

runner

Pure Rave Manifesto

Pure Rave

November 14, 2022



Pure Rave, a collective based in Detroit, Michigan, is an ongoing experiment in “chance dance”. Using various prepared turntables, “damaged” records, the occasional drum machine, rudimentary CDDJ loops, and 133.33 bpm loops. The effect is an indeterminate arrangement of patterns and rhythmic sonic collage. Real-time experimentation with the goal of hitting your pleasure center for whatever your brain thinks is interesting.

Set amidst the context of contemporary Detroit electronic music, the group has no trouble finding endless bins of trashed Midwestern dance records and no problem hosing them off in the front yard of their apartment building. Cheap or free turntables of questionable condition are also bountiful in this town.

Expanding on turntablism techniques developed by experimentalists [Christian Marclay](#), [Grandmaster Flash](#), [Pierre Schaeffer](#), [Otomo Yoshihide](#), [Maria Chavez](#), [Qbert](#), [Graham Dunning](#), [Institut Fuer Feinmotorik](#), [Victoria Shen](#), [Emil Beaulieu](#), and [anyone who’s ever enjoyed what happens when their record starts skipping](#), Core members Nick George, Bryan Dulaney, Will Lawson and Cy Tulip approach the Pure Rave project as a set of rules and limitations for an inaccessible academic experimental music scene and vapid modern DJ culture.

In Fluxus-like fashion, the result is often humorous.

Collaborators include Gus Brovold, Dave Shettler, Onyx Ashanti, Ben Kudler, Matt Conzett, and a guy who took over as Pure Rave for 2+ hours at Donovan’s Pub in the fall of 2019 because we all had to go home early.

Towards a manifesto:

Techniques and understandings of recorded media in Pure Rave

1. Vinyl

Records skip at 133.33 BPM when the turntable is playing at $33 \frac{1}{3}$ RPM. This means any number of turntables will be synced up while skipping at $33 \frac{1}{3}$. The same principle can be applied at 45 RPM or any +/- available on the turntable you’re using. If a turntable is playing at +8 or -8, you can whip your pocket calculator out to find that +/-8% BPM.

$$133.33 \times .08 = 10.66$$

$$133.33 \pm 10.66 = 144.55 \text{ or } 122.67$$

The mathematics of Pure Rave are useful for ongoing experiments. Adding drum machines, synthesizers, and other electronic music equipment in the set up is welcome as long as the relationship of the hardware to the mix is such that an ostensible indeterminate rhythmic source is conducting. Thanks to [Harvestworks](#) in NYC, Pure Rave was granted \$1500 in 2019 to figure out how to use MIDI or CV to organize this process. Envelopes and MIDI data can be triggered by points where the record skips. The results of those experiments are found [here](#) and [here](#).

Jack Callahan engineered a Max/MSP patch that detected records skipping and then generated an envelope that got our synthesizers and drum machines to respond to that signal. While wonky and imprecise (that's kind of the point), it was wild to experiment with all this cool new technology.

We had 3 Technics-1200s modded with [DJ Backtrack's Ultra Pitch and MIDI mod](#) which gave us the ability to control the turntables with MIDI data. Still experimenting with this, [here](#) are some of our first results.

Skips can be achieved in a number of ways, some of the classic techniques for skipping records are:

