?



We definitely recommend grabbing the Max for Live Essentials pack, if you haven't already, to get started, as well as the Pitch And Time Machines pack and anything else that catches your eye...



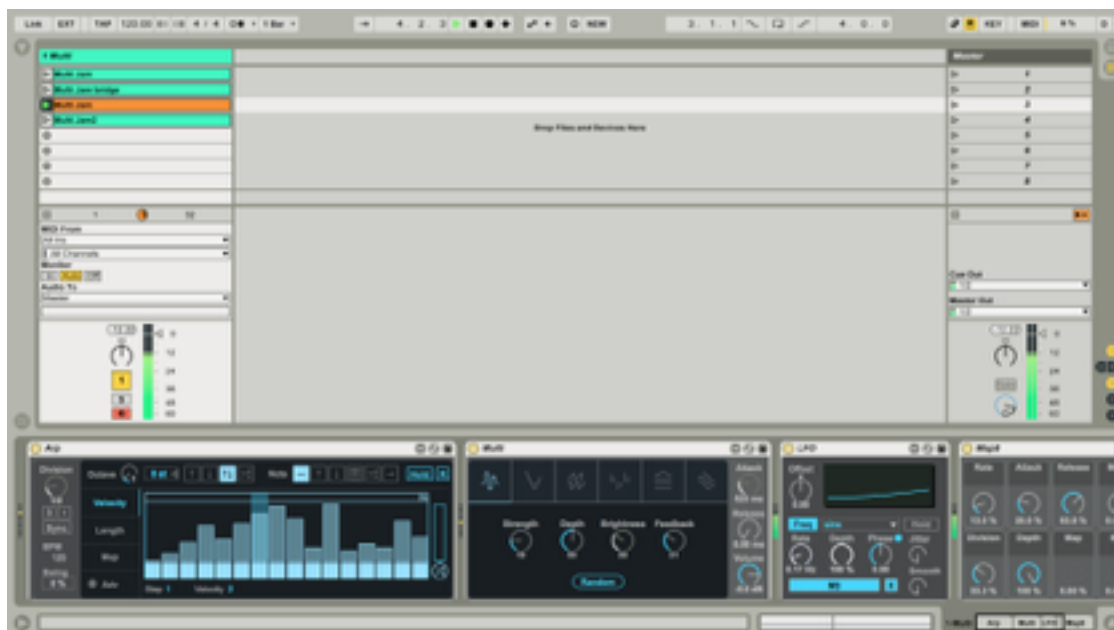
Max for Live is an add-on product that greatly expands Live's features and functionality, by allowing you to run a customized version of the program Max/MSP **inside** Live.



Max for Live devices are essentially a Max/MSP *patch* disguised by a familiar and approachable visual interface, meaning we can get using some weird and wonderful toys without having to learn what's going on 'under the hood'.

Max for Live comes included with Suite, so if you already own that, then you're good to go. Users of Live Standard can upgrade via Ableton's website to access this world of devices and modularity.

How do I use Max for Live?

