

# Two Sequencing Tips

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Many teachers are using MIDI sequencing to create arrangements for student practice, group rehearsal, and performance. Listed below are two tips that might help you to save time in the recording process or to improve the sound of a sequence.

## Tip #1: If the song to be recorded contains meter changes, insert the meter changes into a track before recording any musical parts.

"How do I sequence music which contains meter changes?" This is one of the most common questions I am asked during my sequencing workshops. The easiest way to sequence music that contains meter changes is by inserting the meter changes into a track before recording any music.

Let's suppose that the music to be sequenced begins in 4/4, then changes to 3/4 in measure 2, then changes to 5/4 in measure 3, and then returns to 4/4 in measure 5. Before you record a note of music, insert the meter changes in the appropriate measures on Track 1 of the sequence. On most sequencers you can insert a meter change by selecting a "meter/key change" command. You then specify both the measure number where the meter change will occur and the new meter change for that measure. (Note: some sequencers may first require you to add measures to a track. This is usually accomplished by highlighting an empty track and then selecting a command such as "insert measures" or "add additional measures" to the track.)

Figure 1 shows a track with the meter changes added. Now, when you record the musical parts, the metronome will guide you through the meter changes by playing the appropriate number of clicks for each measure. The reinforcement from the metronome will make it much easier for you to play and to record the music.

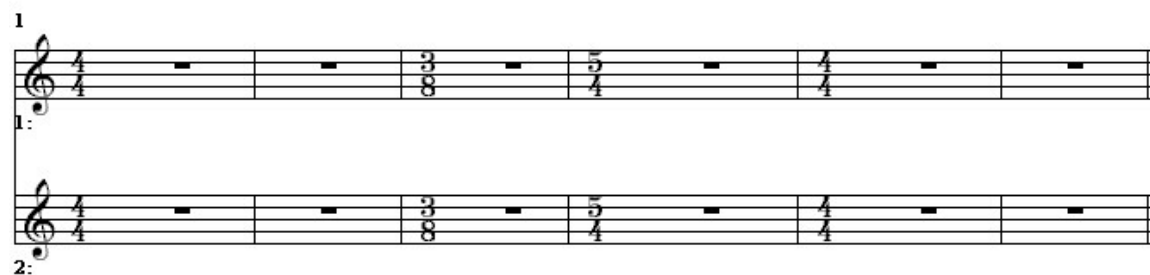
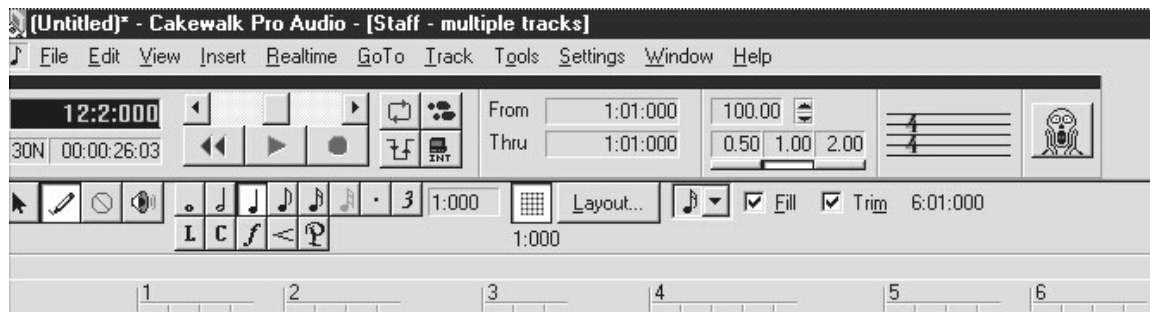


Figure 1

## Tip #2: Add variety to programmed drum tracks

If you don't know how to play drums, you probably use pre-programmed drum patterns from programs such as Band-in-a-Box. Although these patterns are rhythmically accurate, they tend to sound monotonous. You can create variety in the drum track by editing these drum patterns. Creating variations in a drumbeat between phrases or sections of a song is a great way to break up the monotony of an endlessly repeating drum pattern.

Figure 2 shows a typical pre-programmed drum pattern in a basic rock style. The highest line of dots represents a closed hi-hat cymbal playing on every eighth note. The middle line of dots represents snare drum playing on beat 2 and beat 4, and the bottom line of dots represents a bass drum playing on beat 1 and on the second half of beat 3. Even if you have no skill in programming drum parts, you can create variety by moving the existing notes to different note pitches.

