FL STUDIO

BEGINNER'S BUNDLE

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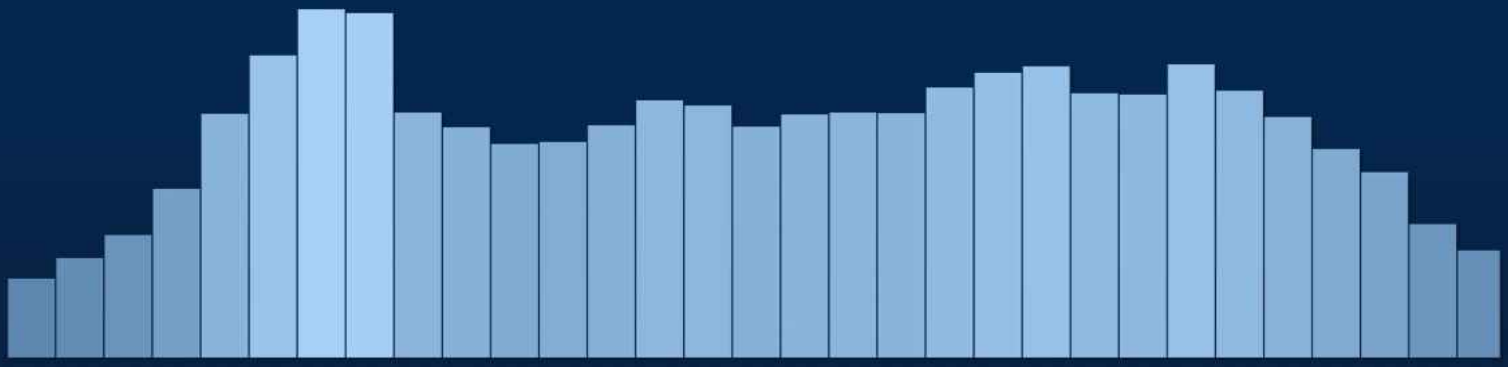

1. FL STUDIO BEGINNER'S GUIDE
2. THE ULTIMATE MELODY GUIDE

SCREECH HOUSE

FL STUDIO
BEGINNER'S BUNDLE

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1. FL STUDIO BEGINNER'S GUIDE
2. THE ULTIMATE MELODY GUIDE

By Cep from Screech House

https://screechhouse.com

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Get a free sample pack

To help you kickstart your music productions, I've created a free hardstyle sample pack (EDM samples included) to share with you. If you're into making EDM, feel free to download your copy by clicking the link below. Enjoy!

Click here to get the free hardstyle sample pack

PREFACE

The FL Studio Beginner's Bundle is a special pack of 2 very popular books under 1 tight cover. This way you'll get twice the value for a much smaller part of the price. Besides, having a bundle like this doesn't only look cool on your desktop, it also gives you all the essential FL Studio beginner's material in one epic format.

That's why it serves as the ultimate FL Studio beginner's shortcut. It will save you years of struggling to figure everything out on your own. It will simply destroy your massive learning curve and boost your FL Studio skills immensely, allowing you to make any songs you want as quickly as humanly possible.

If that sounds good, then let's quickly look at what you will find inside.

This book is absolutely right for you if you want to learn exactly how to use FL Studio very effectively to make incredible music. By simply looking at all the essential basics of the FL Studio's inner workings, you will discover all the important functions that you need to make amazing songs. This will be completely covered in the first section of this book in the **FL Studio Beginner's Guide**.

This book is also definitely right for you if you want to find out how to make awesome melodies for your songs, even if you don't know anything about music theory. By exploring all my easy melody-making strategies, you too will be capable of creating these impressive tunes for your songs all by yourself. This will be covered in all detail in the second section of this book in **The Ultimate Melody Guide**.

Both the FL Studio Beginner's Guide and The Ultimate Melody Guide are also standalone titles available on Amazon. They're entirely included in this bundle, but if you want one of these titles separately, feel free to check them out by clicking the links.

You can also find the EDM Mixing Guide on Amazon. That's another guide I've written to share the most important mixing secrets of the pros, getting your songs to that high level of quality. It's not included here, because it's not necessarily a guide for beginners. However, it absolutely is an important part of making professional music. Consider grabbing yourself a copy when you want to find out all about it.

So, are you ready to learn some solid music-making skills? Then let's start with the FL Studio Beginner's Guide first. Once you've learned the essential FL Studio basics, you can move on to The Ultimate Melody Guide on the second part of this bundle.

Enjoy!

FL STUDIO
BEGINNER'S GUIDE

How to start making music in FL Studio

THE ULTIMATE SHORTCUT

By Cep from Screech House

PREFACE

Are you a beginner in FL Studio and do you want to start making awesome music as quickly as possible? Are you looking to shortcut your learning curve tremendously by not having to focus on unnecessary fluff and overcomplications? Then this is definitely the right guide for you.

In fact, it's the ultimate extension of my FL Studio Guide for Beginners lesson on YouTube. Be sure to also watch the video as it will give you a quick visual summary of all the important topics you're about to learn here.

The FL Studio Beginner's Guide will solely focus on the essential fundamental basics of FL Studio. Using these essential basics will immediately give you the most important skills to create entire songs very effectively. To achieve this, we're only going to explore the main FL Studio functions that require the minimum amount of work but give the most results. This way you can cheat your way through FL Studio. Only learn a little but understand a lot.

This book serves as the smart kick-starter for your FL Studio experience. It thereby looks at the bigger picture of the FL Studio application. So, you won't just be learning what to do or how to do it, you will also be learning what you're doing in the first place and why you're doing it. This way you will get a much better understanding than you would by just following

some instructions. You will simply get an organized mental map for the rest of your life.

This brings a huge benefit, because by having this better understanding, you can now anticipate and create your own solutions, instead of endlessly spitting through “how to” tutorials.

But be aware that certain topics like learning how to make musical arrangements, how music theory works or how to mix, are way beyond the scope of this guide. If you want to learn more about a specific musical topic, I suggest looking into related books, videos or articles.

In fact, when you want to learn more about mixing for example, feel free to check out my EDM Mixing Guide. This is another guide I’ve written for everybody who wants to use the powerful strategies I use to get loud and clean mixes. It’s another smart shortcut that can save you years of struggling to figure it out on your own.

Please be aware that the FL Studio Beginner’s Guide contains specific guidelines, tools or images that may be slightly different than your personal FL Studio experience. This can happen when you’re using slightly different settings or when you have a different FL Studio version.

However, this is absolutely no problem at all. Although you may have to reinterpret some of these differences a little bit (suiting them to your own

needs), they’re pretty much universal in the FL Studio world. They’re the foundation of basically every FL Studio version. We will simply be looking at the core functions here that will give you the right mind map to always find your way in FL Studio.

You probably want to read this book, because you’re just starting out or you want to have a better FL Studio understanding. This is perfect, but I have to make a little assumption before we start.

My assumption is: you’re smart. With that I mean you do have some general common (computer) sense. Even as a beginner, I think you know how to open and close a window. Or even as a beginner, things like the “Play” and “Stop” knob should seem pretty obvious to you. I have to make this assumption, because else this book would contain at least 1000 pages. And that wouldn’t be a quick shortcut at all.

However, if you do have some sticking points with this, I don’t suggest reading this book right now. I suggest to work on your basic computer/software skills first. But it’s also a great idea to play around in the FL Studio program a little bit to see how basic “things” respond before you continue.

So, please forgive me if not literally every tiny step is mentioned here. It’s simply not that important or else I’m sure you will figure it out in no time. As long as you get the big ideas and workings of FL Studio, you’re going to excel tremendously.

Before you dive in, you have to know something about me. I've also said it in the EDM Mixing Guide, but I'm from the Netherlands. Dutch is my native language, English isn't. That's why it's possible you could find some funny grammatical sentences in here. Hopefully they will make you smile, but I did the best I can to make sure everything is as understandable as possible.

If you want to learn more about me or find out why you "should" listen to me, feel free to visit my website at https://screechhouse.com or visit my YouTube channel at https://youtube.com/c/screechhouse.

To give you a quick impression: my nickname is Cep and I'm the creator and founder of *Screech House*. *Screech House* is a platform where I share tips, ideas and tricks to make Electronic Dance Music (EDM) in FL Studio, more specifically the harder EDM styles, like hardstyle or rawstyle, but also some trance or house. I'm sure you will find a lot of valuable content there, so just go watch a couple of videos or come say *"Hello"*.

So, with that being said, are you ready to start making music in FL Studio? Then let's dive in…

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

But wait a minute… Isn't this spot meant to give a sweet little shoot out to certain people for providing their support or willingness to help? I guess it is, so let's make use of it.

The person I want to thank the most is the one that deserves it most. And when does one deserve it most? In my book (literally), a genuine *"thank you"* is meant for those who are serious about their personal growth. To grow personally, one has to find help first, make the effort and give away his trust. Having the balls to do that gains respect and appreciation.

By picking up this book, you proved that you're serious about your personal growth. That's why this spot is reserved for you.

Thank you for making that decision and having trust in me to help you with that. Together we will make it work.

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OTHER FL STUDIO TRICKS

INTRODUCTION

To start making music in FL Studio as quickly as possible, we only need to cover the essential basics. The essential basics will contain all the tools and functions that are absolutely necessary for you to make songs. When you understand these basics, you can immediately use them and be able to kickstart your new hobby or career.

We will be cutting out all the unnecessary FL Studio fluff, overcomplications or details. Therefore, you won't be learning many of the FL Studio tools and functions. That's because you would barely use them, they're not relevant or you don't need them at all at this point.

Now, that isn't to say that you can't use any other functions or tools in FL Studio. In fact, I highly encourage you to learn and understand as much as possible. So always feel free to experiment and discover new possibilities. But for this book, you'll learn the bare essentials to get a very quick shortcut as a beginner.

To shortcut your FL Studio learning curve as a beginner, it's absolutely critical to understand the 4 main FL Studio functions. When you deeply understand these 4 FL Studio functions, you're ready to make any beats you want. You will always need to use them and they represent the strong foundation for the rest of your music-making journey.

So, let’s explore these important 4 main FL Studio functions. We will be starting with an overview and introduction. In the following chapters, we will be taking a look at each main FL Studio function separately and discover all of its essential tools.

While reading this book, you will also discover what the connections are between these 4 main FL Studio functions. They all serve a specific bigger purpose, but they’re also connected or depended on each other. They simply work together for you to be able to make awesome tracks very flexibly.

If that sounds good to you, let’s just dive into it. But before we do that, allow me to give you a quick tip before we start.

Learning how to use FL Studio, or anything that’s new, requires some practice and experience. That’s why it’s a very good idea not to “just” read this book, but also immediately practice what you’ve learned in FL Studio. This way you can link the information from this guide directly to the practical application. This allows you to learn much faster and gives a much better understanding how things work. It’s absolutely not hard to do, but it will help you immensely.

It’s also important to go through the topics step by step. Don’t try to do everything at once. Just take your time, try to understand and practice each

subject first before moving on to the next one. If you can do that, you will master FL Studio in no time.

So, take your time, learn at your own pace, step by step and practice everything in FL Studio. Sounds good? Then let’s begin!

THE 4 MAIN FL STUDIO FUNCTIONS

FL Studio has 4 main functions. These main functions all serve a specific overarching purpose. You can simply look at them as 4 main windows/screens that you have to use to make songs.

These 4 main windows/screens are the foundation for making music in FL Studio. Each of them is there to cover a specific big function. Just look at them as rooms in an apartment for example. In an apartment there's a kitchen, living room, bathroom and bedroom. All these rooms have different functions, but they're also all connected and work together to provide you a nice living experience.

Each main FL Studio window/screen (function) also contains tools. With these tools you can do tasks like editing, designing, creating, shaping, or just making changes in general. Just like a bathroom has tools, for specific tasks. For example, there's a toilet, shower or a sink. You can use these tools to do the tasks you want, like cleaning your ears, washing your body or brushing your teeth. This way, each room has different tools for you to use to accomplish different tasks. It's the same in FL Studio. In FL Studio you can do tasks with the tools on each main function (window/screen).

Besides, FL Studio's functions and tools sometimes have overlap. You can get the same results with different approaches. Just like you can tap a glass

of water in the bathroom, but also in the kitchen. There's no right or wrong here. It's just a matter of preference, convenience or your outcome.

So, to understand the fundamentals of FL Studio, use the analogy of an apartment. This will give you a very good mind map how to approach working in FL Studio.

Simply remember this:

- Each of the 4 main FL Studio functions has its own purpose. They're like the rooms in an apartment.
- Each main function contains specific tools for you to do tasks. They're like the toilet, shower or sink in the bathroom.
- Each main FL Studio function can have tools with overlap to other main functions or tools. It's like the possibility to tap a glass of water in the kitchen, but also in the bathroom.

You didn't expect talking about real estate, did you? You're here for FL Studio for crying out loud, not learning about home construction. All right, all right. Let's go to FL Studio now and find out about the 4 main functions.

So, what are the 4 main functions (windows/screens) in FL Studio?

When you open FL Studio, there's a lot to see in the menu bars. In fact, you may have no idea what it all means. That's fine. Just forget about

everything and let's only focus on 4 simple things. These 4 things will be the 4 main FL Studio functions we have to explore.

The 4 main FL Studio functions are:

1. **Channel Rack**
2. **Piano Roll**
3. **Playlist**
4. **Mixer**

By understanding only these 4 functions you're able to make about any song you want. If you already know a thing or two about FL Studio, this may look overly simplified. But really, these main functions are all you need to know to build your songs.

You can easily access each one of these windows/screens by clicking "View" in the menu bar and then clicking the corresponding name ("Channel rack" [F6], "Piano roll" [F7], "Playlist" [F5] or "Mixer" [F9]).

You can also choose to use the toolbar to access these windows by clicking the corresponding icons.

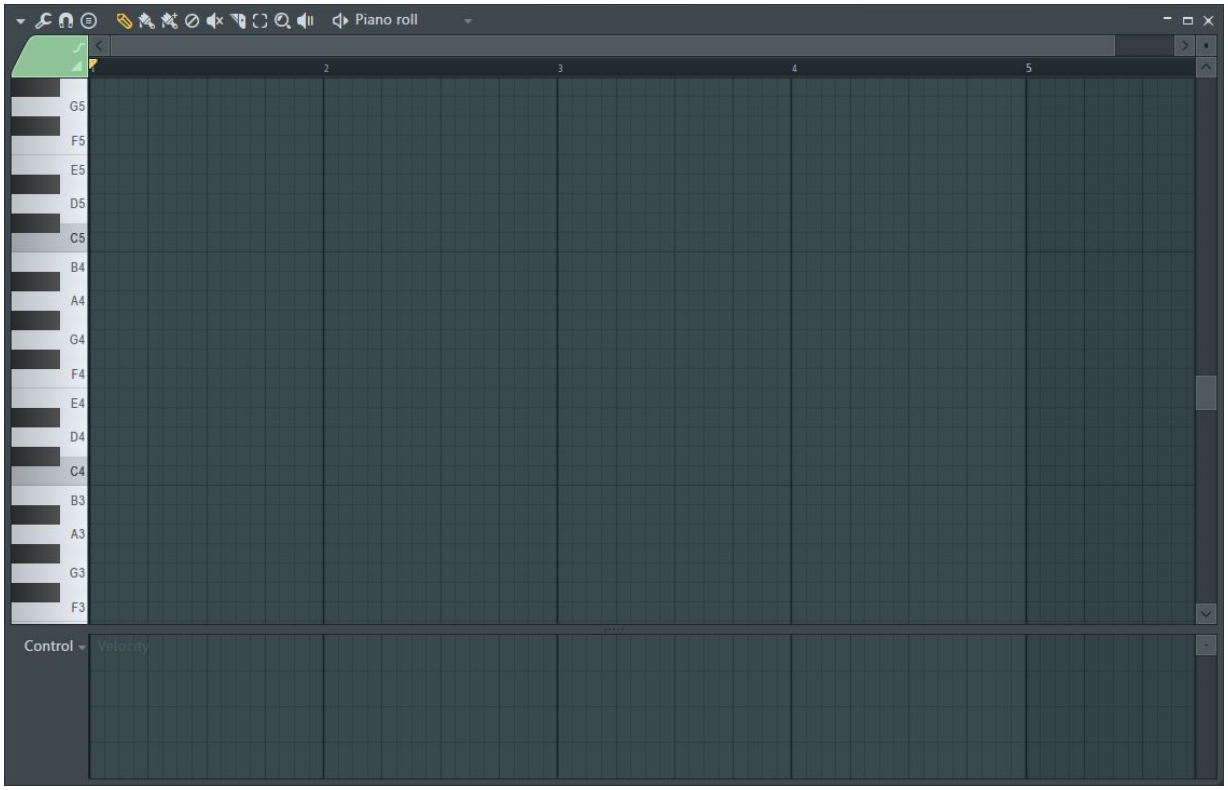
Now that you know how to access the 4 main FL Studio functions, let's quickly go through them one by one. What are they and what do they do?

FL Studio Channel Rack

The Channel Rack serves as the "collector" of all your instruments, samples, or anything that makes a sound. Here you can open, use and edit instruments and samples. You can use the Channel Rack window to access tools that allow you to manage your instruments and samples. Furthermore,

the Channel Rack provides the tools to make short musical rhythms and melodies based on a logical time loop.

FL Studio Piano Roll



The Piano Roll is the place to make rhythms, but particularly melodies and musical arrangements. By using a piano layout, you can “draw” notes, make chords or change many variables on the Piano Roll, like the timing, pitch or velocity of a sound.

FL Studio Playlist

The Playlist is the area where you can really build your track from start to finish. It’s the place to piece your song together, just like using Lego bricks. These Lego bricks can represent anything, like melody loops, beat rhythms or effect movements. By using your creativity, you can access the Playlist to construct your small musical loops and rhythms into an entire song.

FL Studio Mixer

The mixer is the place where you can add effects to your instruments, samples or sounds. Think about effects like reverb, distortion or equalizers (EQ). The mixer has 2 main purposes. The first one is to be able to shape and tweak your sounds with effects. Call it part of “sound design” if you will. The second purpose is to be able to “mix” all your instruments together and create a good relationship between them. This is called “mixing” and is a giant (but important) topic way outside the scope of this guide.

If you want to learn more about mixing, especially how to make loud, clean and powerful EDM songs, I encourage you to get a copy of my EDM

Mixing Guide. In this guide you will discover all my EDM mixing strategies to get these awesome sounding tracks. So, be sure to check it out when you're ready.

For now, we've glimpsed over the 4 main windows/screens in FL Studio. You should have an idea how to look at these fundamental functions. We will get into a little bit more detail of every function in the next chapters. But we will only look at the essential basics to get you moving as quickly as possible. Don't expect to know immediately what everything means. You will slowly develop that intuition when you start working with them.

FL Studio Channel Rack

The first main function in FL Studio is called the Channel Rack. The Channel Rack can be accessed by simply clicking the Channel Rack icon in the toolbar (or go to “View” > “Channel rack” in the menu bar).

Like mentioned before, the Channel Rack serves as the “collector” of all your instruments, samples, or anything that makes a sound. Here you can open, use and edit instruments and samples. You can use the Channel Rack window to access tools that allow you to manage your instruments and samples. Furthermore, the Channel Rack provides the tools to make short musical rhythms and melodies based on a logical time loop.

The Channel Rack is often the first place to start when you want to build a song. You need to have sounds first, before you can do anything else. So,

what are the most important functions on the Channel Rack you absolutely need to know about before you can start making music?

- You need to be able to add sounds, like instruments and samples.
- You need to be able to create or edit those sounds.
- You need to be able to make rhythms with certain sounds.
- You need to be able to make melodies with certain sounds.
- You need to be able to change the volume and panning of your sounds.
- You need to be able to make different rhythms and melodies, so you need to be able to use clean “sheets” to work in.

All these abilities are essential to make your own music. That’s why we’re going to take a look at each one of them and find out how we can use the Channel Rack to accomplish this.

How to add sounds

The very first thing you basically always have to begin with is by adding a sound. By adding sounds, you have the ability to at least make your speakers do something. Once you have your sounds, you’re able to do other things, like making a rhythm or mix your sounds together. So, that’s where we have to start.

Adding a sound on the Channel Rack is as easy as breathing. To add a sound, you need to insert a new “Channel” (hence its name). You can do that by left-clicking the “+” button at the bottom of the Channel Rack. When you click that button, a list of many different instruments, synthesizers, generators, or plugins in general, will appear. Now it’s just a matter of clicking on the plugin name you want to use. Once you’ve made a choice and clicked on a particular plugin, it will get added to the Channel Rack as a new channel.

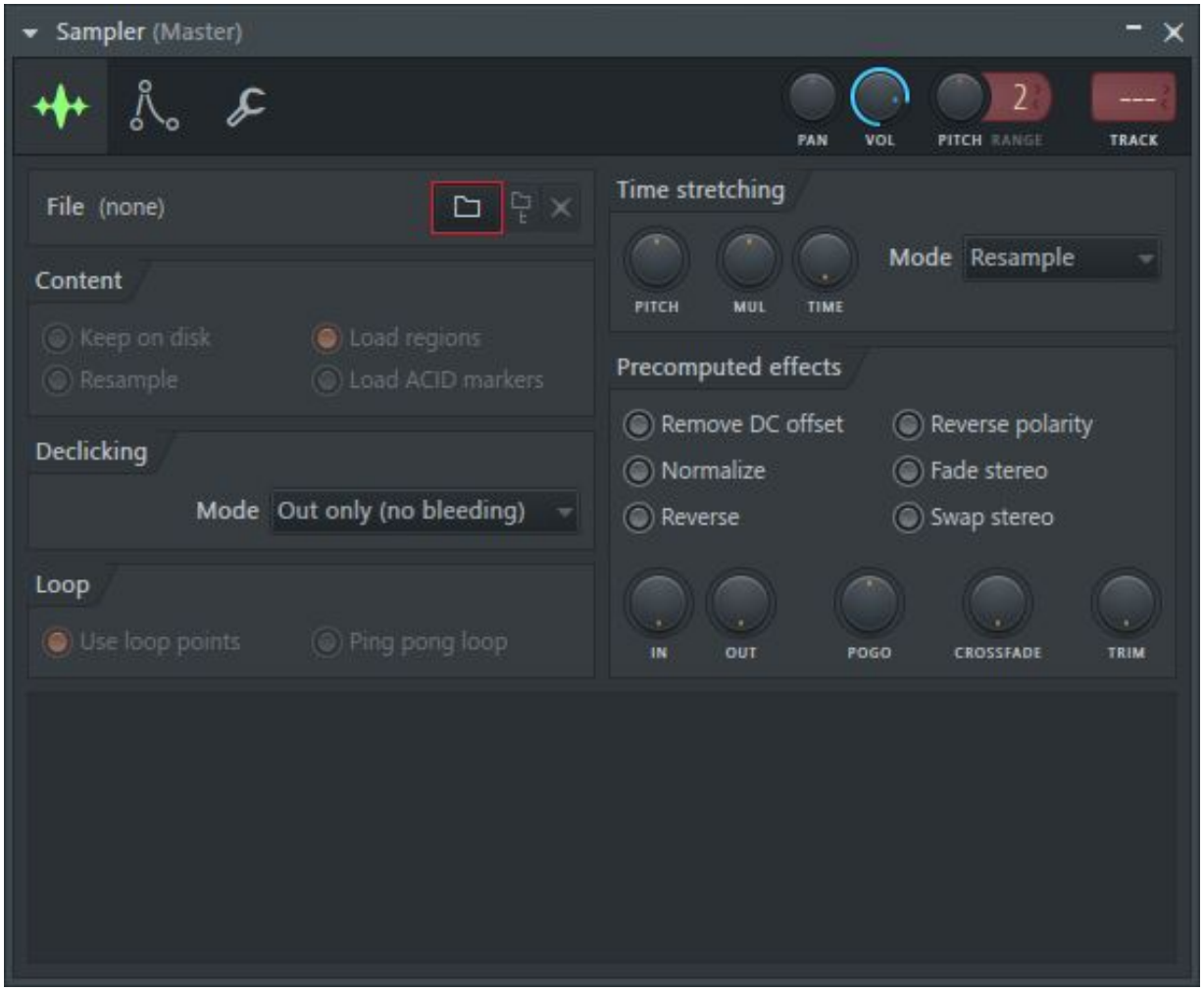
Now, each plugin can do different things or can have different functions. Learning how to use each plugin is way outside the scope of this book. This is part of sounds design or synthesis. If you want to learn more about sound design or synthesis, feel free to go to my website (https://screechhouse.com) and check out some of my sound design or synthesis lessons.

