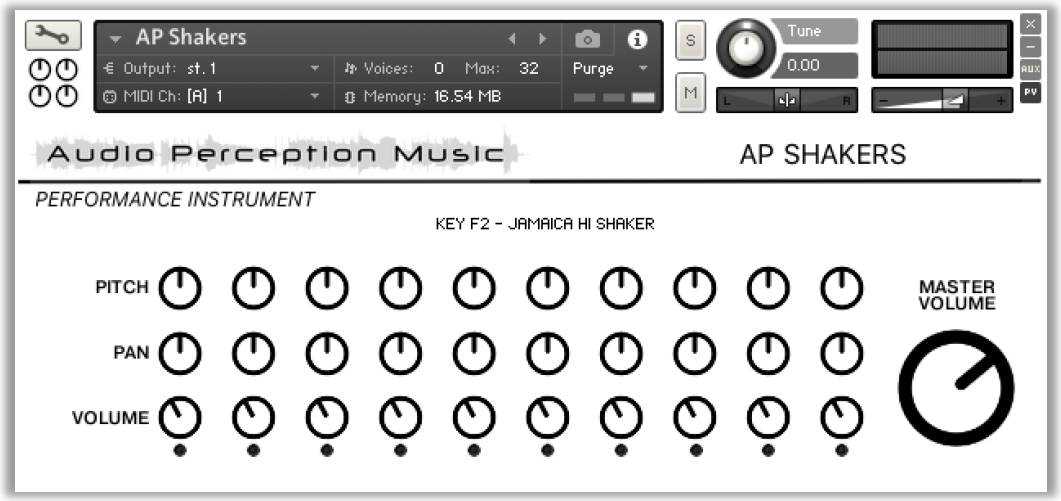
Audio Perception Music



AP SHAKERS

Shaker Performance Instrument

The sampler instrument you can perform like the real instrument!

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User Guide

Contents:

I. About:

At Audio Perception Music, we compose music for various media types, in a wide variety of styles. In that endeavor, we also create various sample libraries tailored to the features important to us. AP Shakers was born out of that necessity. We wanted a shaker sample library with a good variety of tonalities. We wanted it to be a library that is “performed”, and that it is easy to use. We also wanted the resulting shaker track to sound like we had taken the time to actually play and record it with a real instrument. And lastly, for the sample library to work well within a wide range of tempos. We’ve used this sample library in many, many production tracks over the years.

We hope you’ll find our sample library, AP Shakers, useful in your production and composition work.

Please continue on to the next page to learn more about AP Shakers.

II. Features of AP Shakers:

• Performance Instrument
• The sampler instrument you can perform like the real instrument!
• Forward shake is a key press.
• Higher velocities, above 91, are an accented forward shake.
• Back shake is a key release.
• Includes a total of ten different shaker timbres.
• Numerous tonal possibilities when played in different combinations.
• Samples are based on a shaker performance.
• Very human-sounding, even with MIDI note quantization.
• Useable over a wide range of tempos.
• At 16th notes, useable from 50 BPM up to 170 BPM.
• Each shaker is mapped on a single key.
• Multiple velocity layers of forward and back shakes.

• GUI controls for per key shaker volume.
• GUI controls for per key shaker pan.
• GUI controls for per key shaker pitch.
• GUI controls for global reverb settings.
• GUI controls for global distortion settings.
• GUI controls for global one band parametric eq.
• GUI controls for global limiter.
• GUI MIDI activity indicator per key.
• GUI character display of key/sound currently played.
• GUI character display of key switch currently selected.

III. Installation:

• The library folder requires approximately 22MB of storage space.

• To unzip the downloaded file:

Mac: Double click the downloaded file.

PC: Right click the ZIP file, choose “Extract All” and select a destination.

• The AP Shakers folder can reside on the same drive/directory where your other Kontakt patches are stored on your computer system.

Please note; in Kontakt, you’ll find the AP Shakers folder in the Files tab. Via the Files tab, you can browse any and all connected drives. Just navigate to the drive/directory containing AP Shakers, and load the patch from there.

IV. System Requirements:

• Full version of Native Instruments Kontakt 5.8.1 or higher.

(Please note: AP Shakers Will run in demo mode in Kontakt Player; you must have the full version to avoid the library timing out, etc.)

• PC or Mac computer capable of running Kontakt 5.8.1 or later, as a stand-alone or plugin.

• DAW compatible with the Kontakt 5.8.1 or later plugin.