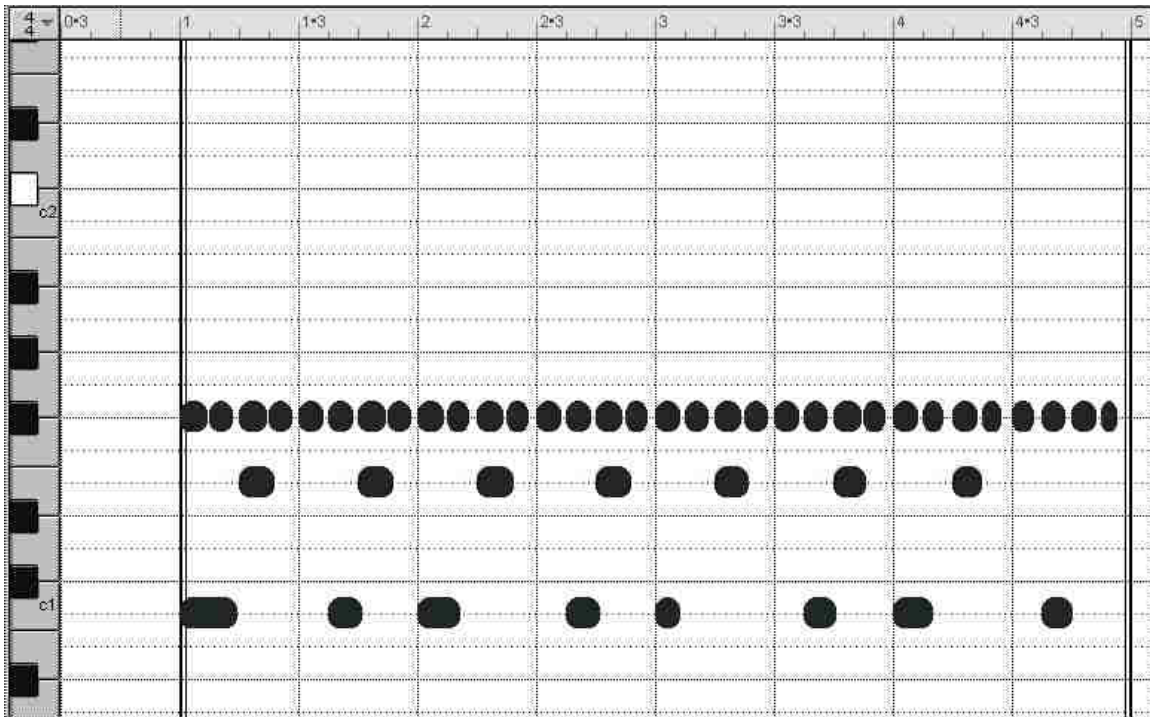


Figure 2

If you look at *Figure 3*, you can see that the drum pitches at the end of the pattern (in measure 4) have been moved. (On most sequencers you can move notes by selecting a note with the mouse and then “dragging” the note up or down to another pitch. Each pitch is a different drum sound.) In this example, the closed hi-hat notes have been changed to three different tom-toms and, on the second half of beat 4, to an open hi-hat sound. You can experiment with moving different sounds to different beats. Start slowly, listen carefully to each change you make and see if it sounds appropriate for your music. The more you experiment, the more comfortable you will be with this editing technique.

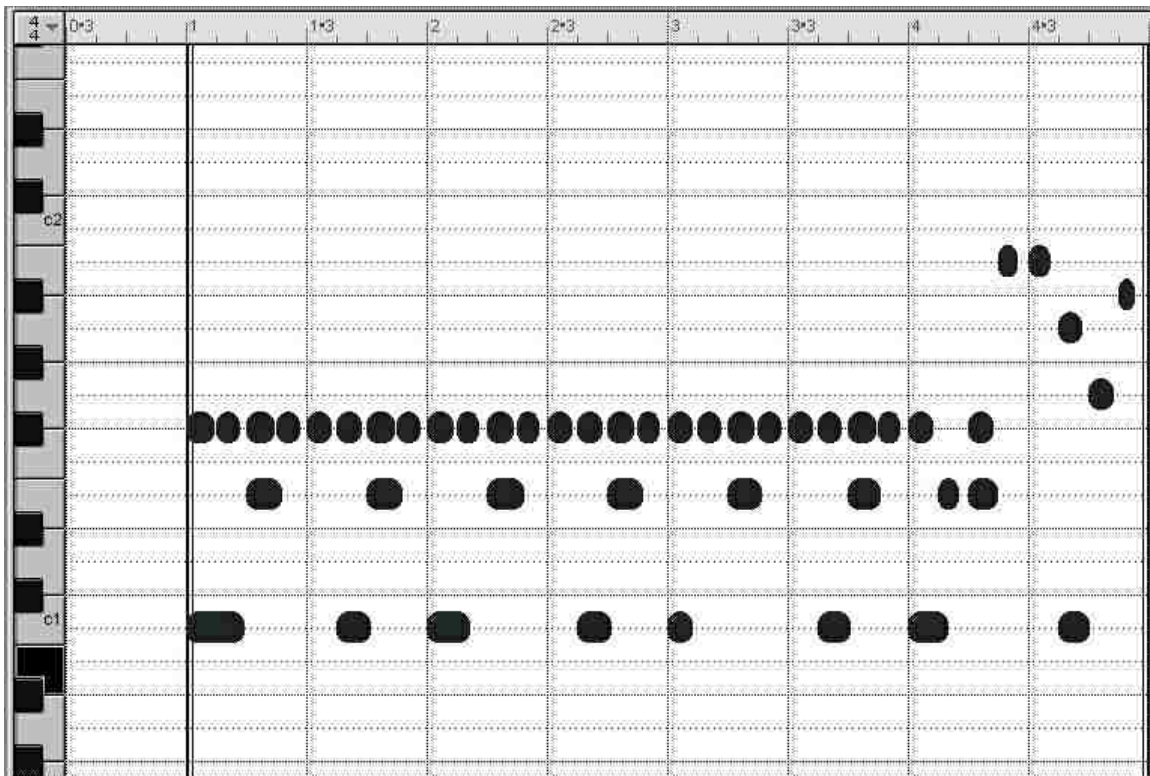


Figure 3