CTP 431 Music and Audio Computing

Sound Synthesis

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Outlines

- Brief history of sound synthesis
- Additive Synthesis
- Subtractive Synthesis
  – Analog synthesizers
- Nonlinear Synthesis
  – Ring modulation / Frequency modulation
  – Wave-shaping
- Sample-based Synthesis

Brief History

- Telharmonium (Cahill, 1897)
  - Room-size additive synthesizer using electro-magnetic "tone wheels"
  - Transmitted through telephone lines (subscription only!)
  - Sound like organ: evolved into Hammond B3 organ (drawbars)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPIbXI81Rs0

- Theremin (Léon Theremin, 1928)
  - Two metal antennas recognize the relative position of hands by detecting the change of electro-magnetic fields
  - Each of them controls amplitude and pitch of a tone
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5qf9O6c20o
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSzTPGINa5U

Brief History

- Music Concrete (Pierre Schaeffer, 1948)
  - Creating sounds by splicing the pieces of tapes where sounds are recorded: sampling-based synthesis
  - Related to musical composition
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4ea0sBrw6M
  - Mellotron (1963): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdkixaxjZCM
- RCA Synthesizer: Mark II (1957)
  - First programmable synthesizer
  - Room-size and off-line processing as a synthesizer and a sequencer
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgN_VzEIZ1I
- Moog Synthesizers (Moog, 1964)
  - Mini-moog (1971): the first popular synthesizer
  - "Switched-On-Bach" by Wendy Carlos
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usl_TvIFtG0

Brief History

- Yamaha DX7 (1983)
  - FM synthesis, the first commercially successful synthesizer
  - Electronic piano sounds in 80's pop music
- Fairlight CMI (1979)
  - The first sampling-based digital synthesizer
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOIPCpSmhRM
- Kurzweil K250 (1983)
  - The first synthesizer that faithfully reproduced an acoustic grand piano
- Yamaha VL-1 (1994)
  - The first commercially available physical-modeling synthesizer

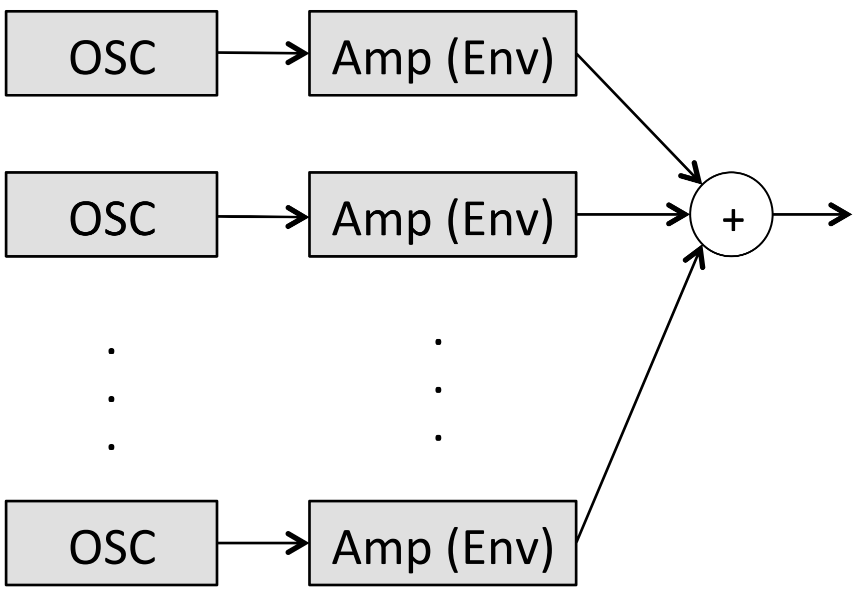
Sound Synthesis Techniques

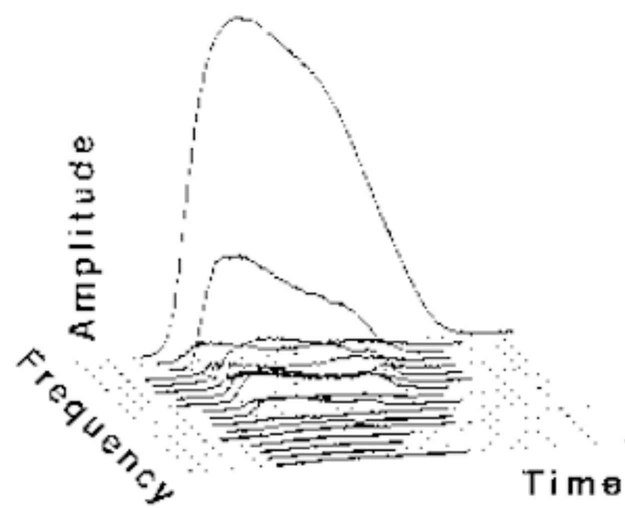
- Categories
  - Additive synthesis
  - Subtractive synthesis
  - Non-linear: modulation / wave-shaping
  - Sample-based synthesis
  - Physical modeling

	Memory (Storage)	Programmability (by # of parameters)	Reproducibility of natural sounds	Interpretability of parameters	Computation power
Additive	**	*****	****	****	****
Subtractive	*	***	**	***	**
Non-linear	*	***	**	**	**
Sample-base	*****	*	*****	N/A	* ~ ***
Physical model	***	**	****	*****	*** ~ *****

Additive Synthesis

- Synthesize sounds by adding multiple sine oscillators
  - Also called Fourier synthesis





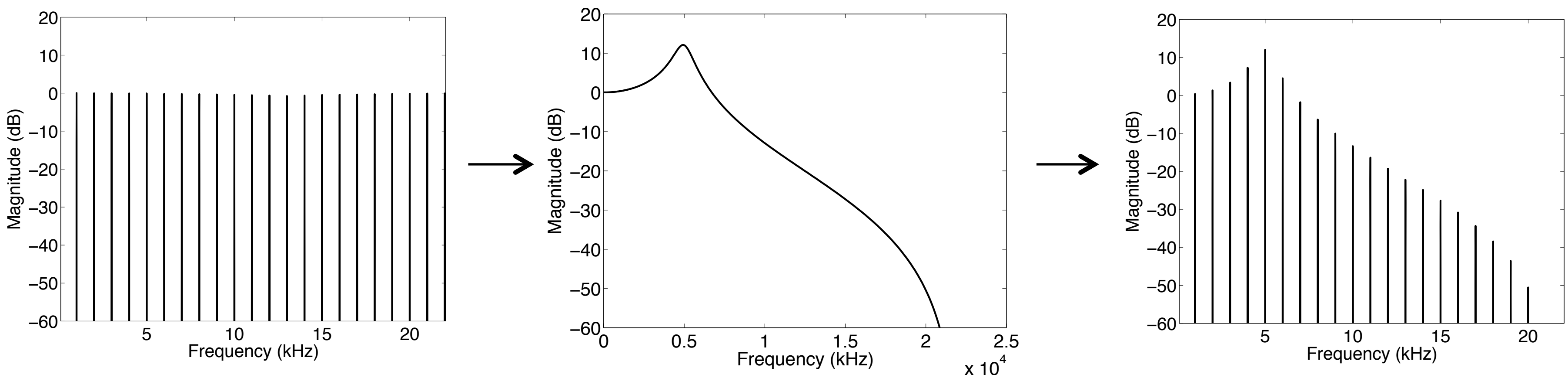
Sound Examples

- Web Audio Demo
  - http://femurdesign.com/theremin/
  - http://www.venlabsla.com/x/additive/additive.html

- Examples (instruments)
  - Kurzweil K150
    - https://soundcloud.com/rosst/sets/kurzweil-k150-fs-additive
  - Kawai K5, K5000
  - Hammond Organ

