

## L'heure du Jazz++



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### *About the author:*

Katja is the German editor of LinuxFocus. She likes Tux, film & photography and the sea. Her homepage can be found here.



### *Abstract:*

Jazz is a midi sequencer with many interesting features for editing and composing your own music!

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## Installation

Jazz++ is available as pre-compiled package or as source code. Installation from source code is an adventure of its own because you need to find your way through a faulty wxwin-1.68E library which is needed for the installation.

The precompiled versions however are easy to install and we start with this:

Download <ftp://ftp.jazzware.com/pub/jazz/stable/linux/jazz-bin-4.1.3.tar.gz>

Don't try to use the rpm version from jazzware.com. It's a fake and contains only a script to install a tar file. You will not have the advantages that come with normal rpm files.

1) Go to some directory (your home directory or /usr/local ) and unpack jazz-bin-4.1.3.tar.gz:

```
tar zxvf /where/you/have/the/package/jazz-bin-4.1.3.tar.gz
```

2) Download the jazz-bin-4.1.3\_addon.tar.gz you can find at the end of the article and run tar zxvf /where/you/have/the/package/jazz-bin-4.1.3\_addon.tar.gz

3) `chmod 755 jazz-bin-4.1.3`

```
chmod 644 jazz-bin-4.1.3/jazz.cfg
```

If you do not execute step 3 then every user will modify the configuration file. With step 3 all users get a default config file. There is no configuration per user.

Now start the jazz program from bin/jazz . To produce "sound" you need a working sound system installation. Alsa is a good choice (see the alsa article).



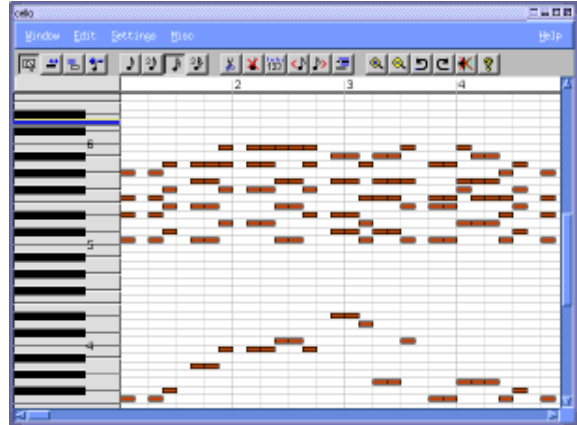
for

## The piano window

To get the piano window you either click on the toolbar button with the piano keyboard on it or if you want the piano window for a certain track (instrument) you right click in the bar code field of the desired track.

On the left side you see a piano keyboard and if you click on it with the mouse you can hear sound. In case that you have selected a drum on channel 10 you will get a list with drum instruments instead and can listen to their sound. (If the piano keyboard doesn't change to a list of drum names for channel 10 you can click Settings-->Events in the menu of the piano window and tick "Show drumnames on drumtracks").

To insert notes (which will again look like bar code) into the big field on the right you just have to click on the insert button (the fourth toolbar button from the left) and then click in the field on the place where you want the notes to be. The next four buttons in the toolbar determine how long your inserted notes will be. But you can also edit them manually by right clicking on the note you want to edit and then dragging the mouse while the mouse button is still held down.



To get yourself some help for your compositions you can e.g. use the Random Generators and

## The Harmony Browser

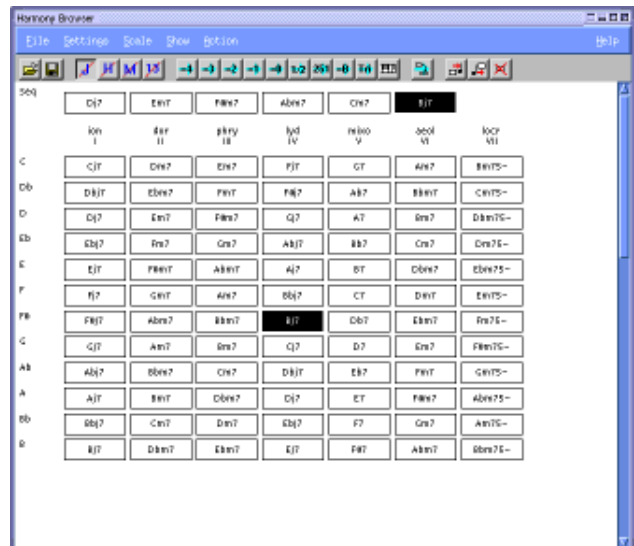
Go back to the track window. In the menu click Misc--> Harmony Browser and a new window opens.

