

We Interrupt This Broadcast

a Max/MSP patch for multiple computers

Seth Shafer

Technical Needs

multiple computers capable of running Max/MSP (a minimum of four)
a matching number of performers
individual sound reinforcement for each of the computers
1 network router (and network cable, if required)
1 video projector

Program Note

In this missile age, our emergency systems must keep pace. That's why the old Conelrad System is out — It's been replaced by the new, improved Emergency Broadcast System — A better, quicker way to bring you essential information in the event of enemy attack. It's no longer necessary to tune to 640 and 1240 on your radio dial. Now, in a national emergency, encoded radio messages are sent to an EBS station in your area to provide special emergency information. Normal radio and television programming will be immediately discontinued so that top priority can be given to Presidential messages. Following the attention signal and the frequency-shifted header burst, listen in for official civil defense instructions and act vigilantly.

Performance Instructions

One computer stationed on center stage will act as a broadcaster of textual information. This information will be distributed via the router to multiple computers running the decoder patch. The decoder patch will parse the text and synthesize audio based on the input. Performance will begin with the alert signal, followed by the body of text supplied below, input by the broadcaster. The decoding computers will sequentially begin synthesizing the text. At the end of the text message, all decoding computers will fall silent, and the broadcaster will trigger the alert signal once again.

BROADCAST EAN MESSAGE NO. 2

RED CARD

WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM. THE OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE. THIS IS AN ATTACK WARNING, REPEAT, THIS IS AN ATTACK WARNING. ATTACK WARNING MEANS THAT AN ACTUAL ATTACK AGAINST THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN DETECTED AND THAT PROTECTIVE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN. IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS WILL FOLLOW IN 30 SECONDS.

Transmit the EMERGENCY ACTION NOTIFICATION ATTENTION SIGNAL.

THE OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE: THIS IS AN ATTACK WARNING, REPEAT, THIS IS AN ATTACK WARNING. ATTACK WARNING MEANS THAT AN ACTUAL ATTACK AGAINST THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN DETECTED AND THAT PROTECTIVE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY ACTION NOTIFICATION. ALL BROADCAST STATIONS SHALL BROADCAST EMERGENCY ACTION NOTIFICATION MESSAGE NUMBER TWO, RED CARD. THIS STATION HAS INTERRUPTED ITS REGULAR PROGRAM AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM, SERVING THE (Operational Area Name) AREA. DURING THIS PERIOD, MANY RADIO STATIONS WILL REMAIN ON THE AIR BROADCASTING NEWS AND OFFICIAL INFORMATION FOR AREAS ASSIGNED TO THEM.

THIS STATION WILL REMAIN ON THE AIR AND WILL SERVE THE (Operational Area Name) AREA. IF YOU ARE NOT LOCATED IN THE (Operational Area Name) AREA, YOU SHOULD NOW TUNE YOUR RADIO TO OTHER STATIONS UNTIL YOU HEAR ONE WHICH IS BROADCASTING NEWS AND INFORMATION, FOR YOUR AREA. YOU ARE LISTENING TO THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM SERVING THE (Operational Area Name) AREA.