Subtractive Synthesis

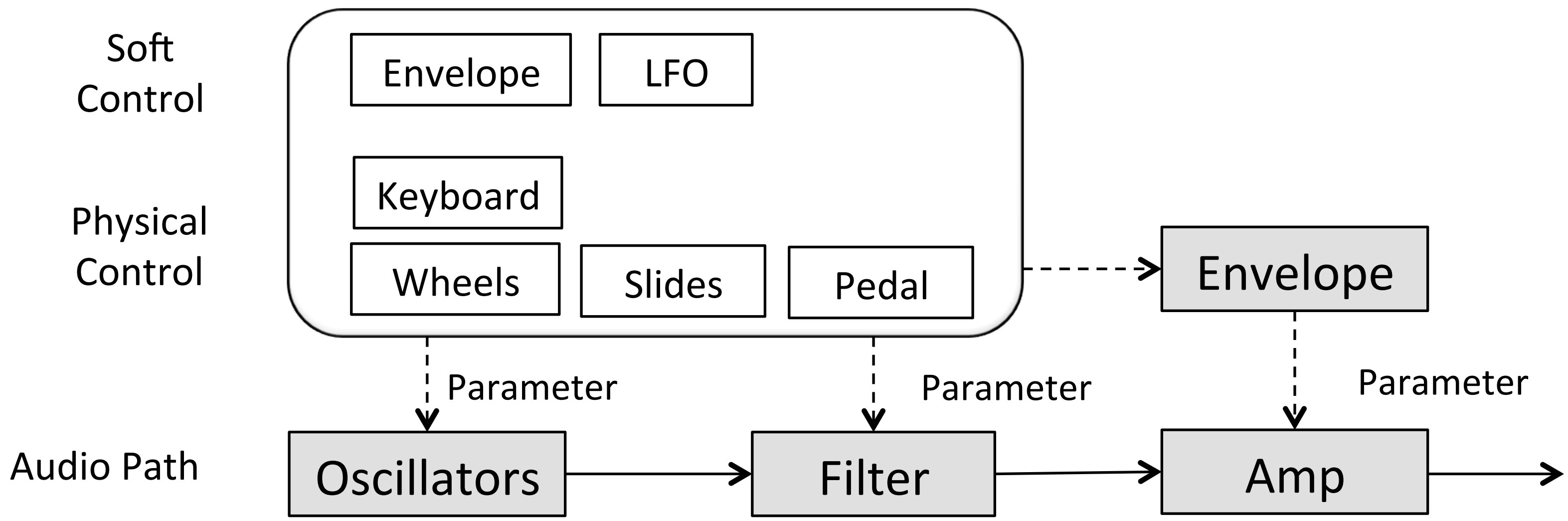
- Synthesize sounds by filtering wide-band oscillators
  - Source-Filter model
  - Examples
    - Analog Synthesizers: oscillators + resonant lowpass filters
    - Voice Synthesizers: glottal pulse train + formant filters



Source | Filter | Filtered Source

Subtractive Synthesis

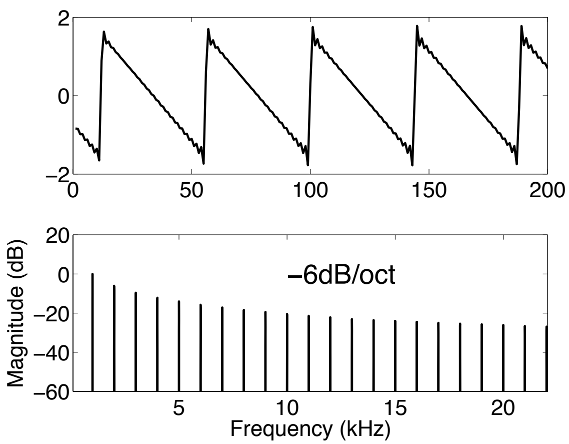
- Moog Synthesizer



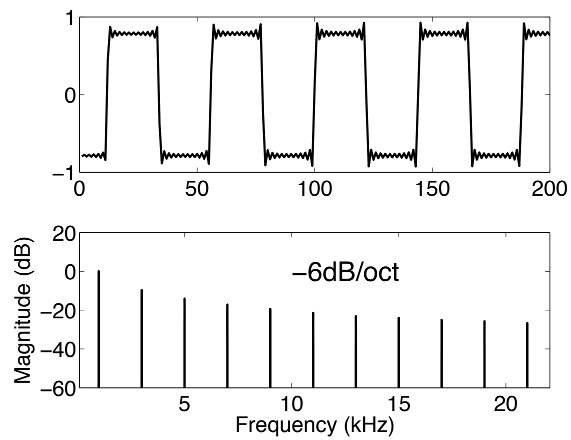
Parameter = offset (static value) + depth*control (dynamic value)   (e.g. filter cut-off frequency)

Oscillators

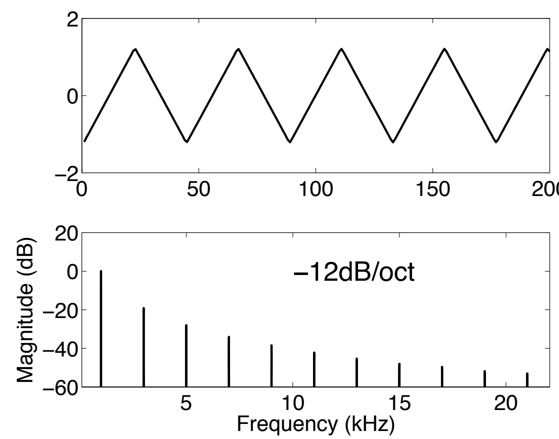
- Classic waveforms



Sawtooth



Square

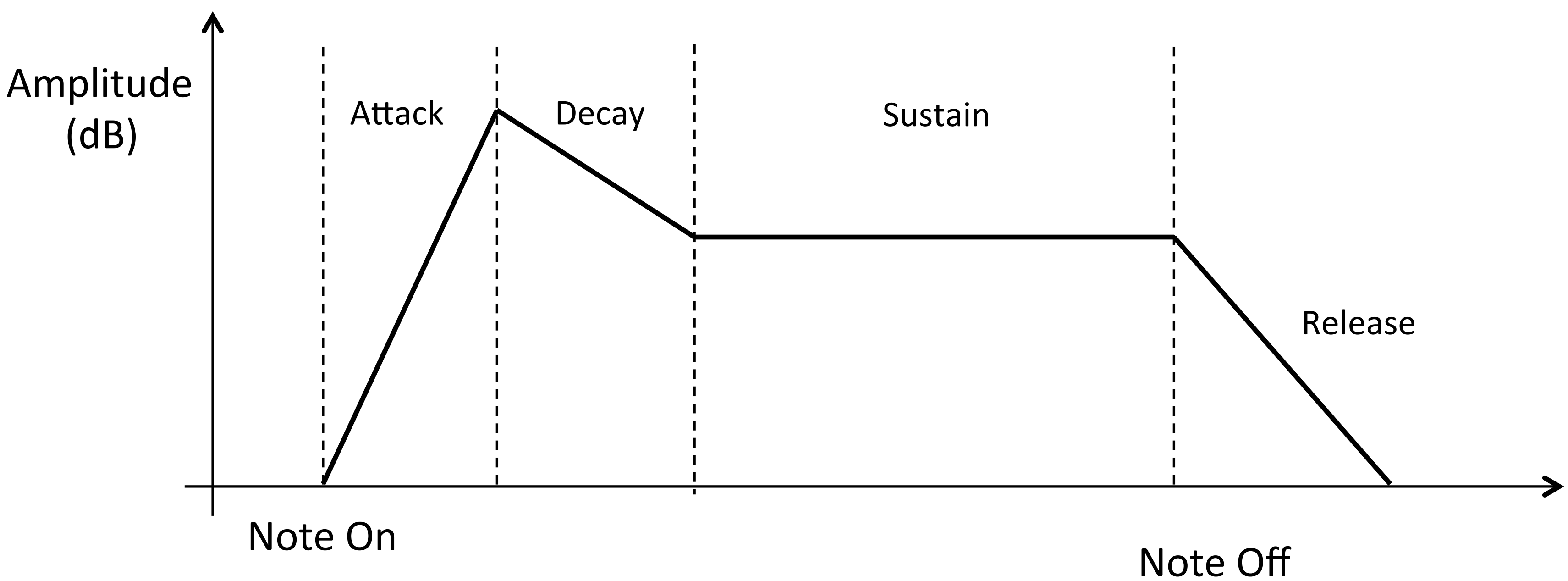


Triangular

- Modulation
  - Pulse width modulation
  - Hard-sync
  - More rich harmonics

Amp Envelop Generator

- Amplitude envelope generation
  - ADSR curve: attack, decay, sustain and release
  - Each state has a pair of time and target level