On the Channel Rack you can add as many channels (plugins) as you want. This way you are able to use many different sounds for your song. If you want to add more new channels, just click that “+” button again and select your desired plugin from the list.

But what about adding samples? Samples are also sounds and are basically made by someone else. They're there for you to use and they are an important part of building a song. They can also save you a lot of time, because you don't necessarily have to make all the sounds yourself. You can just use a sample (and tweak it a little bit to your desire).

To add a sample to the Channel Rack simply click that "+" button again, but now select the "Sampler" from the list. The Sampler is your tool to open and control samples. It has many options for you to tweak and change that sample, but the only thing you have to know right now is how to load a sample into the Sampler.

To load a sample, you have to open the Sampler by left-clicking on its channel name. The Sampler window will appear where you have to look at the "File" section. You can see a little folder icon there. Left-click on that folder icon and a new window will appear. In this window you can search your hard drive to find and select a sample from your library. When you've found the sample you want to use, click "Open". Once you've open it, you can now use it in your project.



If you don’t have any samples on your hard drive yet, there’s always the option to search in your FL Studio installation directory. FL Studio comes with a couple of sample packs (Packs) that you can use. But if you don’t want to use standard FL Studio samples, you can also download my free Hardstyle Sample Pack (EDM samples included).

If you don’t know how to install or use a sample pack in FL Studio, you’re in luck. You can go over to the Sample Pack lesson on my website where I’ve shared a video and post that explains how to do that.

There’s one more thing you need to know before we continue to the next paragraph. You now know how to add sounds to the Channel Rack, but you probably haven’t heard them yet. To be able to hear a sound, you will always need to have it play a note. You’ll learn more about notes and playing sounds in future paragraphs and chapters, but for now, if you want to quickly hear a sound, click on a channel and simply press a key on your keyboard (somewhere from 1 to 10 and A to Z). Depending on the key you press, you’ll get a different pitch (key/note/frequency). This should give you some audible feedback of your instruments and samples.

If that doesn’t seem to work, make sure you’ve enabled the “Typing keyboard to piano keyboard” setting. You can find that settings as an icon on the top of your FL Studio application. Simply left-click on it to enable or disable your keyboard as a piano.

How to create or edit sounds

Now that you know how to add sounds as “channels” (instruments and samples), you need to know how to edit, or even create your own sounds. This way, you’re able to do your own sound design and make unique sounds.

Now again, learning how to make your own sounds or all the different ways how to edit sounds, is an enormous topic that varies tremendously from plugin to plugin and from sound to sound. This is simply something you have to slowly discover when you're working and experimenting in FL Studio. I definitely recommend diving into it, but it won't be covered here.

What you do have to know is how to access the right screens for editing or creating your sounds. To edit or create a sound, you simply need to open that channel on the Channel Rack. You can open a channel by left-clicking on its name.

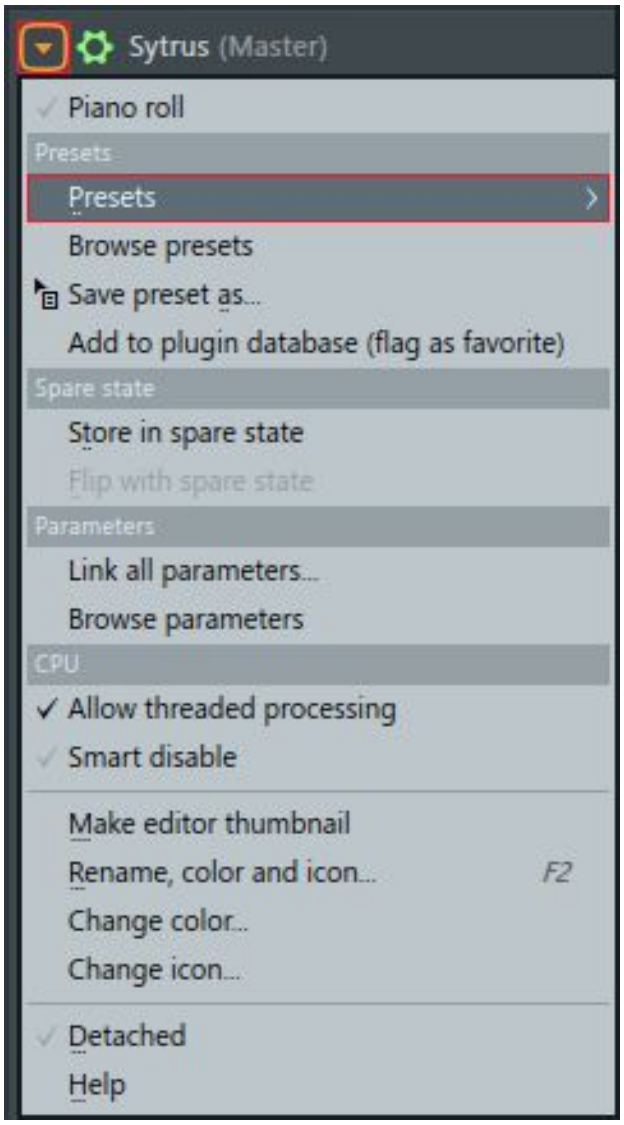
Depending on the channel you open, you can see different screens. For example, when you open the channel of a sample, you will see the Sampler screen. When you open the channel of a synthesizer, you will see the screen of that particular synthesizer. It doesn't matter what screen will pop up, but

simply remember that on each one of them you can directly edit, create or control the sound of that particular channel. You can take that control and access it by simply clicking on it.

Let me share a quick but very effective shortcut here that you can use immediately to have some nice sounds to work with.

On almost every plugin (instrument) there's the option to use "presets". A preset contains certain settings of the instrument that produces a specific sound. They're just premade sounds by someone else that you can use. By using presets, you have the ability to scroll through a library of different types of sounds that you can potentially use in your song. As a beginner it's a good idea to start using presets, because you don't have to learn how to make your own sounds from scratch.

Depending on the plugin, the preset library can be found on different places. So, it's impossible to tell you where to find them on each plugin. But if you're using an FL Studio plugin, like "Sytrus" for example, you can access the presets by first adding the plugin to the Channel Rack and click on the channel name to open it. Once you've opened it, you'll get the window of that instrument. Now it's just a matter of left-clicking on the little downwards pointing arrow (triangle) at the very upper-left corner of that window and select "Presets".



If all goes well, you will get to see a big list of different sounds and categories. Feel free to select a couple of them and experiment with different presets. But always keep in mind that if you go the preset route, the sounds in your song aren't always very original. That's why I also encourage you to learn how to make your own sounds. But as a beginner, this is a great place to start.

How to make a rhythm

So far, we've only talked about taking control of our sounds. It's important, because the sounds actually make your speakers do something. But for your speakers to do something more harmonious, you need to be able to make rhythms with your sounds. This way you can create logical loops and beats for your song.

Music always follows some logical rules. That's why FL Studio automatically "loops" your rhythms (or melodies) at beat intervals of 4, 8, 12, 16, etc. when you press the "Play" button. For example, if you'd make a rhythm that's 2 beats long (boom-boom), FL Studio will play those 2 beats, but also an additional 2 beats silence after that. This way it can keep a logical loop of 4 beats. This is also true for the Piano Roll and Playlist we're going to talk about in the next chapters.

So, it's called "Fruity Loops" for a reason. These short loops can be created on the Channel Rack. For each channel (instrument/sample) on the Channel Rack, you can make different rhythms.

To make a rhythm, just left-click on the series of rectangular buttons to the right of a channel name. By clicking these rectangular buttons, you can basically "draw" a rhythm. A rectangular button will appear white(-ish) when it's active or having its original color when it is not active. You can easily deactivate one by right-clicking on it.

Music always has a tempo, called BPM or beats per minute. The loops or rhythms you create on the Channel Rack, automatically follow this tempo. This is very helpful, because FL Studio will take care of the logical musical loop for you. Visually, this time loop goes from left to right.

But that's also why you can see different color shades for a series of 4 rectangular buttons. Every first button of a 4-button color series represents the beat of the music. So, if you want to "draw" a simple onbeat rhythm, you only have to click each first rectangular button of a 4-button color series. If you want to draw an offbeat rhythm, you only have to click each third rectangular button of a 4-button color series. Each musical beat simply contains 4 intermediate (shorter) steps for you to work with.

When you "draw" the rhythms for each channel (instrument/sample), you can press the "Play" button to actually hear it. This gives you immediate

feedback to how it sounds, so you can make live changes. You can find the playback control at top of your FL Studio application.

On this playback toolbar, you can also change the BPM (Beats Per Minute). This allows you to make your song and rhythms faster or slower. By simply left-clicking onto the BPM number, holding and dragging up or down, you can change the speed of your song.

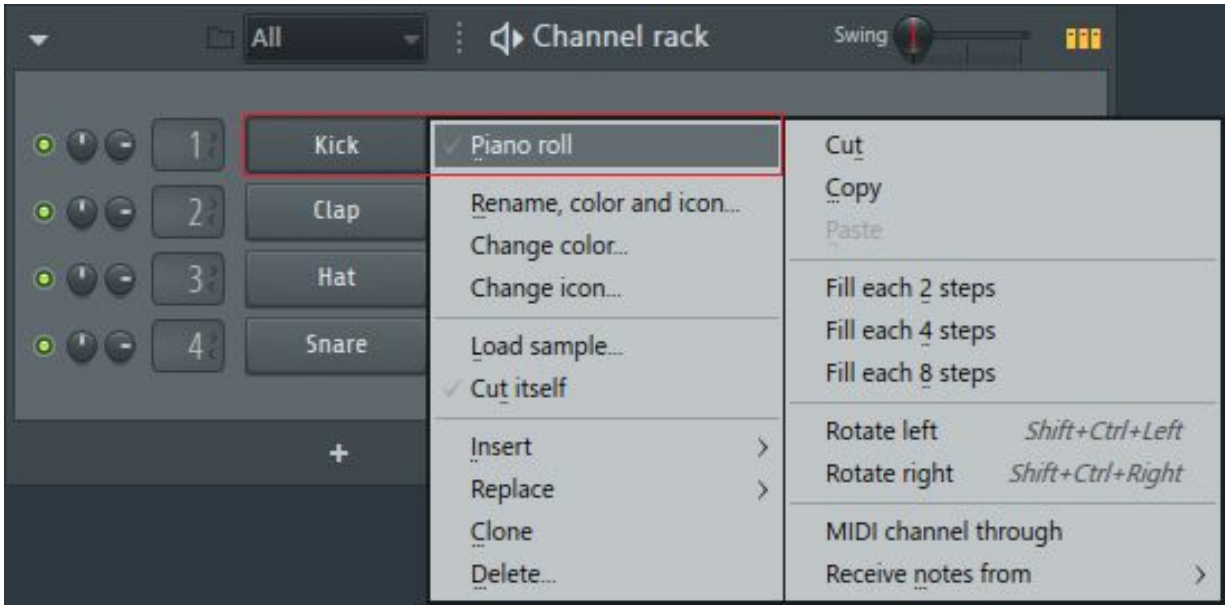
Anyways, just try to make some rhythms with your sounds and press “Play”. Try to “draw” a couple of different rhythms by using these rectangular buttons in different ways (also using the steps in between). If you can do that, you’re good to go and know how to make short rhythms and loops.

How to make a melody

Music doesn’t only consist of rhythms, it also consists of melodies or musical arrangements. Therefore, you need to have the ability to change the pitch (key/note/frequency) of certain sounds to create melodies and nice musical pieces.

That’s why FL Studio has the Piano Roll. The Piano Roll is the main function that allows you to make melodies and change the pitch (key/note/frequency) of a sound. In the next chapter we’re going to look at the Piano Roll. But for now, the only important thing to learn is how to access the Piano Roll, so you can actually use it.

You can access the Piano Roll via the Channel Rack. First, you need to know for which channel (sound) you want to make a melody. Then simply right-click on that channel and click “Piano Roll”. A new window will appear which is… drumroll please… the Piano Roll.



In that window, you can work with the Piano Roll and ONLY affect the sound you’ve selected. So for example, if you want to make a melody with instrument 1, just right-click on instrument 1 and select the Piano Roll. Now you can make a melody with that “instrument 1” sound.

Anyways, you will learn the essential basics of it in the next chapter. Just remember that you can access the Piano Roll for each channel via the Channel Rack. This makes sure that you'll always access the right Piano Roll screen for the right sound. And it enables you to make a melody for that sound or change its pitch (key/note/frequency).

How to change the volume and panning

Imagine you've created cool rhythms and/or melodies with different instruments, but you want certain sounds to be louder or quieter than others. Or what if you want to make your rhythms more interesting by using your left and right speaker differently? No problemo! The Channel Rack's got your back.

On the Channel Rack it's possible to directly control the volume and panning for each channel. The volume controls the loudness of a sound and the panning controls the stereo balance of a sound (using the left and right speaker). This allows you to give each sound a certain place in your rhythmical and musical masterpiece.

To change the volume or the panning of a sound, go to the Channel Rack and look to the left of the concerning channel name. You will find 2 knobs there and also a little (green) lightbox.

- With the little green lightbox you can mute or unmute a channel. If you mute a channel, you won't hear it when you press "Play" or when you export your song.
- With the left round knob you can change the panning of a channel. Turn it to the right to have your sound go more through the right speaker or turn it to the left to have your sound go more through the left speaker. Leave it in the center for a sound to be equally loud in both the left and right speaker.
- With the right round knob you can change the volume of a channel. If you want a sound to be less loud, turn it to the left. If you want a sound to be louder, turn it to the right.

So, as you can see it's very easy to manipulate the loudness and stereo perception of a sound. This is definitely something you want to experiment with to create wider, more balanced or more interesting rhythms and loops.

How to make different rhythms or melodies

As far as the Channel Rack goes, we've basically covered all of its essential functions. You know everything you need to know to use it very effectively. Except there's still one more essential function you have to learn before you can start using it correctly.

Imagine you've created a nice rhythm and of course, you want to use that rhythm in your song. But what if you want to build a song with a different rhythm in the intro than in the climax? Or what if you want to have a melody in the climax and a different melody for the second climax?

Long story short, you need to be able to have a lot of flexibility to make your song exactly the way you want it. You want to be able to make different rhythms, different melodies, use different sounds with different rhythms, use different sounds in different places in your song, etc. You simply want all of that.

To be able to do that, the Channel Rack works with Patterns (Pattern 1, Pattern 2, Pattern 3, etc.) Each Pattern is like a fresh "sheet" on the Channel Rack that you can use to make new rhythms and melodies. This allows you to use multiple Patterns to make all kinds of different short loops.

To use a different Pattern (starting with a fresh "sheet"), you have to hoover over the Pattern panel at the top of the FL Studio application. Then click

somewhere in that Pattern box, hold your mouse button and drag up to go to the next Pattern. If you want to go back to the previous Pattern, left-click, hold and drag down.

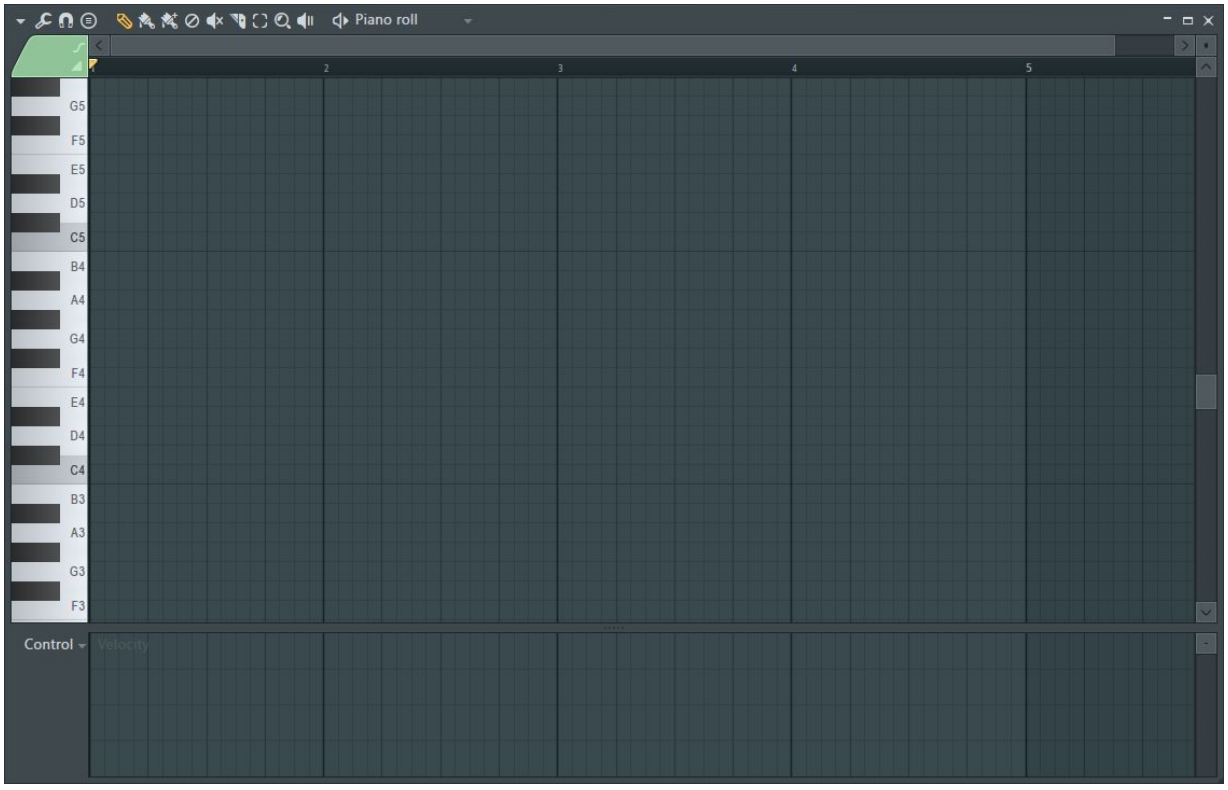
This way you can scroll through as many Patterns as you want and use as many Patterns as you want. In each Pattern you can make different loops. These different loops can be used to build your song on the Playlist. On the Playlist you can add each Pattern to build your song quiet literally, like using Lego bricks (building blocks). The Lego bricks represent the content of each Pattern.

You will learn more about the Playlist in a future chapter. But for now, just remember that you can use Patterns to get fresh “sheets” that allow you to make all kinds of different melodies and rhythms with any of the sounds you want. A Pattern is a small musical content package which you can use to literally build your song on the Playlist.

So simply start using different Patterns to make different loops. If you can do that, you’ve successfully conquered the essential functions of the Channel Rack. Of course, there are many more options you can use, but this is all you need to know to get you started. Make sure to practice this chapter first before going to the next one.

FL Studio Piano Roll

The second main function in FL Studio is called the Piano Roll. The Piano Roll can be accessed by simply clicking the Piano Roll icon in the toolbar (or go to “View” > “Piano roll” in the menu bar). Although this is a good way to access it, as a beginner I suggest to access the Piano Roll by right-clicking on a channel name and then select “Piano roll”. This way you will always get the Piano Roll screen that belongs to the right sound.



As mentioned in the first chapter, the Piano Roll is the place to make rhythms, but particularly melodies and musical arrangements. By using a

piano layout, you can “draw” notes, make chords or change many variables on the Piano Roll, like the timing, pitch or velocity of a sound.

You can look at the Piano Roll as a part or an extension of the Channel Rack. You can also “draw” notes, use Patterns, make rhythms and even the time loop is there. In fact, when you’ve created something on the Piano Roll, it will show up on the Channel Rack. Just like a rhythm (these rectangular buttons) is visible on the Channel Rack.

This is about where the similarities stop. The Piano Roll serves another purpose. It’s meant to create melodies or change the pitch of a sound. You can’t really do that on the Channel Rack itself. So, what are the most important functions of the Piano Roll you absolutely need to know about before you can start making music?

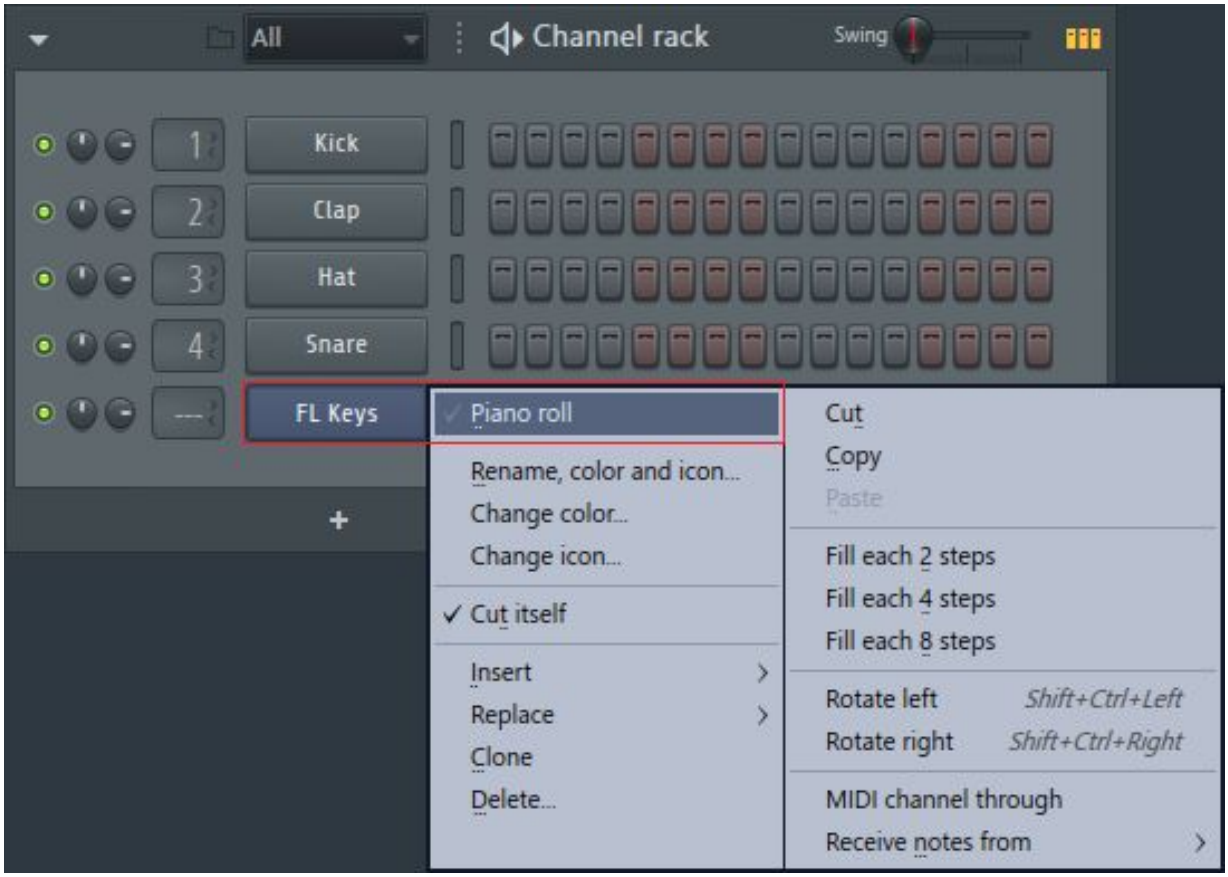
- You need to be able to “draw” notes correctly that allow you to make melodies or musical arrangements.
- You need to be able to make (many) different melodies or musical arrangements. So, you need to be able to use clean “sheets” to work in.
- You need to be able to change the pitch of sounds, making them sound higher or lower.
- You need to be able to make rhythms that are more complex or versatile than rhythms on the Channel Rack.