1. Using small pieces of tape to prevent the needle from moving forward.
2. Placing an object such as a mixing bowl on the turntable. An interesting bonus here is resonant objects can be amplified using wireless contact microphones and processed to make interesting percussive occurrences that repeat when the cartridge resets.
 - a. Tapping the bowl.
3. Lifting the tonearm and placing objects underneath the record to bring the grooves up for a meeting with the needle. useful for staccato skips. If the needle has a tendency to move away from the center, place an object to keep it on the record.
4. Playing locked groove records and convincing yourself that you're not cheating.
5. Calibrating the tonearm and anti-skate dial in such a way that the tonearm weight discourages the advancement of the needle. When records are skipping using this method, a slight bump of the table is enough to introduce a unique shift in the loop's progression. Timed well, the result is agreeable!
6. Treating the record with heat, by way of torch or oven, causes the vinyl to wrinkle and become soft. At this point you can use other records or objects to warp the record. The record may have points now where the needle physically jumps off the record. The landings can then be EQ'd to your liking. For example a record with many wrinkles EQ'd the right way produces a wild snare-like percussive element. Use a can or something if the needle wants to head off the record.
7. Snapping records in such a way that the hole in the center is preserved, a technique we learned from Maria Chavez, is fantastic for layering records on top of each other and allowing the new composition to take form. You might need to use a different kind of needle here, like an ortofon or something.
8. Wobble the table to jostle the loop position. Feel free to enlist the help of a mixing bowl here.
9. Use a 7" or a 10" record to create a loop - this is basically the bowl technique but you could bring the needle onto the small record from time to time if it makes sense.

2. CD DJ's

- Many if not all CD DJ's have some kind of looping mechanism built in, which are sensationally easier on the unsuspecting passersby ear. The sound of a needle scraping across a record is initially met with alarm ("uh oh my record's fucked up now"). The empathetic audience member should feel no worry regarding our digital skipping via CDDJ unit as needle scraping is out of the picture.
 - In order to retain a sense of indeterminacy in the dictation of the mix, a technique in which the loops in and out set points are assigned using cues from only the master mix, without knowing what the track you have lined up sounds like. In other words, the player listens to the mix and sets in and out points based on the rhythm understood of the master mix. When the new loop is brought into the mix, it is a sonic surprise to everyone.
 - The player may know what track they are selecting on the CDDJ, but it's not necessary. Try doing this with other DJs USB sticks. Select a track randomly or whatever name sounds best to you. Pulling off a Pure Rave set not knowing what anything sounds like prior to performing is an impressive and rewarding feat.
 - When using CDDJs, start by using the indeterminate looping technique outlined above but continue creating new loops based off of other loops in the other CDDJ. Keep the indeterminate cycle going.

3. Non-DJ Native tools

In collaboration with Refraction Festival, Pure Rave has been called to put forth a call to action - we're encouraging our fellow experimentalists out there to use these techniques outlined in our manifesto to create their own Pure Rave pieces. We've even recorded some [visual demonstrations of the techniques!](#)

Using the blockchain-enabled publishing mechanism designed by the Nina Protocol, we're able to have the larger avant-garde music community participate in the ongoing Pure Rave experiment in such a way that establishes provenance and shared equity of intellectual property.

In order to make our approach to groovy indeterminacy more accessible, we've developed a new set of techniques using everything from browser-based dictation tools to TikTok.

“Minted Chaos: Community Experiment in Chance Dance with Pure Rave” spans the month of September, 2022, with details of the submission process [here](#).

- Looptube.io
 - Open at least three windows, find whatever songs on youtube you like and enter them into the Looptube.io mechanism - might be a cool idea to go on a clicking spree and see where the algorithm takes you. Populate a bunch of videos ahead of time so you're not distracted by looking for youtube videos when recording or performing. Click the loop button once to start playback, then time your next two clicks rhythmically. Follow the same instructions for CDDJ-based Pure Raving here if possible. You can also use Ctrl+L and time your loops using that hotkey. I like to hit triplets here but remember that your first click out of the loop will resume playback normally, so be sure to trigger the next loop accordingly. Plan three clicks.
 - It's important to note that this is an online tool meant for dictation and learning languages, it's not as precise as a CDDJ - there seems to be a small gap in the looping mechanism making it very tough to time rhythmically. This being said, opening a number of browser windows (or tabs) and experimenting can produce incredible results even with said gap. I recommend leaning into its imprecision. Try double or triple clicking rather quickly and see what happens.
 - Start with the youtube volume slider at zero when queuing up your first loops.