Examples

- Web Audio Demos
  - http://www.google.com/doodles/robert-moogs-78th-birthday
  - http://webaudiodemos.appspot.com/midi-synth/index.html
  - http://aikelab.net/websynth/
  - http://nicroto.github.io/viktor/

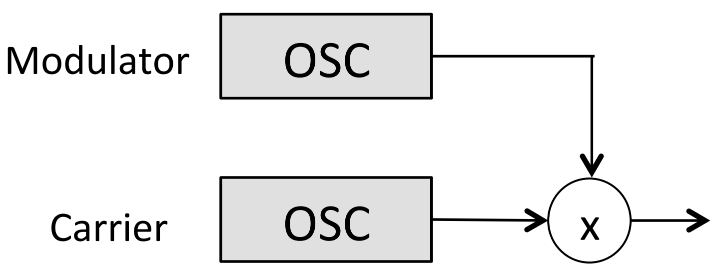
- Example Sounds
  - SuperSaw
  - Leads
  - Pad
  - MoogBass
  - 8-Bit sounds: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tf0-Rrm9dI0
  - TR-808: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeZZk2czG1c

Modulation Synthesis

- Modulation is originally from communication theory
  - Carrier: channel signal, e.g., radio or TV channel
  - Modulator: information signal, e.g., voice, video
- Decreasing the frequency of carrier to hearing range can be used to synthesize sound
- Types of modulation synthesis
  - Amplitude modulation (or ring modulation)
  - Frequency modulation
- Modulation is non-linear processing
  - Generate new sinusoidal components

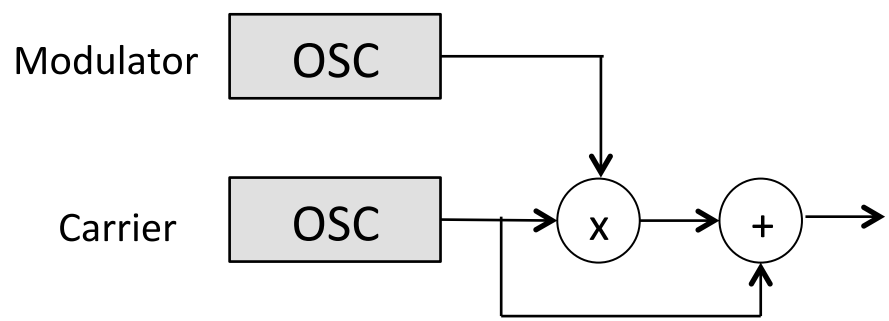
Ring Modulation / Amplitude Modulation

- Change the amplitude of one source with another source
  - Slow change: tremolo
  - Fast change: generate a new tone



$$a_m(t)A_c\cos(2\pi f_c t)$$

Ring Modulation

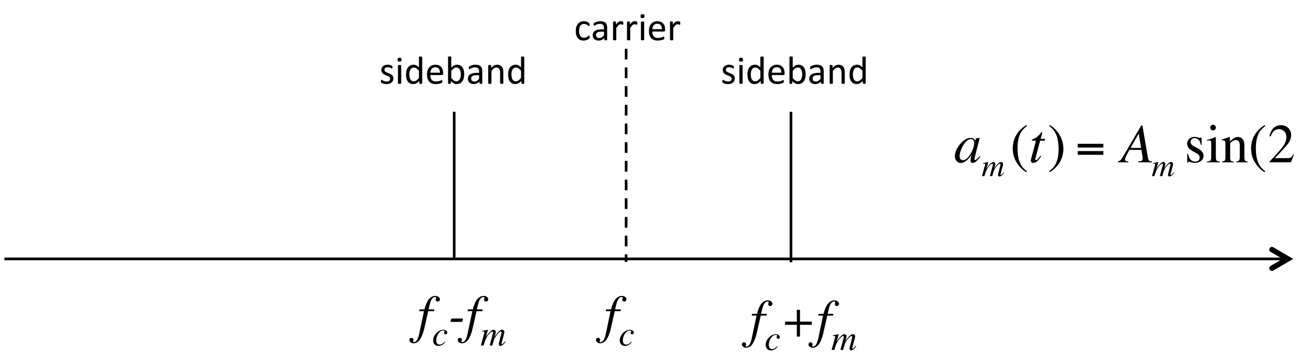


$$(1+a_m(t))A_c\cos(2\pi f_c t)$$

Amplitude Modulation

Ring Modulation / Amplitude Modulation

- Frequency domain
  - Expressed in terms of its sideband frequencies
  - The sum and difference of the two frequencies are obtained according to trigonometric identity
  - If the modulator is a non-sinusoidal tone, a mirrored-spectrum with regard to the carrier frequency is obtained



$$a_m(t) = A_m \sin(2\pi f_m t))$$

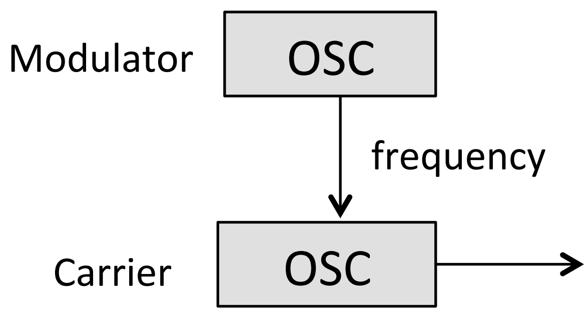
Examples

- Tone generation
  - SawtoothOsc x SineOsc
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yw7_WQmrzuk

- Ring modulation is often used as an audio effect
  - http://webaudio.prototyping.bbc.co.uk/ring-modulator/

Frequency Modulation

- Change the frequency of one source with another source
  - Slow change: vibrato
  - Fast change: generate a new (and rich) tone
  - Invented by John Chowning in 1973 → Yamaha DX7