These abilities are essential to make your own music. That's why we're going to take a look at each one of them and find out how we can use the Piano Roll to accomplish this.

How to "draw" notes and make a melody

Before you're going to make a melody, you need to determine for which sound you want to do that. As a general tip: you typically don't want to make a melody with percussion sounds or samples. It's often best to use a synthesizer or something that creates a sound suited for playing melodies, like a piano, lead or pluck. You know what, just try to add "FL Keys" to the Channel Rack (click that "+" button) and use that for this chapter.

So, pick a sound you want to make a melody with (like FL Keys). Then go to the Channel Rack, right-click on the channel name and select "Piano roll".

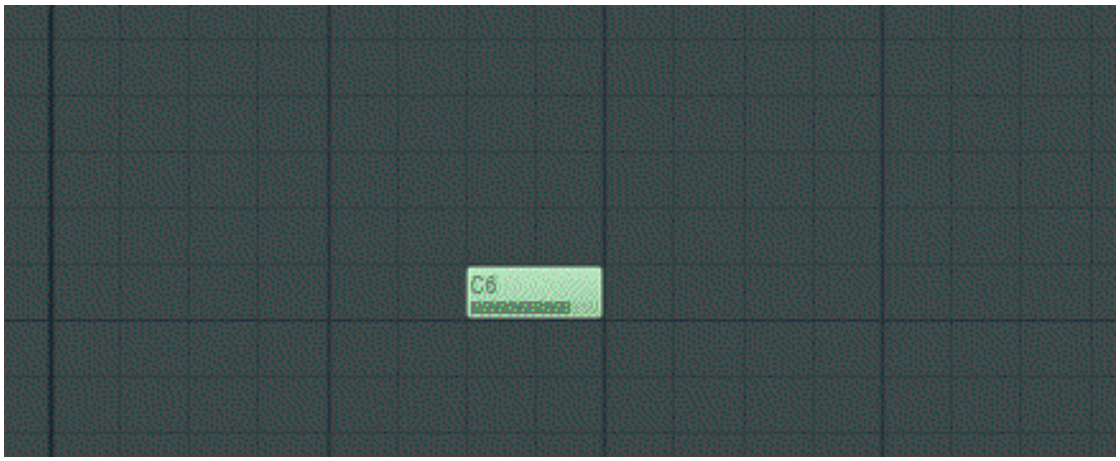


The correct Piano Roll window will now pop up and you're ready to make a melody (or musical arrangement). But how do we do that?

Making a melody or musical arrangement is really simple. You only have to "draw" notes. A note is like a single key you can play on a piano. Depending on how you "draw" these notes, you can create about any melody or musical arrangement you want.

To "draw" a note, just left-click somewhere in the Piano Roll screen. If you do that a green block will appear. That green block represents a note. To

remove a note, just right-click on it. If you do that the green block will disappear.



But you don’t want to just randomly “draw” notes and call it a day. That will result in a big mess. You first have to understand 4 important Piano Roll rules. These 4 rules allow you to use the Piano Roll very effectively, which enables you to make any melody you want. So, let’s take a look at them.

RULE 1: time goes from left to right

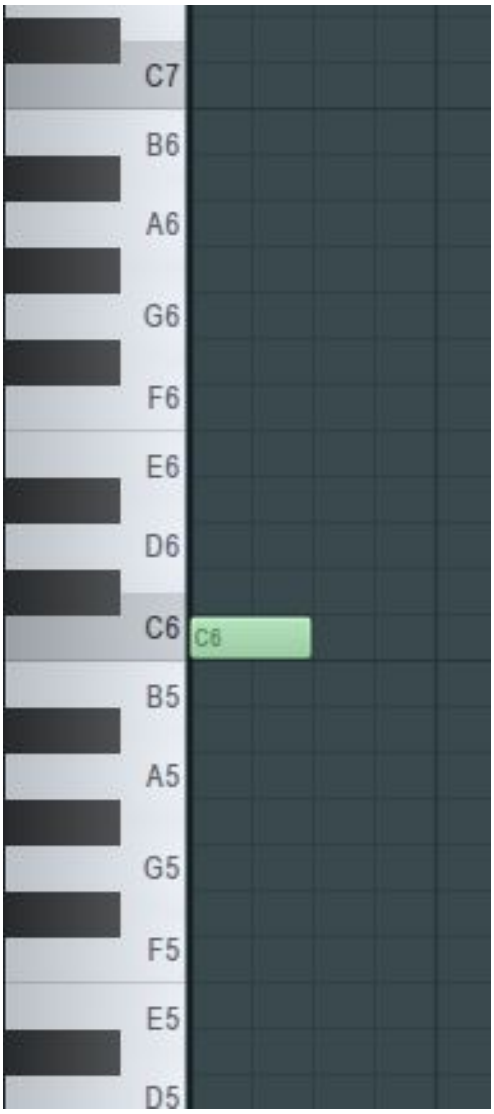
Just like the Channel Rack, the Piano Roll’s time loop goes from left to right. You always start left, then go to the right. The music progresses from left to right. So, the horizontal axis represents time. By placing notes horizontally, they’ll play a certain pace and rhythm.

You can listen directly to your notes and melody (letting them follow the time axis) by pressing “Play” on the playback toolbar at the top of the FL Studio application. This way you’ll get immediate feedback on how your melody sounds. Knowing how it sounds allows you to make changes if necessary.

RULE 2: pitch changes from up to down (high to low)

The vertical axis on the Piano Roll represents the pitch of a note. The pitch of a note determines how low or how high your sound sounds. If you want to play a higher note, just place it higher. If you want to play a lower note, just place it lower. This is very easy to grasp, but let’s add to this and give you a more challenging idea…

The piano (keyboard) layout at the left of the Piano Roll is there to help you understand which key (pitch) you’re using. So, you can put a note on a certain pitch and the piano layout will tell you which key that is. For example, if you randomly “draw” a note, you can look at the piano layout (by following the horizontal lines) to see which note on a piano that would be.



This is always linked to a letter ranging from A to G and a number ranging from 0 to 10. You can also read that letter and number inside the green notes you “draw”. The number thereby represents the octave and the letter represents the pitch/key within that octave. For example, C6 means the C key (pitch) in octave 6.

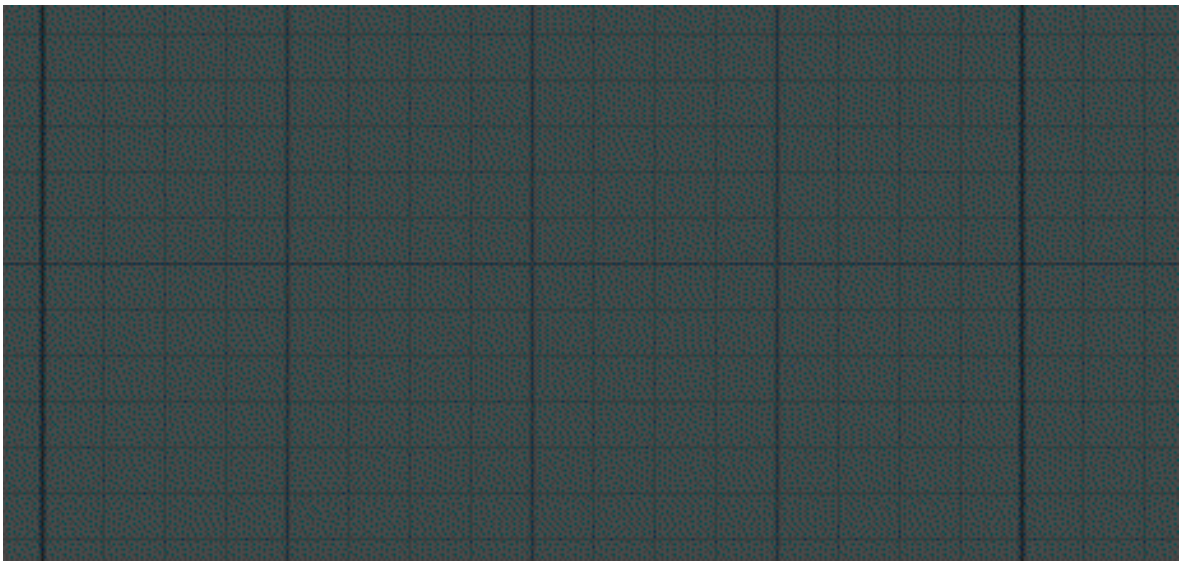
To understand how this all works, you’d have to dive into music theory a little bit. There are entire books written that solely talk about this topic. It’s

just way too big and falls outside the scope of this guide. I do recommend to dive into it, but just learn the basics. It's probably more than enough for you to create some great musical pieces.

In fact, that's exactly the reason why I've also written The Ultimate Melody Guide. The Ultimate Melody Guide will help you immediately to make awesome melodies even if you don't know anything about music theory. It's specifically written for beginners or anybody who wants to discover all the melody-making tricks I personally use to get these professional melodic arrangements. In the second section of this FL Studio Beginner's Bundle you will find The Ultimate Melody Guide, but you can also go to my website or YouTube channel and look into my melody and chord lessons. All these resources will definitely help you to make good melodies as quickly as possible.

RULE 3: grid lines help you to follow the beat

Just like the Channel Rack, you have a timing grid on the Piano Roll. This allows you to "draw" notes in a logical manner, following the beat. If you look closely, you can see slightly ticker vertical lines in that grid that represent the beats. Usually, you can also see 4 squares/rectangles between the ticker vertical lines. These follow the same structure as the rectangular buttons on the Channel Rack.



So for example, if you want your notes to be onbeat, just place them directly to the right of a thicker vertical line. This puts each note in the first square/rectangle of each beat.

If you want your notes to be offbeat, you have to place them exactly in between the thicker lines. This puts them in the third square/rectangle, right in the middle between each beat.

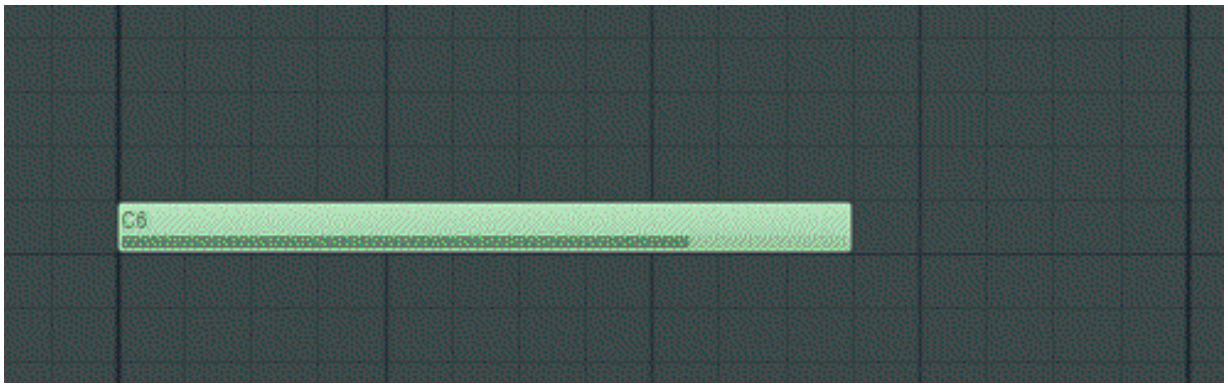
By understanding what this Piano Roll grid means, you can use it as a perfect guide to “draw” notes in a very logical manner. This helps to make your melodies and rhythms sound musically or rhythmically correct. Use it to your advantage.

RULE 4: note length = sound length

The length of a note determines the length of the sound you hear. If you “draw” a long note, the sound you hear will be long. If you draw a short note, the sound you hear will be short. This way you’re able to make very

fast or very slow melodies. It also allows you to combine different note lengths and give you a lot of flexibility in your musical design.

To change the length of a note, hoover over its right edge, so a double horizontal arrow will appear. Now it’s just a matter of left-clicking, holding and dragging to the left or right. The amount of drag will determine the amount of length-change of the note.

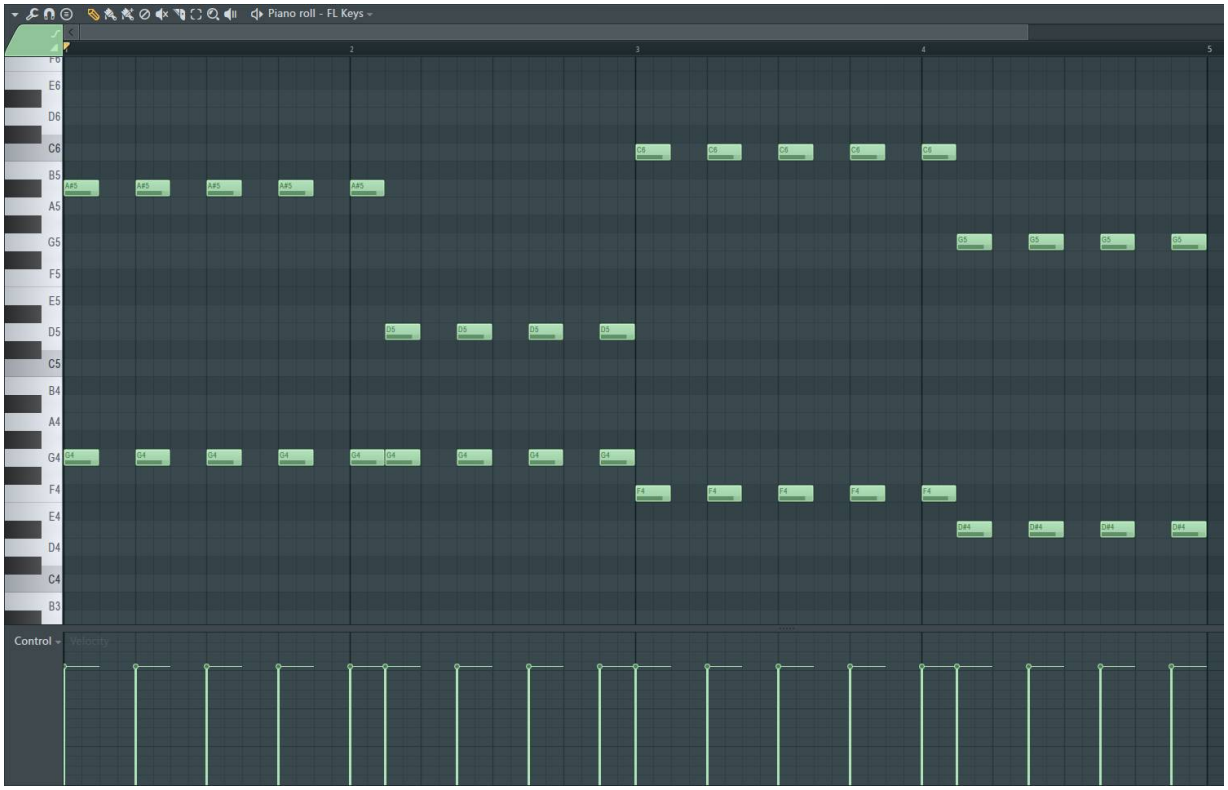


If you just keep these 4 rules in your mind, you can use them as an important mental map to work very effectively on the Piano Roll. So, to recap:

1. **The time loop goes from left to right.**
2. **High notes have high pitch, low notes have low pitch.**
3. **The grid lines are there to help you follow the beat.**
4. **The note length determines the sound length.**

By using these 4 Piano Roll rules, we can now start to make a melody. A melody is made by simply using multiple different notes at different pitches and having a (varied) rhythm. The notes will be following a musically pleasing progression. To achieve this, you have to use your ears and preferably (as mentioned) know something about music theory. We won't be going into music theory here, because that's the territory of The Ultimate Melody Guide, but allow me to give you a few useful tips.

- A good melody always follows a logical loop of 4, 8, 16, 32 (or even more) beats. So always try to make a melody that follows 4, 8, 16 or 32 beats. The grid lines on the Piano Roll will help you determine the number of beats for your melody.
- A good melody should be repeatable. So, let's say you've build a 16-beats melody and you repeat those 16 beats. The start and end of the melody should "feel" right and should naturally connect. A good melody is like a short little story that can repeat itself logically. The end of the story should fit the start of the story.
- A good melody usually consists of different layers. For example, this can mean that there's a melody-line for the lower notes and a melody-line for the upper notes, both working together to get a full and harmonious sound.
- A good melody follows a musical scale. A musical scale basically determines which notes you can and cannot use within that scale. This can be very helpful to give you guidance and a way to be musically correct. Some well-known scales are the major and minor. Again, this is music theory stuff.



Now, don’t worry too much about any of this. The biggest takeaway from this paragraph is to understand how the Piano Roll works and what you can do with it. If you can “draw” notes at different pitches and at different places, you’re good to go. That’s all you really need right now to be able to express your musical ideas into FL Studio.

I encourage you to play around with the Piano Roll. It’s really fun and creative. Just “draw” some notes and try to make short melodies. Once you have a melody that you like, you can use it in your song. The song, will be built on the Playlist where you can add your melody. In the next chapter we’ll dive into the Playlist.

How to make different melodies

The last paragraph was quiet long with a lot of new information to take in. So, let's make this a short one.

Just like making rhythms on the Channel Rack, you need to be able to have a lot of flexibility to make your song exactly the way you want it. Therefore, the ability to just make 1 melody would be very limiting. We need to have a way to make as many melodies, variations or musical pieces as we want.

Earlier I've told you that you can look at the Piano Roll as an extension of the Channel Rack. Well, this also means that the Piano Roll works with Patterns the same way the Channel Rack works with Patterns. If you want a new Piano Roll "sheet" to work in, you just have to use a new Pattern. You can use as many different Patterns as you want.

If you don't remember how to select a new Pattern, shame on you. But here's a quick recap. To use a different Pattern, you have to hoover over the Pattern panel at the top of the FL Studio application. Then left-click somewhere in that Pattern box, hold your mouse button and drag up to go to the next Pattern. If you want to go back to the previous Pattern, click, hold and drag down.

When you've created a melody in a Pattern, you can later use that Pattern on the Playlist to build your song. This way you can use many different Patterns, drop them on the Playlist and arrange your song exactly how you want it. In the next chapter we will talk about the Playlist.

So, just try to make a couple of different melodies on different Patterns. Let's see if you can get a hang of it. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it will give you some practice and a better understanding.

See… I told you this would be a short one. Let's see if we can make the next paragraph just as short.

How to change the pitch of a sound

Melodies are awesome, but we can also use the Piano Roll for other things. One of these things is the possibility to pitch sounds. Pitching a sound simply means changing the key/note/frequency of a sound to make it sound higher or lower.

But why do we want to pitch a sound? Melodies are one thing, but it highly depends on the sound you're using. Sounds, like a piano, lead or pluck are

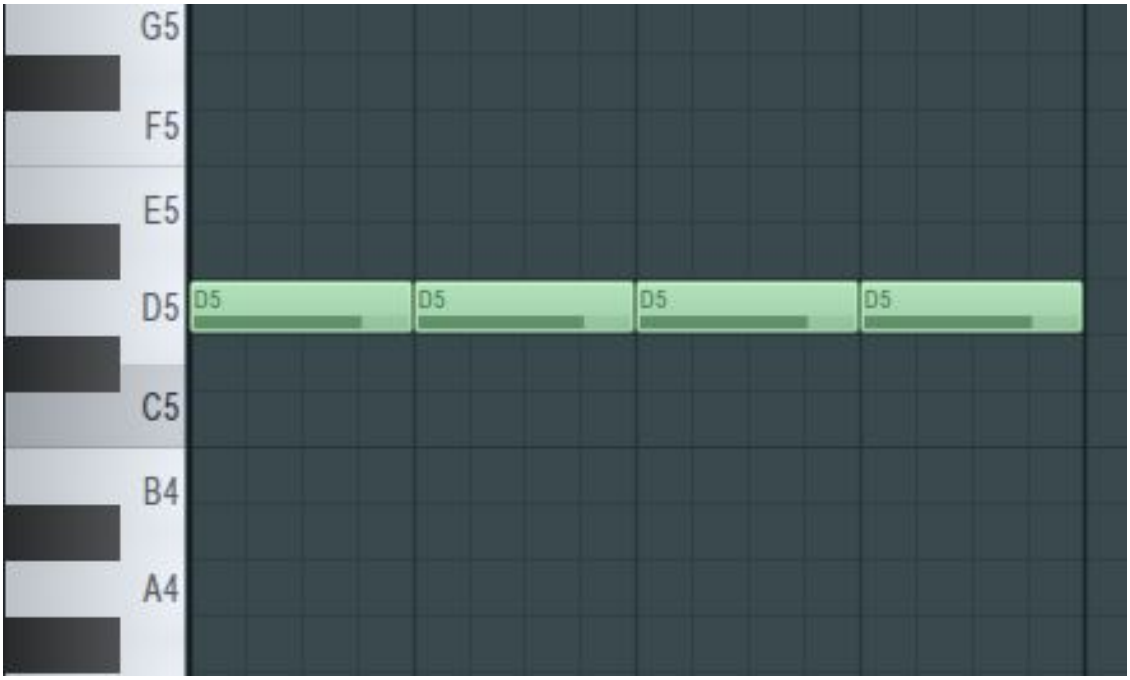
very well suited to have many pitch variations, resulting in a melody. Some other sounds aren't.

For example, you generally don't want to make a melody with a kickdrum or a snare sample (percussion). They're not made for that. They typically stay on the same key/pitch throughout a song. But that doesn't mean you cannot change their pitch. Sometimes it simply sounds better to have a sound on a lower or higher key (pitch). At least you want to have that ability.

