

Course: Beatmaking with Mo

Lesson Four: Add Musical Layers

Learning Area: The Arts **Strands:** Music

Time: 60 Minutes

Year Level: 7-10

Content Descriptors 7-8:

- Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (ACAMUM092).
- Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (ACAMUM093).
- Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (ACAMUM095).

Content Descriptors 9-10:

- Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (ACAMUM099).
- Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (ACAMUM100).

Learning Focus:

- Students add musical layers to their tracks including keys, a bass line and vocals.

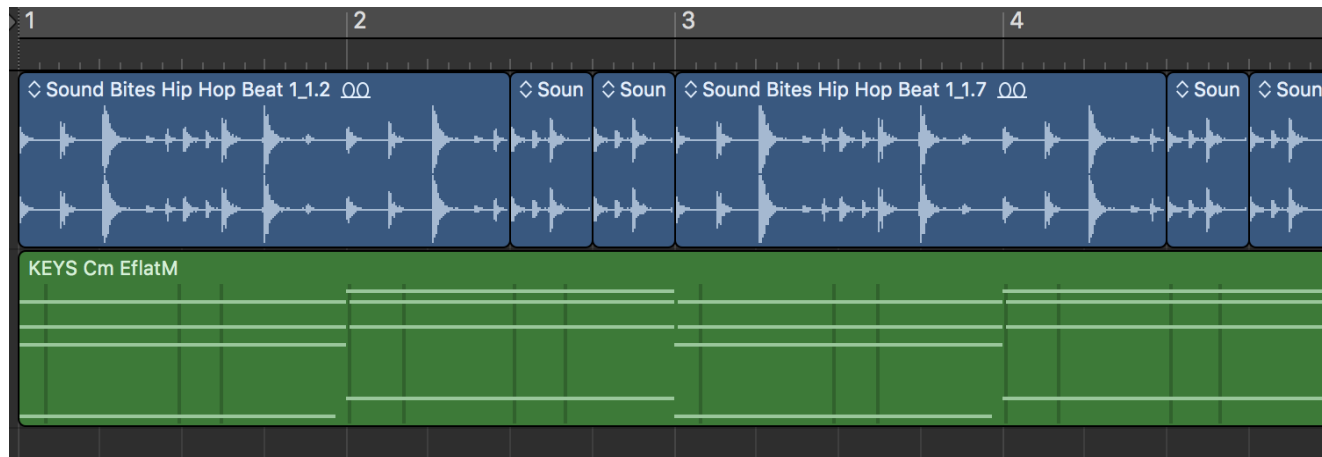
Time	Teaching and Learning Strategies	Preparation and Resources:
10 minutes	Introduction Now that the students have had some experience creating their own drum beats using both audio loops and a MIDI keyboard, watch the Mo Komba video again and discuss anything new that they picked up in the video. Do they now have a better understanding of what Mo is doing as he quickly edits and manipulates the audio and MIDI? Discuss the difference between audio and MIDI again. Ask the students to explain it in their own words. Depending on the skill level of your students, the activities below may need to be delivered over more than one lesson.	Relevant online resources • Beatmaking with Mo Komba video • Add Keys activity sheet • Add a Bass Line activity sheet • Add a Vocal Loop activity sheet • Hip Hop Beat audio track • Hip Hop Beat with keyboard audio track • Hip Hop Beat with keys, delay and tremolo audio track • Hip Hop Beat with keys, delay, tremolo and drums audio track
15 minutes	Add Keys Hand out the Add Keys activity sheet. Using the drum loop created in the previous lesson, including any additional layers of MIDI drums, ensure that students have at least four full bars to work with. Next challenge students to add a keyboard part using a software instrument that works with MIDI notes rather than audio. If you are able to play a keyboard instrument you can play this yourself by following these steps:	

1. Create a software instrument track and choose a type of keyboard sound.
2. Set your 4 bars of drums so that they play on a loop.
3. Choose a simple chord sequence – i.e. one chord per bar.
4. Practise playing your simple chord sequence along with the 4 bar drum loop.
5. Record the chord sequence.

If you made a mistake or you didn't like your performance you can undo the recording and try it again, or you can quantize the MIDI notes so that the timing of the notes they are playing sound the way you would like them to. Remember that listening and experimenting is encouraged.

If you do not play the keyboard you can use MIDI loops from your DAW library or try some of the MIDI loops provided with this lesson.

Alternatively, the below example uses the Hip Hop Beat plus an organ playing a C minor chord followed by an E flat major chord. To listen, use the audio track called Hip Hop Beat with keyboard audio track.



Hip hop beat with organ sound

Extension: Alter the Keys

If students have advanced music production skills, encourage them to add effects to their rhythm using the Filter, Delay or Tremolo plugins.