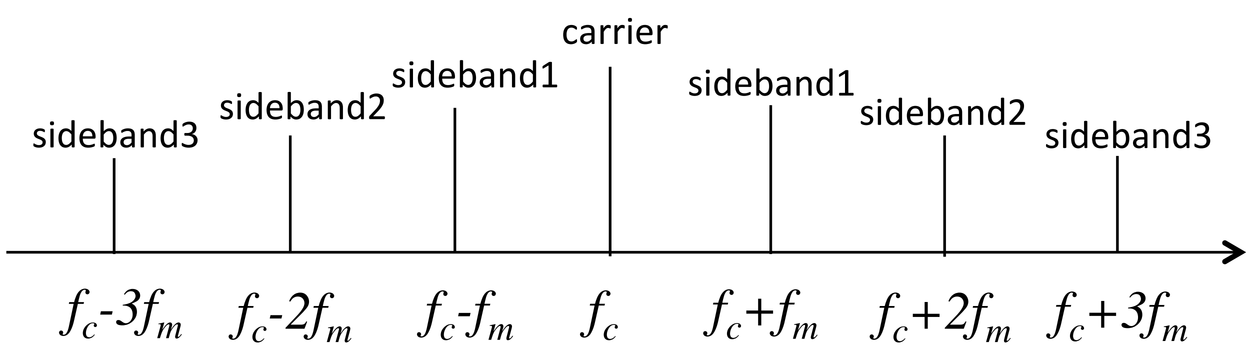
$$A_c \cos(2\pi f_c t + \beta \sin(2\pi f_m t))$$

$$\beta = \frac{A_m}{f_m}$$ Index of modulation

Frequency Modulation

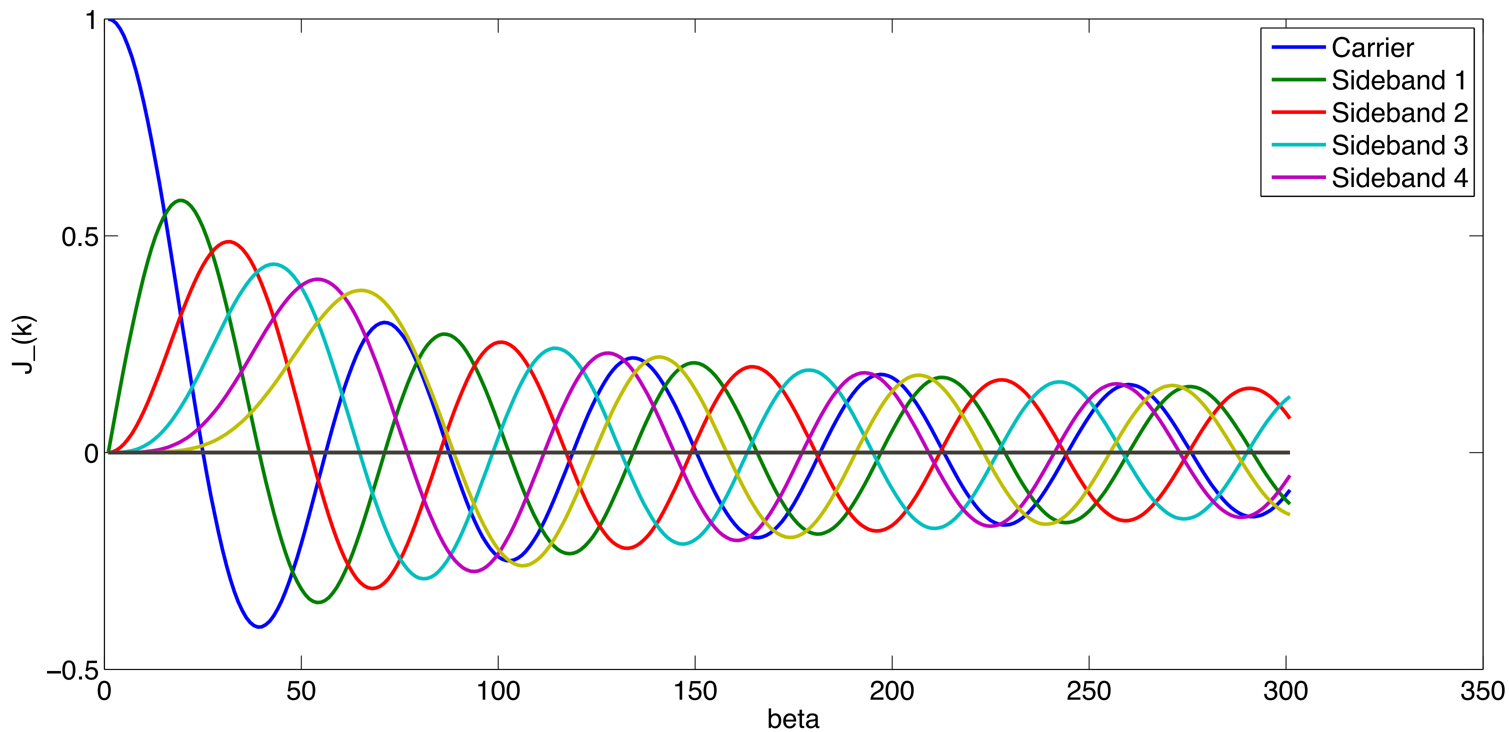
- Frequency Domain
  - Expressed in terms of its sideband frequencies
  - Their amplitudes are determined by the Bessel function
  - The sidebands below 0 Hz or above the Nyquist frequency are folded

$$y(t) = A_c \sum_{k=-\infty}^{k=-\infty} J_k(\beta)\cos(2\pi(f_c + kf_m)t)$$



Bessel Function

$$J_k(\beta) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n (\frac{\beta}{2})^{k+2n}}{n!(n+k)!}$$



