

Adobe After Effects 6.0

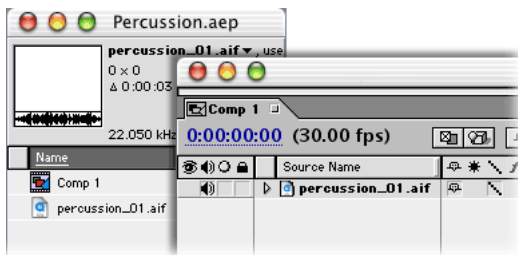
Using music to animate layers

You can sync animations or visual effects to music and make images glow or pulse with the beat in Adobe® After Effects® 6.0. You do this by creating keyframes from an audio file and using them to animate effects. In previous versions of After Effects, you could use audio files to animate effects with Motion Math scripts. Now you can accomplish the same result more easily by using the Convert Audio to Keyframes command and expressions.



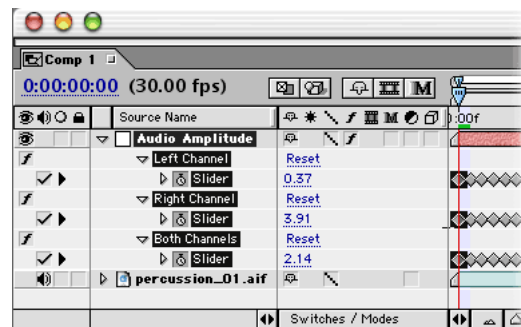
1. Import an audio file.

In a new project, import an audio source file, such as a WAV, MP3, AIF or MOV file. Since you're using the audio's amplitude to animate the layer, music with a good beat works best, though any audio file will do. Create a new composition and limit the duration to a few seconds to speed up processing and previewing times. Add the audio file to the Timeline window.



2. Convert audio to keyframes.

Select the audio layer and choose Animation > Keyframe Assistant > Convert Audio to Keyframes. A new null layer called Audio Amplitude appears in the Timeline window with keyframes that contain values for the audio's amplitude. To view these keyframes, select the Audio Amplitude layer in the Timeline window and press the U key on your keyboard. Leave the layer expanded.



3. Create a text layer to animate.

While you could use any type of source footage, text layers illustrate the capabilities of audio amplitude keyframes exceptionally well. Select the text tool in the Tools palette and click in the Composition window to create a new text layer. In the Character palette, choose a font and a font size that's suitable for the size of your

composition. (The composition shown has a 320 x 240 frame size and uses a 48 pixel font.) Leave the remaining controls at their default settings. Click in the Composition window and type a single word. Use the selection tool to reposition the text layer as needed.

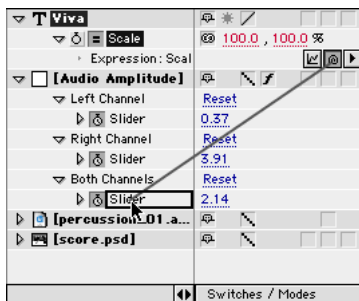


4. Add an expression to the text layer.

The text layer includes several properties that you can animate with audio keyframes. To animate the size and color of the text layer, add an expression to the text layer's Scale property. Later you'll add an expression to the Hue property.

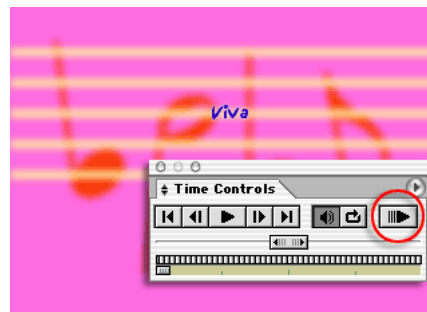
Expressions let you animate effects and properties by using mathematical variables, or by linking keyframes between layers with the pick whip.

Select the text layer and press the S key to reveal the layer's Scale property. Then, select the Scale property and choose Animation > Add Expression. Drag the expression's pick whip to the Both Channels slider for the Audio Amplitude layer.



5. Preview the animated text with audio.

Now, preview the composition to see how the audio keyframes adjust the scale of your text layer. Select the Audio button in the Time Controls palette to include music in your preview, and then click the RAM Preview button.

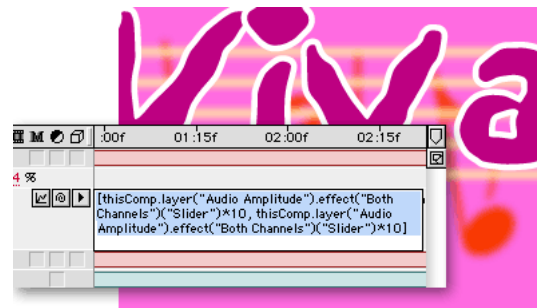


6. Edit the expression.

Audio amplitude values tend to be low. As a result, the text is likely to be too small. To increase the size, or scale, add a multiplier to the expression. Because expressions are too long to view in their entirety within the Timeline window, make edits by clicking anywhere in the expression and navigating with the right and left arrows. Type *10 after each of the two ("Slider") values to magnify the amplitude by a factor of ten, thereby increasing the scale by a factor of ten. Click anywhere outside the expression to exit the edit mode. Try different multipliers to get the look you want.

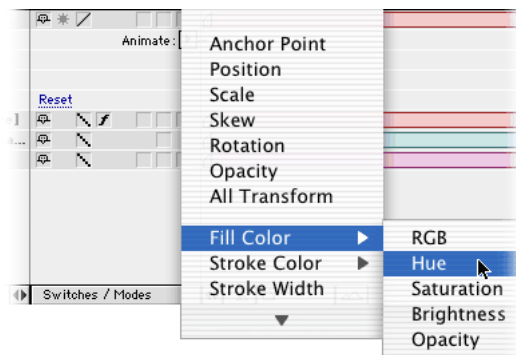
Your final expression should look like this:

```
[thisComp.layer("Audio Amplitude").effect("Left Channel")("Slider")*10, thisComp.layer("Audio Amplitude").effect("Right Channel")("Slider")*10]
```



7. Animate the Hue property of the text layer.

Next, make the text appear more lively by animating its Hue property with the audio keyframes. In the Timeline window, expand the text layer and choose Fill Color > Hue from the Animate pop-up menu in the Switches column. Then, choose Animation > Add Expression. Drag the pick whip to the Both Channels slider to animate the Hue property using values from the audio keyframes. Then, type *10 (or a different value) at the end of the expression.



8. Preview the animation.

As you preview, note how the size and color of the text change as the volume of the audio changes. To add more interest, experiment with different types of music, create additional text layers, or add a background layer to your composition.

This is just one example of what you can do with audio amplitude keyframes—and only a fraction of what you can do with expressions! For more ideas on using these fun features, see the After Effects online Help.