• 22MB of disk space.

V. Introduction:

AP Shakers - the sampler instrument you can perform like the real instrument!

With the AP Shakers performance sample instrument, you'll be able to easily add quality, natural, human-sounding shaker parts with minimal effort and great results.

AP Shakers is a Kontakt based sample library with a wide variety of percussion shakers and tonalities to fit a broad range of musical moods and styles. These are not loops. Each shaker within the patch is based on an actual shaker performance, carefully edited for easy programmability and playability at a wide range of tempos. At 16th notes, a realistic, useable tempo range is from roughly 50BPM to upwards of 170BPM. Since these are not loops, there is no time compression or expansion involved in that wide range of tempos.

Also, instead of triggering a sample via a key press only, we set up this library to trigger a sample on the key press, and on the key release. A key press is a forward shake, a key release is a backward shake. This makes for a more realistic way of playing/performing the shaker parts, and makes it easier to play or record 16th notes at faster tempos.

Why a shaker library? We compose a lot of music library material, and shakers are a common percussion element used to add drive and momentum to a track.

To add shakers to a track, you can always record a real shaker part, which can be challenging if you are not a seasoned percussionist. Alternately, you can use a sample that sounds fairly static or stiff, or use a loop of some type that sounds just as stiff. Also, a loop will have a limited tempo range due to the effects of time stretching and compression.

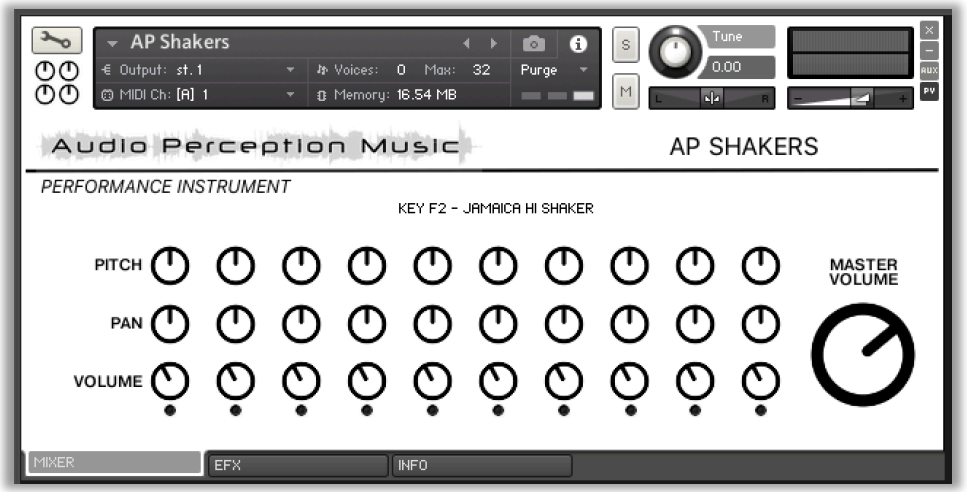
We opted to record real shaker parts. After recording many shaker parts, it became quite obvious that it's very difficult to maintain good timing and usually requires a fair amount of editing. This makes it a very time-consuming process.

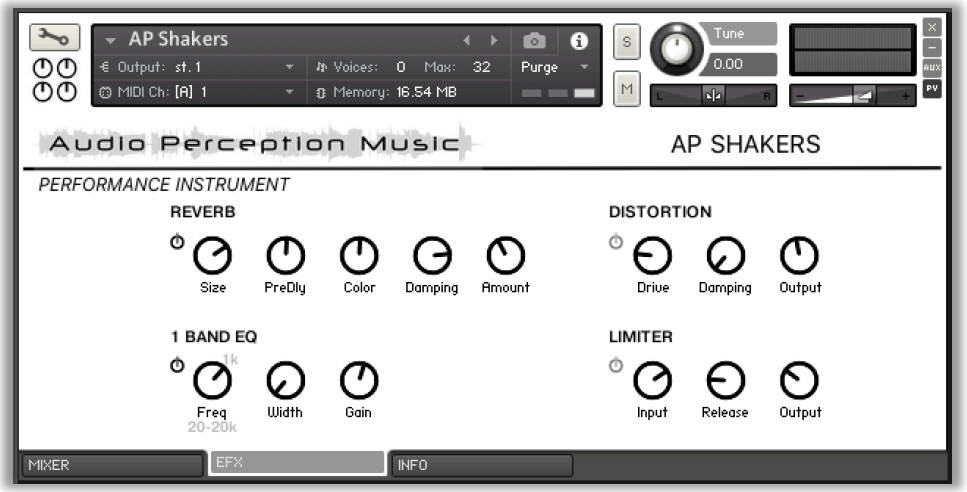
To make things easier, we decided to create a very playable, human-sounding shaker library that is both easy and quick to program, but also offers a nice selection of shaker tonalities. Be sure to experiment with different combinations of shakers for any given part. Use the individual volumes and pans to get just the right balance and spread when combining multiple shakers into one part.