For example, if you've created a melody with the root-note G (again, music theory stuff), but you have a kickdrum that plays on an F note, they wouldn't really sound harmonious together. To make them sound harmonious, you want to pitch the kickdrum to a G (increasing it by 1 whole white note). So, that's one reason why changing the pitch can be a good idea. Other reasons can be more creative ones or based on personal taste.

Long story short, whatever your reason is, you can always change the pitch of a sound by simply using the Piano Roll. This works the same as "drawing" notes. Simply go to the Channel Rack and go to the sound (channel) you want to change in pitch. Then right-click on the channel name and click "Piano roll". The Piano Roll will appear and it is now time to "draw" the notes for your sound.

You have to know that the C5 note is always the standard pitch. This means that if you “draw” a note on C5, it will sound the same as the original sample (like playing it on the Channel Rack). If you want your sample to change in pitch, just “draw” a note above or below the C5 line. If you want to make a short loop, just “draw” multiple notes next to each other on the same line.



Keep in mind that when you change the pitch of a sample on the Piano Roll, the sample will sound (slightly) longer or shorter. This depends on how much you change the pitch (distance from the C5 line) and if you change the pitch upwards or downwards. A higher note will make your sample sound shorter, a lower note will make your sample sound longer. Just go by ear.

There are also other ways to pitch a sound, for example by using the tools on the Sampler. Feel free to experiment, but as far as pitching goes on the Piano Roll, this is really it. Piece of cake!

How to make rhythms on the Piano Roll

Now, the Piano Roll is your “to go” FL Studio function for making melodies or changing pitches/keys. But you can also use the Piano Roll to make rhythms. It works the same as on the Channel Rack. The same principles apply, like the logical beats of 4, 8, 16, 32, the time loop, tempo, the blocky grid and the ability to use multiple different Patterns.

But why or when do you want to make a rhythm on the Piano Roll instead of the Channel Rack? Does it really matter?

If you get the results you want, it really doesn’t matter. But there are a few options on the Piano Roll that you might prefer over the options on the Channel Rack. Let me give you 3 reasons why making a rhythm on the Piano Roll can be a better option. And feel free to practice it right away.

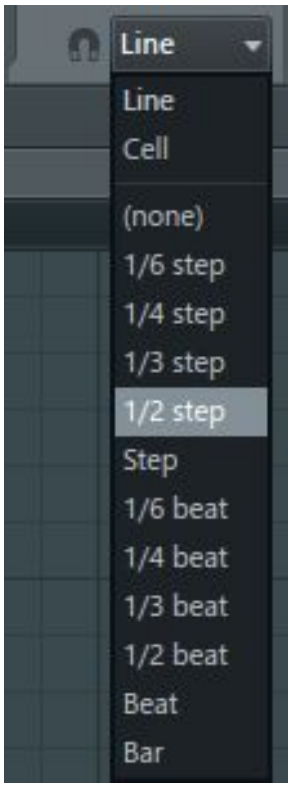
REASON 1: notes in between notes

On the Piano Roll you can make notes in between notes in between notes (in between notes). This means that by using a certain setting, it allows you

to have way more than 4 places to put a note within a beat. This gives you the possibility to make crazy or very fast rhythms.

If you want to put notes in between notes, you have to work with the “snap function”. The snap function controls the stickiness of your notes. Normally, it’s set to “Line”. This means that the notes can only be placed on the 4 standard squares/rectangles within each beat. So, 1 beat, 4 note-options. This is a good setting, because it forces you to make your notes stick logically to the beat.

But if you want to work in between those 4 note-options, you have to set the snap function to “1/2”, “1/4”, or even “(none)”. You can find the snap function at the top of you FL Studio application. It has a little magnet icon on it.

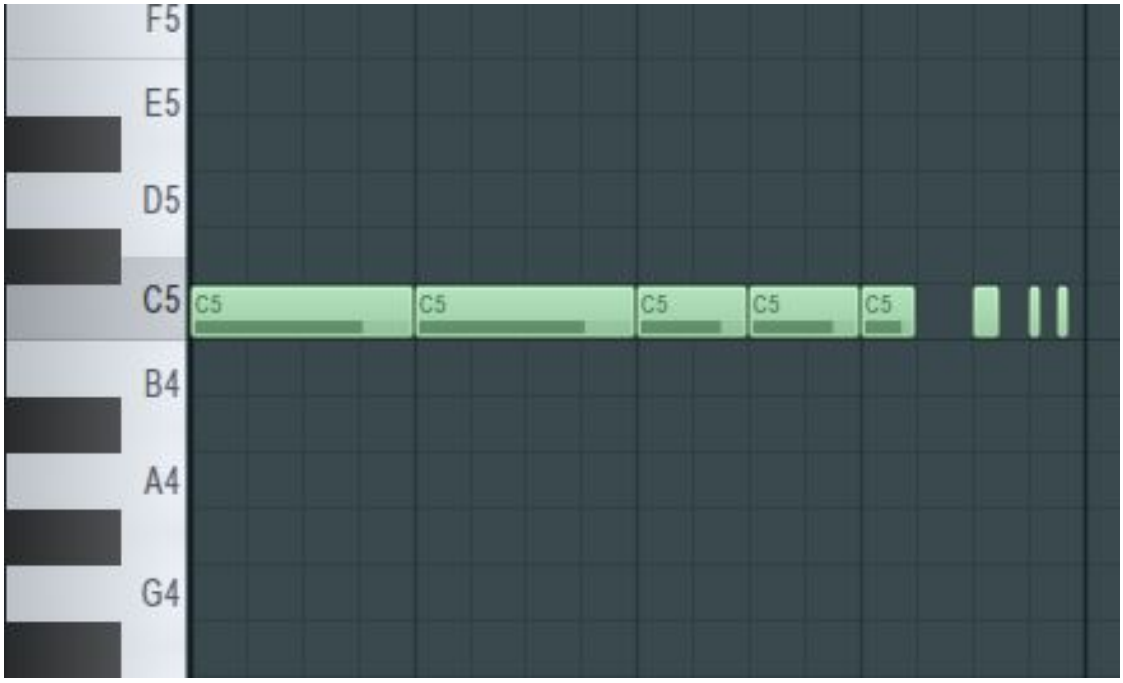


Be careful with it, because if you set it to “(none)” or any very small setting, it’s really easy to mess up the logic of your rhythm or your melody for that matter. Notes can be dropped about anywhere on the time axis, which can easily result in sounds that don’t follow the beat in a nice way, like glitches or mistakes. If you have to redo all these “wrong” notes, it can be a pain in the ass.

REASON 2: note length control

On the Piano Roll you can determine the exact length of a note very easily. As mention in an earlier paragraph, the length of a note determines the length of your sound. For example, a very short note will give a very short

sound. This way you're able to cut off notes earlier than its natural decay length. It allows you to do crazy stutters or give you more control in general.



To actually make this work, and have a sound play the exact note-length, you sometimes have to change the volume envelope settings of a sound. You see, the length of a note on the Piano Roll only represents how long you press a certain key. So, if a sound has a so called "release" or "decay", you will always hear that sound fading out right after the end of a note. This may sometime be desired, but sometimes it's not. It just depends on what you want to accomplish.

But for the sake of building a rhythm and having these short stuttering notes, you have to make sure that your sound has a very short release and/or

decay setting (preferably, no release at all). You can control the release and decay setting by using the volume envelope tool on your instrument or sample.

Where you can find this setting depends hugely on the instrument you're using. But in general, almost every instrument has an envelope section.

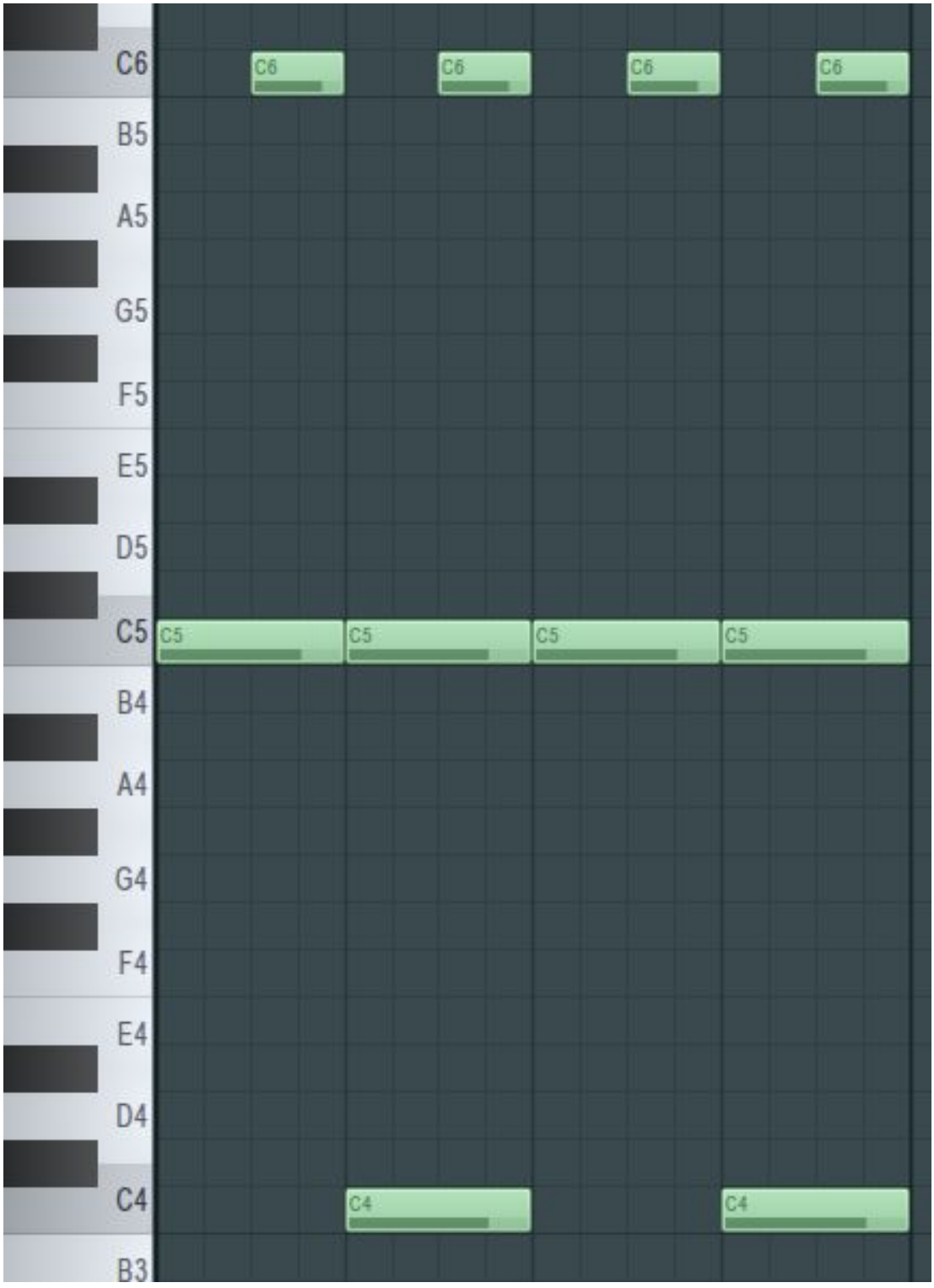
To give you an example, on the Sampler (the channel where a sample is loaded), you can find the envelope setting under the "Envelope / instrument settings" tab at the top of the Sampler screen. By clicking that tab and then clicking on the "Volume" tab exactly below it, you can access the volume envelope settings.

Now you only have to enable the “Envelope” and work with the little graph to change the volume shape of your sound. You can shape the volume of your sound by using the knobs below the graph. If you want to make tight and short sounds, you have to shut down the “REL” (release) and “DEC” (decay). They control the volume at the end of your sound. You may also want to shut down the “DELAY” and “ATT” (attack). They control the volume at the beginning of the sound. The “HOLD” and “SUS” (sustain) determine how long the sound will play when a key gets pressed. So, it may be a good thing to completely open up the “HOLD” and/or the “SUS”. Simply experiment.

Anyways, back to the Piano Roll. So, it’s a good idea to play around with the length of the notes with different sounds. Try to make some short stuttering rhythms by “drawing” short notes and by changing its volume envelope to suit your needs. This is a matter of experimentation and using your own creativity. Just go wild.

REASON 3: pitch possibilities

Obviously, you can also use different pitches when making a rhythm on the Piano Roll. For example, putting a clap sample in your rhythm at C4 (instead of C5) might sound very cool as a variation. Or may be that one hit hat sample sounds perfect on C6. As you can understand, it simply gives you more flexibility to create richer or deeper rhythms.


C6
B5
A5
G5
F5
E5
D5
C5
B4
A4
G4
F4
E4
D4
C4
B3
C6
C6
C6
C6
C5
C5
C5
C5
C4
C4

Generally, when making rhythms with your sounds, you simply want to use the C5 line to “draw” your notes. A C5 note will be the sound of the original sample (no change in pitch).

Now, there are probably dozens of (other) reasons why to use the Piano Roll or why to use the Channel Rack for making rhythms and loops. In the end it’s usually a matter of preference and what you can do with them. So please, don’t think by any means that you have to use the Piano Roll for your rhythms. You can just as well use the Channel Rack. But just be aware of these possibilities.

Just practice with both of them and get the experience to develop your own profitable ways of working. Now is the right time to do that, because this is the end of this chapter. If you can “draw” notes, make melodies (or something that sounds like a melody), make a rhythm and using different Patterns, then you’re ready to move forward. It’s all you really need to be very effective on the Piano Roll as a beginner.

There are still many options unexplored, but they are not essential right now. However, I will always recommend to look into them anyway when you’re ready. For now, let’s move on.

FL Studio Playlist

The third main function in FL Studio is called the Playlist. The Playlist can be accessed by simply clicking the Playlist icon in the toolbar (or go to “View” > “Playlist” in the menu bar).

We've already talked about it a little bit, but the Playlist is the area where you can really build your track from start to finish. It's the place to piece your song together, just like using Lego bricks. These Lego bricks can represent anything, like melody loops, beat rhythms or effect movements. By using your creativity, you can access the Playlist to construct your small musical loops and rhythms into an entire song.

You already know how to make rhythms and melodies, resulting in short loops. But these loops aren't yet a complete song. That's why you will need to work with the Playlist to piece your rhythms and melodies together, by using its most important functions. So, what are the most important functions on the Playlist you absolutely need to know about before you can start making music?

- You need to be able to drop all your short loops or Patterns onto the Playlist to build your song.
- You need to be able to use different "Tracks" on the Playlist to arrange your short loops very flexibly.
- You need to be able to make automations to change parameters (knobs, buttons, sliders) over time, allowing you to create movements and effects throughout your song.

These abilities are essential to make your own music. That's why we're going to take a look at each one of them and find out how we can use the Playlist to accomplish this.

How to add Patterns to the Playlist

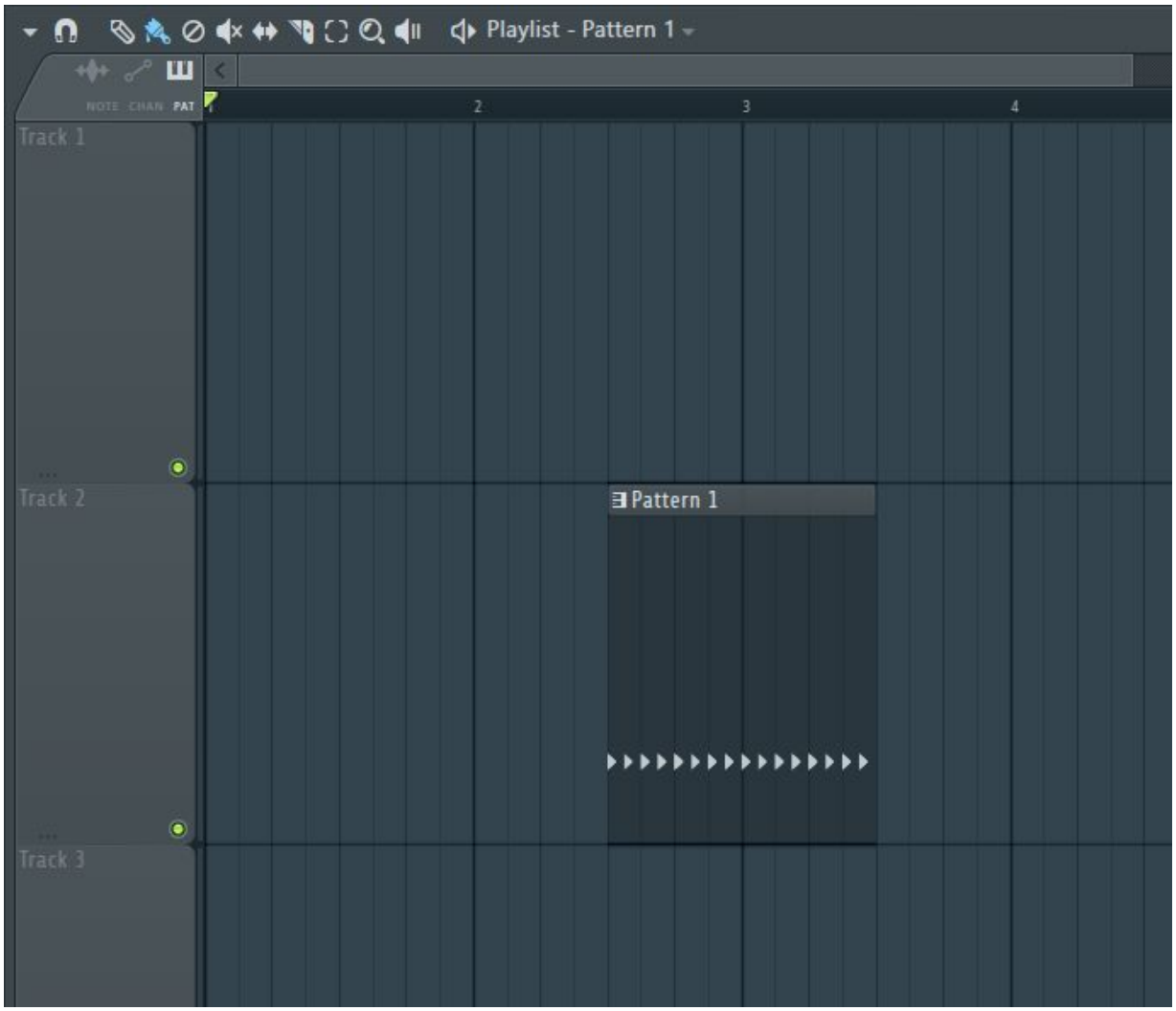
After you've made some rhythms and melodies, the next thing you want to do is use them in your song. This is really a fun part, because it can give you quite quickly a good impression of how your loops, rhythms and melodies work together as a whole. But how do we actually add them to the Playlist?

First, you need to open the Playlist before you can add something to it. To open the Playlist, click the Playlist icon in the toolbar (or go to "View" > "Playlist" in the menu bar). Once you've opened it, you can go to work.

To understand how to work on the Playlist, you can use the analogy of working with Lego bricks. Remember those Patterns containing your rhythms and melodies? Well, these Patterns are your Lego bricks now. They're short packages of musical content that you can add to the Playlist to build your song.

So, how do we add a Pattern to the Playlist? First, you have to select the Pattern you want to add to the Playlist. You can select a Pattern by hoovering over the Pattern panel at the top of your FL Studio application. Then left-click somewhere in the panel box, hold that button and drag up or down to select the Pattern you want to use.

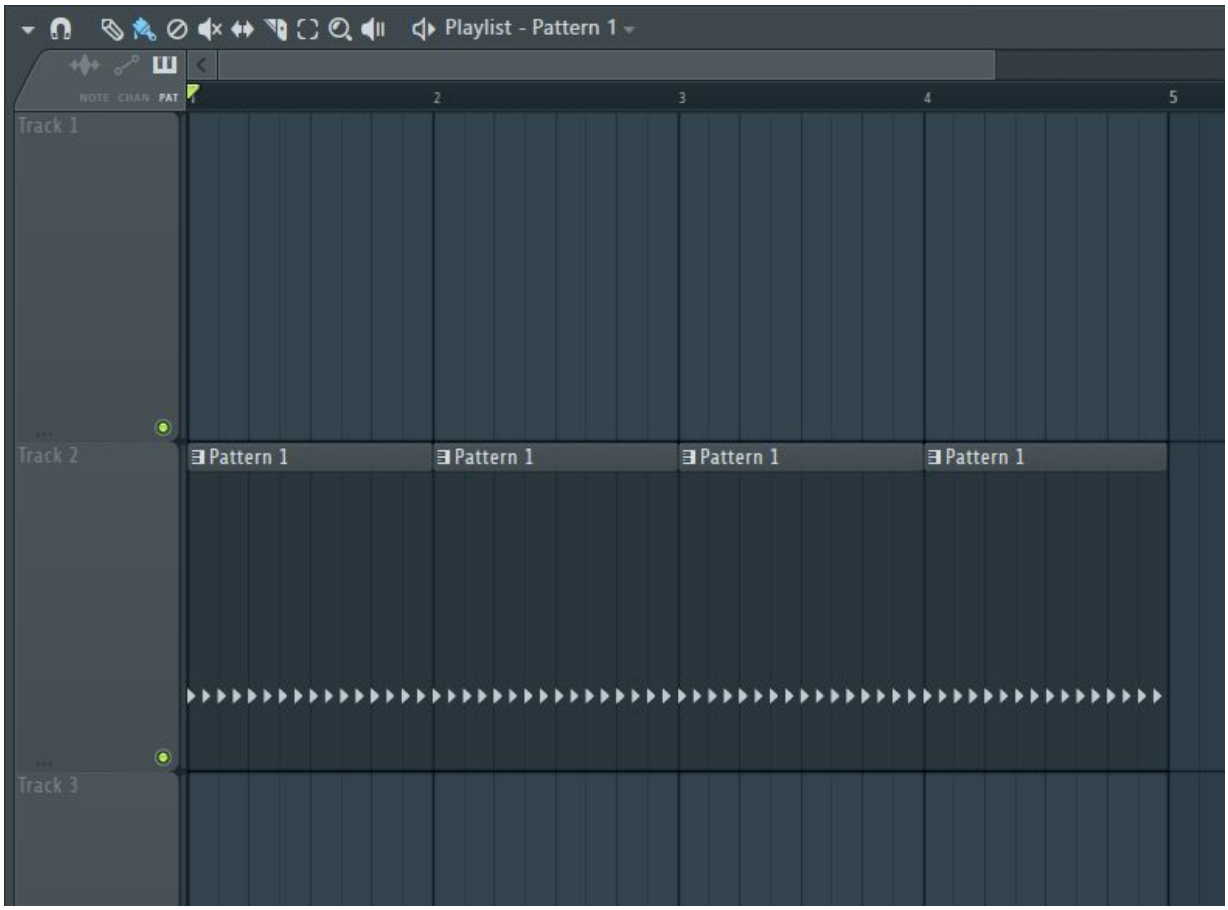
Once you've selected the Pattern, go to the Playlist and left-click somewhere in there. If all goes well you will see some sort of block or box added to it. This block has the name of that Pattern written onto it. If you can't read it, you can zoom in by holding the Ctrl key and scroll with your mouse wheel.