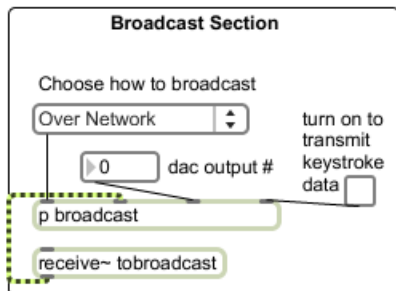
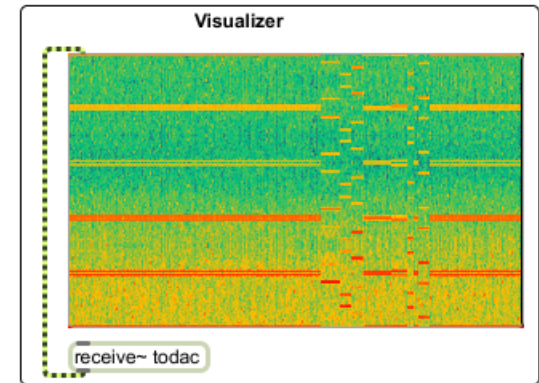
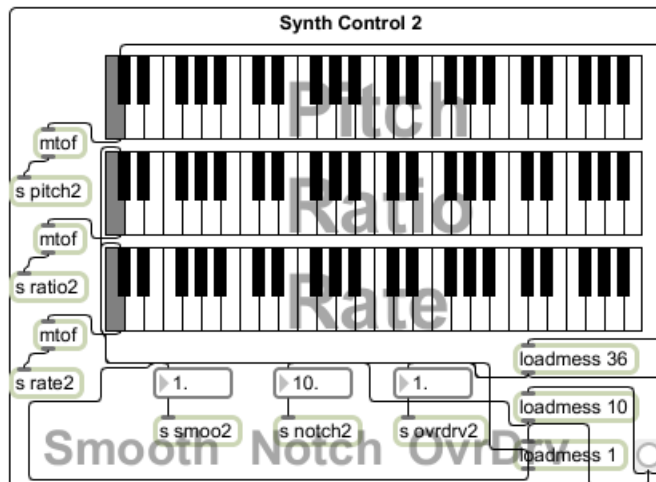
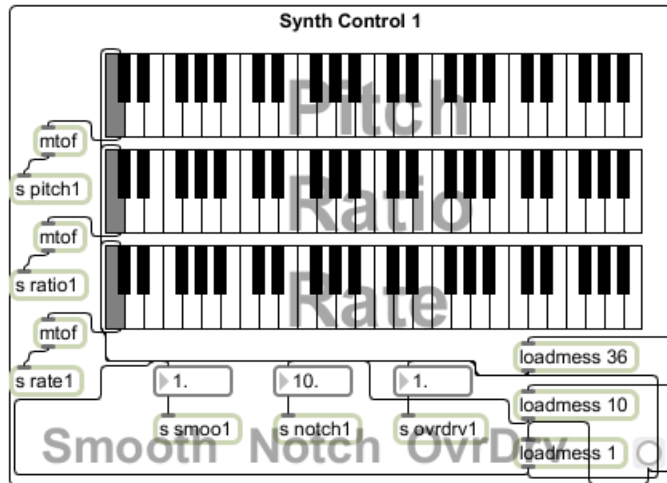
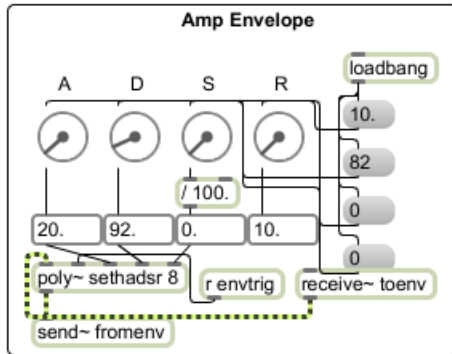
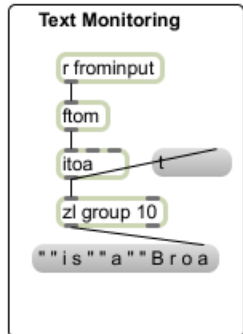
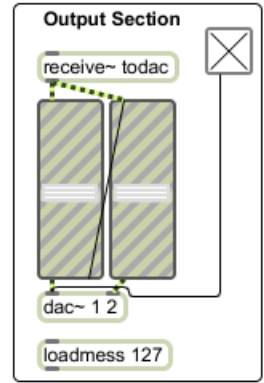
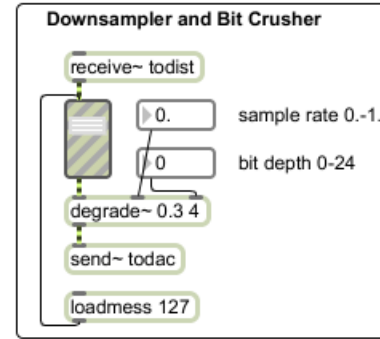
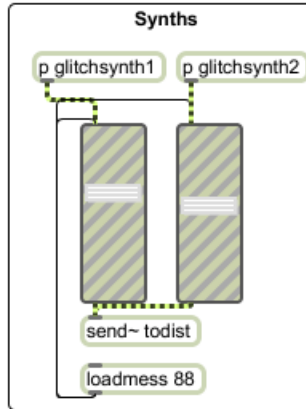
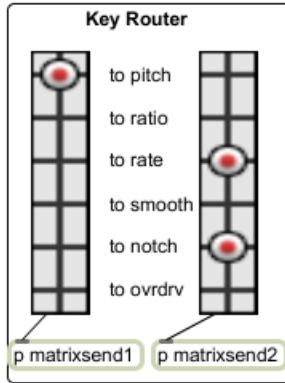
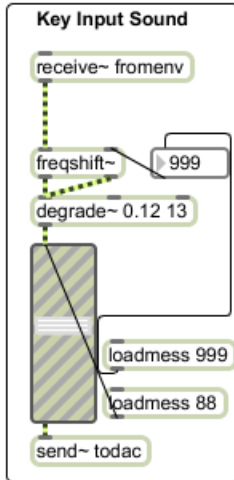
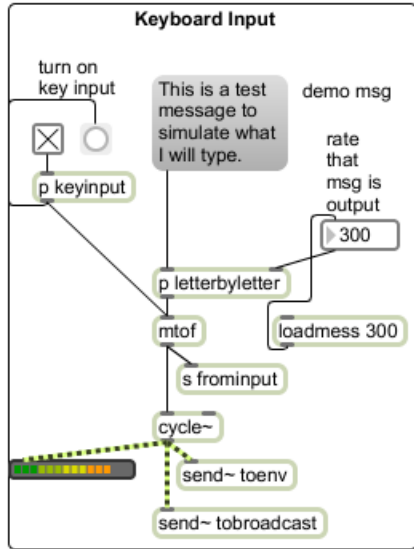
I REPEAT