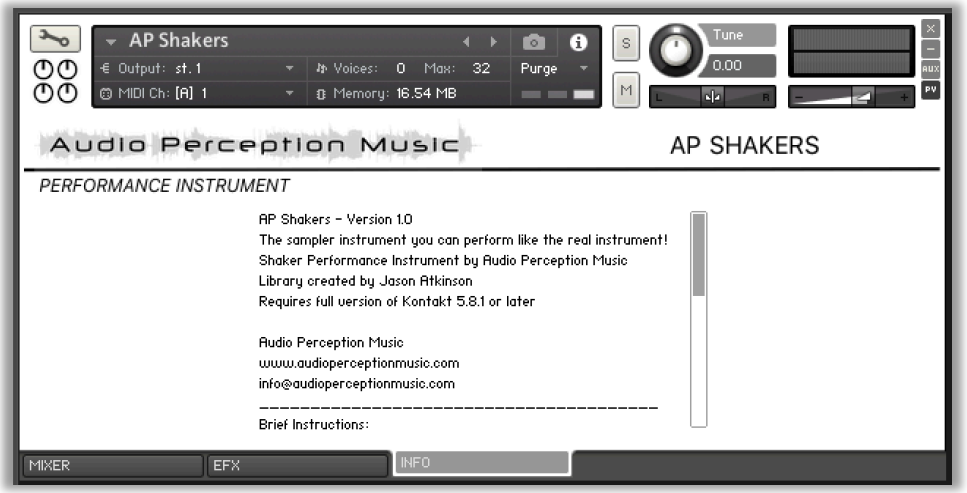
The human feel of the shakers comes from the variety of velocity layers, which add a lot of “slosh” and varied “rattles.” This makes for a dynamic part with quite a bit of feel. Even if you quantize both the note beginning and end to an exact bar/beat grid, it will still sound very human as long as the note velocities are varied throughout the recorded MIDI notes.

VI. User Interface:

Includes tabs for mixer, global effects and info.







VII. Instruments:

Notes F2, G2, A2 - A pair of handmade shakers from Jamaica. F2 is the high pitched shaker with a tight throw and a sharp pitch. Featuring a sharp accent at higher velocities, G2 is the low pitched shaker, which is a bit looser than F2. A2 is both shakers performed together, in one hand. It's a great blend that is a bit gentler than if you play the F2 and G2 keys together.

Note B2 - Though technically not a shaker, this rain stick provides a thick shaker tonality that adds a unique flavor to the library. It has a loose, grainy sound with a light accent. This makes for a smooth rhythmic feel with a nice midrange tone.

Note C3 - Another handmade shaker, this large wooden instrument from New Mexico has an organic, earthy tone with a surprisingly light feel. The accent is sharp and tight.

Notes D3, E3, F3 - These are the tightest shakers in the group, representing the classic, fiber maraca sound. D3 is the single higher pitched maraca and E3 is the single lower pitched maraca. Although they are not that different in sound, together they make a perfect blend when played on F3. When D3 and E3 are played together, the blend has a smoother tone.

Note G3 - Another classic sound, the small egg shaker provides a nice, light shaker tonality to any music. With a loose shake and a tight accent, this one can complement almost any track.

Note A3 – Our third handmade instrument is probably the softest shaker sound you'll find. Made from dried gourds with a light bean inside, individually they were too quiet, so A3 is a single patch of both shakers at the same time. Truly a unique, light tonality.

VIII. General Use:

• To load the library, use the File Browser tab in Kontakt to navigate to the drive directory where the AP Shakers sample library resides.

• Double-click on the “AP Shakers” file to load it into the Kontakt rack. Or you can drag and drop from the Kontakt browser column directly into the Kontakt rack area.

• If you are using Kontakt running in stand-alone operation, you’ll need to choose an appropriate MIDI port and MIDI channel for triggering the library.