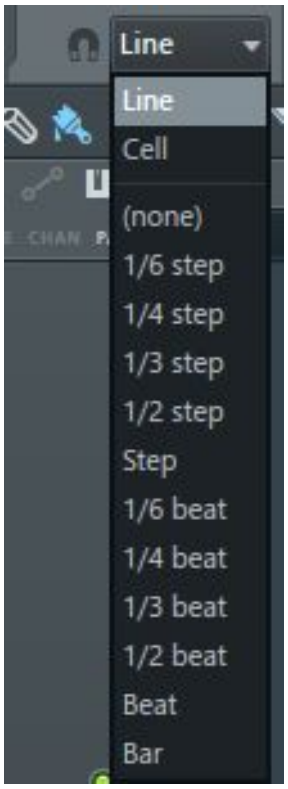
So, the Pattern panel will dictate which Pattern you can drop onto the Playlist. If you want to add a different Pattern to the Playlist, just select it on the Pattern panel and click in the Playlist.

Adding just one Pattern will never result in a full song. You need to be able to add the same Pattern as many times as you want. So, if you want to use a Pattern multiple times (or in a row) simply left-click multiple times in the Playlist. Every click results in a new Pattern block added.

You can put them nicely together in a row to create a consistent repeating loop. By simply left-clicking on a Pattern block, holding and dragging, you can pick it up and move it around. Just try to piece a couple of Patterns together this way to get a longer row.



If you want to remove a Pattern block, just right-click on it. This way it will disappear. It just works the same as the notes on the Piano Roll or the rectangular buttons on the Channel Rack. That also includes the “snap function” we’ve talked about in the Piano Roll chapter. If you want to get these Pattern blocks stick together perfectly, you have to set the snap to “Line”.



When you've pieced together a couple of Patterns, you would probably also like to listen to it. This will give you immediate feedback, allowing you to make changes if necessary. To listen to your song on the Playlist, you have to press the "Play" button on the playback control on the top of your FL Studio application. However, you also should set it to "Song mode" instead of "Pattern mode". You can do this by turning "on" or "off" the button directly to the left of the "Play" button.

So, the playback control has a button that you need to press when you want to switch between listening to your Patterns and listening to your song. Set it to “Pattern mode” (light on) if you want to listen to your rhythms and melodies on a Pattern. Set it to “Song mode” (light off) if you want to listen to your song on the Playlist. In both cases you have to press the “Play” button to let the music play.

When you press the “Play” button and listen to your song on the Playlist, you will notice that the time loop flows from left to right as well, just like the Channel Rack and Piano Roll. So, Pattern blocks on the left side will play first. The more the Pattern blocks are put to the right, the later they’ll get played in your song. Every function in FL Studio has these same principles that apply, which makes it very easy to understand and work with.

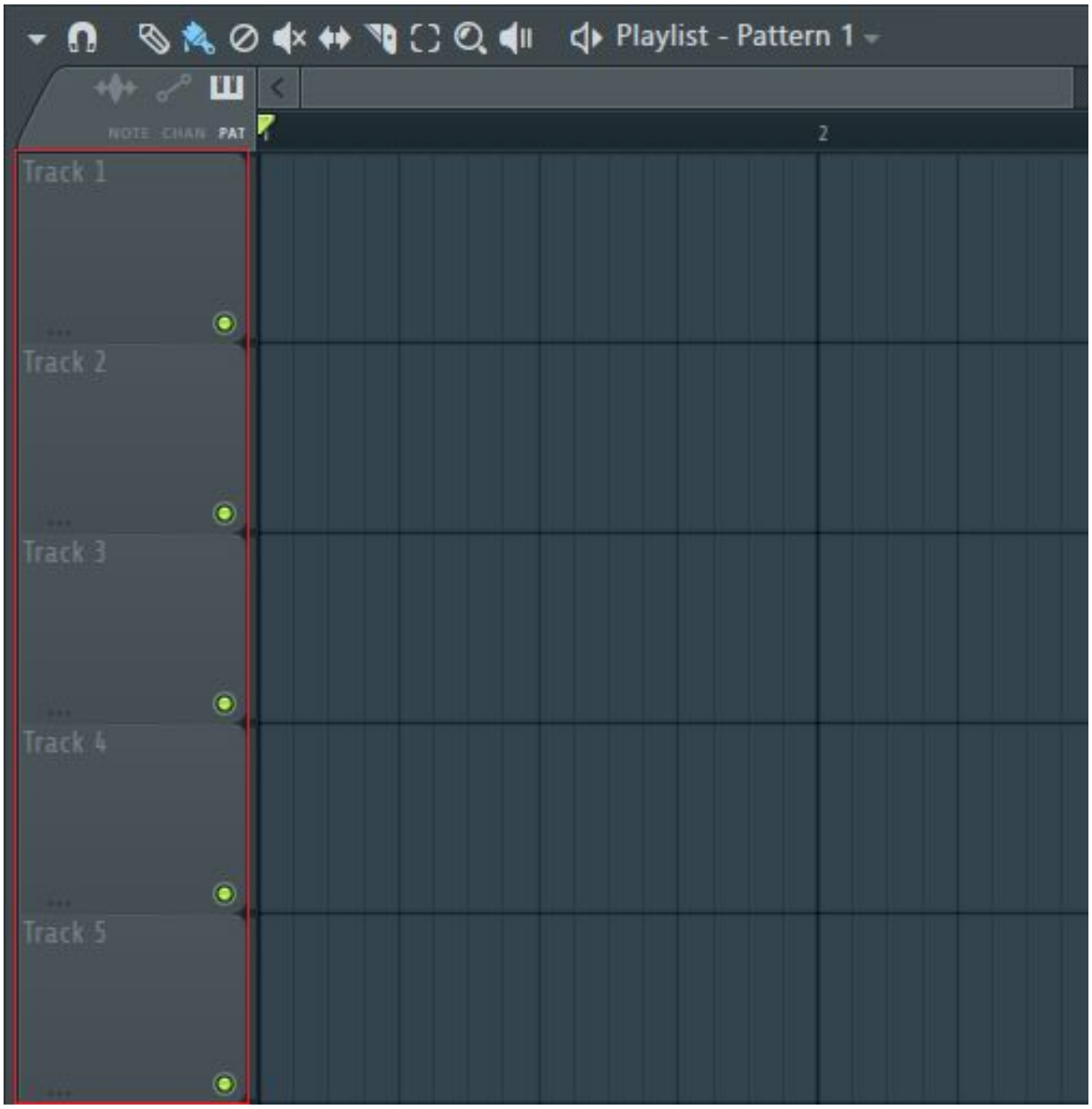
Anyways, if you can add some different Patterns to the Playlist and organize them the way you want, you’re ready to move on.

How to use different tracks on the Playlist

Now, adding Patterns to the playlist is one thing, but adding multiple different Patterns at the same moment in time is something different. For example, if you want to play a kickdrum rhythm together with a melody and a snare loop (all built on different Patterns), you need to be able to do that. So, you need to have the ability to add as many different Patterns at the

same moment in time. That’s where the different Tracks on the Playlist come in.

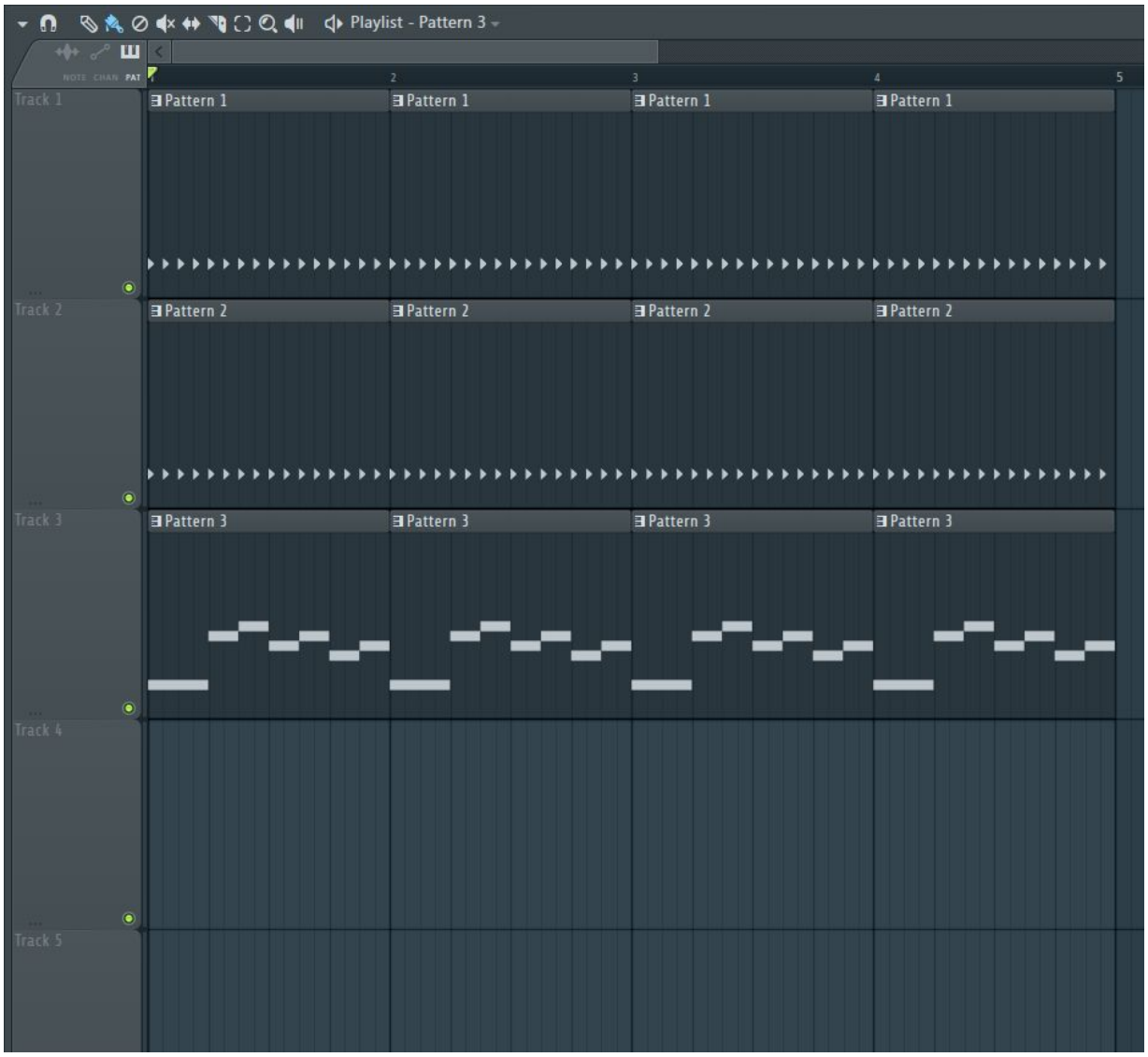
The Playlist allows you to use different Tracks, so you can put your Patterns in the right order and at the right time. When you look on the left side of the Playlist, you can see many different Tracks underneath each other. They all have a number, starting with “Track 1”, “Track 2”, “Track 3”, etc. You can scroll down to get as many Tracks as you need.



Each Track represents a spore or strip you can use to add Pattern blocks onto the Playlist. They serve as drop spots for your Patterns. This way you’re able to put as many Patterns underneath each other and having them all play at the same time. This allows you to play that kickdrum rhythm, melody and snare drum loop we talked about exactly simultaneously.

To put Patterns underneath each other, you'd have to select the first Pattern you want to use. Again, go to the Pattern panel on the top of the FL Studio application and scroll to the one you need. Once you've found a Pattern you want to use, click into the Playlist. You can make a little row with the Pattern blocks and put them all on a single Track, like "Track 1" for example.

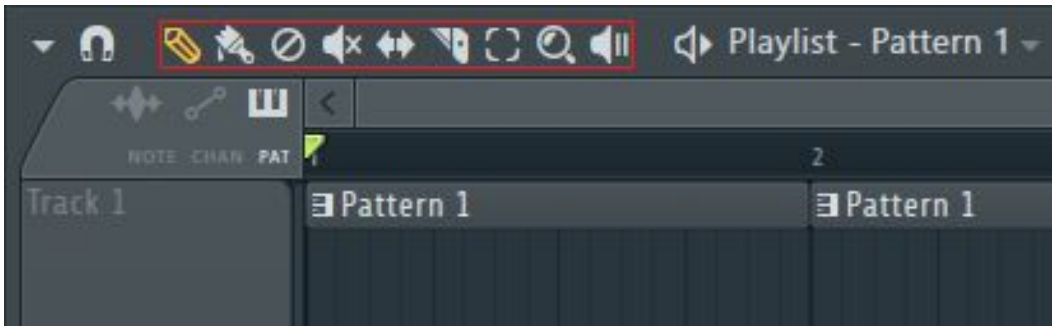
Now it's time to select a second Pattern. Go to the Pattern panel, select another Pattern and drop a few of them onto the Playlist. But this time use a different Track. So, let's say you've put the first Pattern blocks (row) onto "Track 1", then this time you can put the second Pattern blocks (row) onto "Track 2". Make sure to place these blocks below the first ones. You can repeat this process and put as many Patterns underneath each other as you want.



Also, you don’t have to match the Pattern number with the Track number. They’re not related or depended on each other. You can place the Patterns on any Tracks you want, giving you enormous flexibility. For example, you can drop Pattern 10 on Track 1 or Pattern 6 on Track 50. You can even switch to different Tracks for the same Patterns throughout your song. It’s all up to you.

If you want to listen to all your Patterns playing together, simply hit “Play” (set it to “Song mode”). This way you can get a good sense how your sounds, rhythms and melodies work together. This also allows you to tweak your instruments in relationship to one another and eventually do some mixing. Mixing is something that happens on the Mixer. We’ll talk about the Mixer in the next chapter.

To get the most out of the Playlist, you can look at the top of its window where you will find some icons. These icons can be used as tools within the Playlist to “draw” your Pattern blocks a certain way. Each icon has a different function. There’s a drawing tool, cutting tool, zoom tool, selecting tool, etc.



Simply use a couple of them, try to “draw” some Pattern blocks and learn how these tools affect your drawing. They can all be handy for different types of changes or the way you’d like to organize the Pattern blocks on the Playlist. Just experiment. You will be happy they’re there.

Anyways, by using many different sounds, filling all your Patterns with rhythms, melodies and loops, and organizing (arranging) them on the Playlist, you can already build a song from start to finish. Simply said, that's all you really do. In fact, if all went well, you can already accomplish that because you now know how.

I could as well stop here and end this book. But that's not what I'm going to do. You see, there are a few things you definitely need to know about. Not only do you have to know how to start making a song (which mostly you do by now), but you also have to know how to make a song that sounds reasonably good or professional. That's because song-building (and sound design) requires some extra tools or processes that makes all your elements fit together much better.

In the next chapter we're going to talk about one very important part in song-building (and sound design) that you definitely need to know about. That will be mixing on the Mixer, which can be a giant topic to cover. But we'll only cover the essential basics to get you started effectively.

One of the things that can help your songs to get reasonably better, can already be applied on the Playlist. It's all about the ability to create movements and effects throughout your song. FL Studio got you covered!

How to make automations

Now that you know how to add Patterns to the Playlist and arrange them however you want, you can take it to the next level. The next level is making automations. An automation is basically a movement of a parameter throughout time. It’s like if someone is changing a certain knob in FL Studio while your song is playing. This way you are able to create nice effects and live movements in your music.

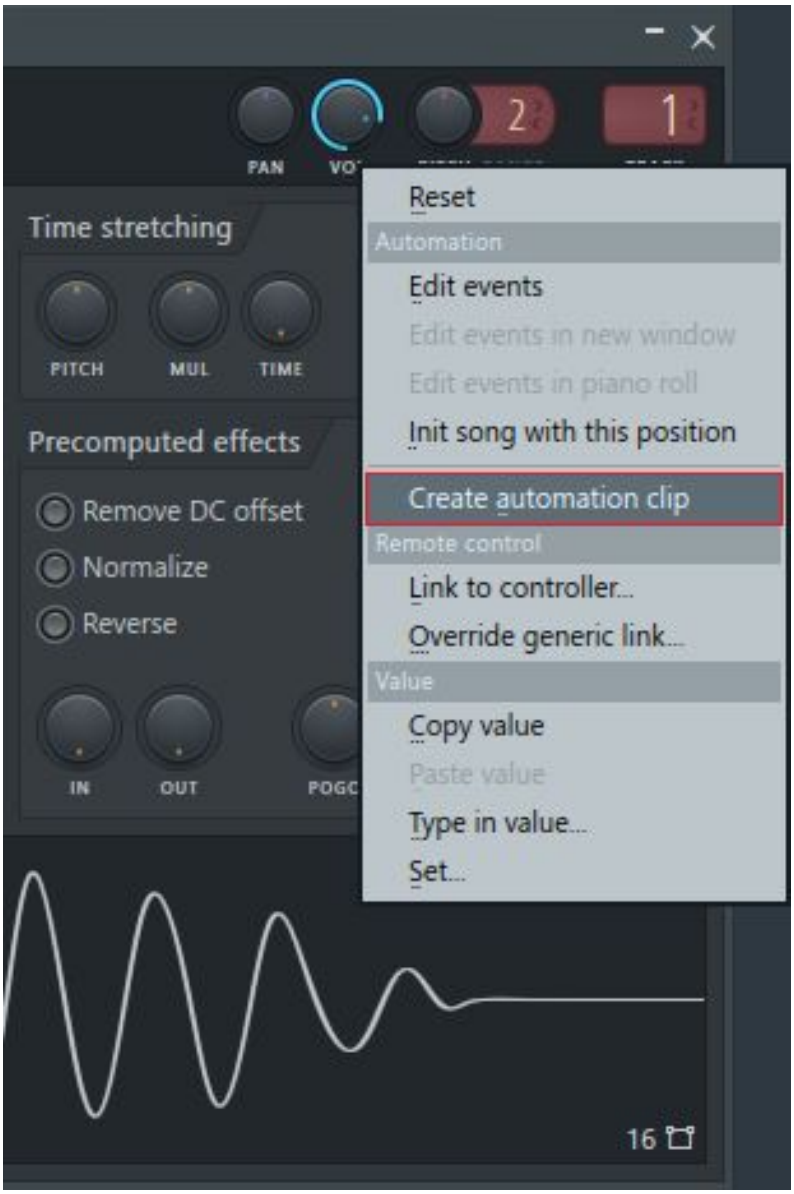
For example, imagine you’re listening to your song and while you’re listening, you go over to a certain sound and slowly move its volume knob. This will create the effect that the loudness of that sound is changing throughout your song. But instead of you having to control that knob, you can use a so called “Automation Clip” to do the work for you. This way you can create as many Automation Clips as you want for as many parameters (knobs, buttons, sliders) as you want, allowing you to create a song full of effects, movements and changes very flexibly.

Just like Patterns (Pattern blocks), Automation Clips can simply be added to the Playlist. However, the process to get them there and how to work with them is slightly different. So, let’s first talk about how to get an Automation Clip onto the Playlist.

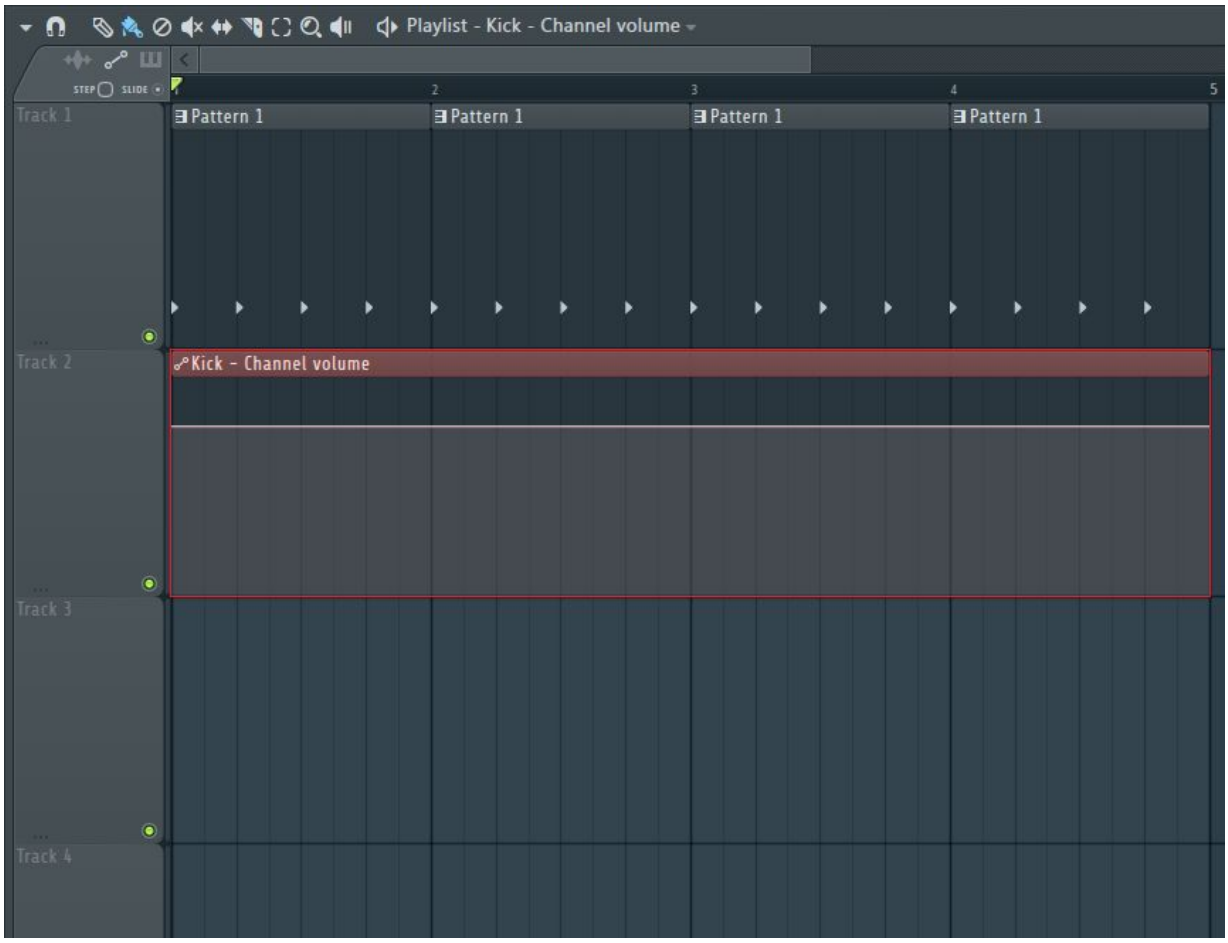
The very first thing you always have to determine is for which sound and which parameter you want to create an Automation Clip. Once you know that, you have to go to that sound and its parameter. For example, if you’d like to have a volume movement in your song for the kickdrum, you have to

go to the Channel Rack, find your kickdrum channel, open it and find the volume knob.

You can use about any parameter of your instruments, effects, or even on the FL Studio functions. When you've found the right parameter you want to use, you can now tell it to show up on the Playlist as an Automation Clip. For every FL Studio instrument or effect, it's very easy to create an Automation Clip. The only thing you have to do is right-click on the parameter and then click "Create automation clip".



