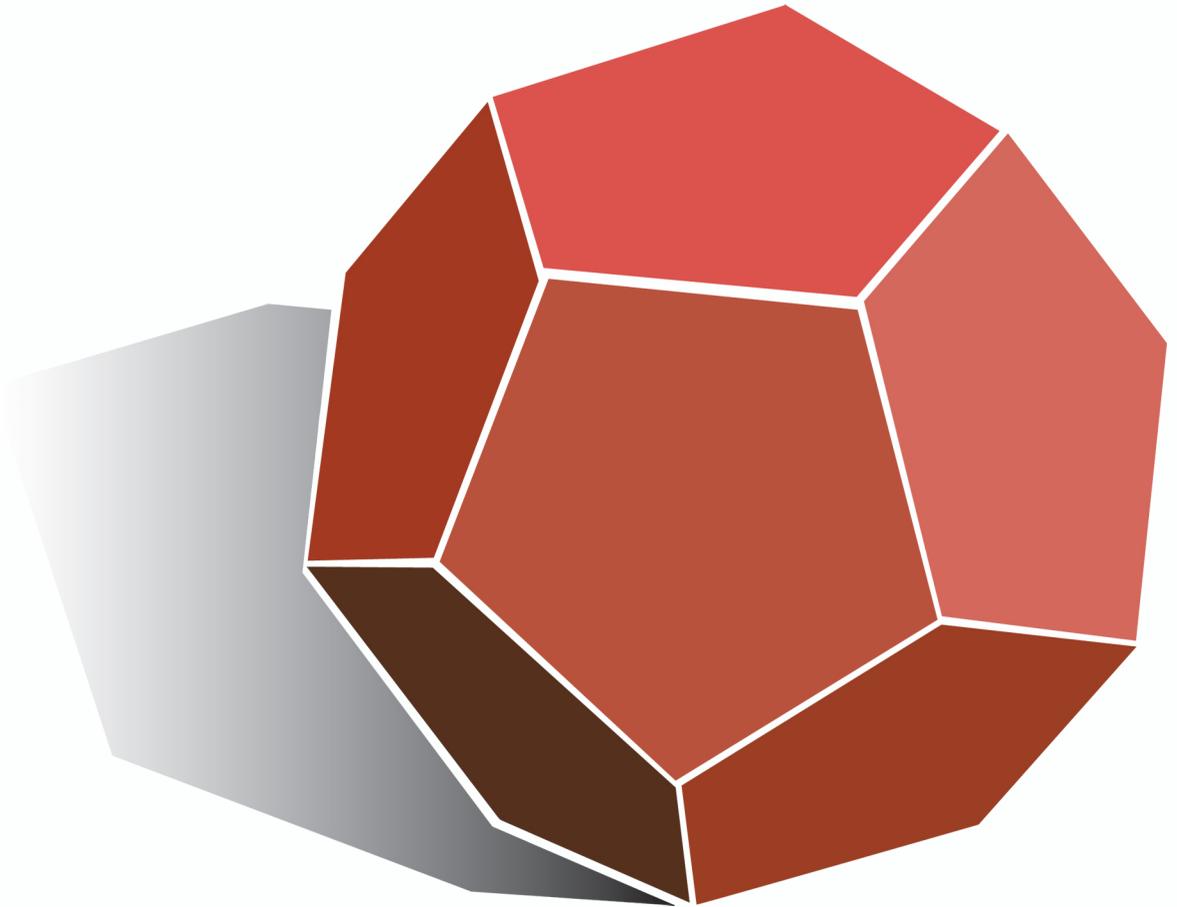


# CHROMATIK



## The Chromatik Problem Statement

Electronic music creation is more popular and accessible than ever before. Ableton has bridged the gap between traditional DAWs (Pro Tools, Logic) and loop-based production suites (Propellerhead, Native Instruments), by pairing their powerful software suite Live with their surface controller Push (and now the Push 2). Push allows the user to control almost all of Live's operations and frees you from buying your face in the computer screen while you make music. But as someone who's logged hundreds of hours using the Push, I think it leaves a lot to be desired during the musical ideation experience. It does a mediocre job of simplifying these critically precious and important parts of the creative process.