• Once the library is loaded, you’ll be able to make adjustments to individual shaker volumes, pans and pitch, as well as control global reverb, distortion, equalization and limiting. You can also bypass the effects.

• Each of the 10 shaker patches is on a single white key, starting on F2 to A3. There are no patches on black keys.

• A key “press” is a forward shake.

• A key “press” with a higher velocity, 91 or above, is an accented forward shake.

• A release of the key “press” is the backward shake.

• Once recorded, it is recommended that you change the duration of all the notes in the part, to the exact beat division, 8^{th} or 16^{th} notes. This will make the shaker part more accurate.

• Even if you can record the part without the need for quantization, you might still consider adjusting the note durations to the exact division, either 8^{th} or 16^{th} notes.

• Once quantized, you’ll probably need to select all notes on the shaker MIDI track and slide them a pinch earlier (to the left) to get the feel to sit in the groove. If needed, slide them earlier until the groove feels right.

The reason for this is that when playing a real shaker, the movement and sound start before a beat division. It's not until the shaker, moving in one direction, comes to a stop and starts back in the other direction that you reach a beat division. There is always movement before and after the beat.

The shaker samples were edited so they could be tightly quantized to the grid, and still have a human feel. Just use your ear to listen to the feel and groove to see if the notes may need to be shifted slightly earlier in the MIDI track.

• Quantization is optional, if you are capable of recording the part to your liking without it. But this solution has worked great for us.

Continue to the next page for tutorials.

IX. Tutorial 1:

In this tutorial, we'll actually record the shaker notes as a performance.

Step 1.
Create an instrument track in your DAW. Also create a separate midi track if necessary, as some DAW applications may require that step as well.

Step 2.
Insert Kontakt 5.8.1 or later in the newly created instrument track.

Step 3.
In the Kontakt "Files" tab (in the upper, left corner), Locate the AP Shakers library in the location that it was copied to, and load it.

Step 4.
Either "record enable" the instrument track, or assign the separate MIDI track to the instrument track, and "record enable" the midi track.

Step 5.
Be sure that the metronome click is active and audible.

Step 6.
Take a few minutes to practice along with the track. Keep in mind; a key “press” is the forward shake, while a key “release” is the back shake. A key “press” velocity of 91 or higher will be an accented shake.

Step 7.
To perform with a shaker and either practice or record, “press” and “release” the appropriate key on beat. Press the key softer for lower velocities, and harder for higher velocities (which are the forward accents), this will make the performance sound very natural and human with the velocity sample layers. Make sure that both the key “press” and “release” are on the beat division so that the shaker part will be in time.

Step 8.
Once you’ve recorded a shaker part in this manner, listen to the performance to see if it needs any editing or quantizing. If you are satisfied with the MIDI recording, you are finished.

Step 9.
If you find that the MIDI recording needs a few edits here and there, you have a few options.

Step 9A.
Manually edit notes as necessary to make any needed corrections.

Step 9B.
Try changing the duration of all the shaker notes to the proper beat division. You may find that just setting the exact note duration is all that is needed, avoiding quantization, or manual editing. In most DAWs you’ll find a function for changing the duration of all selected MIDI notes.

Step 9C.
Quantize all the notes to the proper note division. You may need to combine this with changing note durations. Please note: with Step 9C you might have to slide all the shaker MIDI notes slightly earlier in time (to the left.) This can help to get the shaker part to sit nicely in the groove. Learn more about this in the “General Use” section.

This should complete the shaker track recording.

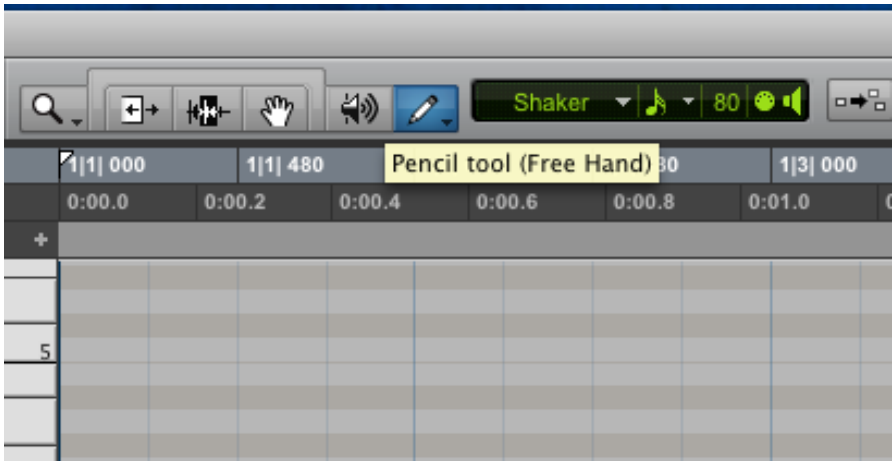
X. Tutorial 2:

This tutorial demonstrates a method for adding a shaker part to any track without the need to “perform” it. We’ll utilize the process of drawing notes into a MIDI Piano Roll editor. A common editor found in all DAW applications. We’ll be using Pro Tools for this tutorial, but the process will be very similar in any DAW.

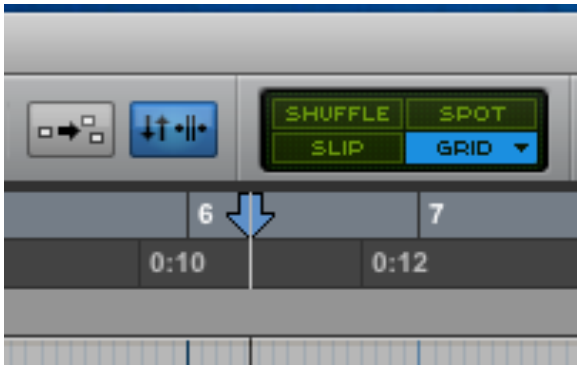
A wide range of useable tempos is available from around 50bpm to 170bpm, at 16th notes. You can use either 8th or 16th notes. With 8th notes, the lowest useable tempo may be closer to 80bpm. We’ll be using 16th notes for this tutorial.

Step 1.
Create a new MIDI/instrument track and load AP Shakers into a Kontakt (5.8.1 or later) instance.

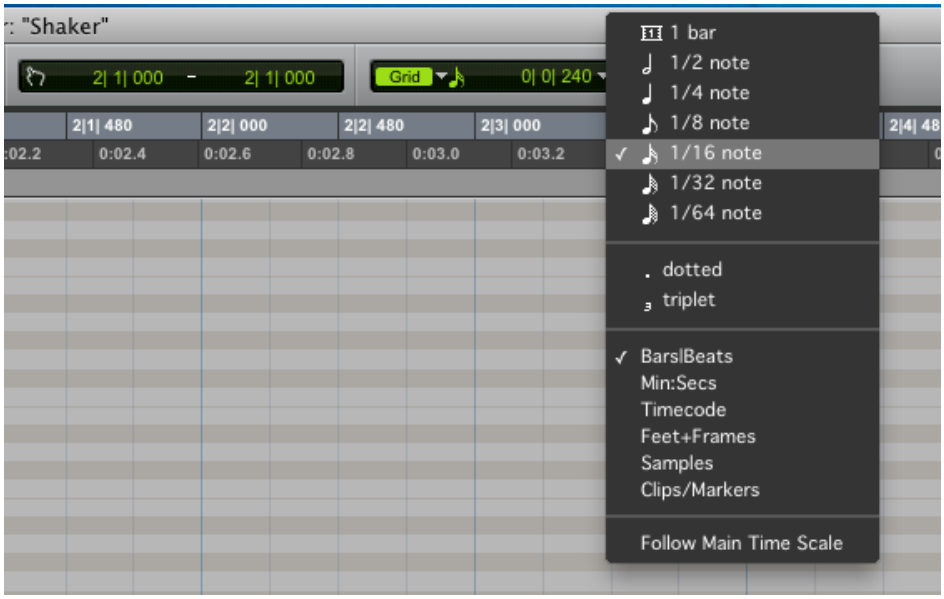
Step 2.
Select the new track, and open the “Piano Roll” MIDI edit window. Choose the “Pencil” tool. This will be used to draw in MIDI notes.



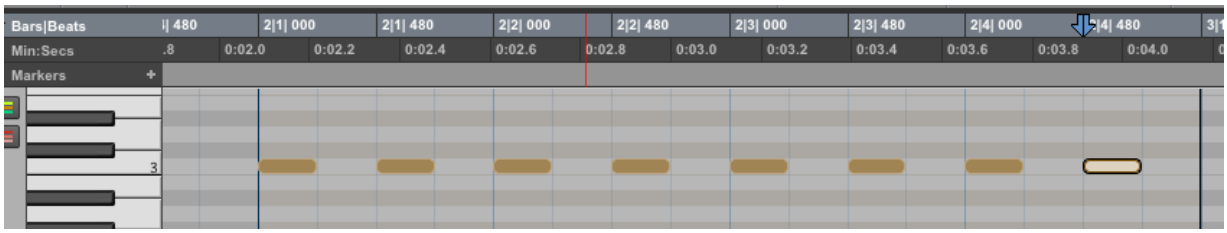
Step 3.
In the “Piano Roll” MIDI edit window, set the note snapping to “Grid.”