Bessel Function

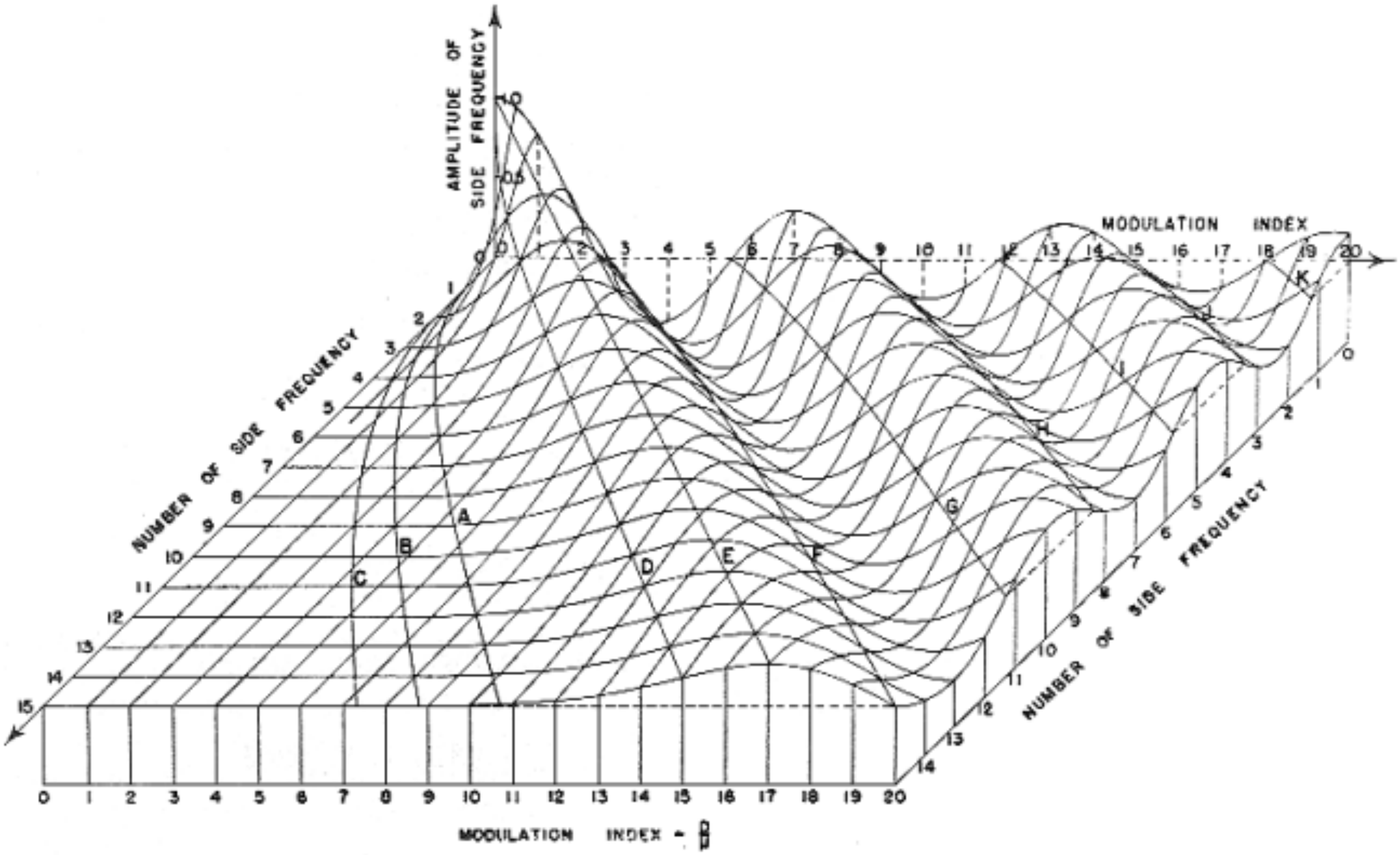
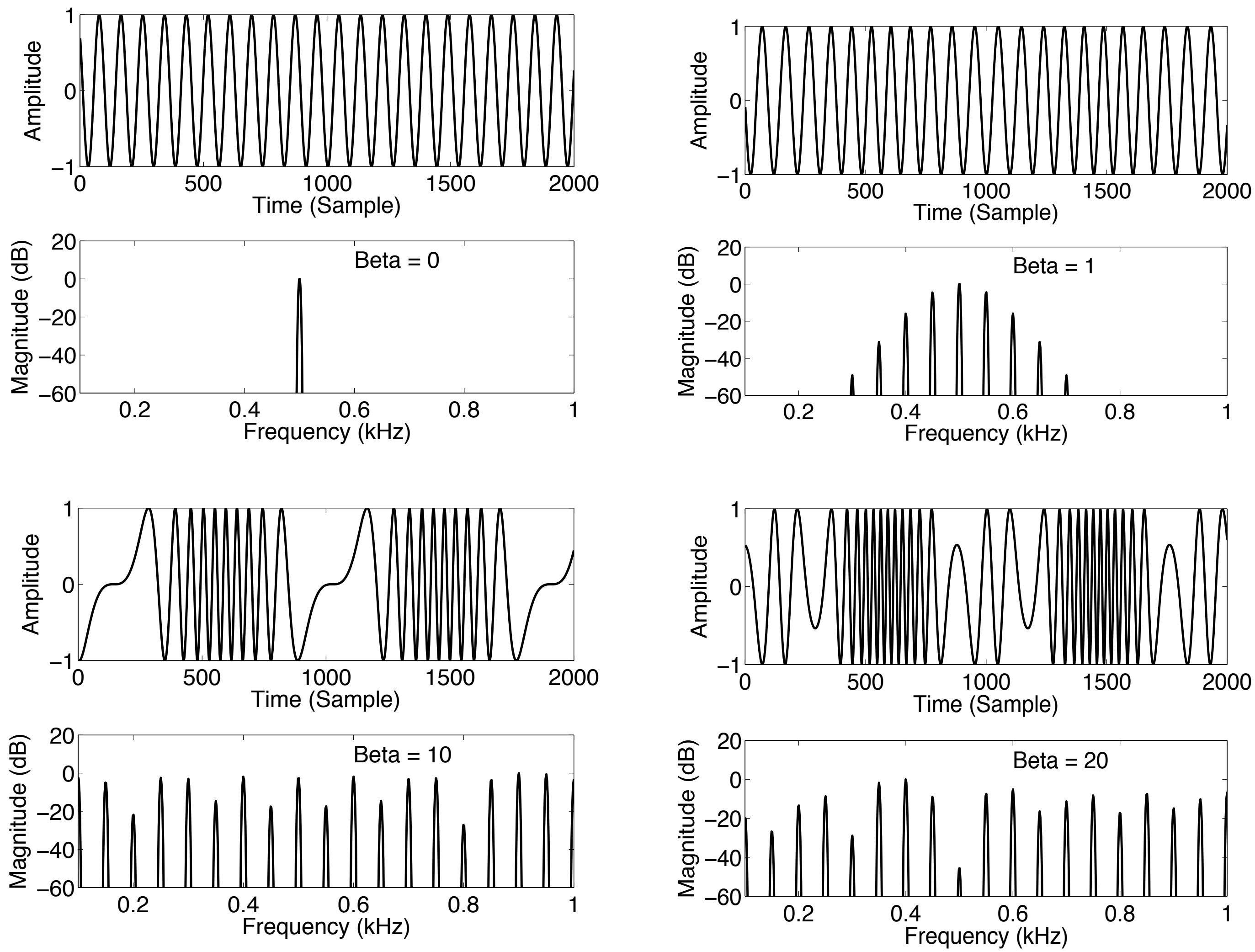


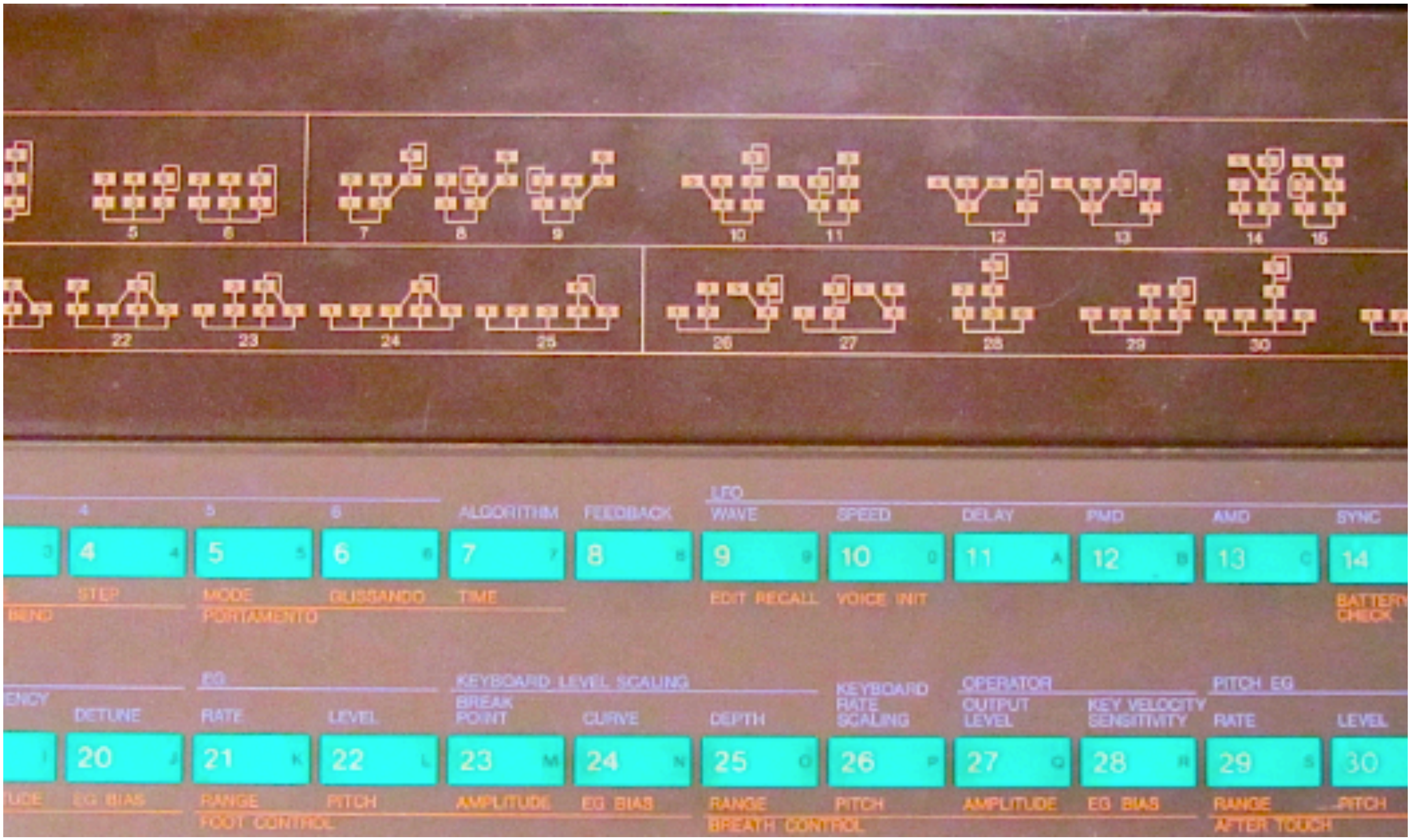
Fig. 4—Side-frequency amplitudes.