If all goes well, you should see something new being added to the Playlist. That new something is your Automation Clip. It looks like a colored Pattern block, except it has a line in it. That line represents the value of the parameter. You can now change that line to make the parameter (volume in this example) move in your song.



So, that brings us to the step of how to work with an Automation Clip. To work with it, open the Playlist and go to the Automation Clip you just created. Now it’s time to tweak the line.

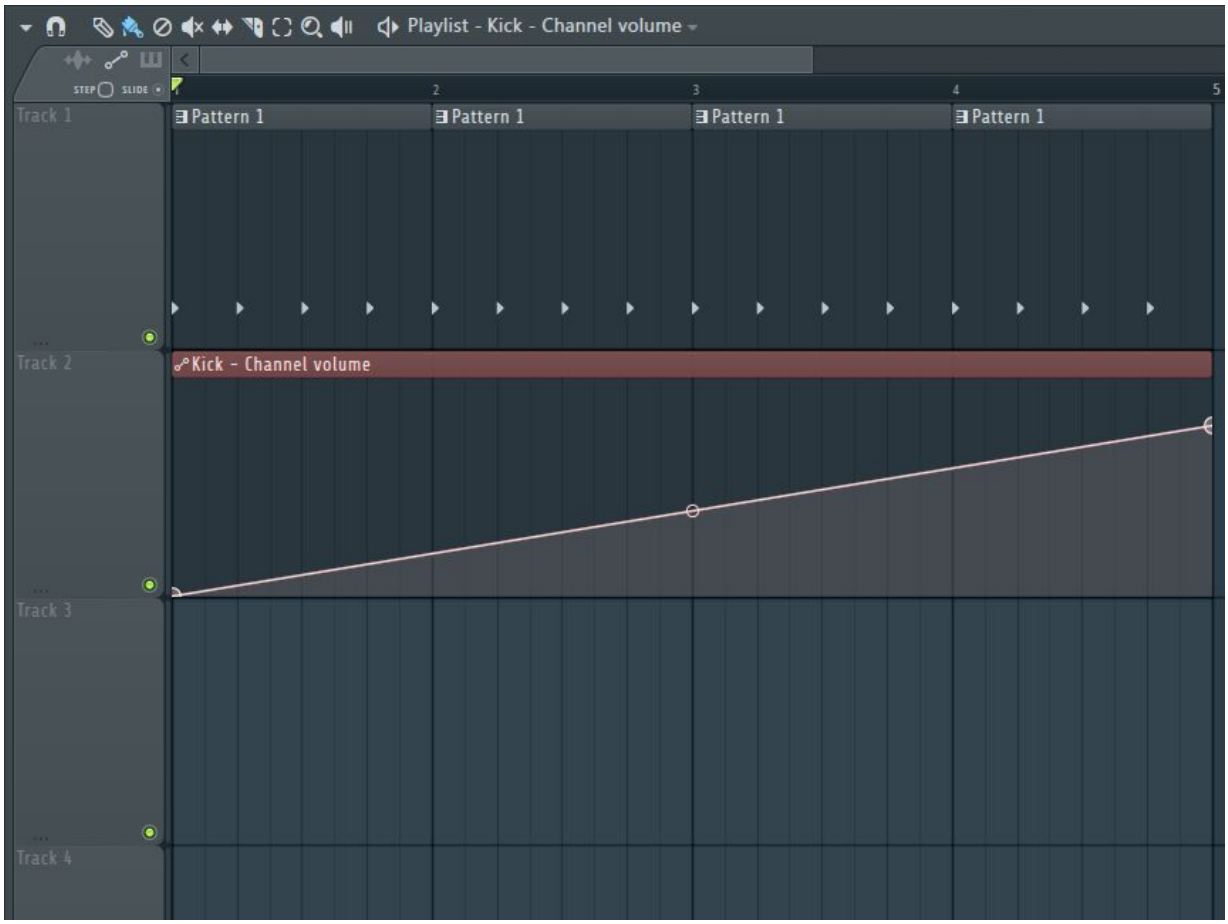
The line inside a new Automation Clip is always at the level the corresponding parameter is currently at. So in our example, if the volume knob is at 78%, the line will also be at 78%. You can see this by looking at the height of the line inside the Automation Clip. If the line is at the top of the Automation Clip, the corresponding parameter (knob, button, slider) is fully open (100%). If the line is at the bottom of the Automation Clip, the

corresponding parameter (knob, button, slider) is fully closed (0%). So, line high = knob open, line low = knob closed.

By knowing this, you can start changing the line exactly the way you want. The changes you make will result in curves and shapes that represent the exact movements of that parameter throughout time.

To make changes in the line, you have to understand a couple of things. First, the line can only be shaped between 2 points. Points represent a fixed spot. You can change a point by left-clicking on it, holding it and dragging it up and down or left and right.

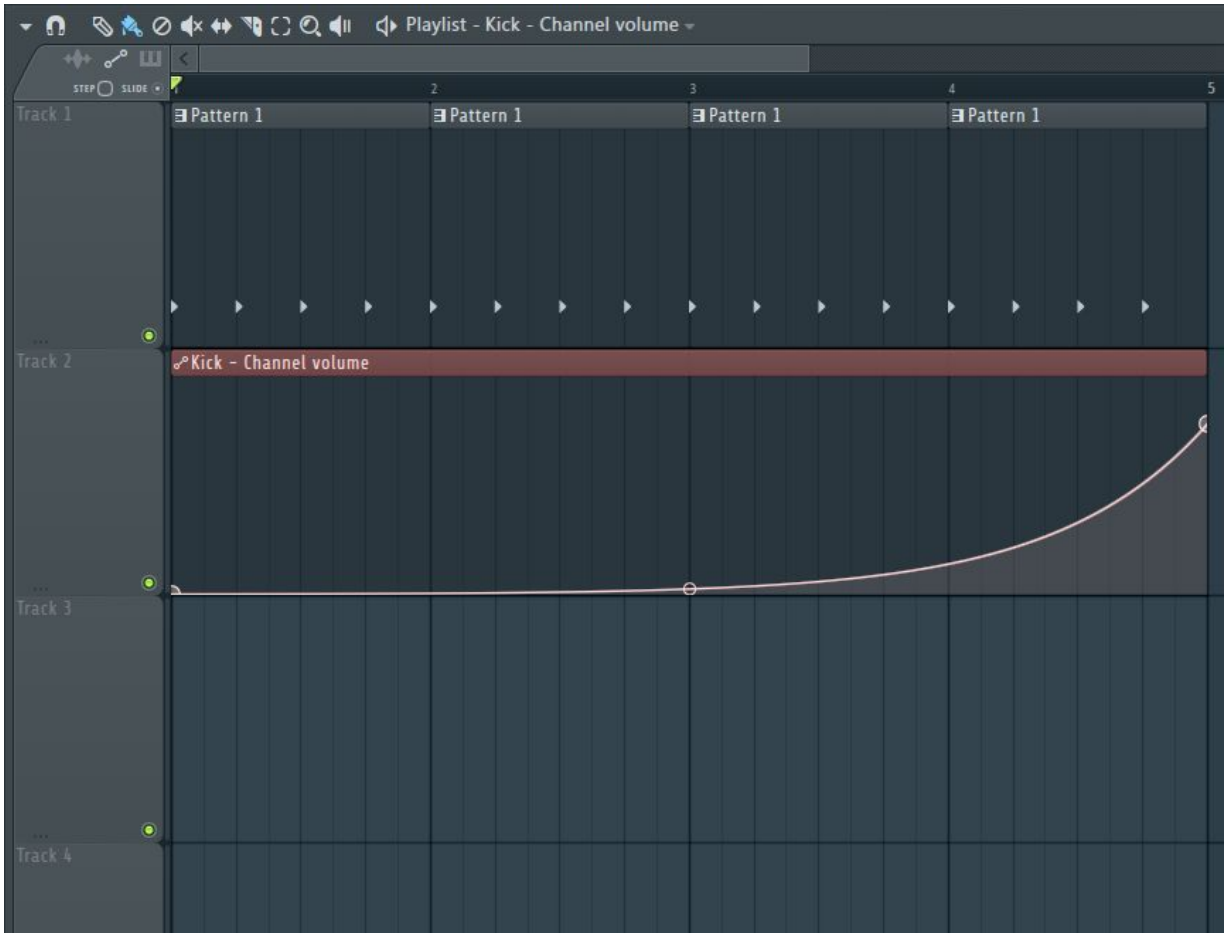
For example, you can pick up the very first point on the line of your Automation Clip and drag it all the way down. If you leave the next point (last point) to its current spot, you could see the line being a gradual slope. In case of the volume parameter for the kickdrum, it would mean that the kickdrum will go from quiet to loud throughout a part of your song. A slow but steady increase of volume.



Now, if you look exactly in between two points, there's always another point visible, but it looks slightly different. It has a hole in it. A point with a hole in it represents the "tension" control of that line. This means that by moving that point up or down, the line will get a certain amount of curvature. How much you move that point up or down determines the extremeness of the curve. This allows you to create accelerating or deaccelerating movements, like a volume knob that opens up faster and faster (or slower and slower) as time moves forward.

You can change the curvature of the line by left-clicking on the point with a hole in it, holding it and dragging it up or down. The amount of drag will

determine the amount of curvature.



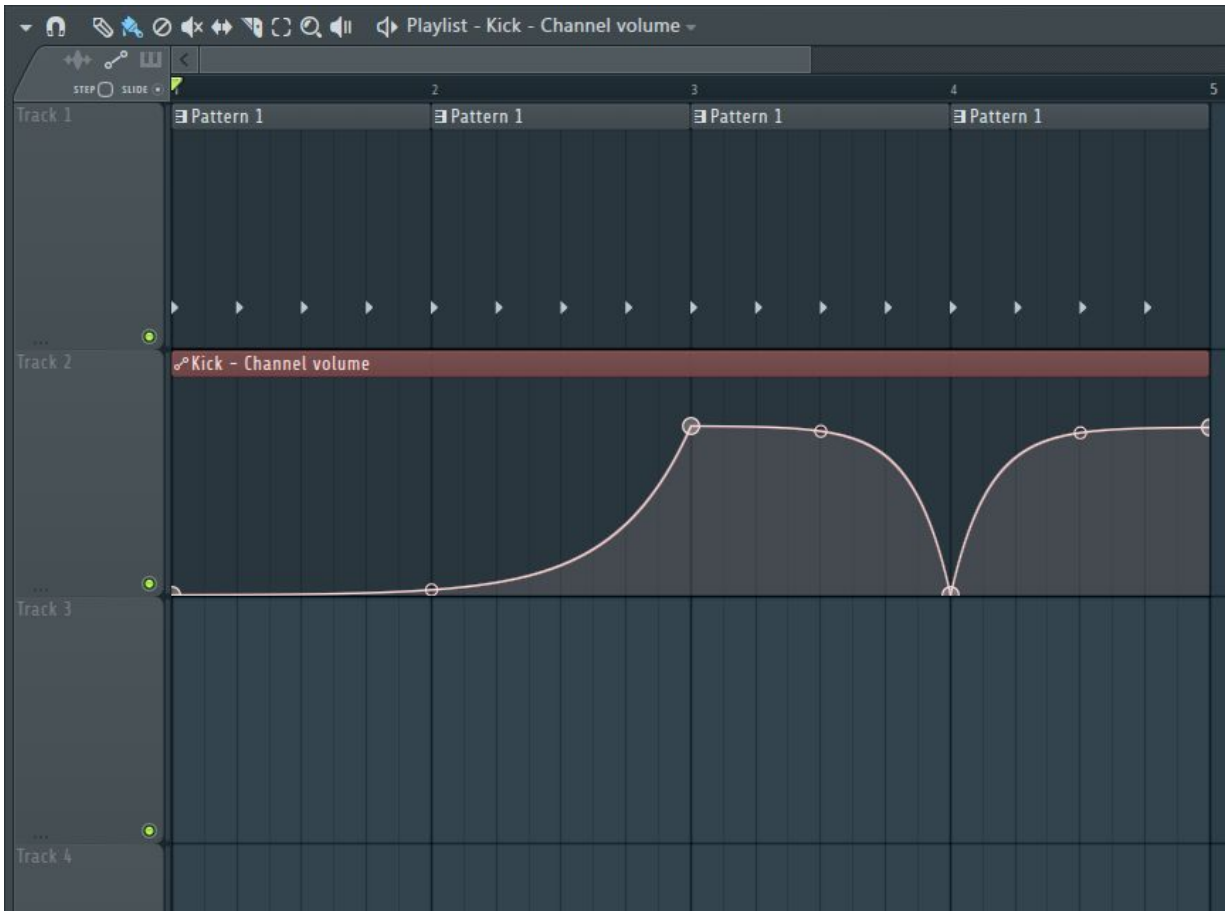
You can only create curves between two points this way if both these fixed points are at a different level. So, one point must be higher or lower than the other point. If both points are exactly at the same height, there’s no slope to begin with, so it cannot be curved.

This is all fun stuff to play and experiment with, but we can do even more. We can easily add fixed points to the line to have more spots to work with.

This allows for much more detailed control and the ability to make crazy shapes, curves and finetuned movements.

To add a new point, simply right-click somewhere on the line in between the already existing fixed points. By right-clicking, the new point will immediately appear. You can pick it up and move it to the place you want. You can also curve the new lines in between the new points. Simply repeat this process as often as needed to get as many points as you need. If you want to remove a point, right-click on it and click “Delete”.

Feel free to apply all this information right away. Try to add a couple of points and try to change the curves of the lines in between them. If you can do that and get the movements of the right parameters you want, you understand the essential basics of using Automation Clips.



Be aware that typically, an Automation Clip takes the full length of your song. If you want to shorten it, just hoover over its upper left or upper right edge until a double horizontal arrow appears. Then left-click, hold and drag it to the left or right to change the length of your Automation Clip.

Also, be aware that an Automation Clip will naturally show up on the Channel Rack, just like a channel would. This helps for you to see and organize the Automation Clips you've been using throughout your song. You can as well ignore it, because you don't really have to do anything with it.

Besides Automation Clips, there’s also another type of clip you can add to the Playlist. That one is called an “Audio Clip”. An Audio Clip is like using the Sampler to add a sample to the Channel Rack, except you skip the Sampler and drop it directly onto the Playlist. This allows you to work with a sample directly to make cuts, loops or any changes using the Playlist.

Audio Clips can be very useful, but you don’t necessarily need them to build a song. That’s why we’re not going to talk about them here and simply move on to the next chapter. Only the most effective bare essentials are all you need to kickstart your music-making journey. So, let’s discover those bare essentials for the final main function of FL Studio.

FL Studio Mixer

The fourth and final main function in FL Studio is called the Mixer. The Mixer can be accessed by simply clicking the Mixer icon in the toolbar (or go to “View” > “Mixer” in the menu bar).

The mixer is the place where you can add effects to your instruments, samples or sounds. Think about effects like reverb, distortion or equalizers (EQ). The mixer has 2 main purposes. The first one is to be able to shape and tweak your sounds with effects. Call it part of “sound design” if you will. The second purpose is to be able to “mix” all your instruments

together and create a good relationship between them. This is called “mixing”.

To shape your instruments or samples a certain way and to make your song sound good, you have to use the Mixer. The Mixer is FL Studio’s main function where you can effectively take care of your mix. A good mix sounds clean and powerful. A bad mix sounds dull and messy. To create a good mix, we have to look at the most important functions of the Mixer. So, what are the most important functions of the Mixer you absolutely need to know about before you can start making music?

- You need to be able to route your instruments (channels) to the Mixer and being able to treat them differently.
- You need to be able to add effects to the Mixer for each instrument (channel).
- You need to be able to add effects to the Mixer that affect your song as a whole.
- You need to be able to make smart mixing decisions to get a professional sounding song.

All these abilities are essential to make your own music and to make it sound reasonably good. That’s why we’re going to take a look at each one of them and find out how we can use the Mixer to accomplish this.

How to add instruments to the Mixer

In the Channel Rack chapter, you've learned how to add sounds (instruments and samples) to the Channel Rack. This is important, because these are the instruments that you will use to make rhythms, melodies and loops for your song.

But what if you want to make these instruments sound better or different? Or what if you want to make these instruments sound good when being played together? You'd simply have to send them to the Mixer where you can work on your sound design or mix. That's why the first step you have to take is learning how to add an instrument to the Mixer. Luckily, this is a piece of cake.

To add an instrument to the Mixer, go to the Channel Rack and decide which instrument (channel) you want to send/route to the Mixer. When you've found your instrument (channel), look directly to the left of its channel name. You will see a little box there, either with a number in it or a couple of dashes (---). The only thing you have to do is, left-click in that little box, hold your mouse button and drag up (or down) to give it a number. Which number you give it is up to you. But for the sake of this example, let's take number 1.

What that does is it adds the instrument to the Mixer on “Insert 1”. “Insert 1” is just the standard name in FL Studio for the first “Track” (spore, channel, buss) on the Mixer. On an Insert Track you can add effects and directly change and shape the instrument routed to that Insert Track.

Each Insert Track is a new or fresh spot on the Mixer where you can shape or treat an instrument completely separately. That’s why the Mixer has all these Insert Tracks next to each other, allowing you to add many instruments to it. They can be used to welcome instruments and samples to the Mixer, giving them a unique place to stay. This makes it possible to give each instrument different effects.

All instruments and samples can be routed to the Mixer this way. You can give different instruments a different Mixer Insert Track number. But you can also give different instruments and samples the same Mixer Insert Track number. It’s all up to you and how you want your instruments to be affected on the Mixer.

Personally, I like to give each instrument a different Mixer Insert Track number. This allows me to shape and tweak each instrument separately. As a beginner, this is a good place to start. Just try to route the different channels on your Channel Rack to different mixer tracks. If you can do that, you’re ready to add some effects.

How to add effects to instruments

This is really a cool part of making music: adding effects to your instruments. Very familiar or common used effects are reverbs, delays, equalizers and distortion plugins. They allow you to make your instruments sound nice, or to shape your instruments a certain way to get a better mix (unless you mess things up).

Effects need to be added via an Insert Track on the Mixer. Each Insert Track on the Mixer has multiple “Slots” available for you to use. The only thing you have to do is use those Slots to give your instruments (routed to these Insert Tracks) the desired effects.

To add your first effect, go to the Mixer and left-click onto an Insert Track that’s occupied by an instrument, like Insert Track 1. By clicking on the correct Insert Track before you continue, you make sure that you’re in the right screen. All the effects you’re about to add will now only affect the instrument(s) routed to Insert Track 1.

Now, head over to the right side of the Mixer where you can see multiple Slots in a column all underneath each other. Just left-click on an empty Slot (like Slot 1) and you’ll get a list of many different names that represent the different effects. Simply select one from the list and it will be added to the Mixer for that particular Insert Track.

Try to add the “Fruity Reeverb 2” for example. When you do that, the name “Fruity Reeverb 2” will appear in one of the Slots. Also, you’ll get a new window. That new window is the Fruity Reeverb 2 effect. You can use that window, and all the tools in it, to give your instrument the type of reverb you want it to have. This way, each effect has its own window with its own settings and tools you can use to control how the effect affects the sound.

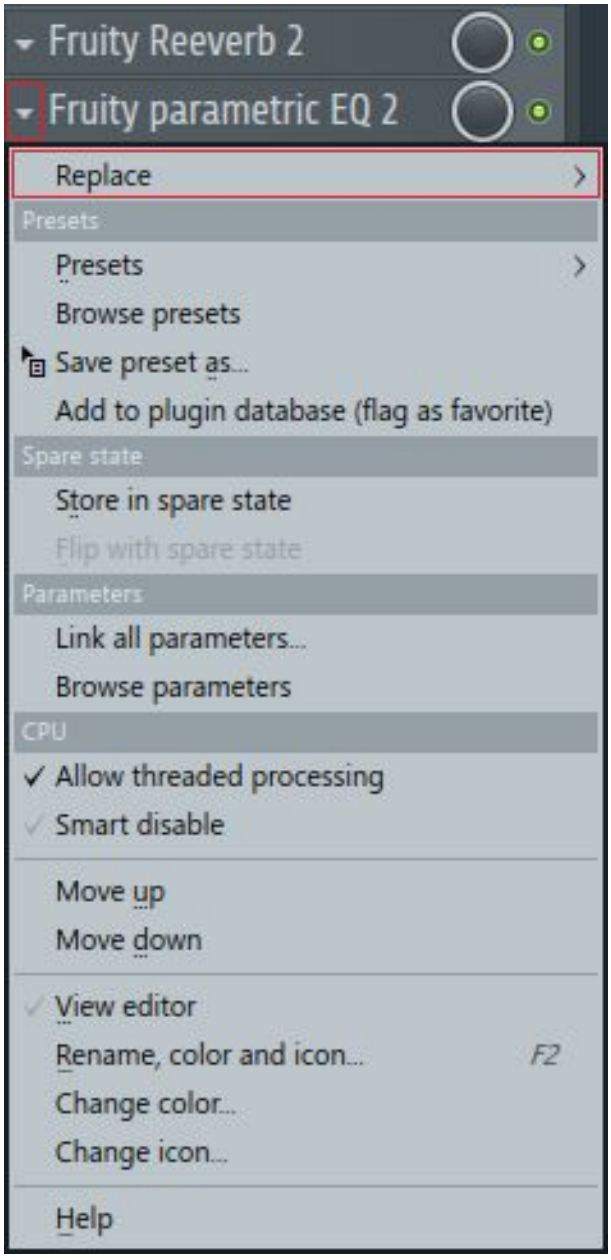
If you want to hear your effects in action and listen to the changes you make, always press the “Play” button on the playback control on top of the FL Studio application. Be sure you’ve “drawn” at least a note, rhythm or melody, else you won’t hear a thing.

How to control and how to use each effect exactly, falls way beyond the scope of this guide. I invite you to experiment and play with all the parameters to get an intuitive “feel” for how each setting changes or influences your sounds. This is really a fun part and you’ll get quite quickly reasonably good results. Feel free to visit my website at https://screechhouse.com to find many lessons and examples of sound designing and mixing.

For now, let’s try to add another effect, but use a different Slot. This time we can use Slot 2 to add the “Fruity Parametric EQ 2”. Just go over to Slot 2, left-click on it and select the Fruity Parametric EQ 2 from the list. If all goes well, the effect gets added to the Mixer and again, a new window will popup where you can use its tools to shape the sound.

If you don’t make any changes to the Fruity Parametric EQ 2, you probably won’t hear any difference. For an equalizer to work, you have to change the “Bands” to boost or dip certain frequency ranges. Anyways, feel free to play around and listen to how the changes affect the sound.