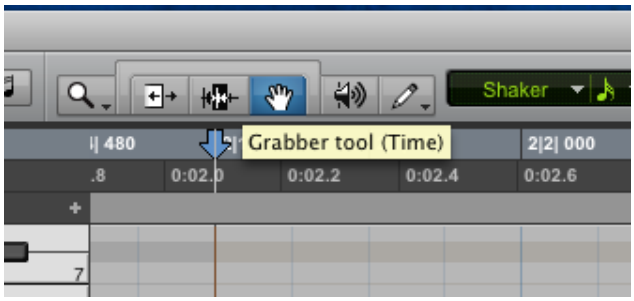
Step 4.
For the “Grid” resolution, choose 16th notes.



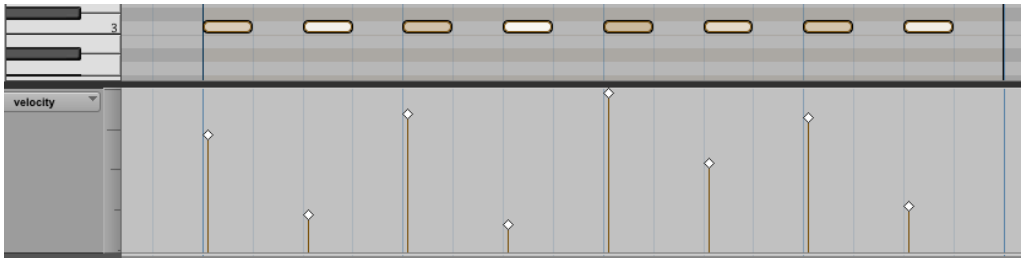
Step 5.
For this tutorial, we chose the shaker on note C3. Choose 16th notes for the note division. With the “Pencil” tool, draw in 1 bar of 16th notes, 8 notes total, as seen below. (For 16th notes, you’ll only draw a note on the first and third divisions of the beat. For 8th notes, a note would only be drawn on the first division, not the second.) The note beginning is a forward shake, the note end/release is a back shake. The 16th notes should lock to the grid.



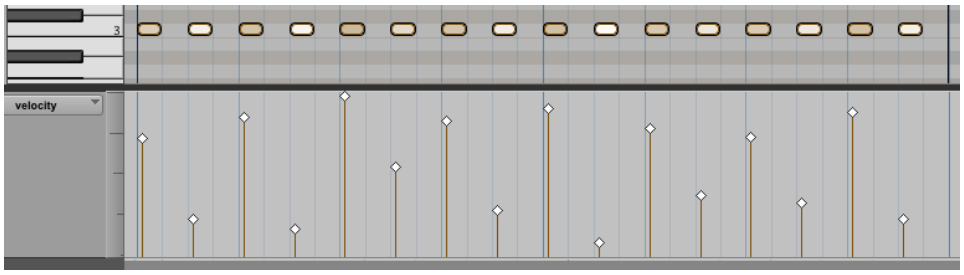
Step 6.
Choose the “Grabber” tool, or similar selector tool in any other DAW.



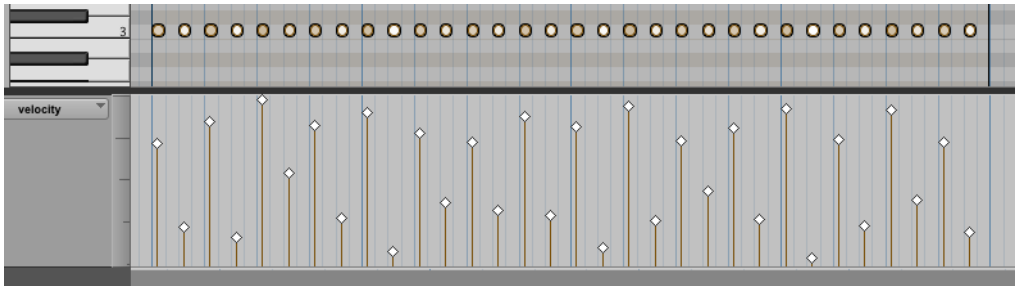
Step 7.
With the “Grabber” (or selector) tool, vary the velocities in a similar manner as in the image below. This will trigger a variety of samples based on velocity, which will make for a dynamic shaker part. Keep in mind, velocities of 91 or higher are an accented forward shake.