THE OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE: THIS IS AN ATTACK WARNING, REPEAT, THIS IS AN ATTACK WARNING. ATTACK WARNING MEANS THAT AN ACTUAL ATTACK AGAINST THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN DETECTED AND THAT PROTECTIVE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY ACTION NOTIFICATION. ALL BROADCAST STATIONS SHALL BROADCAST EMERGENCY ACTION NOTIFICATION MESSAGE NUMBER TWO, RED CARD. THIS STATION HAS INTERRUPTED ITS REGULAR PROGRAM AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM, SERVING THE (Operational Area Name) AREA. DURING THIS PERIOD, MANY RADIO STATIONS WILL REMAIN ON THE AIR BROADCASTING NEWS AND OFFICIAL INFORMATION FOR AREAS ASSIGNED TO THEM. THIS STATION WILL REMAIN ON THE AIR AND WILL SERVE THE (Operational Area Name) AREA. IF YOU ARE NOT LOCATED IN THE (Operational Area Name) AREA, YOU SHOULD NOW TUNE YOUR RADIO TO OTHER STATIONS UNTIL YOU HEAR ONE WHICH IS BROADCASTING NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR YOUR AREA. YOU ARE LISTENING TO THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM SERVING THE (Operational Area Name) AREA.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

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To use:

- Turn on DAC, turn up main faders (you should hear signal).
- Click on sample text in msg box (you should hear key input sound).
- Route the keystroke info different controls in the two synths (signal should be modulating now).
- Turn on toggle next to sample text to use your keyboard for input (lock patch before typing away or you'll end up with toggles, bangs, and number boxes everywhere).
- Manually change synth setting using the Synth Control sections.
- Broadcast the keystroke signal to the Decoder patch by selecting "Test using send~" from the menu and turning the toggle on to transmit keystroke data via Maxhole.