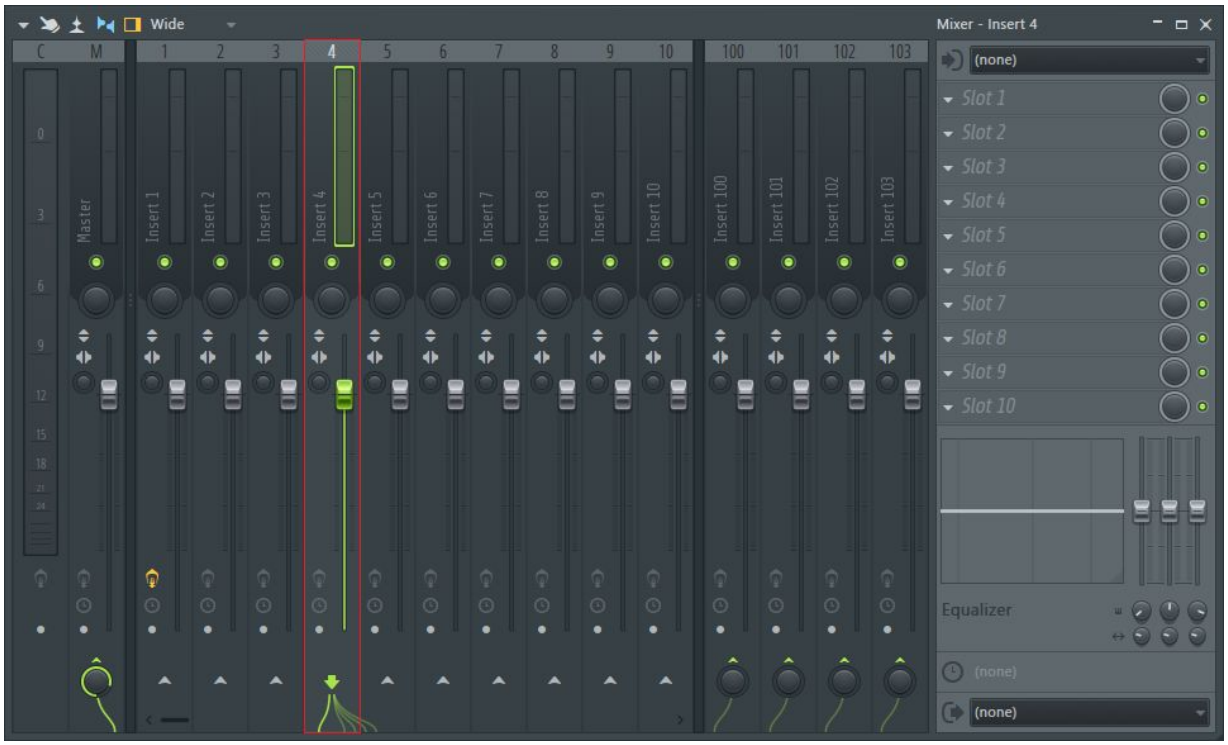
If you need more effects, simply go to an empty Slot and repeat the process. If you want to remove an effect, just left-click on the downwards pointing arrow (triangle) right in front of the effect's name on the Mixer. Then select "Replace" and click "(none)" from the list. The Slot will then be empty again. You can also just replace an effect by another one in the same way.



It’s important to keep in mind that the effects follow an order from top to bottom. The first effect is the one that affects your sound first. The last effect will affect your sound last. So, the order of the effects can matter. But there’s no right or wrong way of doing things. It’s just a matter of what you want to achieve and how they make your instruments or samples sound.

If you want to move an effect up or down, thus changing its position in the column, click that little downwards pointing arrow (triangle) again. Now click “Move up” to move the effect one position up. Click “Move down” to move the effect one position down. Repeat clicking on “Move up” or “Move down” until the effect is at your desired position.

For now, we’ve only talked about adding effects to a single mixer track (Insert Track 1 in this case). But you can as well add effects to other Insert Tracks the same way. The only thing you have to do is left-click on a different Insert Track. This way you’ll get a new column of empty Slots that belong to that Insert Track.



The process of adding effects to each new Insert Track is exactly the same as explained earlier. Left-click on an empty Slot and select one from the list. You can select up to 10 effects per Insert Track.

Now that you know how to give all your instruments different effects, we can quickly take a look at how to give ALL your instruments the same effects. In other words: how to add effects that affect your song as a whole.

How to add effects to a song

When you want to shape or finetune your song as a whole, it would be nice to have that possibility. This would make it possible to do some final

tweaking or make some slight song adjustments to your flavor. Therefore, you need to have the ability to add effects to all of the instruments at once, so you can control them collectively.

To do that, you can simply use the “Master Track” on the Mixer. The Master Track is just like an Insert Track, except every instrument (channel) and every Insert Track go through that track. FL Studio automatically sends all your channels and all your Insert Tracks directly to the Master Track, even if you haven’t send an instrument to an Insert Track at all. This allows you to add effects that affect every instrument at the final stage before the mix get send to your speakers.

So, keep in mind that not only can you use effects on the Master Track to affect your whole song, the effects added and changes made to the Master Track will also affect all the output signals of all the other Insert Tracks.

This sounds complicated, doesn’t it? You know what, just forget about it. Only remember this: everything you do on the Master Track will affect all the instruments right before they enter your ears. It affects your whole song.

I said I’d do this quickly, so let’s speed it up!

If you want to add effects that affect your whole song, open the Mixer and look to the left side. On the left side of the Mixer you can find a track called “Master”. This is the Master Track. You can use this Master Track exactly

the same way as an Insert Track (except you can use it to affect your whole song).

You can add effects by using the available Slots and select them from the list. Be careful though. Aggressive effects or extreme settings here can really mess up your song. Generally, effects on the Master Track should be used to finetune a song as a final process. This is basically part of the mixing process, which we'll talk a little bit about next.

How to mix a song

Now clearly, the Mixer has a lot of buttons, knobs and sliders we haven't yet talked about. So, let's talk about a few parameters you probably want to use when you need to mix your instruments together.

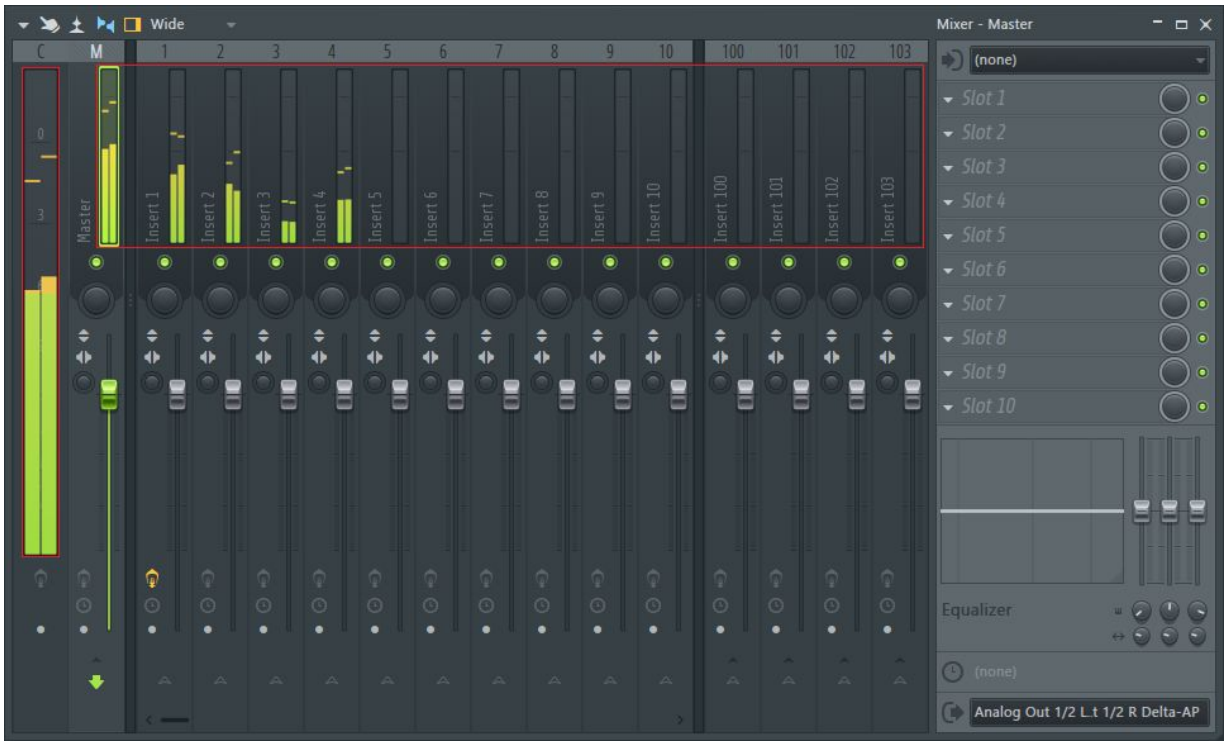
First of all, there's the obvious big giant enormous slider taking up half the space on each Mixer Track. This is the volume slider. The volume slider controls, well… the volume or loudness of the signal (sound) that goes through a Mixer Track. By left-clicking on the volume slider, holding and moving it up or down, you can change the volume amount for each track.

So, you can actually control the loudness of the instruments assigned to these Mixer Tracks. This is very handy, because you always want to look for that balance when you're trying to mix the instruments together. You need to have certain sounds to be louder than others. This hugely depends on the genre and your goal, but there's also something that's called "common sense" which you can tap into.

For example, if you're into making EDM (Electronic Dance Music), it's very common that leads and kickdrums are dominant elements in a song. You'd likely want to model that and also make the lead and kickdrum dominant elements in your song. Other elements, like certain percussion samples, strings or atmospheric effects, usually are submissive elements in the EDM genres. By controlling the volume sliders, you can easily make smart mixing decisions and try to give your instruments a good place in the mix. Simply model the pros and use common sense.

Another big reason why you want to use these volume sliders, is because digital audio has a volume limit. If you exceed that limit, your song will very likely be distorted (unwantedly) to some degree. That's why it's a good practice to use the volume sliders to lower the loudness of your instruments a little bit.

A good general benchmark for you to know if your song is getting too loud, is to look at the volume meter on the Master Track. The volume meter will be active when you press the "Play" button on the playback control. You will then see colored bars on each currently active Mixer Track bumping up and down. These bars represent the volume peaks of the instruments on the Mixer Tracks. To see the overall volume level for your whole song, simply left-click the Master Track and look at its volume meter.



If the volume level jumps above 0 dB (yes, it's measured that way), these bars will get a red(ish) color. Red(ish) colored bars generally mean that your sound is a bit too loud. Just try to keep everything below that 0 dB limit by using the volume sliders. This means that you usually have to lower the volume for a lot of instruments.

Controlling the volume to create a balanced mix is extremely important, but having a good balance in the stereo field is also important. The stereo field is just the relationship of the sounds between the left and the right "speaker". Using the stereo field properly can give you a wider mix which sounds bigger, and a mix that can "breathe" better. This means that not all the instruments are condensed in the same center spot, but are nicely distributed throughout the stereo spectrum to make good use of the stereo

nature of your two ears. It simply helps to bring a good sense of space to your mix.

One way to make use of the stereo field is by using the panning parameters on the Mixer. The panning parameters allow you to balance all your instruments differently. You can pan some more to the left, some more to the right or leaving some exactly in the center.

The panning parameters can be found on the Mixer directly above the volume sliders. To control a panning knob, simply left-click on it, hold and drag up or down. Dragging up will pan the signal to the right. Dragging down will pan the signal to the left.

When you want to pan your instruments, always try to look for balance. Don’t pan everything to the right or left. Look for an even distribution throughout the stereo field.

Some instruments lend themselves better than others when it comes down to making panning decisions. For example, a kickdrum shouldn’t be panned at all and should be left in the center of your mix. This way it keeps its power which will sound much better in clubs and car systems.

On the other hand, percussion samples, like claps, snares, crashes, hats or rides, are often very well suited to be panned quite extremely. Feel free to experiment by panning a couple of percussion samples to the left and right at different levels. Try to find balance. If you pan one sample to the right, also pan one to the left. This often yields good results. If you don’t have any samples yet to experiment with, you can always download my free sample pack.

As far as the Mixer goes, there are more options available that you can look into. But for now, these are the essential basics. You know all that you need to know to get you started very effectively.

And as far as the process of mixing goes, be aware that it can be a true artform. I shared a couple of important tips here, but there are so many

elements to it that there are entire educations about it. But with a little bit of knowledge and practice, you can become really good quite quickly.

That's also why I've written an EDM Mixing Guide. In this guide you will discover all my mixing strategies and learn how to mix like a pro. When you're ready for it, just click here: EDM Mixing Guide. Keep in mind that it's not entirely written for a rank beginner. However, as a rank beginner you sure can get a lot of valuable strategies out of it.

How about we tie an end to this chapter? You may experience some information overload. It can be hard to process it all at once. That's why I encourage you to practice everything and take it step by step. Don't feel like you have to hurry. If you simply follow all the guidelines in this book, you'll get these music-making skills as quickly as reasonably possible. That's the big benefit of only looking at the essential basics that give you almost all the results.

Anyways, if you can add different instruments to different Mixer Tracks, add effects to them and control the volume and panning, you're ready to start your song-building hobby or career. As long as you get this bigger understanding of how the Channel Rack, Piano Roll, Playlist and Mixer work together, you will succeed.

It's more than enough to start kicking some music-making ass. You now have all the tools and information necessary to find your way in FL Studio

as a beginner. Read or reread this guide as many times as you need. It’s really easy, but just follow everything step by step at your own pace.

Other FL Studio tricks

Okay, okay… I lied. You're not ready yet. I forgot to tell you a critical process in song-building. Besides, I need to address a few FL Studio subjects as well. So, let's use this chapter for that.

Now imagine this… You've spend days, weeks, months, may be years using your scarce spare time to carefully implement hundreds of instruments, effects and made a gazillion tweaks and changes to build this epic maze of Patterns and Clips that turns into a true masterpiece which makes even Beethoven feel bad about himself. But there's one problem… you can't send it to your friends, you can't listen to it in your car and you certainly can't release it for that big label company. Why? Because you haven't learned that critical process in song-building yet.

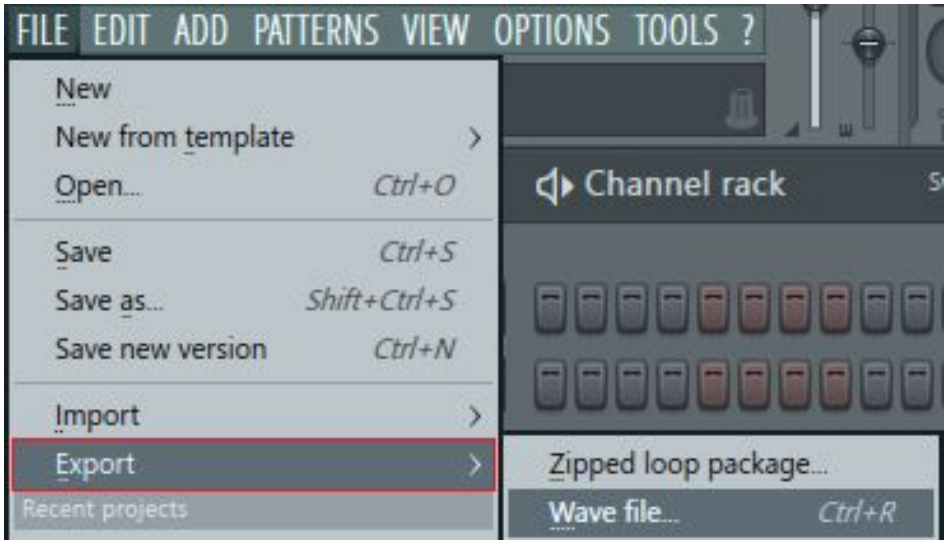
So, what is that critical process and why is it so important?

It may sound obvious but being able to export or render your song to an audio file can be extremely valuable. It allows you to play it on your phone, your car, a club, send it to your friends, share it online or even present that big label company a demo of your work. You can't do that if you don't export/render your song first.

How to export a song

Before you export a song, you have to determine if you want to export your whole song or only just a Pattern. You can do that by switching between the “Song mode” and “Pattern mode” on the playback control. If you want to render the content of your Playlist, set it to Song mode.

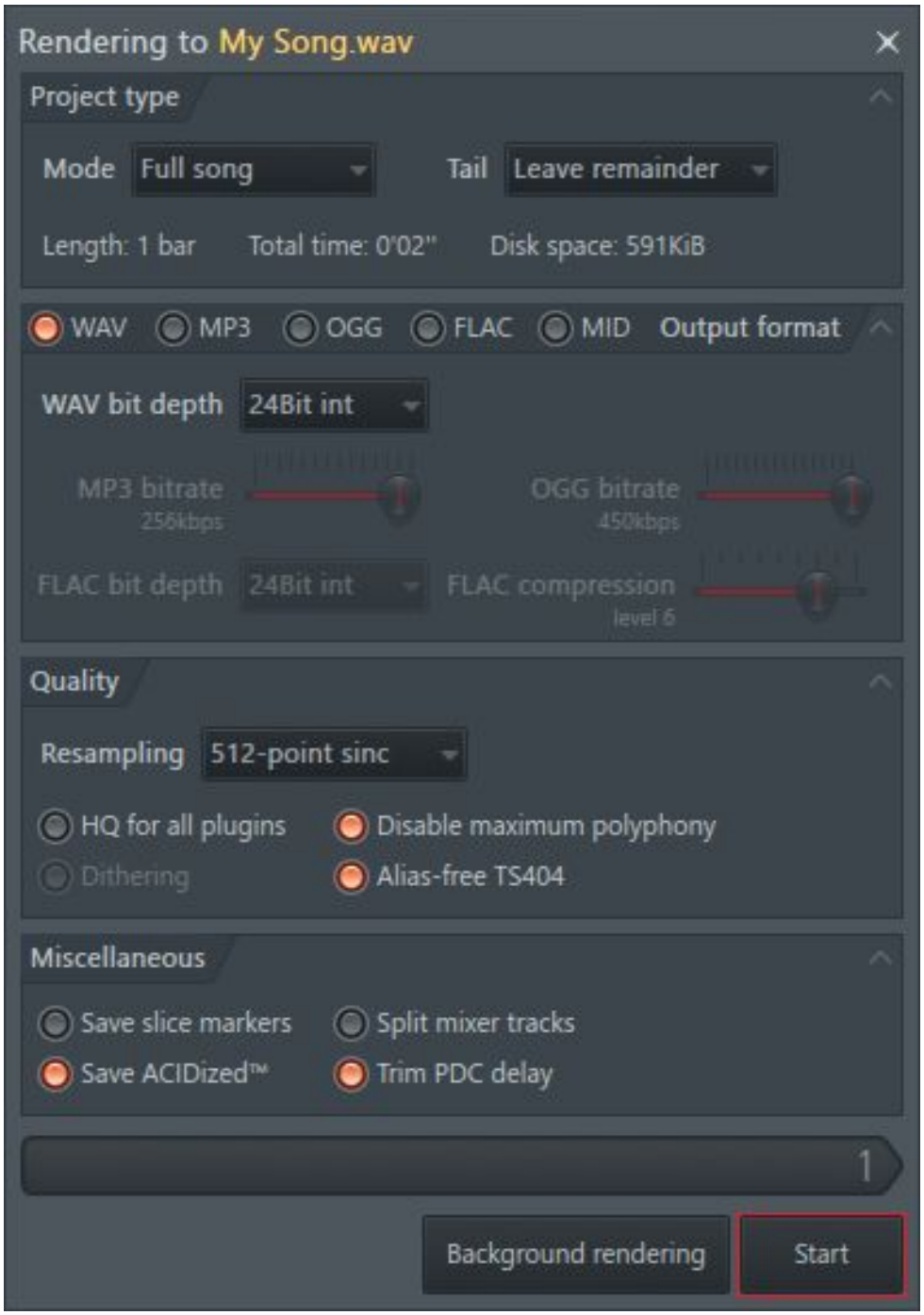
To export or render your song, click “File” in the menu bar, select “Export” and then click onto your preferred audio file format. Personally, I always select “Wave file…”. A wave file (.wav) is an audio file format without any quality loss. Other formats usually contain some form of quality loss by using different types of file compression. However, for sending it to friends or putting it online, it doesn’t really matter. Just go with the most popular formats, like MP3.



If all goes well, a new window will appear. This is the window where you have to name your file and choose a location to store it. You can simply choose to save it to your hard drive or music library. It’s up to you. Give it a nice name and click “Save” when you’re ready.

Once you’ve hit “Save” another window will show up. This is the rendering window. On the rendering window you can change the output format or use some settings to change the quality of your song. It doesn’t all really matter that much, except maybe you want to set the “Resampling” quality to “512-point sinc”. Theoretically, this should give the highest quality. It’s likely you can barely hear the differences.

When you’re happy with all the rendering settings, hit that “Start” button at the bottom right corner of the window. Depending on your computer power, the rendering quality, the length of your song, and the type and number of instruments and effects being used, it can only take a second or up to multiple long minutes.



After the rendering process is complete, you have yourself an audio file stored onto one of your mediums. Just go to the file in the specified location and you can now use it however you want.

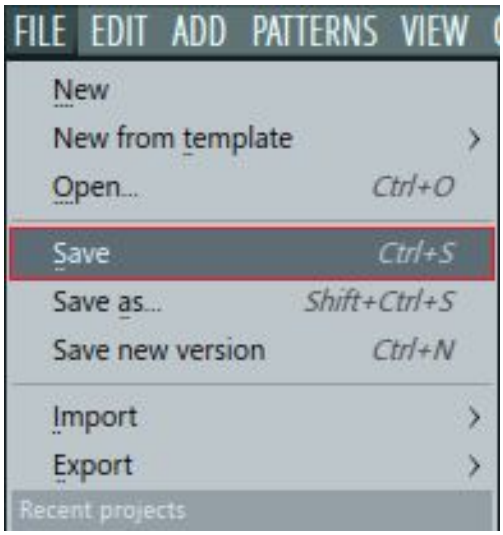
That was really easy. But do you know what else makes your FL Studio life easy? Saving your project files…

Save your FL Studio project (1000 times)

When you carefully build a song and make a lot of changes, it would be a shame if that goes to waste. That's why you'd have to save your FL Studio project to make sure it's still there the next time.

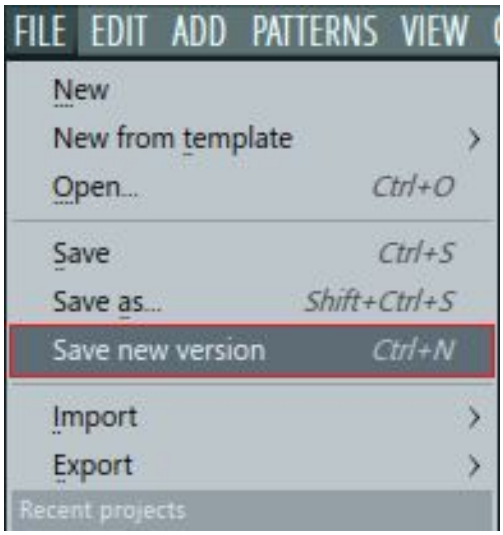
Not only do you want to save your project ones, you probably want to save it at least 1000's of times while you're working on it. Okay, may be that's exaggerated, but the point is that it can be very smart to always have your updated project being saved. For example, every time you're happy with a certain amount of changes, make it a habit to immediately hit that "Save" button. This way you always have your updated file save and sound on your hard drive.

You can save your FL Studio project file (.flp) by clicking "File" in the menu bar and then click "Save". When you save your project for the first time, you'll get the "Save as" window. In this window you can select a location and give your project a name. Simply choose a location, give your project a nice name and click "Save". Your project has now been saved to the location you've selected.



Also, every time that you're going to make changes, and you don't want to mess up the last version of your project, simply save a new version and work in that one. If at some point you mess things up while working on your song, you can always go back to a previous version and start from there again.