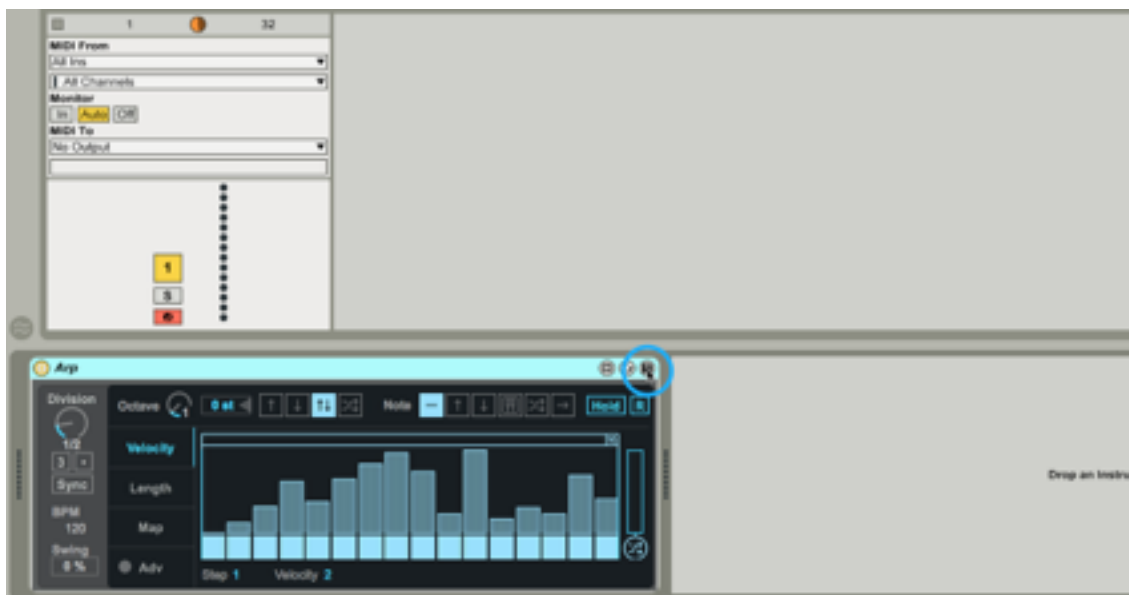


Max for Live devices, which can be distinguished by their .amxd file type, can be found in their designated section of Live's User Library, and can originate from a number of places: Packs, both free and premium from Ableton's website, the enormous and mostly-free library at maxforlive.com, from specialist companies such as Max for Cats, or from building your own devices.

You can essentially use Max for Live, however, you see fit: as a way to customize and enhance your Live environment, as a gateway to a constantly-expanding universe of instruments and effects, or, if you become interested in learning the relatively simple visual coding language of Max, as a musical swiss-army-knife of infinite possibility.



Max for Live devices work, for all intents and purposes, just like native Live devices, meaning you can drag and drop them around your Live project to your heart's content, add them to instrument racks and modulate their parameters in clips or the Live timeline.



After dragging a downloaded patch into your Live set, clicking the Save icon on the top right of the device will copy it to your library. Alternatively, devices that come with Packs you have installed are automatically populated into the Max for Live section of your User Library.

To get you up on your feet, we've decided to introduce you to 9 of our favourite devices, and in turn shine a light on this wondrous universe of sonic possibilities...

Expanded Features



Some of our most-loved Max for Live devices are the ones that add new features to Live. Here are our top 3:

1) LFO



Have you ever dreamed of quickly and easily assigning a million parameters to one LFO, à la Massive or Serum, in Live? Now you can! Not only can you map LFO to just about any parameter in your Live set (including Master Tempo...), combining this device with Instrument Racks and Macro mappings essentially turns Live into a endless modular synthesizer. Essential!

Pro Tip: Map one LFO to a filter cutoff, and a second LFO to the first one's Rate for complex and evolving modulations.

2) Multimap

A Macro Knob with a difference! Put Multimap on your Master channel (or anywhere you like), and you can map its one Macro Knob to up to 8 parameters, on any track, in any device!



Pro Tip: I really like using this device when I play live. I'll map the knob to things like filter cutoff, delay and reverb on all of my tracks, so I can turn loops into live arrangements by manipulating the tension of the music with just one, all-powerful Macro!

3) Device Randomizer



A great tool for when you hit a wall, or just want to experiment with sound design. This device can randomize any native Live device, as well as the Macros of an instrument rack. As well as 1-click patches when mapped to Operator synth (for example), you can modulate the randomization with an internal LFO, leading to some absolutely crazy sounds - try using this with a Grain Delay!

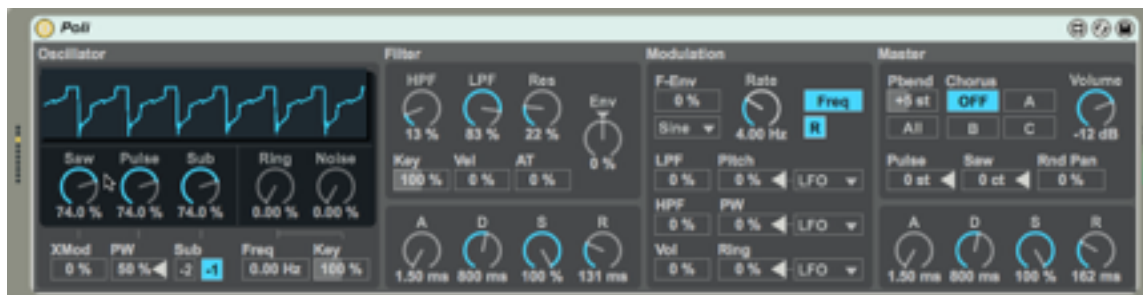
Pro Tip: You can use this device with any third-party plugin, selecting the parameters you want to randomize by using the 'Config' button, on the top right of the device titlebar.