One way to use the Harmony browser is to click on the available chords. Put the ones you like in the Sequence by holding shift-key while clicking on the chord you like. If you now click on the chord in the sequence the chord gets into the piano buffer. When you now go to the piano window and left click in it you can paste the chord there.

Back to the Harmony Browser. If you go to the menu Settings--> Midi you can change the pitch of the notes in the harmony browser so you can have chords with a lower or higher sound.

Here you can also set the midi channel the Harmony Browser should use for its instrument (this is important when you want to use it for several instruments because otherwise all will sound like the instrument in the channel set there).

Another way to use the Harmony Browser is to first put some single notes in the piano window. If you



select these notes in the track window and then click Action-> Analyze in the Harmony Browser the single notes will be transformed into chords. You can see them in the chord sequence and can then paste them into your song.

To select the notes you want click with the left mouse button and drag the mouse over them. If you want to select more than is visible in the current window you have to hold the shift-key down while selecting. After scrolling you can then continue your selection.

## Random Rhythm Generator

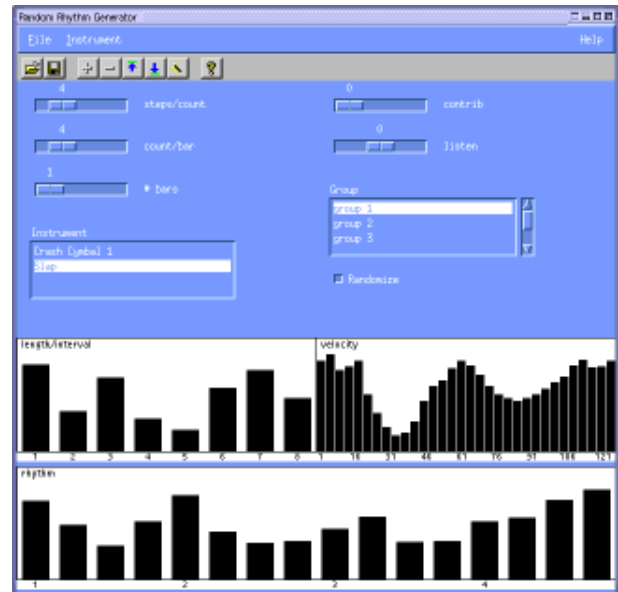
Select the area of your track where you want the random rhythm to be in the track window. Open the Random Rhythm Generator by clicking Misc-->Random Rhythm in the menu of the Track window. At first you should choose an instrument. Then you can set all the other variables you can see in the window and generate the rhythm by clicking Instrument--> Generate. After that you can go on with another instrument until you are finished.

Listen to it. I personally find that you have to try it out several times. Sometimes it gives a nice rhythm and sometimes it doesn't. It's just random but still it's nice to use.

The variables you specify are actually probabilities. E.g. in the rhythm field you specify the probability that an instrument is played at that time. A high value means a high probability and a low value means a low probability.

In the documentation it is suggested to define every instrument twice. Once you choose high probabilities on a few positions and once low probabilities for many positions. It really gives a quite nice result.

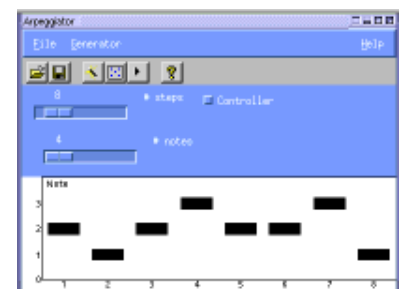
You can also define groups of instruments to make the different drums play a bit more together. This is what you see on the right side of the dialog box of the random rhythm generator. Note that you have to define a contributor before a listener.