Within the wealth of devices, effects, and creative choices we can make in electronic music production, often we can become the roadblocks to our own best ideas. The problem is not that Push isn't a dynamic and creative tool, it's that it was designed to be a swiss army knife. For example, when used as an instrument, it's layout lets you play it like a classic MPC-style pad sampler, but it also defaults to mapping the VST's notes across 5 octaves and parameter locks to a musical key. This creates such an unnecessary amount of unison notes, that it can really clutter-up the process of writing a melodic line.

Keith Macmillen Instruments do a good job of making various MIDI controllers with a high degree of creative malleability, and like Push there are ways to tailor a MIDI config that appeals to each user. But even for a professional electronic musician like myself, often customizing these devices is not all that intuitive and valuable creative steam can be lost during these moments of configuration friction with your tech.

In other ways, we can easily find ourselves putting the cart before the horse as we build up a song. Within the wealth of options available in the softwares there is the ever present possibility that a musician may experience a fatigue of variety. Our processes can easily stagnate under the weight of all those choices. Often, before you've fully formed an interesting compositional idea — be it a lead, bass line, drum beat, etc. — you'll find your mind and process wandering by making production and arrangement decisions too early on in the song-making. This leaves a lot of exciting room for more singularly focused devices to exist within the market place.

In response to this problem, I've concepted the preliminary design of Chromatik — a Bluetooth, battery-operated MIDI controller that's specifically designed for ideation. To free us from moments of writer's block, stagnations in our production process, or to suggest new melodic lines — this is what Chromatik seeks to solve.

It's a dodecahedron the size of a grapefruit, and is in essence modeled after the idea of a 12 sided die. Like the dice, Chromatik's default setup would scatter it's 1-12 values around its panels. During moments of creative roadblock simply "roll the dice," and let Chromatik tumble across a surface. As the 12 touch sensitive pads that

make up it's panels make contact with the surface they trigger MIDI notes (perhaps the 12 pitches in a chromatic scale, or perhaps you parameter lock it to a major or minor key). Maybe you those notes become a quantized sequence. Or perhaps you briefly get outside your own thoughts and consider how this new, randomly introduced melodic line acts as a fresh jumping off point to some new idea.

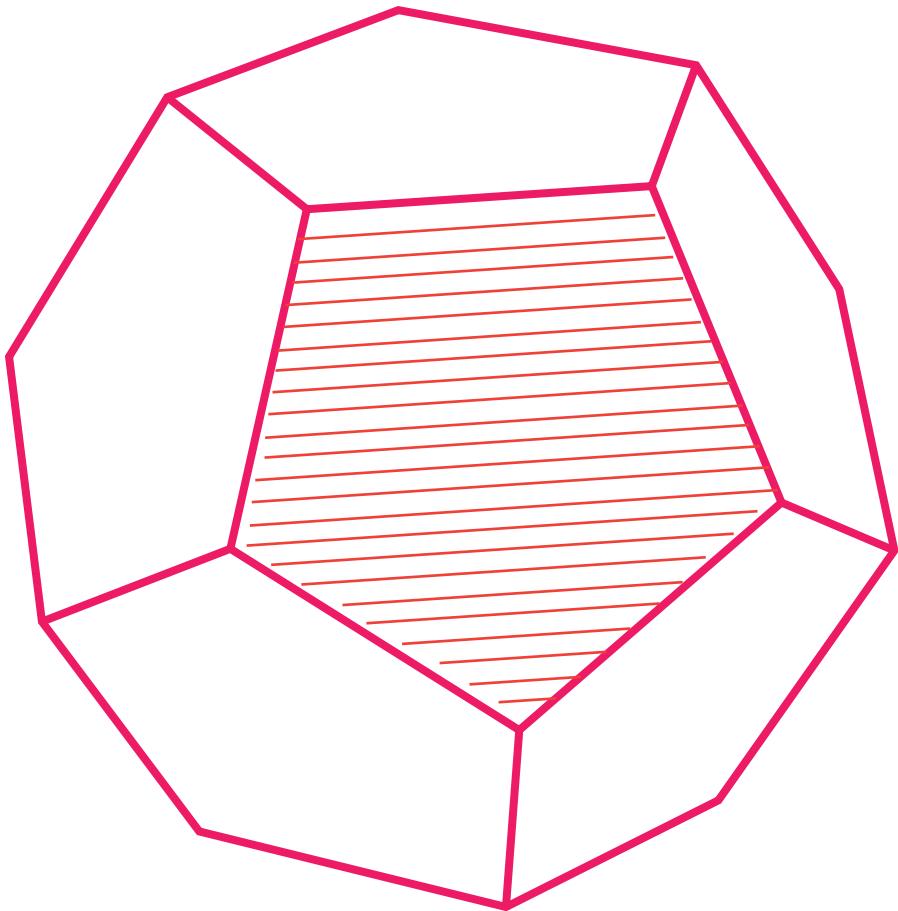
Furthermore, in the examples of a trackball or a computer mouse, that people prefer to engage an ergonomic and handheld device that connects the human - computer interaction. The idea behind a ball-like MIDI controller is also that it's simply more fun than an MPC-style pad controller.