- Ableton

Ableton Method 1:

- Drag your desired audio track into an audio channel
- Audio will appear in the bottom of the ableton window
- Drag right-hand arrow marker at the end of the clip to the point in the clip where you want sound to end/loop to the beginning
- Select the “loop” button to the left of the audio clip
- Hit the spacebar to start audio
- Clip can also be shortened and compressed in such a way as to accelerate the speed of the audio by hovering mouse over the end of the clip near the top of the sound waves, where the play marker pops up, until a bracket appears — click and drag toward the beginning of the clip, clip should compress and shorten

Ableton Method 2:

- Drag desired audio into audio channel
- Open Effect menu/sample library menu on left margin of the ableton project window
- Click “Audio Effects”
- In the search bar up top, search “looper”
- Click Looper and select “1 Bar Phrase” (or however long you'd like your loop to last)
- Hit space bar to play audio track

- Click record icon (big circle within a square in bottom left corner of looper effect) to record segmented clip of audio track
 - To add more audio channels, click “Create” in the top menu bar, then “Insert Midi Track”.
 - Clips can be layered through multiple audio tracks to replicate Pure Rave method of multiple turntables and collaged samples.
- Smart Phone
 - There are various methods for utilizing a smartphone to create indeterminate loops. The following are but a few tested applications one can use to create indeterminate loops on your phone. Feel free to experiment in different ways, hopefully these techniques can get you started.
 - Instagram Story Loops: Open Instagram and begin playing through your stories feed. Activate your screen recording feature and jump back and forth through your stories feed whenever it strikes you to do so. This initial recording itself can serve as a piece, or can be further re-sampled by posting the recording as a story and repeating the process.
 - Tik-Tok Scrubbing Loops: Similar in effect to the ‘Instagram Story Loops’ the Tik-Tok Scrubbing Loop can be achieved by opening your Tik-Tok app and scrolling back and forth through your feed as you please. Be sure to activate your screen recording device while doing so. Again, this initial recording can serve as a piece or be further re-sampled by posting to IG stories and utilizing the ‘Instagram Story Loops’ technique again, or reposting to Tik-Tok and doing the same or a combination of both.
 - Tik-Tok Time Shift Loops: This technique has you focus on a particular tik-tok post that you let run while screen recording. To achieve the Tik-Tok Time Shift Loop simply run the timerhead at the bottom of the Tik-Tok video back and forth as you capture the screen recording. Allow any amount of time to pass as you see fit before readjusting the timer head to a different position on the post. Once again this initial recording can serve as the piece, or it can be further resampled using any combination of the above mentioned techniques on the recording.
 - Other
 - Feel free to dive into the world of rhythmic indeterminacy however you see fit! Keep the term “Chance Dance” with you at all times.

Performance

- When “performing live” at a venue with live acts, you could assume the position of “casual DJ playing music between acts.” In this manner, Pure Rave plays before, between, and after all other live performances.
- Try and “mix in” to another set when it’s your turn - see if you can Pure Rave yourself into a groove based on what the previous act/DJ is playing.
- When sharing a bill with other DJs, encourage them to play in Pure Rave style if they show interest, they can use part of your “time slot”.
- If a member of the “audience” shows interest in Pure Rave style, show them a few techniques and encourage them to take over. Use this rule with caution, as there are certainly some folks who without any knowledge of “DJing”, may damage the equipment.
- If anyone asks what record you’re playing, consider offering the record to them as a gift, unless it’s a nice record that you want to keep. Give away as many records as possible.

Recording

- Direct-in to a computer or recording device is pretty standard but feel free to use whatever you’re used to. It’s fun to do shout outs and maybe even sing along. Have fun!
- <https://rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/> is a tool that records audio from your Macs sound card.
- <https://obsproject.com/> is an open-source tool for all operating systems that enables screen and sound recording + streaming.



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