## Random Arpeggio Generator

I also find it interesting to use this generator. An arpeggio can be described as a chord that is played one note at a time. In other words, instead of playing all notes of a chord at once they are played individually one after the other. Sometimes it really gives very nice sounds! I especially like to copy the chords first to another track so that I have one track with the chords and one with the arpeggio. Usually it gives a very nice sound!

Just play around with it. You will be surprised what nice sounds and



rhythms you can generate quite easily.

Now that you have a piece of music you might want to edit some parts of it:

## **Editing your music**

There are really lots of possibilities in Jazz++ to edit your piece of music any way you like and we can't discuss all of them here. So let's just look at a few of them:

### **Insert and Repeat**

If you want to insert some notes somewhere in the middle of your piece and need more space for it you can just shift the other notes with cut and paste. First click and drag the left mouse button to select the notes that you want to move, then click cut in the menu. When you now click paste and move your mouse over the track window you will see an arrow. If you left click it will be pasted on that place.

If you want to repeat a part do the same just click on copy instead of cut.

Another way to repeat something is to use replicate. First select the area that you want to replicate. Then in the Trackwindow Edit--> Replicate. You now have to click where you want the copy to start. A dialog box opens. After closing it you have to click where you want the replication to end. If you have "Repeat Copy" ticked the selected part is repeated to fill the destination range. If "Insert Space" is ticked other parts of music are shifted to the right to make room for the new music.

You can also insert a part from another song into this new song by just saving the part as pattern (File--> Save Pattern) and then insert it later into the new song with File--> Load Pattern.

To delete something you can go to Edit--> Delete. In the dialog box you can decide whether the deletion should leave an empty space or the music from the right should move to fill the gap.

### **Transpose**

To transpose part of your music you have to select it first, then go to Edit-->Transpose in the Track window.

Another way to transpose is to use the Harmony Browser. You can choose some chords that you like.

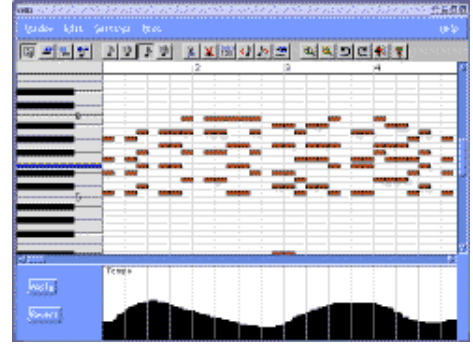
You then select the part of your music piece you want to transpose in the track window and click Action->Transpose in the Harmony Browser. The notes from your music piece will be transposed to the pitch of the chords.

### **Tempo Adjustment**

You will be astonished how different a piece of music can sound

You will be astonished how different a piece of music can sound depending on the speed with which it is played. To adjust the speed go to the track window. There you see the field speed. Clicking the right mouse button will decrease the speed, clicking the left one will increase the speed.

To change the speed only in some parts of your song click Misc--> Edit Tempo in the Piano window. You will see that a new field under the notes becomes visible. Here you can draw the desired tempo changes with your mouse. (For some reason I sometimes have to click on Misc--> Edit Tempo again after clicking Apply to get it work correctly.)



## Changing the pitch

Click Misc-->Edit Pitch in the Piano Winow. It works similar to changing the tempo in a part of your song: You will see that a new field under the notes becomes visible and can draw the desired pitch changes with your mouse.

## Crescendo/Decrescendo

For this you use the velocity button Misc--> Edit Velocity in the piano window.

If you don't like any of the changes you made you can of course undo them by clicking the undo button (Misc--> Undo).

I hope you have some idea now what Jazz++ is all about and can't wait to play with it for yourself! There are lots of other features to explore like the guitar board, the random shuffle generator etc. etc. but this is up to you to try it out yourself!

Have fun and enjoy!

## References

The program itself has very good documentation when you click the Help button. You can also search in it.

- [jazzware.com](http://jazzware.com)
- [HowTo from Hymn](#)
- [jazz-bin-4.1.3\\_addon.tar.gz](#)
- Jazz++ works best with alsa sound. See article 259:Midi with alsa
- [additional patches for source code installation](#)

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