Chromatik could also be used to exciting ends in a performance setting. Holding it in your hands, Chromatik becomes an elegantly tangible instrument, as you rotate it and let your fingers play myriad notes or samples in unpremeditated patterns.

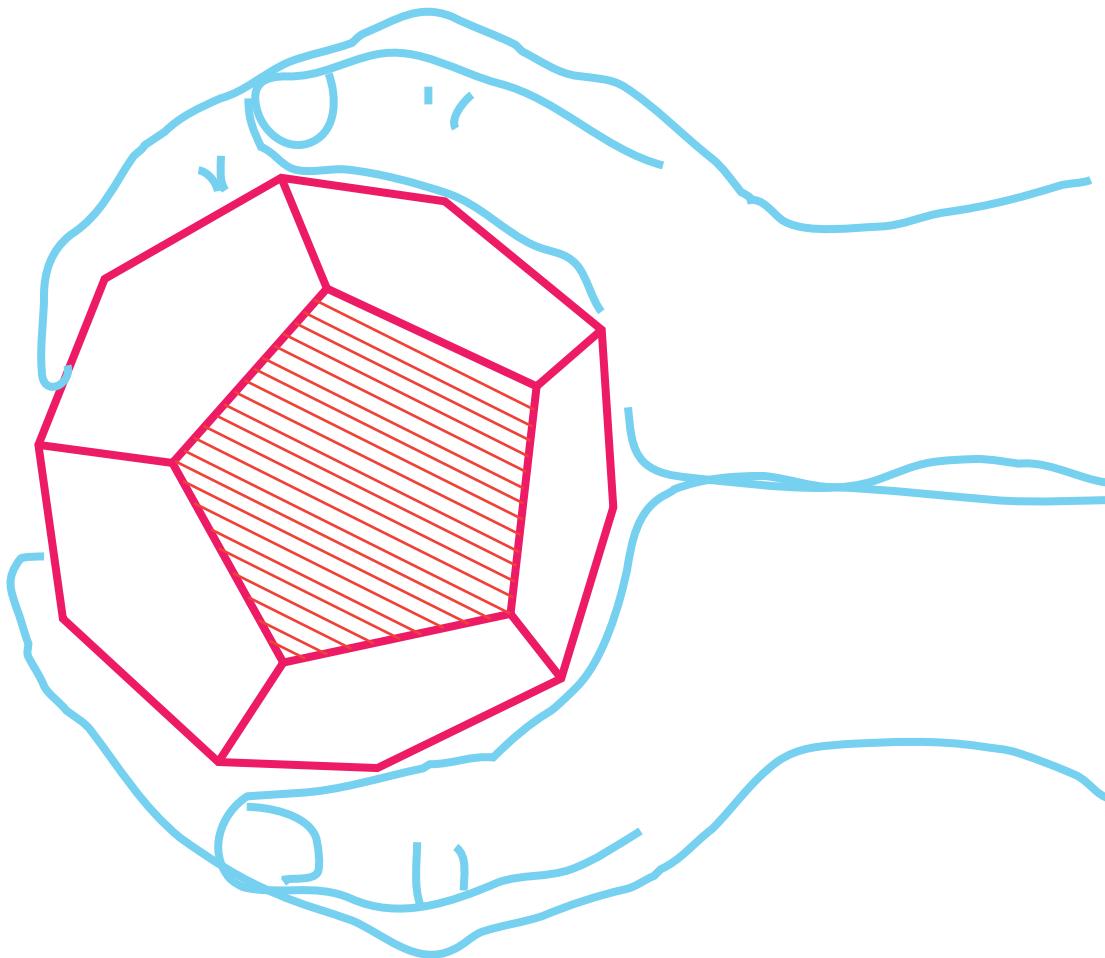
Ultimately, it could be targeted at both the growing numbers of entry level electronic music-makers, or more experienced users: anyone who'd appreciate a fun, creative tool that suggests new compositional pathways within a song.

