

Drum Mixing Tips on Drum Group Track

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On 01.30.14, In [Full Signal Chains For Each Instrument](#), by

Hello there, guys!

In our previous [signal chains](#) we've talked about editing & mixing separate instruments and drums parts.

Now I will show you what I like to use onto the stereo Drum bus/group track channel itself.



Drums Should Act Like One Instrument

While we use tons of tracks for all our drum parts to mix our [kicks](#), [snares](#) etc. we also add some plugins to the **stereo drum group track**.

We tend to think that the different drum parts work separately but truth is that by **tweaking each drum part affects another one**. Drums should work as **one instrument just like the bass guitar or the rhythm guitars**.

Is the snare too bright and the toms way too muddy? Is the kick too low with so much “thud” without much “attack” and, on the contrary, the snare too ringy? Then, before diving into the group track try to fix the solo tracks first.

Saturation

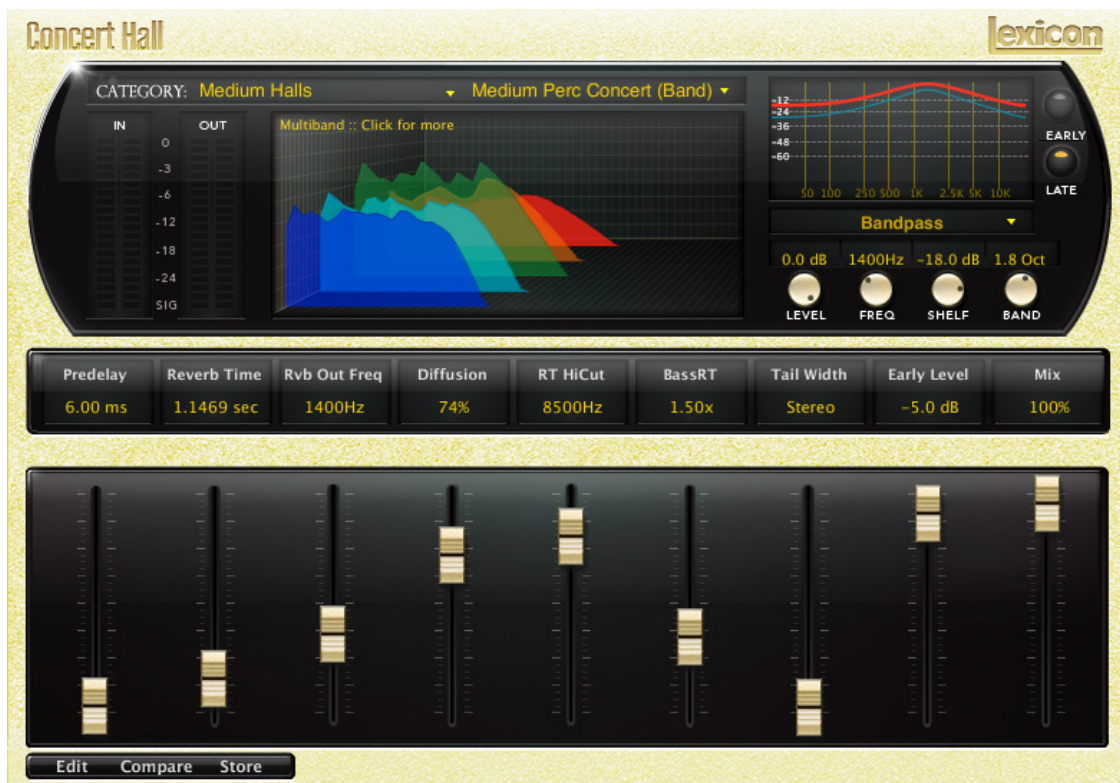
What I really love about [Saturation](#) on Drums is the “glue” it adds on them, as I described above. Each part used to sound disconnected but with a bit of [Tape Saturation](#), things get really interesting.

More Benefits

- Softening, gluing and “rounding” the transients of the drum kit as a whole.
- Thicker sound, more “body” and some thick mids.

[You can check out my favorite Saturation plugins here.](#)

Adding Effects – Reverb Time!



Reverb Plugins = Freedom

In digital mixing we can choose among numerous reverb plugins to add to our mixes.

The best thing about it is that we can manipulate the reverb without **having bleed problems**. Let me give you an example.

How many times have you got raw recording room tracks and by the time you put them in the mix there was **cymbal spill everywhere** in the frequency spectrum?

That's one of the reason that **sampled rooms** can really help us create a fantastic huge drum sound without the negative effects of **non-sampled rooms**, that *usually* have lots of **mud** and **cymbal spill**.

Does that mean that famous producers with high quality "real" room sounds discard the room mics completely? Well, no.

But I am pretty sure they may blend some "plugin reverb" with their "real" mic room captured from their mics. Sampled rooms are also real rooms anyway. Plus, experimenting with blending room sounds is creative and fun too!

What Drum Parts Need Reverb?

This is my way of using reverb on my drums. The first ones has the most reverb in it while the last ones has the least:

You can [check out the signal chain of each one](#) too.

Parallel Compression

Parallel Compression can really make your drums sound **more coherent without killing the transients/punch**, plus adding a sweet **aggressive sound** to your drums.

Do I use it all the time? No.

I try to get what I want with less "tricks" and that's a rule I follow generally, not only on drums.

But I always experiment with it and if the drum sound is better then I keep it, else I remove it completely.

The idea of parallel compression is to:

1. Create a duplicate of your drum group.
2. [Compress it like hell](#) – fast attack and release, high ratio, huge GR.
3. Blend the volume fader with the original drum group.

When blending try to find the **sweet spot**. Raise the fader till the duplicated group (the compressor) starts affecting BARELY the original group.

Do it a couple of times, mute and unmute the compressor and see if it adds cohesion to your drums. If not, do it again, compress even more or remove it completely!

Just because you can do it doesn't mean you should. The "secret" is to know when to use less tricks.

Conclusion

The drum group is purely affected by the mics of all of the drum tracks.

If something doesn't sound right chances are that you need to go back to your drum mics/tracks and spend some time mixing there.

And as always, the better the source sounds = the better the final product. Good luck!

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