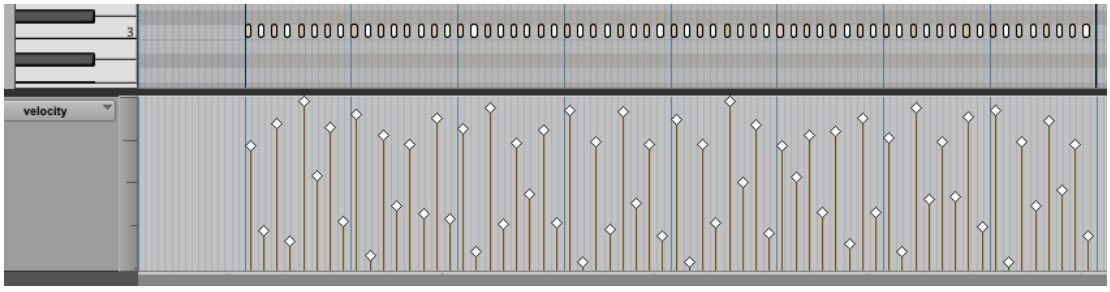
Step 8.
Duplicate the 8 notes to make 16, for a total now of 2 bars. Vary the note velocities of the 8 duplicate notes.



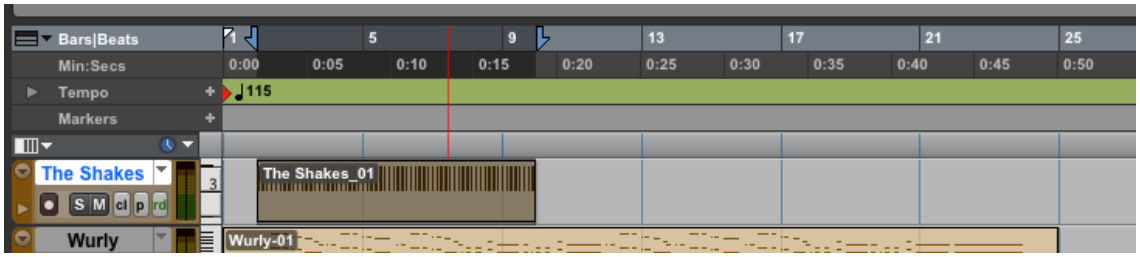
Step 9.
Duplicate the 16 notes to make 32, for a total of 4 bars. Vary the note velocities of the 16 duplicate notes.



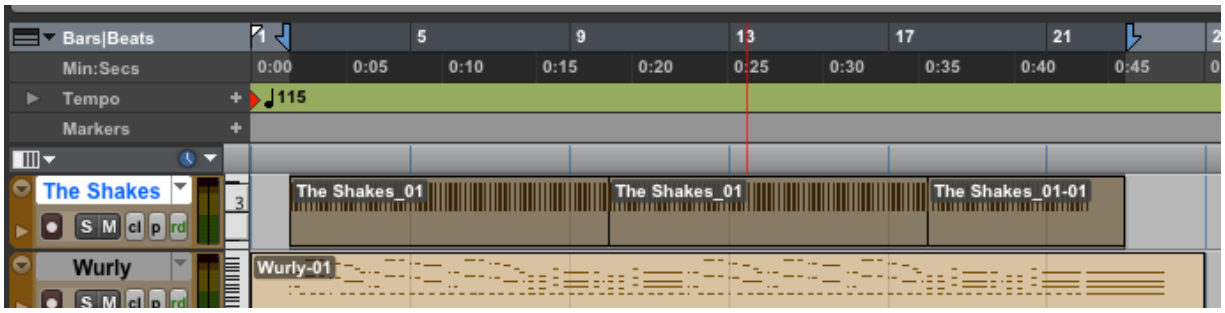
Step 10.
Duplicate the 32 notes to make 64, for a total of 8 bars. Vary the note velocities of the 32 duplicate notes.



We now have a region of 8 bars (64 notes.)

