Importing MIDI Songs in DrumGen

Using Tracks and the Staff View

General MIDI song files can be imported into DrumGen for:

- playback
- accompaniment (music-minus-one)
- overdub recording
- extracting parts (e.g. the drum track)
- general editing and song development

In most cases it will be advantageous to have the resultant drum program contain **multiple tracks** (DrumGen Tracks) in the PLAY Section:

```
PLAY
        TITLE           "Karma Chameleon"       40 "25"
        SUBTITLE        "~~ Culture Club ~~"    80 "18"

        TEMPO   200

        KEYSIG  Bb

        TRACK                                               Karma.Drums
        TRACK                                               Karma.Perc

        BASSTRACK       SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 8     NOSPLIT MONO    Karma.Bass
        TREBLETRACK     NOSHOW  FILL    QUANTIZE 16                    Karma.Sl_string
        TREBLETRACK     NOSHOW  FILL    QUANTIZE 16                    Karma.Organ
        BASSTRACK       SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16    SPLIT C5        Karma.Guitar
        TREBLETRACK     SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16    NOSPLIT CLEAN   Karma.Distortn
        TREBLETRACK     SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16    NOSPLIT MONO    Karma.Sax
        TREBLETRACK     NOSHOW  FILL    QUANTIZE 16                    Karma.GS_GM
        TREBLETRACK     SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16    NOSPLIT CLEAN   Karma.Harpsichord
```

Multiple tracks give flexibility for:

- controlling the notes displayed in the Staff view
- muting tracks to allow accompaniment and recording
- extracting parts

Most MIDI song files are of *Type 1*, which means the file itself is already organized as multiple tracks; each track typically containing the notes for a particular instrument. When importing Type 1 files into DrumGen, the *Import MIDI* dialog should specify **per Track**. The track names within the MIDI file are often descriptive of the associated instrument; if present these track names are used as the Pattern names created to hold the MIDI messages for that track.

```
Patterns
    ☐ per channel      ☑ per Track
         ☐ per Note (drums)
```
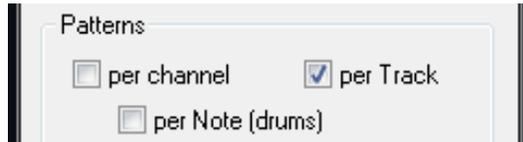
```
PATTERN Drums   {
                // *** Bar 1 ***
                C10_Volume       1        25
                // *** Bar 2 ***
                GM.AcousticBassDrum      32        109
                REST             4 TIE 16 DOT
                GM.AcousticBassDrum      32        109
                REST             4 TIE 16 DOT
```

However, some MIDI files are *Type 0*, meaning that all notes are contained in a single track. For Type 0 files, it is advisable to specify **per channel** in the *Import MIDI* dialog.

```
Patterns
    ☑ per channel      ☐ per Track
         ☐ per Note (drums)
```
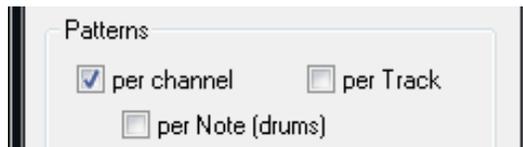
The import operation will then sort the notes into different tracks and the resultant drum program will appear as:

```
TREBLETRACK      SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16      Bananara.Chan1
TREBLETRACK      SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16      Bananara.Chan2
TREBLETRACK      SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16      Bananara.Chan3
TREBLETRACK      SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16      Bananara.Chan4
TREBLETRACK      SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16      Bananara.Chan5
TREBLETRACK      SHOW    FILL    QUANTIZE 16      Bananara.Chan6
TRACK                                             Bananara.Chan10
```

In this case, the Patterns are named `Chan1, Chan2`, etc. These Patterns generally still contain the notes for specific instruments and can be renamed by the user. Usually a PATCH statement in the beginning of the Pattern will reveal the targeted General MIDI instrument.