- Hip Hop Beat with bass line one audio track
- Hip Hop Beat with bass line two audio track
- Hip Hop Beat with vocal loop audio track
- Hip Hop Beat with vocal loop with big reverb audio track
- Hip Hop Beat with vocal loop with big reverb and distortion audio track
- Access to royalty free MIDI loops and samples

Additional resources required

- DAW (Digital Audio Workstation)
- Audio interface – to record any live vocals or instruments.
- MIDI controller

15 minutes

Add a Bass Line

Hand out the Add a Bass Line activity sheet to guide students through the process of adding a Bass part to their loop. A great way to start adding a simple bass part is to play the bottom note of the chords that you have chosen.

In the example above a C minor chord is followed by an E Flat major chord so the bass line can start by simply being the notes C and E Flat.

Listen to Hip Hop Beat with bass line one audio track to hear what it sounds like with a C on the first beat of bar one and an E flat on the first beat of bar 2.

It can work well to add bass notes in the same spots as the drum part. In the example below the bass notes have been placed on the first two drum beats in the bar and then the last drum beat. Play Hip Hop Beat with bass line two audio track to hear what this example sounds like.

The screenshot displays a DAW interface with a 4-bar timeline. The top track, labeled 'Sound Bites Hip Hop Beat 1_1.2', contains a blue audio waveform. Below it, the 'KEYS Cm EflatM' track shows a green piano roll with white notes. The bottom track, labeled 'Simple Bass Line 2', shows a green piano roll with white notes. The timeline is divided into four bars, with the first bar containing two drum beats and the last bar containing one drum beat.

Hip hop beat with organ sound and bass line

Encourage students to take some time to experiment with different bass lines from their DAW loops library.

15 minutes

Add Vocals

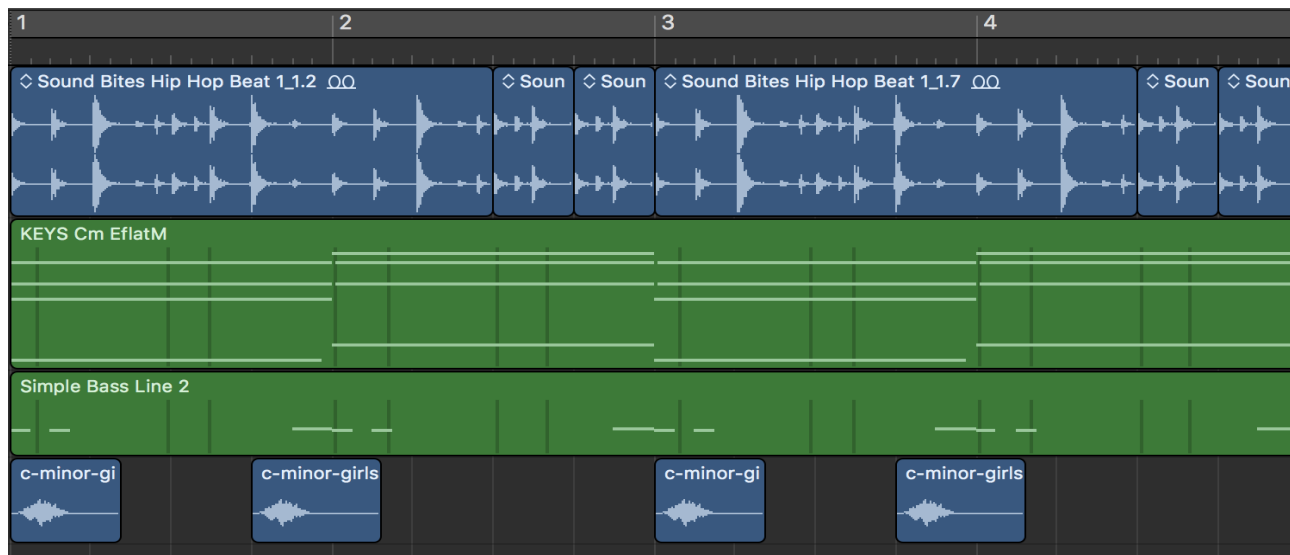
Hand out the Add a Vocal Loop activity sheet. Explain to students that the final step in the process is to add a vocal loop.

Students can find vocal loops in the loop library of their DAW or record their own vocal loop.

Demonstrate the following process to students:

1. Create an audio track in your DAW.
2. Make sure this audio track is connected to a microphone and the track is armed.
3. Set your 4 bars to play on a loop and practise singing over the top.
4. When you feel comfortable record in a short vocal phrase. If you made a mistake or you didn't like your performance you can undo the recording and try it again until you are happy. Always make sure that you regularly save your work!
5. Try adding some reverb to the vocal loop using a reverb plugin.

Here is the example track with a vocal sound added. Play Hip Hop Beat with vocal loop audio track to hear what the vocal sounds like.



Hip hop beat with organ sound, bass line and vocal

5 minutes

Listen to Hip Hop Beat with vocal loop with big reverb audio track to hear what it sounds like with reverb and Hip Hop Beat with vocal loop with big reverb and distortion audio track to hear what it sounds like with added distortion.

Share and reflect

Discuss the process with the students

- What worked?
- What was difficult?
- How could the process be improved?
- How did using a DAW make creativity easier?
- How did using a DAW make creativity harder?