The Effect of Modulation Index



$$f_c = 500, \;\; f_m = 50$$

“Algorithms” in DX7



http://www.audiocentralmagazine.com/yamaha-dx-7-riparliamo-di-fm-e-non-solo-seconda-parte/yamaha-dx7-algorithms/

Examples

- Web Audio Demo
  - http://www.taktech.org/takm/WebFMSynth/

- Sound Examples
  - Bell
  - Wood
  - Brass
  - Electric Piano
  - Vibraphone

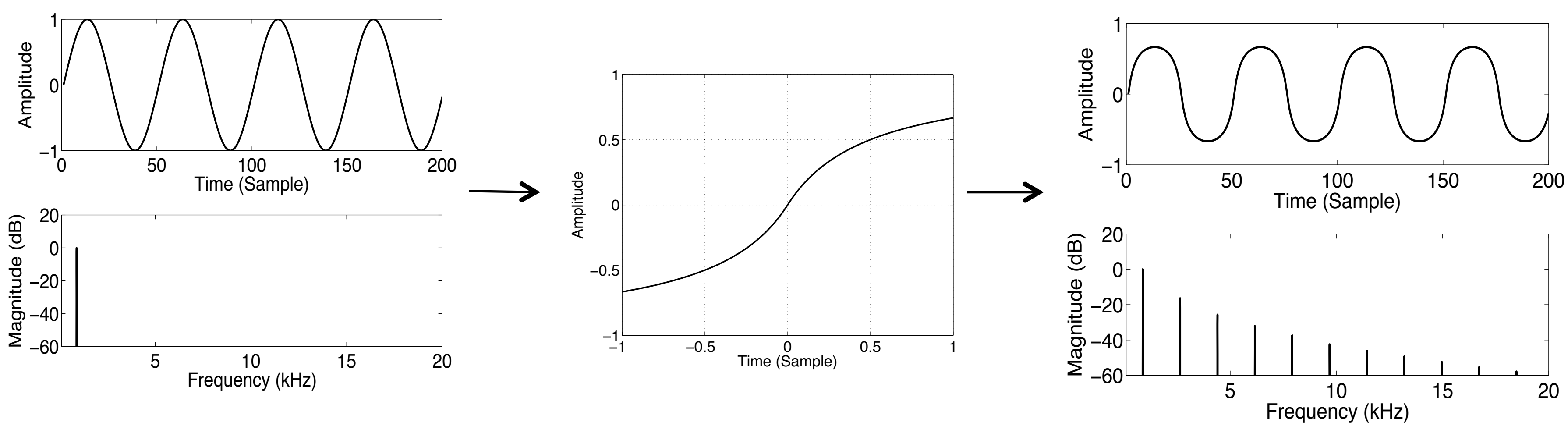
Non-linear Synthesis (wave-shaping)

- Generate a rich sound spectrum from a sinusoid using non-linear transfer functions (also called "distortion synthesis")

- Examples of transfer function: $y = f(x)$
  - $y = 1.5x' - 0.5x'^3$
  - $y = x'/(1+|x'|)$
  - $y = \sin(x')$
  - Chebyshev polynomial: $T_{k+1}(x) = 2xT_k(x) - T_{k-1}(x)$

$x' = gx$: g correspond to the "gain knob" of the distortion

$T_0(x)=1$, $T_1(x)=x$,
$T_2(x)=2x^2-1$, $T_2(x)=4x^3-3x$



Sample-based Synthesis

- The majority of digital sound and music synthesis today is accomplished via the playback of stored waveforms
  - Media production: sound effects, narration, prompts
  - Digital devices: ringtone, sound alert
  - Musical Instruments
    - Native Instrument Kontakt5: 43+ GB (1000+ instruments)
    - Synthogy Ivory II Piano: 77GB+ (Steinway D Grand, ….)

Foley (filmmaking)