# “The Chromatik”

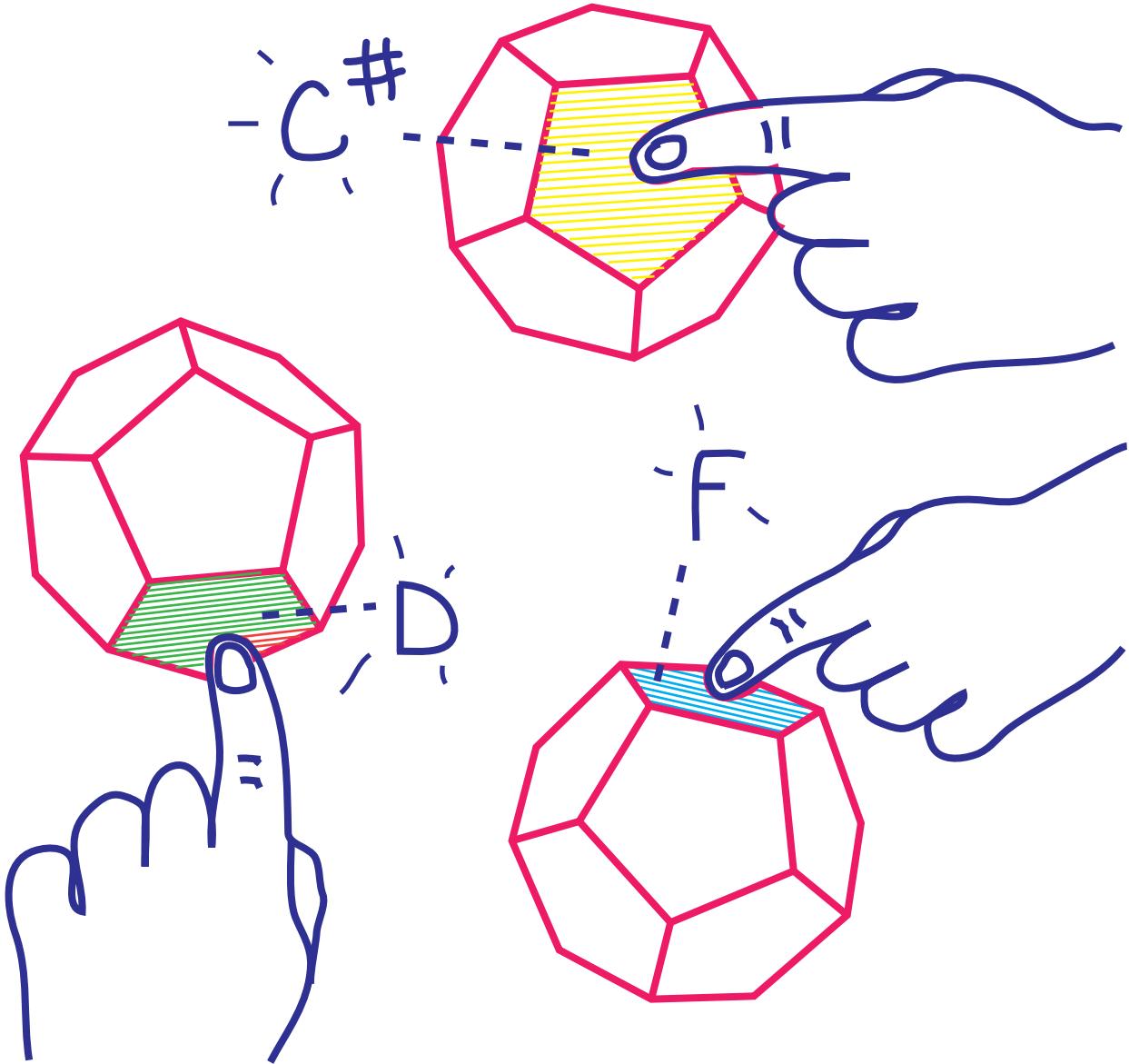
- Concept Storyboard
- 12-sided MIDI Controller for Music Creation and Performance



