SONAR CAKEWALK Lab 2

(Digital Audio Workstations 1)

Lab 2

In this Lab, you will create and configure a new Sonar project at a given tempo (in bpm). You will import MIDI files from a given folder and use the copy and paste function on these clips in the Trackview (or Arrange window) to create an arrangement using sounds and patches from a number of Soft Synths (Instrument plug-ins) which you will choose. You will learn how to manipulate and edit MIDI information to suit a musical arrangement.


Note

MIDI (Musical Information Digital Interface) is a standard (or protocol) which allows musical information (such as pitch, note length and velocity) to be transmitted from one MIDI device to another. It doesn't include any sound or audio itself.

Preparing the Project

After opening Cakewalk Sonar, create a new session based on a normal template. Save this as "YOURNAME-SONAR LAB2" into your work folder on the Audio Drive (D:).

Make sure that the the Large Transport is open and set the bpm to 124 bpm.
We wont be using Audio tracks in this Lab initially, but creating Soft Synth tracks instead, so the first thing to do is create your first Instrument (and its track) by Track>Insert Soft synth> Psyn II

When this (below) dialogue box appears, make sure that it has the same options ticked as the illustration.
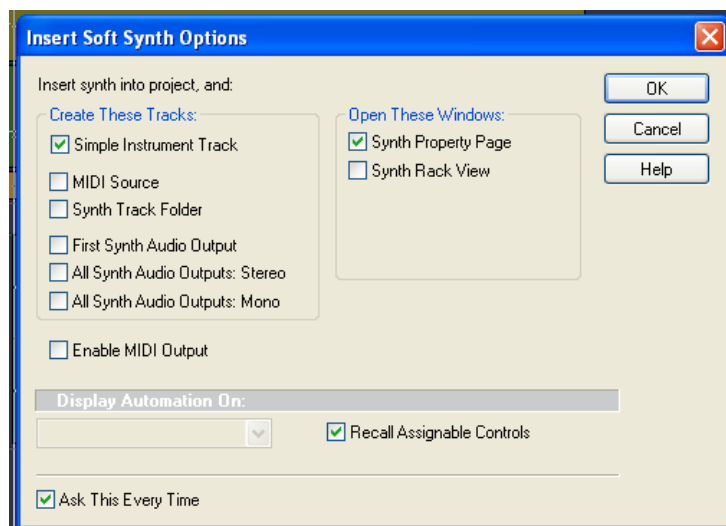
When you have clicked "OK" you will see the synth edit screen appear -this is where you call up and edit sounds from. Browse the patches until you find a Bass sound you like – you can audition the sound by playing your keyboard.

Importing the MIDI Files and creating an initial arrangement

As we imported audio loops into audio tracks, importing MIDI clips (or files) into Soft Synth tracks is done in a similar way – Menu>File>Import MIDI.
From the folder given, open the "bass a" sound. You should see it appear as a MIDI clip on the Trackview page. Pressing play(<spacebar>) will now playback that MIDI clip, which is the first element in the arrangement.

This is only the first Instrument to be created, so what you need to do now is to go through that same process (ie creating new Soft Synth tracks) a number of times in order to build up enough instrument for a Song.

Instruments and their associated MIDI clips.

Bass Synth (already created) for parts "bass a" and "bass b"
Drum based Synth for the "drums"
Electronic piano type Synth for "chords a" and "chords b"
Choir type synth for "choir' and "choir arpeggio"
-and another 2 synths for both "bass follow synth" and "lead synth"

Reminder

Using the loop function can speed up the production process by focussing in on the sections which you are editing.

Transposing and Quantizing MIDI Events.

Transpose is a musical term used to describe the changing of musical key of a tune or part of a tune. There are various ways to do this in Sonar but the most convenient way is to highlight the clip you want to transpose, and then from the Pull down menu – Process>Transpose and then enter the amount by clicking + or – values - and this will transpose in semitones.
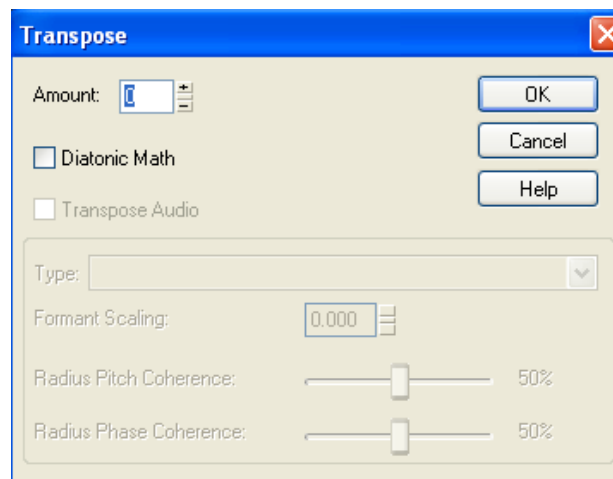
Quantizing is a function which is used to correct timing errors in MIDI parts – simply put, it aligns all the notes to a grid which you set the resolution of. In the picture below you can see the pull down note values which in this Lab you should set at "Eighths". From the Pull down menu it is Process>Quantize.
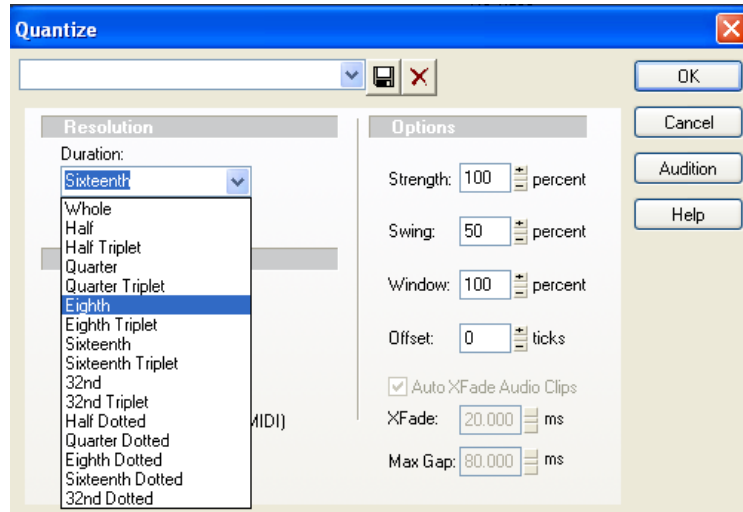
If you listen to the Drum clip you should notice that a couple of the snare drum beats are slightly out of time. Use the Quantize function to correct them.

There are also a few MIDI clips which aren't in the correct key for the song, or might need transposing by an octave, so when you find them, use the Transpose function (and your ears!) to correct them.

Notes on the arrangement

Some of the clips will not sound right musically with others -this is because the arrangement of the song has 2 distinct sections – part a and part b. The overall structure of the song has a pop format with a twist, but until you import the vocal into the project, lay out the clips in a way which you like.

The next Lab will take this Project further by showing you how to move and edit audio clips precisely , add sympathetic plug in effects and balance instruments in a mix, as well as other production techniques.

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