Ringtones

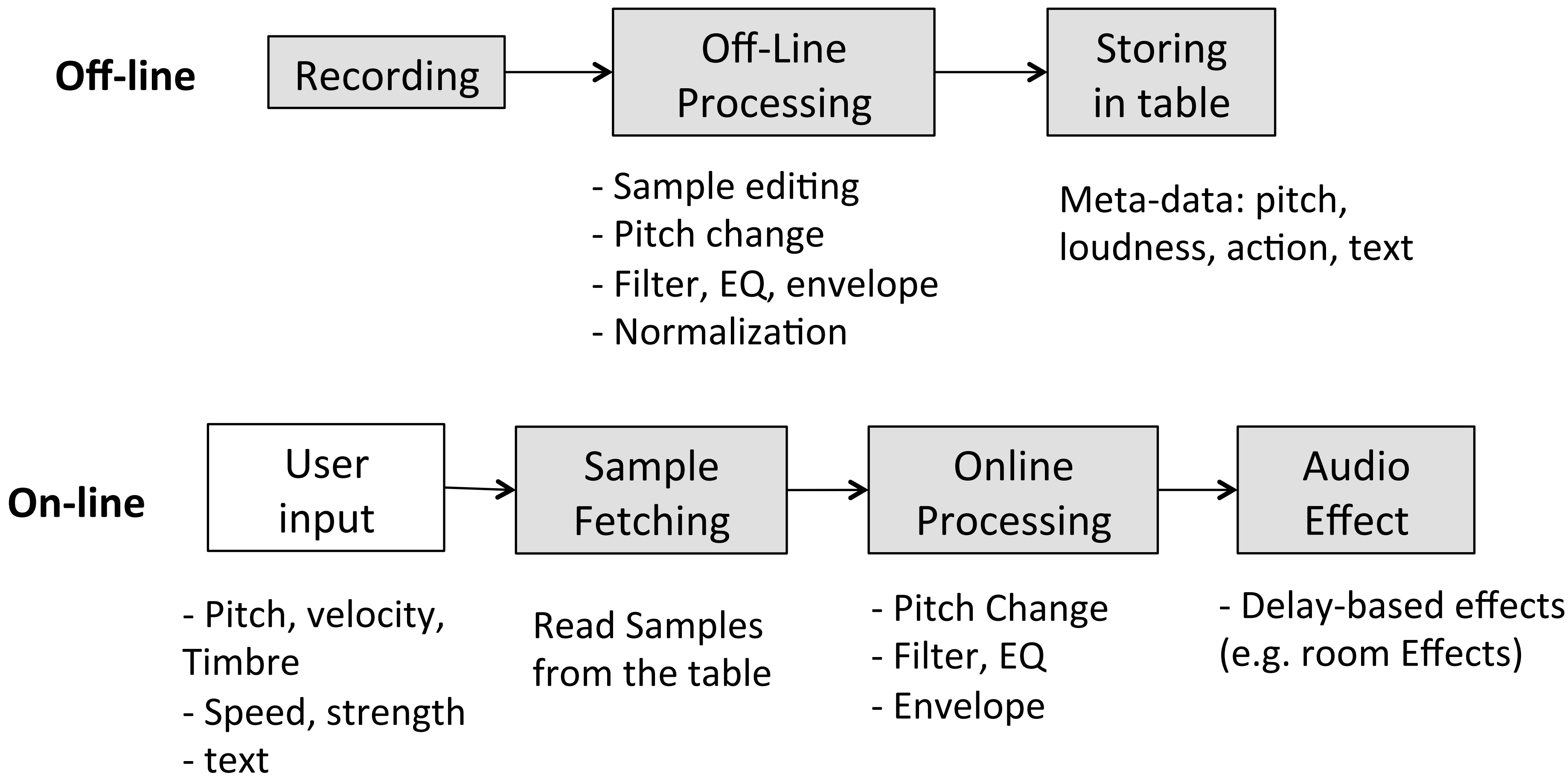
Synthogy Ivory II Piano

Why Don't We Just Use Samples?

- Advantages
  - Reproduce realistic sounds (needless to say)
  - Less use of CPU
- Limitations
  - Not flexible: repeat the same sound again, not expressive
  - Can require a great deal of storage
  - Need high-quality recording
  - Limited to real-world sounds
- Better ways
  - Modify samples based on existing sound processing techniques
    - Much richer spectrum of sounds
  - Trade-off: CPU, memory and programmability

Sampling Synthesis

- Overview

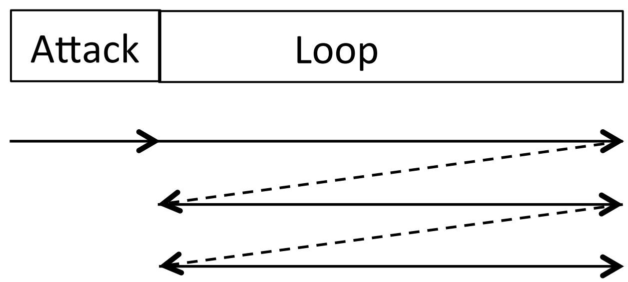


Wavetable Synthesis

- Playback samples stored in tables
  - Multi-sampling: choose different sample tables depending on input conditions such pitch and loudness
    - Velocity switching
- Reducing sample tables in musical synthesizers
  - Sample looping: reduce the size of tables
  - Pitch shifting by re-sampling: avoid sampling every single pitch
  - Filtering: avoid sampling every single loudness
    - e.g. low-pass filtering for soft input

Sample Looping

- Find a periodic segment and repeat it seamlessly during playback
  - Particularly for instruments with forced oscillation (e.g. woodwind)
  - Usually taken from the sustained part of a pitched musical note



Playback using looping

- It is not easy to find an exactly clean loop
  - The amplitude envelopes often decays or modulated:
    - e.g. piano, guitar, violin
  - Period in sample is not integer → non-integer-size sample table?

Sample Looping

- Solutions
  - Decaying amplitude: normalize the amplitude
    - Compute the envelope and multiply it inverse
    - Then, multiply the envelope back later
  - Non-integer period in sample
    - Use multiple periods for the loop such that the total period is close to integers
      * e.g. Period = 100.2 samples → 5*Period = 501 samples
  - Amplitude modulation
    - Crossfade between the end of loop and the beginning of loop meet

- Automatic loop search
  - Pitch detection and zero-crossing detection: c.f. samplers

Concatenative Synthesis

- Splicing sample segments based on input information
  - Typically done in speech synthesis: unit selection
- Sample size depends on applications
  - ARS: limited expression and context-dependent
    - word or phrase level
  - TTS: unlimited expression and context-independent
    - phone or di-phone (phone-to-phone transition) level

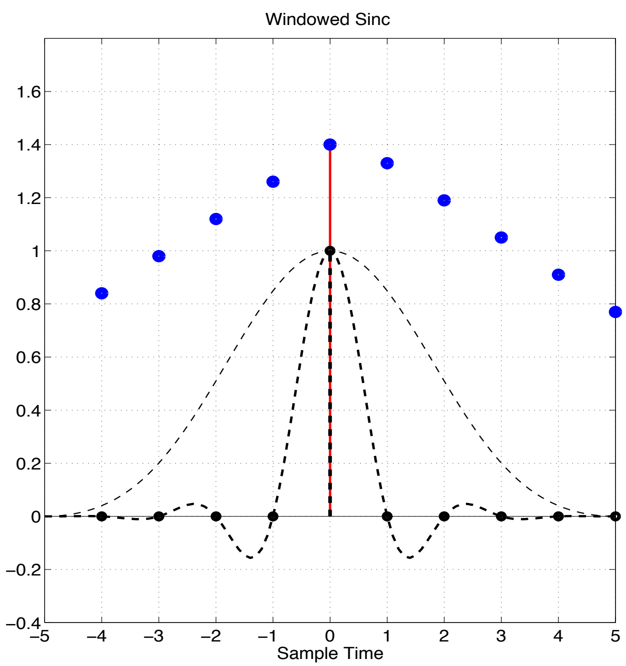
Pitch Shifting (Re-sampling)

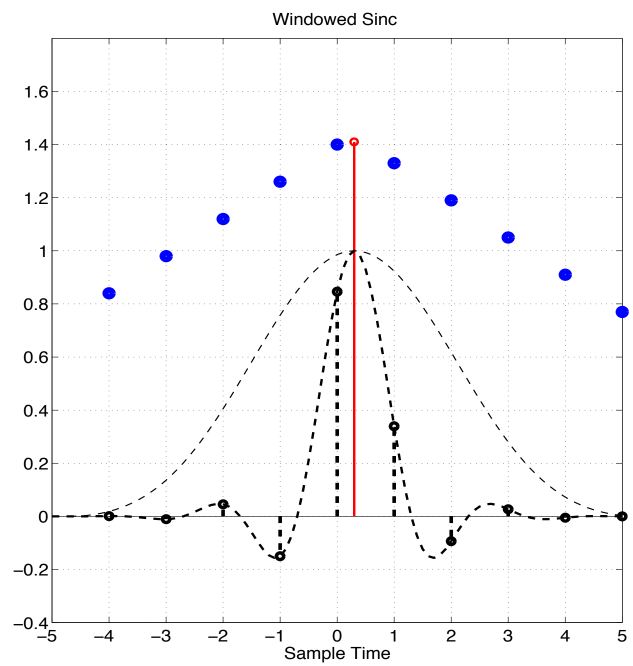
- Change pitch by adjusting the playback rate given sampling rate
  - Corresponding to sliding tapes on the magnetic header in a variable speed (c.f. music concrete)
  - Down-sampling: pitch goes up and time shrinks ("chipmunk effect")
  - Up-sampling: pitch goes down and time expands

- Interpolation from discrete samples
  - Convolution with interpolation filters (e.g. windowed sinc)
  - Need to avoid aliasing for down sampling
    - Narrowing the bandwidth of the lowpass filter → the shape of sinc function gets wider
  - "resample.m" in Matlab

Pitch Shifting (Re-sampling)