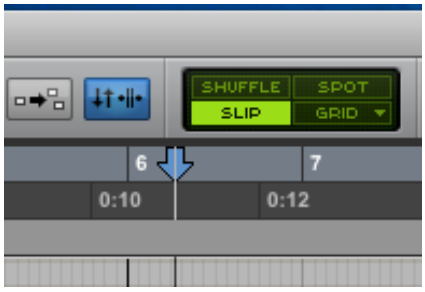


Step 11.
Go to the main “Edit/Arrange” window. Now that we have 8 bars, we’ll duplicate that region for the rest of the track. Duplicate the region as seen in the following image. This fills out the track with the shaker part. Delete notes as necessary in the last region to end on the correct down beat.

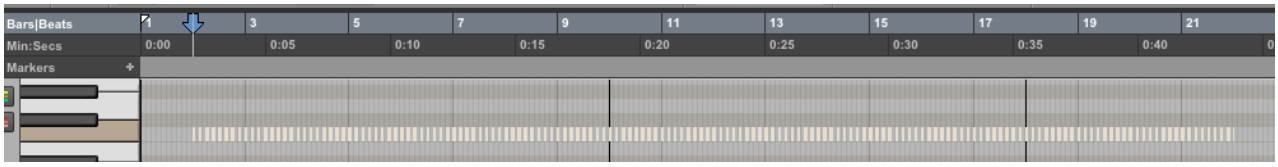


Note: Skip steps 12, 13, 14 and 15, and go straight to Step 16 if the shaker part is in the groove of the track now. If it feels a bit late, it may be necessary to slide all the notes slightly earlier. See “General Use” for an explanation.

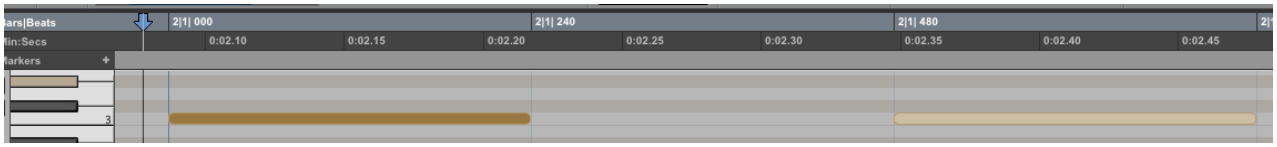
Step 12.
Back in the Piano Roll MIDI editor, choose “Slip” for the grid snap mode.



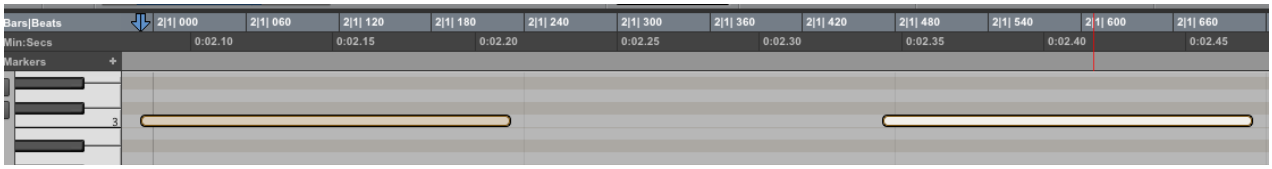
Step 13.
Select all the shaker MIDI notes.



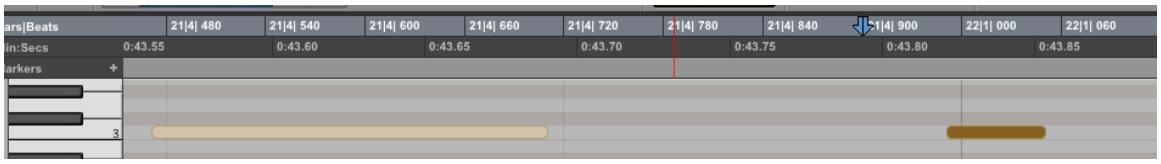
Step 14.
Zoom in to see the first few notes in greater detail.



Step 15.
With the “Grabber/Selector” tool, slide all the shaker MIDI notes slightly earlier (to the left), until the part fits nicely into the groove.



Step 16.
To end a shaker section, or the song, add a very short note on the downbeat of the ending bar. This will cause the forward and back shakes to happen quickly, one right after the other, which will just sound like a single accented shake.



That’s it. You’ve just added a dynamic, natural, human-sounding shaker part in a fairly short time.

XI. License Agreement:

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