

# The Best of Bolder



**Welcome to the Best of Bolder Granular Selections for the EXS 24!**

*A brief history of Bolder Sounds' Granular Collection*

In 1997 I released the full version (650 mb) of the Granular CD ROM for Akai and Kurzweil samplers. The Best Of Bolder was later released in Gigastudio 2.5 format in the year 2002. It was an eclectic double CD set which I felt was the “best” material I had sampled up until that point in time (2002). What is represented here is 200 mb of the Granular material that was chosen for the BOB Gigastudio disc, but now in native EXS 24 format.

Doing an internet search on granular synthesis will yield a great deal of information. There are many who have written on this topic who have done a better job than I ever will. If you'd like more information on this topic it is out there. To this day (December 4, 2007) I am still fascinated by granular synthesis. I had a great deal of fun making these unusual textures ... I hope you have fun experimenting with them as well!

# BOB Granular Sound List

**Arctic Bee** - I used a piano string sample plucked by a guitar pick for this crazy sound. It uses a granular parameter called pitch dispersion. When Jim Aikin reviewed the Bolder Granular CD in KEYBOARD magazine he described this sound as “a orchestral trill run through a wooden meat grinder” ..... nice description there Jim!

**Chordal Ostinatos** - These were created in the SuperCollider purely by the use of FM synthesis, no granular synthesis. But since I thought they were so cool I had to include them. If you hold down just one key, a chordal pattern is created. Augmented chords are mapped from C2 to D#2, diminished chords from C3 to D#3, major chords from C4 to B4, minor chords from C5 to B5. The “layered octave programs layer the same sample against itself an octave lower, this creates a wonderful polyrhythmic effect. With diminished chords I’ve only given you triads - if you need a half diminished chord or a fully diminished 7th chord you can add that in easily with another voice. Experiment with all the polychord possibilities you can.... example: C major against G major gives you a Cmaj9 type of chord.

**Cyways** - I gave this sound set this name because it reminded me of hearing vehicles passing by you on a highway, yet it seemed like a highway in the future, hence the name “Cyways”. I created the source sound files for this set with James McCartneys SuperCollider programming language. From those sound files I did some cutting and pasting. Then I used Digidesigns Sound Designer II software (remember that?) with it’s “scrub” feature and played the sounds both forward and backward by dragging the mouse around the mouse pad at various speeds which created an acceleration type effect. That was recorded onto a separate hard disc recorder. Then I took those files and with the use of the SuperCollider granular engine, I applied various techniques of granular synthesis. These are wonderful pieces of “ear candy” which can spice up rhythmic sections of loops if placed strategically.

**Granular loops & hits @ 110 bpm** - These loops are presented in both “straight” and swing versions. The swing versions were “swung” with the use of Logic Audio by Emagic (now Apple’s Logic Pro). The loops are mapped to keys C2 - G2 (chromatically) and the hits go from G#2 to D4 (chromatic also). The original sound source was derived from wavetable synthesis.

**Harmonic Pad** - This sound was created with electric guitar harmonics. A great deal of “time dispersion” as well as elongation of the original sound file was employed. The entire sample at C4 (original pitch) is 20 seconds in length. So press C4 keep the sustain pedal down and give the whole thing a listen...then try playing it in 5ths.....a wonderful sonic event I think!

**Longongs** - The source sample for this sound was a gong. I call it “Longongs” because I elongated the sustain of the sound with the use of granular synthesis to a very exaggerated extreme, therefore naming them long- gongs. Longongs at Cs has the original pitch of each sample at C2, C3, C3 and C4.

**Metalmorphic** - I collected all sorts of metallic samples to make these sound files which “morph” very gradually into each other. Wheel. If you’re looking for an atmospheric background sound that has a great deal of “bite”... look no further.