- Interpolation with the windowed sinc function



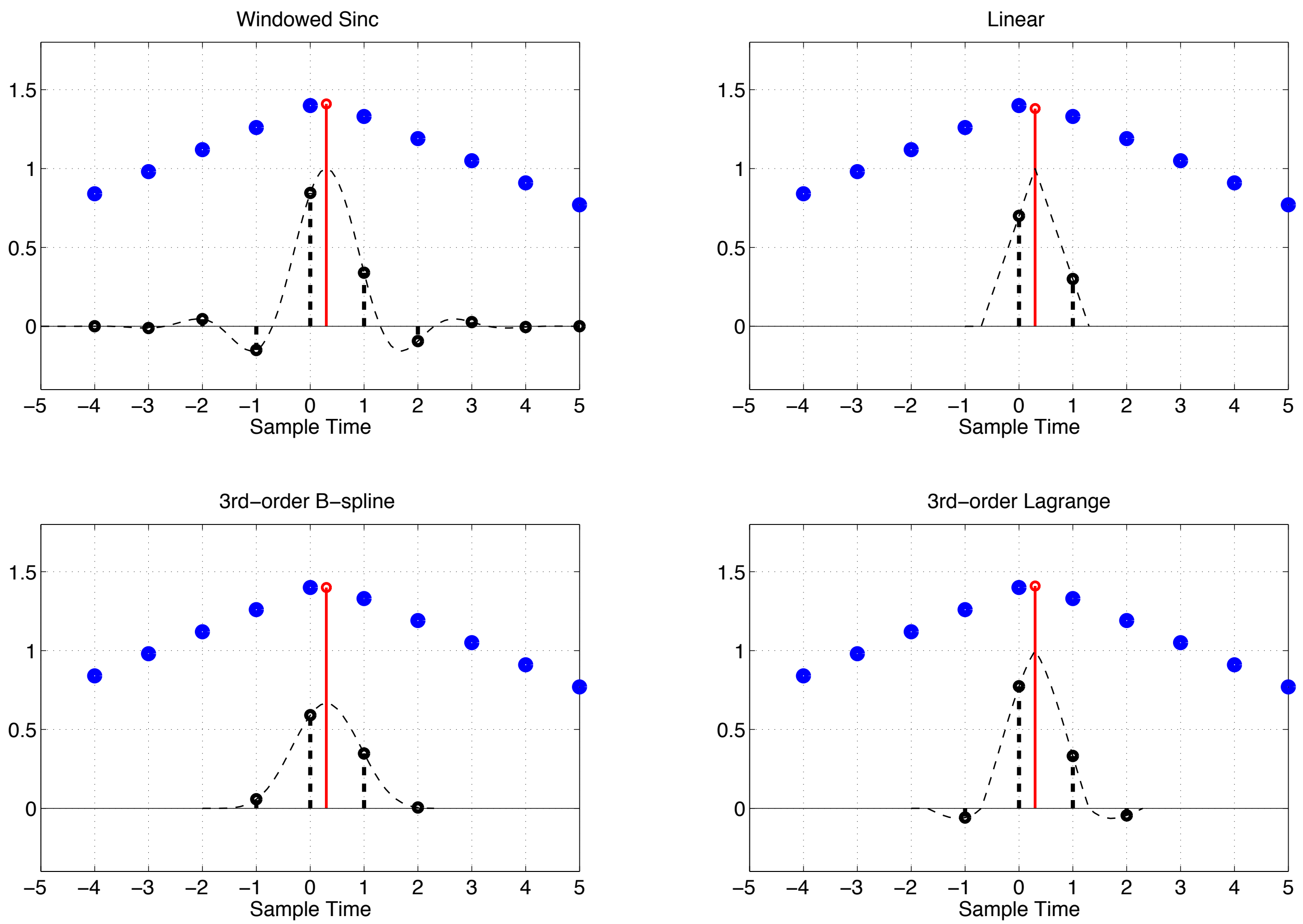


$$h(t) = \mathrm{w}(t)\mathrm{sinc}(t) = \mathrm{w}(t)\frac{\sin(\pi t)}{\pi t}$$

Delayed by d ($0 < d < 1$)

$$x(d) = \sum_{k=-(L-1)}^{k=L} x(k)h(d-k)$$

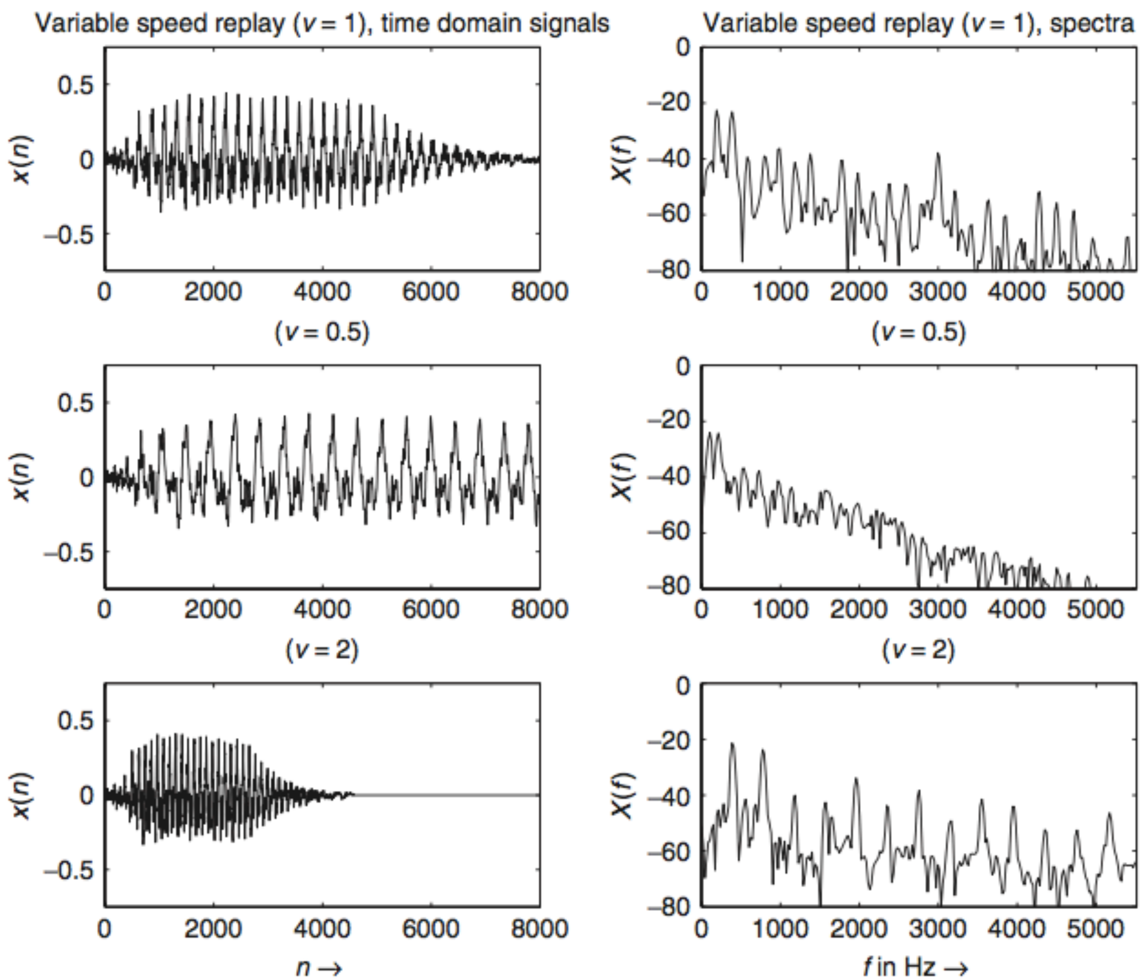
Types of Interpolators



They are all lowpass filters with different transition bands.
In general, interpolators with higher orders have narrower transition bands.

Pitch Shifting (Re-sampling)

- Change in time and spectrum by the pitch shifting



$$x(\alpha t) \leftrightarrow \frac{1}{|\alpha|} X(\frac{f}{\alpha})$$

Scaling theorem in FT

[The DaFX book]