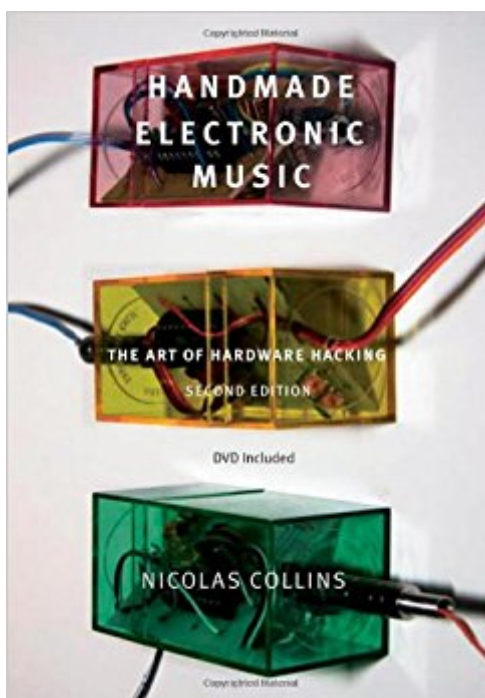


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Handmade Electronic Music: The Art Of Hardware Hacking



Synopsis

Handmade Electronic Music: The Art of Hardware Hacking provides a long-needed, practical, and engaging introduction to the craft of making - as well as creatively cannibalizing - electronic circuits for artistic purposes. With a sense of adventure and no prior knowledge, the reader can subvert the intentions designed into devices such as radios and toys to discover a new sonic world. At a time when computers dominate music production, this book offers a rare glimpse into the core technology of early live electronic music, as well as more recent developments at the hands of emerging artists. In addition to advice on hacking found electronics, the reader learns how to make contact microphones, pickups for electromagnetic fields, oscillators, distortion boxes, and unusual signal processors cheaply and quickly. This revised and expanded second edition is extensively illustrated and includes a DVD featuring 87 video clips and twenty audio tracks by over 100 hackers, benders, musicians, artists, and inventors from around the world, as well as 13 video tutorials demonstrating projects in the book. Further enhancements include additional projects, photographs, diagrams, and illustrations.

Book Information

Paperback: 360 pages

Publisher: Routledge; 2 edition (April 15, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415998735

ISBN-13: 978-0415998734

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 7 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 39 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #76,819 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > MIDI, Mixers, etc. #140

in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > Techniques

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Customer Reviews

Nicolas Collins, an active composer and performer of electronic music, and has worked with John Cage, Alvin Lucier, David Tudor, and many other masters of modern music. Dr. Collins is Professor of Sound at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and has led hacking workshops around the world. He has been Visiting Artistic Director of STEIM (Amsterdam) and a DAAD

composer-in-residence in Berlin. Since 1997 he has been editor-in-chief of Leonardo Music Journal.

It's like this book was written for me. Fun, simple, incredible experiments and ideas for playing around with home-made electronic sounds. I'd spent a year playing with 555-style oscillators from the Forest Mims playbook to make synthesizers; but Forrest has musical circuits as an afterthought for his more practical electronic projects. I was at a complete standstill, full of ideas, but doing them incorrectly and getting nowhere. This book has exactly what I need to go up a few levels. And while it's at it, tons of really fun ideas for the sound devices themselves. Put loose change in a speaker cone, hook it up to a nine volt battery, dangle some leads and see what you get! Who knew? And Nicolas writes pretty funny as well; I'd never seen a resistor/capacitor setup compared to a Monty Python sketch before. I have one complaint about the book. There's too much cool stuff. I finish a chapter, ready to try everything, and then the next chapter has even better ideas. And then I look at all the chapters remaining and wonder where I'll find the time to do it all. I've got an online order for Jameco for which I'm afraid to hit "send" until I re-read it all again. Meanwhile, I've had a blast doing the projects from the first few chapters.

This book is, apparently, compiled from course materials for what must be a very fun class. It mostly covers two broad topics. First, producing unexpected sounds from radios and the circuit boards in toys, and modifying those devices in simple ways, such as adding photoresistors or new circuit board connections. Second, building simple synthesizers from scratch. The skills taught are basic, and form the building blocks for infinite exploration. The tools and parts needed are all inexpensive (often costing mere pennies). The included CD is great fun, but best saved for later listening, since it contains "spoilers" of what some of the projects might sound like. Because of the book's origination in a class situation, the explanations and pictures are not always ideally clear. There are a lot of typos. However, the writing is so engaging and the book is so much fun that it still deserves 5 stars. Where the book is incomplete ("how to I de-solder something?"), the Web is there. The book is clearly aimed at musicians without any electronics experience. Nonmusicians might still enjoy it, but a joy in playing with sound is absolutely required. I suspect the book would be way too basic for people with any significant experience in electronics. As sidebars, the book includes a considerable amount of history of electronic music -- who's who and what they've been up to.

I was hoping for a bit more in-depth information on electronics than this book gave. It's a nice "get your feet wet" kind of book, but left me with lots of questions that I think could have been included in

the book. The first half of the book wasn't very interesting to me as it talked mostly about circuit bending and hacking already made electronic noise makers.

This is a really fun book, with lots of projects for budding electronic musicians. But it goes beyond that: It's a solid intro to electronics and CMOS components. I went into this book thinking it might be too basic, yet I walked away with a lot of ideas, and some interesting new techniques. I wish that more electronics writers would cover the material with this author's style and accuracy. Also, kudos for providing parts sources and for using easy to find and inexpensive components. (I've seen many people, myself included, become frustrated by hard-to-find parts lists or the use of discontinued items. These projects suffer from neither of those problems.) In the end, you'll be left wanting to know more about the components and techniques you've picked up. (You'll probably want to add Don Lancaster's classic CMOS Cookbook to your shopping cart. It will give you the details about many of these components.) Highly recommended. I'm looking forward to other books by this author.

Seriously, if you are interested in making some extraterrestrial sounds/gadgets get this book!!! I recommend reading it with Mort Garson playing in the background for ultimate knowledge absorption.

This book is absolutely incredible! So simply articulate to such technical things, and such interesting projects! This is just an all around well written project book. It has updated citations to things like what website to get bulk/cheap parts from and examples (on DVD, as well as other references) from many sonic artists who have tampered in related mad sciences. The different projects are diverse and well prepared.. It's just the greatest thing for a beginning sonic/electronics nerd! Can't say enough about how much I've gotten out of this book.

Any artist or tinkerer who is remotely interested in hacking music or sound, will find this invaluable. The author's laid back writing style and humor make this an easy to understand manual on making electronic noise. One of my favorite books!

I had the first edition, now I have the second edition. It's a great book!

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