**Minor Pad** - This was originally from the Modal Soundscapes section of the “Granular CD”, it was entitled “Mixolydian”. Only after finishing that disc did I realize that I left out a low G in the source sound file. This omission makes what would have been a G9 chord really a D minor chord. the sound was created by layering some electric guitar volume swells and granulating them into a elongated pad. From there I used Tom Erbe’s wonderful “Soundhack” program for the Macintosh and applied some DSP effects such as convolution and mutation, resulting in 4 variations of this sound. Programs 1 - 4 simply map out each sample individually... just press the corresponding key to the pitch you wish to create a minor chord on. You can also create complex polychord voicings by depressing different pitches.

**Moogular** - I created the source sound file for this with a Realistic (Radio Shack) Moog Synthesizer. It utilizes a simple sequence of the diatonic scale gradually unfolding under the wrath of granular synthesis..... it has a nice “toothy” bite to it. Each sample was manipulated with granular synthesis as well as being processed with Tom Erbe’s Soundhack program for the Mac with varying degrees of Convolution and Mutation DSP. Those 4 version of the sound are presented alone, then they are layered into various combinations.

**Mutation** - The source sound for this granular adventure was a gong. I used a DSP function from Soundhack called “Spectral Extraction”. What this does is it extracts the transient part of a sound and deposits it in a separate sound file, and then in another sound file it extracts just the pitched part of the sound. Then I “mutated” these 2 sound files back together after granulating them.... sort of a “pull it apart and then put it back together Frankenstein operation”.

**Opaque** - was created with a set of toy vibraphones. As with many of these granular “soundscapes”.... play them in open voicings of 5ths, 4ths, 9th etc.... they swirl about in the most interesting ways!

**Pentatonic** - I created this sound from multi-tracking a set of random electric guitar volume swells to a pentatonic major scale. “Pentatonic Grainy” begins with a course-grainy quality but eventually blossoms into a nice smooth release. You’ll see the words “time dispersion” in some of the programs. This refers to a parameter of granular synthesis in which the source sound file is “looked at” and “spit out” not in the traditional linear order (as in from left to right on a computer screen). It “looks ahead” a ways and intersperses that information with the current sound data.

**Psalm** - This was made from a single piano string being plucked with a guitar pick and then elongated with granular synthesis. This creates a warm-lyrical sound for soft chords when played in the midrange of the keyboard. I was surprised by the amount of feedback I received from my customers who found this sound very useful.

**Random Universe** - Well.... what else would you call a bunch of Medieval Psaltry samples chewed up and spit back out by granular synthesis! This is one of my favorite “out there” granular files I’ve created period! Play it down around C2, then play it up around C4..... it’s a whole different “universe”.

**Sea Bed** - This is my favorite granular pad sound. It is both effective for slow single melody lines as well as chordal voicings. I created this sound with a conch shell I brought back from a trip to Mexico. Then with simple elongation and a bit of pitch and time dispersion with granular synthesis it evolved into this nice long still sound. “Sea Bed split” uses an octave voicing in the lower part of the keyboard and in the higher part a single note voicing. The octave voicing has a very nice “string-like” quality to it. This sample was also included on the Granular Conch Shell collection for Kontakt 2 ... it will be released very shortly for the EXS 24 as well.

**Under Water** - This is a granular sound which almost sounds like whistling, but the pitch is all over the place. On second thought.... if whales could whistle under water, I think this is what it might sound like.

**Vudu Loops at 160 bpm** - These loops were originally recorded from a Udud Drum before applying granular DSP to them. The loops are mapped chromatically C2 - C3. there are a few “hits” mapped from C#3 - E3 for fills or endings if needed.

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## Thanks and Acknowledgements

This sound set could have never been created without a programming language by James McCartney called **SuperCollider** - Thank you James!!

<http://www.audiosynth.com>

Tom Erbe's **Sound Hack** was also very important in the creation of these sounds - Thank You Tom!!

<http://www.soundhack.com>

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Thank You!

Dennis @ Bolder

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