In all the examples in this tutorial, the *Import MIDI* dialog should also specify **create Tracks**.

```
    ☐ controller Patterns  ☐ NOSHOW
    ☑ create Tracks         ☑ fill to barline
```
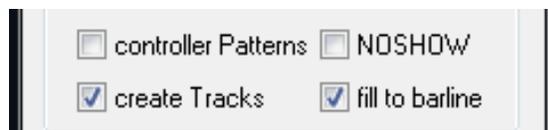
The Staff View - which Tracks to display

DrumGen's Staff view is a simple mechanism that, in addition to displaying drum notes on individual staves, contains a **piano staff** for displaying the pitched notes of a song. The Staff view is typically the active view when playing, accompanying or overdubbing the MIDI song; in fact, in this view the user can start and stop playback directly with the SPACE bar (as of DrumGen version 1.0.5).

The piano staff displays all notes in **one voice** in the treble clef and one voice in the bass clef. Thus, *an important part of importing a MIDI song is controlling how notes are displayed on the piano staff in the Staff view*.

After importing with the *Import MIDI* dialog selections above, the resultant drum program will contain multiple TREBLETRACKs, each of which will display notes on the piano staff. Any notes imported on MIDI channel 10 are assumed to be drum notes for display on drum staves and are given a TRACK.

DrumGen has several features to help **unclutter** the piano staff, starting with selecting which tracks to display (with SHOW). *NOTE: the **track modifiers** discussed below (other than MUTE) do not affect the actual playback of notes, but just their display in the Staff view.*

For general playback, it may be best to display the *melodic* notes in the treble clef and the *bass* notes in the bass clef of the piano staff and forgo any rhythm tracks:

```
TREBLETRACK              melody       // 'SHOW' is the default
TREBLETRACK NOSHOW       rhythm
BASSTRACK                bass
TRACK                    drums
```

For play-along and overdub recording, it is important to MUTE the instrumental part being performed (or use NOPLAY):

```
TREBLETRACK MUTE         melody       // can also add 'NOSHOW'
TREBLETRACK              rhythm
BASSTRACK                bass
TRACK                    drums
```

The Staff View - uncluttering with Track modifiers

The **Track statement** features several modifiers to help the Staff view become more visually appealing. The following pictures illustrate the effect of these modifiers; more information can be found in the *DrumGen User Manual*. A few modifiers (QUANTIZE 16 and FILL) are generated automatically when importing.

QUANTIZE 16 ==>
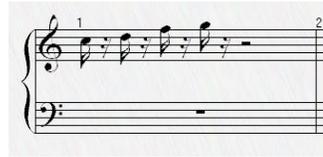
FILL   ===>

CLEAN ===>

CLEAN ===>

MONO ===>
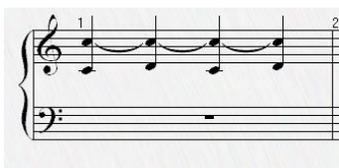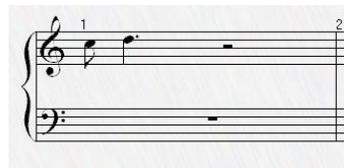
SPLIT ===>
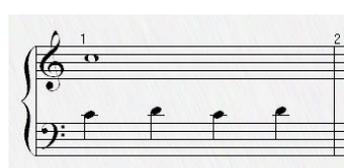
Using NOSPLIT will confine the notes within a Track to either the treble or bass clef.

The **Staff statement** allows the user to set parameters to control the selection and placement of items in the Staff View. The parameter BARWIDTH can be used to widen bars:

Specifying the correct **key signature** can also reduce the accidentals displayed in the Staff view.

In summary, the *Import MIDI* dialog gives many options for converting MIDI files into drum programs. For MIDI files holding General MIDI songs, creating DrumGen Tracks and using the features above to control the Staff view will result in a more flexible and visually appealing drum program for the song.