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Aug 19 2009

## Alternative Music Distribution: Moldover's CD Case as Circuit Board Noisemaker

By [Peter Kirn](#)

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Making music into an object – the central genius of recording – could be a wonderful thing. But the CD was always somewhat utilitarian as a distribution mechanism, with its easily-splintered plastic jewel case and inserted artwork that paled next to the grand visions of the LP.

Moldover is the latest artist to experiment with ways of re-imagining the musical object. Already a fan of custom sonic circuitry, he made his CD into a circuit board. Some of it is just aesthetic, like the printed lettering. But there is also integrated noise-making circuitry for a very simple optical Theremin (well, at least, a light sensor-driven oscillator), plus a headphone jack. There's actually quite a lot of function you can get out of that when plugging into a computer.

The album itself is comprised jazzy bleepy jams (in varying proportions). You do pay for this deluxe, handmade circuit goodness. The US\$25 "Pocket Edition" seems to be the sweet spot, with a pocketable version of the circuit board. It still has a built-in speaker, turning the jewel case into self-sufficient sonic hardware instead of a throwaway. The \$50 version comes with the full custom-printed circuit board for the track listing, but you can't pocket it, which means you have exactly \$25 and one custom Theremin less in your pocket.

Check out the music and purchases at Moldover's site:

<http://moldover.com/quicklinks/buy.html>

The joy of being on YouTube is you get strange comments like this:

Who let you out? of your mom's basement? Go back to building lego trainsets to transport your cocoa from the kitchen to your computer desk.

Hey – that's a great idea, come to think of it.

Justifying the musical object can sometimes get ridiculous, but so long as there are genuinely creative ideas that fit the music, I think music may have a more interesting future in the post-industry world than it did before.



**Updated – previous applications of this idea:** I'm typing quickly before I head to lunch, and I commit the major sin of not mentioning our friend Tristan Perich's infamous 2005 release 1-bit Music. Whereas Moldover is turning the packaging into an instrument and inserting a traditional CD, Tristan made the entire jewel box the playback mechanism – the album is embedded in the circuitry, and you listen to it directly.

An electronic circuit is assembled inside a CD case with a headphone jack on the side. The device plays back 40 minutes of low-fi 1-bit electronic music—the lowest possible digital representation of audio.

[1-bit Music](#) (Tristan also did a great workshop at Handmade Music. So if you want to play with these ideas, and you're in the NYC area, there's only [one place you should be tomorrow night.](#))

We talk a lot about novelty, but my hope is people rip off both Moldover's and Tristan's idea here – and invent their own twist on this concept. I'd love to have a shelf full of circuit CDs, instead of dead, silent plastic!



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**Smithers**

What about <http://www.1bitmusic.com/>?

August 19, 2009 @ [2:12 pm](#)



[rucyl](#)

brilliant

August 19, 2009 @ [2:13 pm](#)



[corporation](#)

so awesome

August 19, 2009 @ [2:23 pm](#)



[rucyl](#)

tristan rocks. went to school with him and i didn't even know he made this

August 19, 2009 @ [2:45 pm](#)



[KC](#)

Don't forget the 'Women Take Back The Noise' compilation!

<http://ubuibi.org/wtbtn/>

August 19, 2009 @ [8:52 pm](#)



[distractedbyathing.net » Blog Archive » CD Case as Circuit Board Noisemaker](#)

[...] Fun, Funny, Geeky and Innovative... <http://createdigitalmusic.com/2009/08/19/alternative-music-distribution-moldovers-cd-case-as-circuit...> [...]

August 20, 2009 @ [6:25 am](#)



[Cd vira sintetizador nas mãos do Moldover « www.ilankrigger.net](#)

[...] Fonte: CDM [...]

August 20, 2009 @ [9:42 am](#)



**E.X.P**

fun and cool !

August 20, 2009 @ [11:33 am](#)



[soilsound](#)

This is great!

August 20, 2009 @ [12:04 pm](#)



[Darren Landrum](#)

I've become convinced that people who leave comments like that on Youtube and blogs are people who wish they were smart enough to design and make interesting things like this. :-) That optical theremin CD case is brilliant. The 1-bit album is a pretty sweet idea, too. I wonder how good of an album could be made with the processing power of a dsPIC...

August 20, 2009 @ [4:13 pm](#)



[paulbailey.us \(beta\) » Bookmarks for August 17th through August 22nd \[del.icio.us\]](#)

[...] Create Digital Music » Alternative Music Distribution: Moldover's CD Case as Circuit Board Noisem... – "Moldover is the latest artist to experiment with ways of re-imagining the musical object. Already a fan of custom sonic circuitry, he made his CD into a circuit board. Some of it is just aesthetic, like the printed lettering. But there is also integrated noise-making circuitry for a very simple optical Theremin (well, at least, a light sensor-driven oscillator), plus a headphone jack. There's actually quite a lot of function you can get out of that when plugging into a computer" <http://moldover.com/quicklinks/buy.html> [...]

August 23, 2009 @ [12:33 pm](#)



[m](#)

ahh this is genius..so cool!! i want one

August 23, 2009 @ [11:01 pm](#)



### [CHEAP, FAT and OPEN, V3 SYNTH-CAR, Osmos, Art of Sound Contest Winners, Moldover Circuit Board Album](#)

[...] # Alternative Music Distribution: Moldover's CD Case as Circuit Board Noisemaker [...]

August 24, 2009 @ [6:14 am](#)



### [Bong Bong The Fantastic](#)

Just like a BeepIt, but way cooler looking with the silicon styleeee. Much props, so finger linkin' good.

August 26, 2009 @ [11:46 pm](#)



### [Ding Ding The Corruptah!](#)

umm yeah me too cool! great! groovy! wikked! trendy! plagiarism! hee-haw! :)

August 30, 2009 @ [6:14 am](#)



### [Create Digital Music » Happy Halloween: Exclusive Free Liz Revision Mix, Party in Chicago with Bitshifter](#)

[...] folder of sketches on her USB drive. Matt Moldover, who has been working on his CD-as-electronic-instrument album, lent his laptop. (Watch him assembling CDs in the video after the [...])

October 30, 2009 @ [2:01 pm](#)



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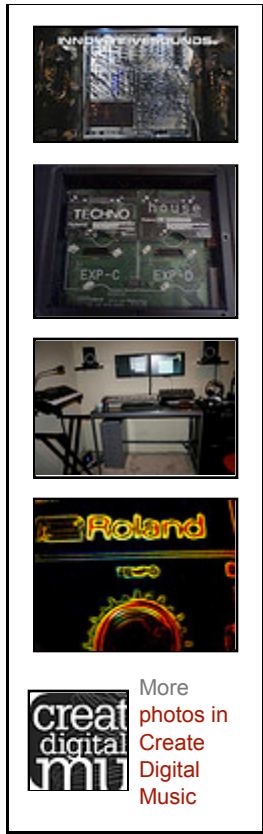
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