Three Incredible Instruments

Expanding your pallet of sounds...



4) Poli



Poli is a lush, analog-modeled polyphonic synthesizer that gives a firm nod to some classic Roland models from the 80s and 90s; this wonderful device is overlooked at your peril! Like it's cousin Bass, Poli compliments the excellent native Live synthesizers Analog and Operator, bringing something distinctly stylized to the table, whilst remaining useable and fun.

Pro Tip: Modulate the XMod parameter for some unique textures and movements!

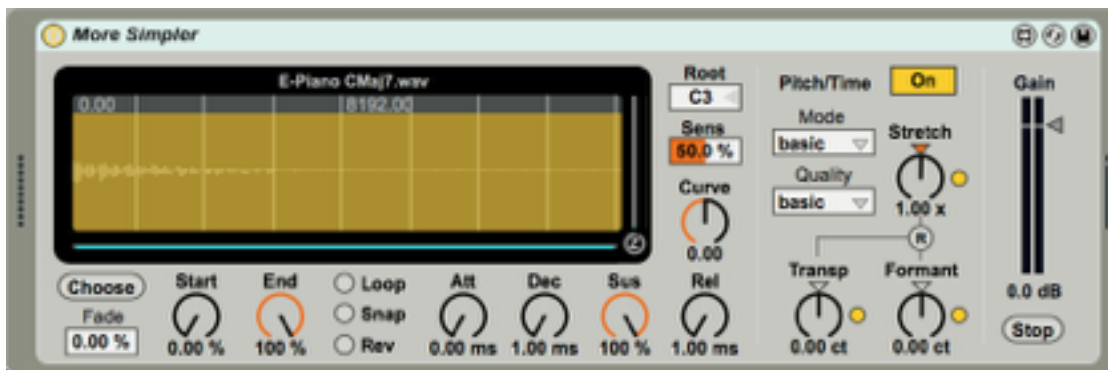
[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A TUTORIAL ON POLI!](#)

5) Granulator II



The funny thing about starting off with granular synthesis is that you keep having moments of 'oh, so THATS how you make that sound!' It's an incredibly refreshing approach to sound design that can bring you anything from morphing drones to twisted Neuro bass wobbles. Granulator II is usable and complete in its features, and while perhaps a bit daunting at first, is not so hard to get your head around if you already understand Operator and Simpler. Granulator was created by Robert Henke, one of the original minds behind Ableton Live's evolution.

6) More Simpler



This severely under-loved device packs a mean punch for sound design, allowing you to transform banal sounds and loops into enormous granular movements with just a few macro knobs.

Pro Tip: Use More Simpler's Time and Pitch controls to modulate foley and field recordings, for mind-bending textures, basses and leads.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A TUTORIAL ON MORE SIMPLER!](#)

Crazy Effects

Spicing up your instruments and samples...



7) Buffer Shuffler 2



Instant ideas, instant glitch! Like an array of Beat Repeat devices controlled by a step sequencer, you can dial in the length, stutter and pitch of each step, dial in odd-numbered envelopes for constant variation, or just hammer the Dice buttons and let Live write your grooves for you.

Pro Tip: Take a long piece of ambience, foley or noise; add Buffer Shuffler, tweak the parameters and boom, a unique percussion loop!

8) Convolution Reverb



Convolution is a process of filtering one sound through another, and is most often used as a way of simulating space. Max for Live's Convolution Reverb comes with a huge library of Impulse Response files, or sonic footprints, offering a colorful alternative to Live's own Reverb device.



Aside from convincing reverbs, the true depth of convolution is revealed when you discover that you can drag any sample from your arrangement, or library, onto the device, and use that as your IR... so, want your drums to sound a bit like your synth? Your bass to have a similar tone to your kick? Look no further...

Pro Tip: drop a pad onto Convolution Reverb, and run some drums and percussion through it as a new way of generating melodic loops.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A TUTORIAL ON CONVOLUTION REVERB!](#)

9) Deep Chorus

This one doesn't come from an Ableton pack, but rather from the very aptly-named boutique company Amazing Noises, purveyors of next-level, intricately programmed instruments and effects such as Dark Synth and Outer Spaces.