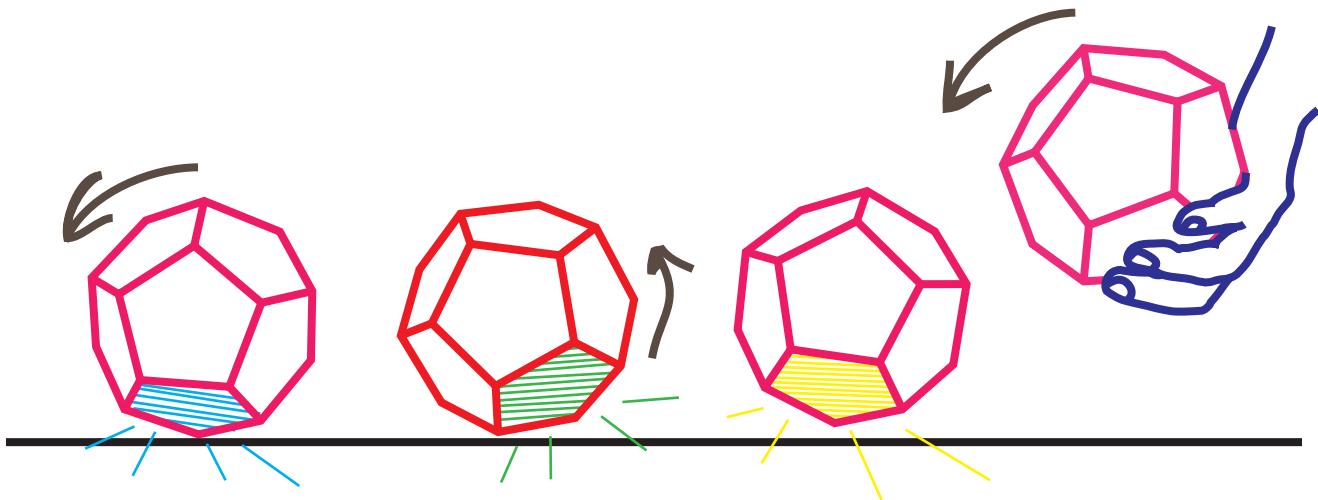
- Like a 12 sided die the size of a grapefruit, Chromatik fits in the palm of your hands
- Simple, low barrier to entry for novice or professional electronic music-makers
- Bluetooth connectivity with your Digital Audio Workstation



- assign the touch-sensitive panels to the 12 unique notes of a chromatic scale, or parameter lock the instrument to play within a desired major or minor scale.



- Sometimes we become trapped in certain modes of creative thinking. Within the endless possibilities of electronic music production we can become the roadblocks to our own best ideas.
- During moments of writer's block users can "Roll the Dice"
- Let the Chromatik roll across a table or floor and watch it generate a string of notes in unpredictable sequences as the different panels make contact with the surface.
- Whether you quantize those notes into a sequencer, for example, or just let it generate new melodic lines to consider, the Chromatik can help to shake you free when your train of thought has become stuck.



- You can also introduce the element of chance another way.
- Chromatik becomes a sphere-like instrument by holding it with both hands and playing the different panels with your fingertips.
- Rotate it in your hands to let your fingers rest on different panels, thereby shuffling the configurations of notes/samples that you trigger.

