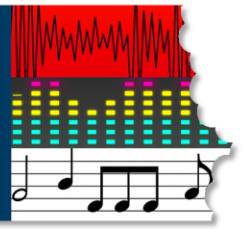


Sound Bites

Beatmaking with Mo



Create a MIDI Drum Loop

MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface. It is a language that allows computers and MIDI capable hardware to trigger instrument sounds. For example, keys could be pressed on a keyboard to initiate different drum kit sounds. Each MIDI note contains information about things such as pitch, volume, length and timing. MIDI is a great way to be able to play a whole lot of different sounds and instruments using one MIDI keyboard.

Audio recording is different to MIDI recording. In audio recording, the sound information including pitch, volume, velocity, note length and tempo are blended together. Audio recordings can still be adjusted using various DAW plug-ins but the sound components will remain mixed together. In a MIDI recording all the individual sound components can be adjusted separately within any note. This means there are more options for manipulating and developing a MIDI track.

Materials

You will need the following items:

- Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)
- Audio Interface
- Royalty free drum loops or drum packs
- MIDI controller (keyboard or drum pad).

Preparation

Complete the Choosing a Drum Loop activity before starting this one.

Steps

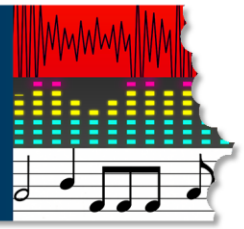
1. Open your chosen drum loop track and create a software instrument track underneath.
2. Pick a drum pack to play on this software instrument track. Different drum packs will include many types of drums and sound

qualities. For example there may be a Calypso or Jazz drum pack.

3. Find out where the bass drum, snare and hi-hat sounds are played on your MIDI controller/keyboard. Start exploring the bass drum keys and find out what sounds you like. The instrument track will only make a sound if it is 'armed'. Arming track buttons are presented differently in different software. If it's hard to find, use the help menu.
4. Try playing your original drum loop track and jam along to it using bass drum sounds on the MIDI keyboard. Once you have created a bass drum track that you like, record it (you may also need to record enable a track to record your part). This button usually has an R on it that goes red when it is armed.
5. Repeat steps for the snare and hi-hat parts.

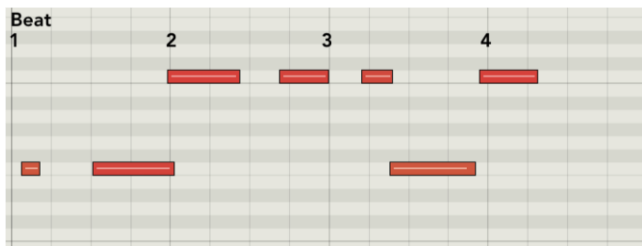
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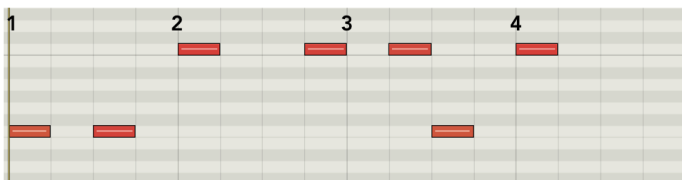
Quantising

Quantising is the process of locking notes to a particular tempo grid. This is usually done to make sure that the different music parts are in time with the beat. As Mo says, 'Make sure the timing is right because the groove is the most important thing'. Learning to quantise MIDI notes takes practice but it can be very useful.



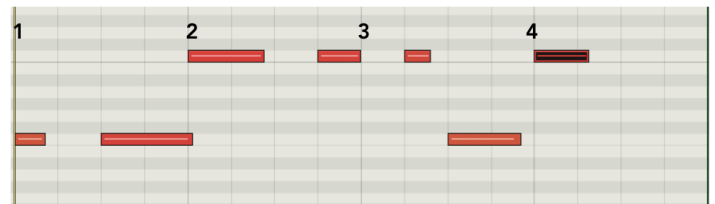
In this version of Mo's beat, the MIDI notes in the second track, are not quite on the grid lines and this means these notes are not quite in time.

Try manually adjusting the starts and ends of these notes to get them in time by dragging them to line up with the grid.



In this version of Mo's beat, the MIDI notes in the second track have been adjusted to be in line with the grid and so they are in time with the drum loop track.

Sometimes too much quantising can make a drum beat sound too rigid. Experiment with only adjusting the starts of each MIDI note and leaving the ends as they are. This can create a more human sounding drum beat that is still more in time.



In this version of Mo's beat, the start of the MIDI notes in the second track have been adjusted to be in line with the grid so they are more in time with the drum loop track.

Create Layers

Try to build tension and momentum by layering different drums sounds from the sample pack.

1. Create a new MIDI instrument track using a different snare drum. Mo does this as part of his process. Start by picking a new snare sound that you like.
2. Play this sound along with your other tracks. Try playing the snare for one or two beats in each bar.
3. Once this is sounding good record the snare track.
4. Repeat this with another MIDI track and a different drum sampler instrument such as a tambourine, shaker or maracas. Repeat the jamming and recording steps for this track.