Deep Chorus is exactly what it says on the tin, a deep and layered chorus device with particular and warm character. This is one of many awesome freebies available on Amazing Noises' website.



Honorable Mentions

We couldn't condense our list to only nine devices, there's so much out there! These three deserve a shout-out...



Multi

Sibling to Poli and Bass from the Max for Live Essentials Pack, this quirky and intuitive multi-mode synthesizer is a great compositional tool.

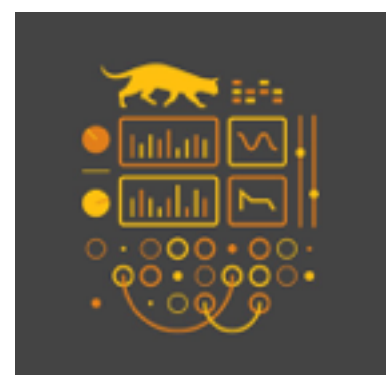
[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A TUTORIAL ON MULTI!](#)



Bengal

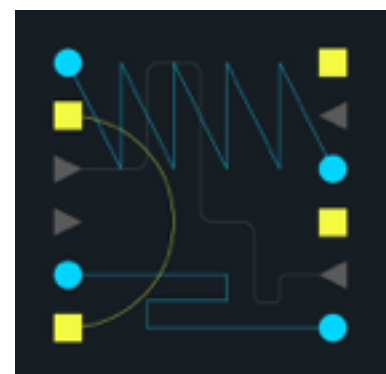
This is one of our favorite plugins from Max for Cats, a fantastically innovative company pushing the forefront of the Max for Live game.

Merging the usability of Operator with the depth and complexity of FM8, this is an FM synthesizer from another planet. The quality of sound from the oscillators and filters is absurd, and its excellent GUI make this synth a sound design weapon.



Max for Live Connection Kit

A fascinating free pack of toys and tools from Ableton, allowing you to intuitively and easily connect Live to things like your Webcam, Arduino micro-computers, OSC and even robotic Lego bricks!



Resources

If this short introduction has tickled your curiosity, and you want to dive deeper, here are some handy resources we can vouch for...



Max for Live Tutorials

An introduction to Max for Live from Eric Ameres from Learn Max:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNb-RSlmlA0>

A cool video overview from Ableton:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnbhHS6FLDo>

The Max for Live page of Cycling74's website, where you can find some excellent tutorials:

<https://cycling74.com/products/maxforlive/#.WMq9zhiZNE5>

An excellent overview of MaxMSP, showing some of the crazy things it can do:

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Intro-to-MaxMSP/>

Swag

Free and premium devices on Ableton's website:

https://www.ableton.com/en/packs/#?item_type=max_for_live

The one and only MaxForLive.com

<http://www.maxforlive.com>

Amazing free devices from Robert Henke

<http://roberthenke.com/technology/m4l.html>

Max for Cats

<http://maxforcats.com>

Amazing Noises

<https://www.amazingnoises.com/home-3/>

Isotonik

<https://isotonikstudios.com>

Warp Academy



Learn music production with Ableton Certified Trainers:

<https://www.warpacademy.com>

Subscribe to us on Youtube:

<http://youtube.com/warpacademy>

Say hello on Facebook:

<http://facebook.com/warpacademy>

About The Author

Merlyn Silva is a musician, educator and sound artist living in Aarhus, Denmark. Cutting his teeth as a guitarist in the early 00's touring with a string of rock and dub groups, Merlyn later took a left turn at the crossroads and enrolled to study theatre in 2006. Shortly after, he stumbled into Ableton Live whilst working on a production, in a search for a more elegant backing-track solution than a CD. He has been mesmerized with the software ever since.

Merlyn's academic history includes a Bachelors degree in Theatre from the University of Exeter (UK), and a Masters degree in Electronic Music from the Danish Royal Academy of Music (DIEM), where he is currently completing a Postgraduate Diploma. After 10 years of using Live, Merlyn became an Ableton Certified Trainer in July 2016. Merlyn currently divides his time between teaching, performing, and promoting niche electronic music concerts in his adopted Scandinavian hometown.

