This exploratory paper examines issues related to MIDI controller performances. Ableton, the software company behind the popular Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) Live, released a hardware counterpart, the Push, in 2013. In the subsequent year, performance videos have emerged that suggest the product’s radical potential as a composition tool for electronic musicians. These videos arguably concretize sound into discrete linear units, and also promote visual and tactile structural metaphors that delineate and demarcate musical/instrumental conventions. The Ableton Push raises critical questions about the business of selling packaged proprietary software/hardware as an all-in-one popular musical instrument. Through a lens of user interaction, media studies, and visual content analysis, my readings of these performances comment on the changing relationships between musician, composer, engineer, and performer. As a form of Controllerism, a Push performance can be undifferentiated and opaque; however, the visual nature of this specific medium offers a synesthetic site for decoding transparent musical interactions. The computer is the meta–instrument that drives electronic music, but designers are emphasizing a need for creative distance from the laptop. The software has been translated into three-dimensional hardware: if we take this goal seriously, what implications does it have for other potential creative tools? Looking ahead, how can the concept of an all-in-one, portable editing tool be mirrored for creative amateurs looking to produce in other forms of media? Pedagogically, what sorts of conventions get instilled onto those who learn from such tools? Is every sound broken down into its variable components?