To save a new version, click "File" in the menu bar and click "Save new version". FL Studio will automatically make your current project the new version and save it to the same location as your first version. It also adds a number to the filename. The more "new versions" you save this way, the higher the file's version number becomes.



That brings is to another obvious good practice: always make backups regularly! FL Studio projects are creative files that are sometimes very hard to recreate if for some reason your storage medium crashes. Personally, I have all my FL Studio files always stored in two or more locations. It's just a smart thing to do, especially when you pile up these songs and snippets over the course of your life. So, if you haven't already, find a way to manage and backup your personal files regularly.

Don't skim over saving and back-upping your personal files. It's not the most exciting part, but sooner or later you'll experience your files being lost, damaged, erased or broken. And that would be a real shame for all your hard work.

Anyways, what were the other subjects I wanted to address?

BUT YOU DIDN'T EXPLAIN…

Now, what simply needs to be said is that FL Studio has so many more functions and tools we haven't talked about in this book. These functions and tools are all valuable and all serve mentioning. However, that's almost impossible, nor would it be good to blow your brains out with every possibility. Furthermore, even if you think you know everything, there's still new things to learn and explore you didn't know before.

So, the fact is that there's probably a lot I didn't explain. I haven't talked about FL Studio's Browser, filters, sound recording, helpers, chords, compressors, analyzers and waveforms, just to name a few. There's just too much to learn and too little time and pages to discuss it in.

Most of these things you simply have to explore by yourself or maybe I'll write another book to go deeper down the FL Studio rabbit hole. And to be honest, most tools or function aren't that relevant, especially for a beginner. Who cares if you don't know how to reverse the polarity of a sample or how to "side chain" your reverb. These things don't really determine your music making skills or quality that much. They aren't a huge factor in the bigger picture of FL Studio's workings and making your own music.

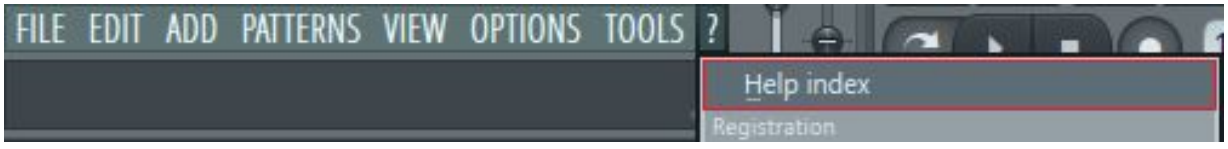
That's why this book serves a purpose and one purpose only: getting you to start making music as quickly and effectively as possible by solely focusing on the essential basics and the general functions. Let it thereby be a future-proof mental framework for you to follow for the rest of your FL Studio journey.

When you just keep in mind that every other tool or setting in FL Studio works in the same way, you're good. They're mostly just knobs, buttons or sliders (parameters) that only represent a specific setting on the Channel Rack, Piano Roll, Playlist or Mixer. Changing or using that parameter will often change the sound, melody or rhythms a certain way. As long as you understand the importance of the 4 main functions in FL Studio and you have that bigger picture, you will very quickly understand the other tools and settings FL Studio has to offer.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HELP?

Now, if all else fails and you really want to learn or know about certain topics, I'd like to share a good tip here. FL Studio comes with a very well-organized help function. It's truly legit. There's so much information in there that this guide should be totally unnecessary.

To access the FL Studio help function, click on the question mark (?) in the menu bar and click "Help index". The "FL Studio Users Manual" window will appear. In this window you can search any topic or browse through its content. If you have a question regarding anything related to FL Studio, I'm sure it can be found in the help index.



If you need more help or if you want different resources, you can always visit my website at https://screechhouse.com or visit my YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/c/screechhouse. You will find lessons, tips or ideas there, but you can also find some products that can really help your song get to that next level. Just drop by and come say *"Hello"*. I always try to read and respond to messages when possible.

If you want to have a quick video overview of the material covered in this guide, you can visit my FL Studio Guide for Beginners lesson on YouTube. Getting some visual feedback, together with this explanation, can really boost your learning experience.

Hopefully my work will contribute to your growth as a producer. If it does, I'd always appreciate if you spread the word. Don't forget to grab your free sample pack on the next page and make use of the resources below it.

Now it's your turn… Good luck!

- Cep (music producer, author & creator of *Screech House*)

THE ULTIMATE MELODY GUIDE

HOW TO MAKE AWESOME MELODIES

WITHOUT KNOWING MUSIC THEORY

*** NOTES ***

*** SCALES ***

*** CHORDS ***

*** MELODIES ***

By Cep from Screech House

PREFACE

Would you like to make awesome melodies and do you want to get that professional “feel” to them? Do you also want to get your songs to that premium musical level or do you just want to play some catchy tunes? Whatever your goal is, this guide will definitely help you get there quickly, so your listeners will instantly become addicted to your music.

All the ideas, tricks and strategies you’re about to learn will always work and give these amazing results. Once you understand the underlaying structures, they will become part of who you are. By knowing and modelling the information in this guide, you will get the skills required to make awesome melodies for the rest of your life.

How do I know? Because everything you’re about to learn, I also implement myself for more than a decade now. Every song or snippet I’ve made, contains at least some of these ideas, tricks and strategies. They simply always work.

You don’t have to take my word for it and just blindly believe what I say. You can go to my website at https://screechhouse.com or go to my YouTube channel at https://youtube.com/c/screechhouse and watch some of my lessons. It’s all free content that gives you a good impression of my work and what you can expect. You may actually find some very useful music theory content there which can help you move ahead tremendously.

Music theory can be an enormously overwhelming topic to dive into and can feel like an endless hole of information. This can turn you off and leaves you discouraged or demotivated to stick to it. It basically encourages you to give up.

That's exactly the reason why I've created this guide. It serves as a music theory shortcut by only looking at the essential strategies that give you these impressive melodies very quickly. You don't have to know everything to make awesome music. In fact, you only have to know a little and still being able to get these powerful results that make people think you've followed music classes for at least 20 years.

So, it's set up in a way that you'll get the essential basics and you'll get all the strategies I personally always use to become successful. I've selected the most valuable information that's absolutely necessary to get these musically pleasing melodies as fast as reasonably possible.

This book also serves as a detailed and complete extension of my melody lessons on YouTube or on my website. On my website all the lessons are organized in different topics. You can simply go to the melody & chord page and watch many of the topic related videos. They will help you get real visual and audible clues of all the information you're about to learn here. I highly recommend it.

Now, this guide is written in a way that it can be understood by anyone. But be aware that I am a music producer, using software to create songs. That's why you may find some metaphors or explanations that are more easily interpretable when you're a music producer yourself. However, it's all relatively easy stuff, so without any musical background, you are still able to understand everything.

Throughout the chapters and paragraphs, you will find images to clarify the concerning explanations and examples. This can be really helpful, but know that most of the images are taken from the FL Studio application. FL Studio is the software I use to make music. You don't have to be an FL Studio user yourself to be able to understand them. They're very self-explanatory. If you happen to misunderstand one, simply ignore the image and try to understand the bigger underlaying principle that's being discussed.

The final thing to share here is a little information about my background. My nickname is Cep and I'm the creator and founder of *Screech House*. *Screech House* is the platform where I share ideas and strategies to make EDM (Electronic Dance Music) in FL Studio, specifically the harder musical styles like hardstyle or rawstyle, but also some trance or house. Feel free to visit my website and YouTube channel. And don't hesitate if you want me to send a message there.

I'm also an author and published multiple different books about topics related to using profitable music-making strategies. At the time of this writing, I've got two other guides available that can save you years of

struggling to figure everything out on your own. When you want to discover the topics these guides cover, I highly recommend checking them out. You can simply follow these links:

- EDM Mixing Guide
- FL Studio Beginner's Guide (included in the first section of this bundle)

Lastly, it's important for you to know that I'm from the Netherlands. Dutch is my native language, English isn't. So, there could be some funny words or sentences in here that may make you smile. However, I've made sure that everything is completely understandable. Whether English is your native language or not, you should be able to read everything and understand it correctly.

Well, that should cover the preface section. Let's begin!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Can I first give a quick shout out to a special person?

This person deserves to be in this spot and rightfully so to be thanked genuinely. If you're reading this, you know who you are…

Thank you for investing in yourself by getting this book and having the trust in my work. I'll do my absolute best not to disappoint you.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

You're here because you want to make awesome melodies while you probably don't know much yet about music theory. I assume that you just want to get these melody-making skills as quickly as possible with the least amount of knowledge or theory possible. Just like the 80/20 rule. Get 80% of the results by only having to put in 20% of the effort.

That's exactly how this guide is set up and why it's set up that way. It skims over the most important topics and explains the essential basics that gives you the most profitable results. Make no mistake, you do have to know a couple of important basic topics to have a musical structure to follow. So, that's what we're here for. Let's give you this structure, so you can get there as fast as possible.

Now, the chapters and paragraphs are written in such a way that they enable you to learn cumulative. This basically means that you have to understand each chapter or paragraph first, before proceeding to the next one. If you don't understand a chapter or paragraph yet, it's best to stick to it until you do. Then you can move on to the next one.

To get a good understanding of each chapter or paragraph, it's crucial that you practice what you learn. By actually applying the information right away, you'll develop that deeper understanding quickly. By only reading it,

it stays in your intellect and can be forgotten rather quickly. It doesn’t necessarily sink in that way.

Whether you’re just playing an instrument or you’re using software as a music producer, for the sake of practicing the material, it doesn’t really matter. Just do it when you can. How you do it, is up to you.

So, just explore everything at your own pace. There’s no need to hurry and it’s not that hard to follow. It’s actually rather easy to learn if you set your mind to it. Just go step by step and within no time you can already play some notes and make some tunes.

WHAT IS A MELODY?

Before you can start to make a melody, you have to know what a melody is. I'm sure you already know what it means but allow me to quickly explain it.

A melody is simply a musical storyline that is often the highlight (climax) of a song. That's it. But to add a little bit more to that: a melody follows a time loop and while doing that it progresses a certain way. It has certain rhythms and pitch changes. It has a logical flow and it "loops" naturally, so it can always repeat itself. All in all, melodies should sound harmonious and pleasing to listen to.

Depending on the genre or your preferred outcome, you can make all kinds of different melodies. Some have a slow pace, some have a fast pace and some have multiple different paces. Some are short and some are long. Some are dark, some are happy. Some are euphoric and some are dramatic. It's all just a matter of what you want to achieve by making one. This way you're really the architect of your own musical piece.

Now, to make a good melody there are some things that you have to know first. To help you learn these things as quickly as possible, I am giving you 4 simple steps to follow. These 4 steps serve as a guideline for you to make melodies without any musical background. They're my "to go" strategies for making melodies, because I am one of those persons that doesn't have a

musical background. I had to figure out a way to make it work and get great musical results. That's why you can simply model my strategies and get the same amazing outcome.

But be aware that these are only guidelines. They work perfectly, but they also constrain you, because they follow some rules. If you're at a level that you don't need those rules anymore, then just drop them. By dropping the guidelines you're able to create melodies much more freely and extensively.

Anyways, I'm expecting you're not at that level yet, so these are all the steps you have to understand to be able to make good melodies:

1. **Notes & octaves**
2. **Musical scales**
3. **Chords & chord progression**
4. **Melodies**

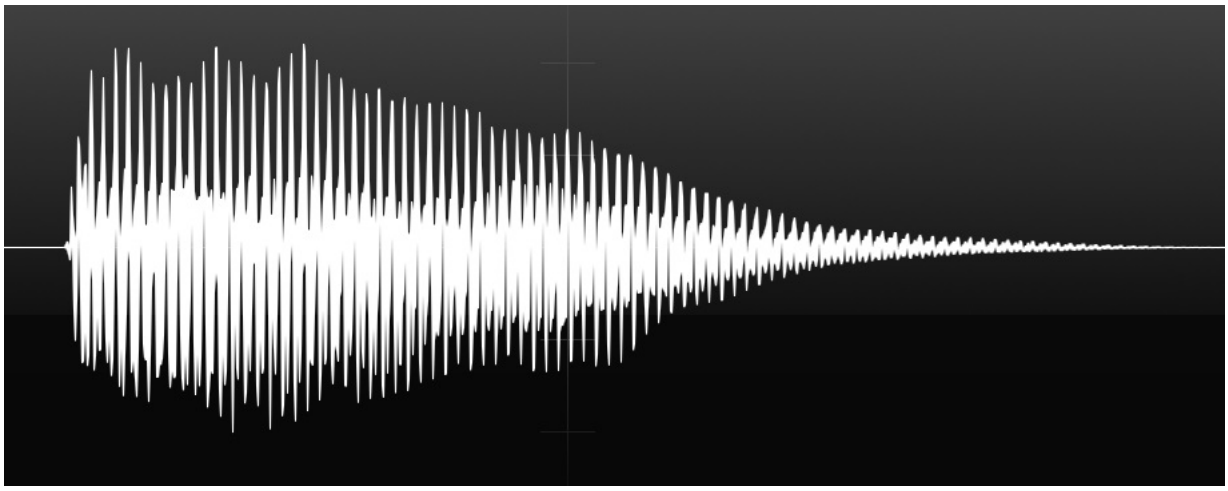
In the next chapters we're going to take a look at each step. By understanding each step, you will have the solid foundation needed to make awesome melodies. Once you arrive at the 4th step (melodies chapter), you'll get all the easy strategies I use to get awesome results. But before you can use those, you have to know and understand the other chapters as well.

NOTES & OCTAVES

The first important step to take is understanding notes and octaves. Why? Because a melody consists of different notes and octaves. They're the smallest building units of a melody. To find out what notes and octaves are, let's first dive a little bit into sounds in general.

Your ears work by picking up air particle vibrations (that is, if you believe in a materialistic world). These vibrations come from a source, like slamming a door, screaming or hitting a piano. This is how humans are able to interpret sounds.

The vibrations in the air are called soundwaves. Each sound source can create different soundwaves. This way, a soundwave contains the specific information that exactly defines a certain sound. Your ears can simply pick up these different soundwaves and your mind can interpret these differences. That's how you are able to distinguish a door slam from a scream. The soundwaves are different and contain different information.



But what has that to do with notes or octaves? Okay hold on. Stay with me.

A soundwave can contain information that's more "random" or more "elegant" (or combinations of both). The more random soundwaves are non-musical sounds. The more elegant soundwaves are musical sounds.

To get a musical sound, a soundwave needs to vibrate consistently or regularly. It should repeat a constant pattern or having a constant cycle. Each oscillation (one single back and forth movement of a soundwave) has the same duration, resulting in a constant tone. This constant tone is what you will perceive as a musical sound.

So, musical sounds are just regular/consistent vibrations. Your ears will pick these up and your mind will interpret them as having a certain frequency or pitch. The pitch or frequency you perceive will be determined by the speed of these vibrations. A slow vibration will be perceived as a low

pitch/frequency. A fast vibration will be perceived as a high pitch/frequency.

The frequency of a musical sound is measured in Hertz (Hz). A frequency of 1 hertz means 1 wave cycle (oscillation) per second. A frequency of 1000 hertz means 1000 wave cycles (oscillations) per second.

This is where notes and octaves come in. A note is simply the base pitch or frequency of a sound. By having a certain note, you will get a certain pitch or frequency. So for example, by hitting a certain piano key, you can get a musical sound that has a base frequency of 440 Hz.

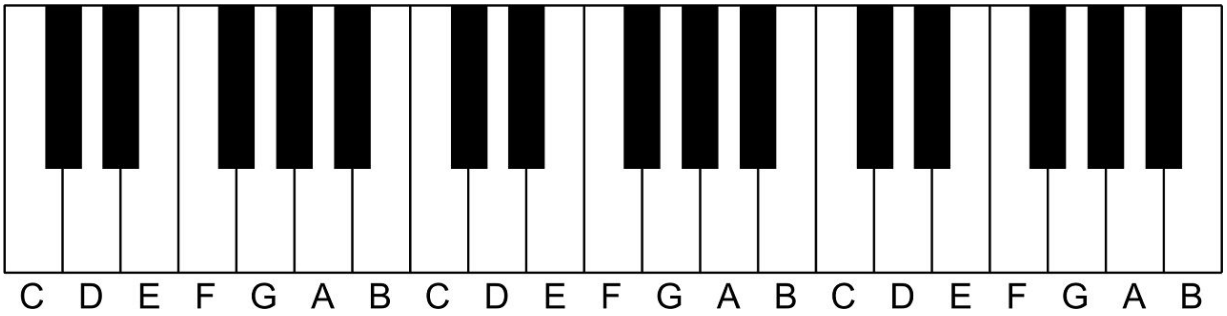
Now, an octave is the difference in pitch between two notes where one has twice the frequency of the other. So for example, when you'd have a 440 Hz note, the note at 880 Hz is the exact same note, but at a higher octave. At each higher octave, each note doubles in frequency.

But why is this important?

When you're building melodies, you always have to use a certain musical "structure". This structure simply follows the logical consequences of note frequencies and octaves. The structure can be understood by looking at a piano or keyboard layout. A piano or keyboard layout gives you the structure to work with music logically and harmoniously.

As you probably know, a piano or keyboard has these black and white keys. Each key represents a certain note and there are 12 notes within each octave. There are 7 white notes and 5 black notes. The 7 white notes carry the letters A, B, C, D, E, F & G. The 5 black notes usually carry the letters A#, C#, D#, F#, & G#. So, in total we get these 12 keys:

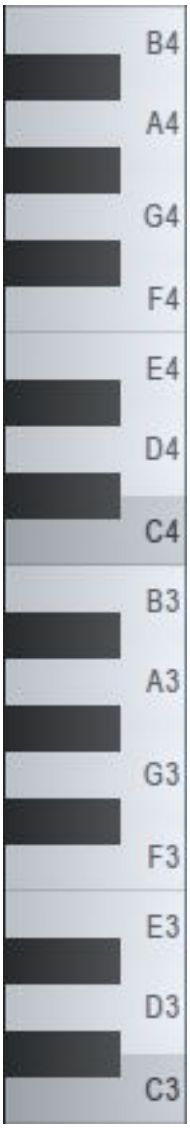
A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#



All the 12 notes have a different frequency, but all within a range of one octave. Each octave always consists of all these 12 notes. That's why you will see this note-pattern being repeated on a piano or keyboard. These 12 notes will come back and come back at all the octaves being presented on the layout.

Now as discussed earlier, a note that doubles in frequency, is at a higher octave. This way, the notes at lower octaves sound lower and notes at the higher octaves sound higher. To understand how "high" or how "low" a note is being played at (a.k.a. in which octave), we simply assign a number to it. This way we know in which octave a note is being played and we can get a clue of its pitch/frequency.

So for example, when you press the A4 note on a piano, you'll get a base frequency of 440 Hz. When you press the A3 note on a piano, you'll get a base frequency of 220 Hz. This way each note letter gets a number. The number represents the octave. The lower the number, the lower the pitch/frequency and the higher the number, the higher the pitch/frequency.



When you start to make melodies, you will always use this structure. You have to know what notes are, what octaves are and how you can read the letters and numbers. It’s really simple, but very important to understand before we continue.

So under the hood, music is actually a logical science when you’d understand everything at the deepest level. But this is actually way too complex to pay attention to or to practically work with. It’s unnecessary to have that deepest understanding. That’s why we use these tools and structures to work with. It’s a good framework we can use to work more quickly and effectively in building our musical pieces.

What you only need to remember from this chapter is that notes are just certain base frequencies or pitches. And octaves determine the range of these frequencies or pitches, where at each higher octave the frequency of a note doubles. Everything falls together in a “structure” of 12 notes (A to G#) and many different octaves (1, 2, 3, etc.) that can be simply understood by looking at a piano or keyboard layout. With this structure you’re able to create logical and harmonious melodies and musical pieces.

To give you a quick idea: when you play the A5 note, it’s the exact same as playing the A6 note, except the A6 note sounds higher (double the frequency). If you’d play A5 and A6 together, they will perfectly fit and sound musically correct. This way you’re able to use the note and octave structure to have rules that allow you to make logical and musically pleasing melodies and arrangements.

There are many different rules for using the notes and octaves in a logical and musically correct way. It can truly be a giant topic, but unnecessary to dive into that deeply. Throughout the rest of this book you will discover some of these rules, like using musical scales and building chords. But we will only look at the basics and trying to keep it as simple as possible. The goal is to get you started as effectively as possible. By only knowing a few rules and the basics, you’re already capable of creating awesome melodies.

Musical scales

The second important step to take is understanding musical scales. Why? Because a musical scale sets the rules on which notes you can and cannot use when you build a melody. It serves as a framework, allowing you to only use a certain collection of notes. This way you can use a scale to make sure your melody sounds musically correct. It defines the melodic structure.

You can't just randomly play some notes together and get a pleasing musical piece. That's why a scale simply limits/constraints the note choices you can make for building a melody. This is really a good thing, because having these limits (rules) allow you to make better choices more easily. It's just easier to choose the right notes for your melody by having these rules to follow.

However, there are many (and I really mean many) different scales that you can use. Each different scale has a different collection of notes for you to use. This way a scale can determine the general "feel" of a melody. For example, melodies built on the "major" scale sound happy. Melodies built on the "harmonic minor" scale sound more dark or dramatic. Melodies built on the "melodic minor" scale sound more serious and euphoric.

So, scales determine your note choices and give you these limits. The type of scale you pick determines the general "feel" for your melody. There are many different scales, all allowing different notes, and all having a different

name. For this book, I only want to quickly look at 3 very common scales, especially used in western music. With these 3 scales you can make about any melody you want and make it sound professional and awesome.

The 3 most common musical scales are:

- Major
- Harmonic minor
- Melodic minor

The general “feel” for each of those scales is as follows:

- Major = happy
- Harmonic minor = dark and/or dramatic
- Melodic minor = serious and/or euphoric

Now, before you start to make a melody, simply always pick a musical scale and stick to it. By knowing how a scale influences the “feel” of your melody, you can make your decision. Do you want to make a happy melody? Pick the major scale. Do you want a dark melody? Pick the harmonic minor scale. Once you’ve picked a scale, it’s time to look at which notes you can use and cannot use. By knowing that, you can actually start your melody making journey.

So, how do we know which notes we can use that fall within our just selected musical scale?

We only need to know 2 things:

1. The root note or key of the (future) melody.
2. The intervals or “jumps” between the notes.

The root note is generally the very first lowest sounding note of a melody. It defines the key of a scale. It’s simply a way of denoting on which frequency a scale starts. For example, you can play a melody at G major, E major or C# minor. So, the key (root note) of the scale basically determines on which note your melody starts and how you should progress from there.

Now depending on your root note, you can have a different collection of notes within a scale. For example, if you’d play a C major melody, you are only allowed to use the A, B, C, D, E, F and G notes. But if you’d play a D major melody, you are now only allowed to use the D, E, F#, G, A, B and C# notes. But this looks very confusing. How do you know which notes you can use if they are always different on different keys (root notes)?

Instead of just looking at the notes, it’s better to look at the intervals or “jumps” between the notes. These intervals always follow the same pattern

which belongs to that scale regardless of the key (root note). By understanding the intervals, you will always understand the scale and you will always understand which notes you can use at different keys (root notes). So, the interval pattern (jumps between the notes) actually defines the scale.

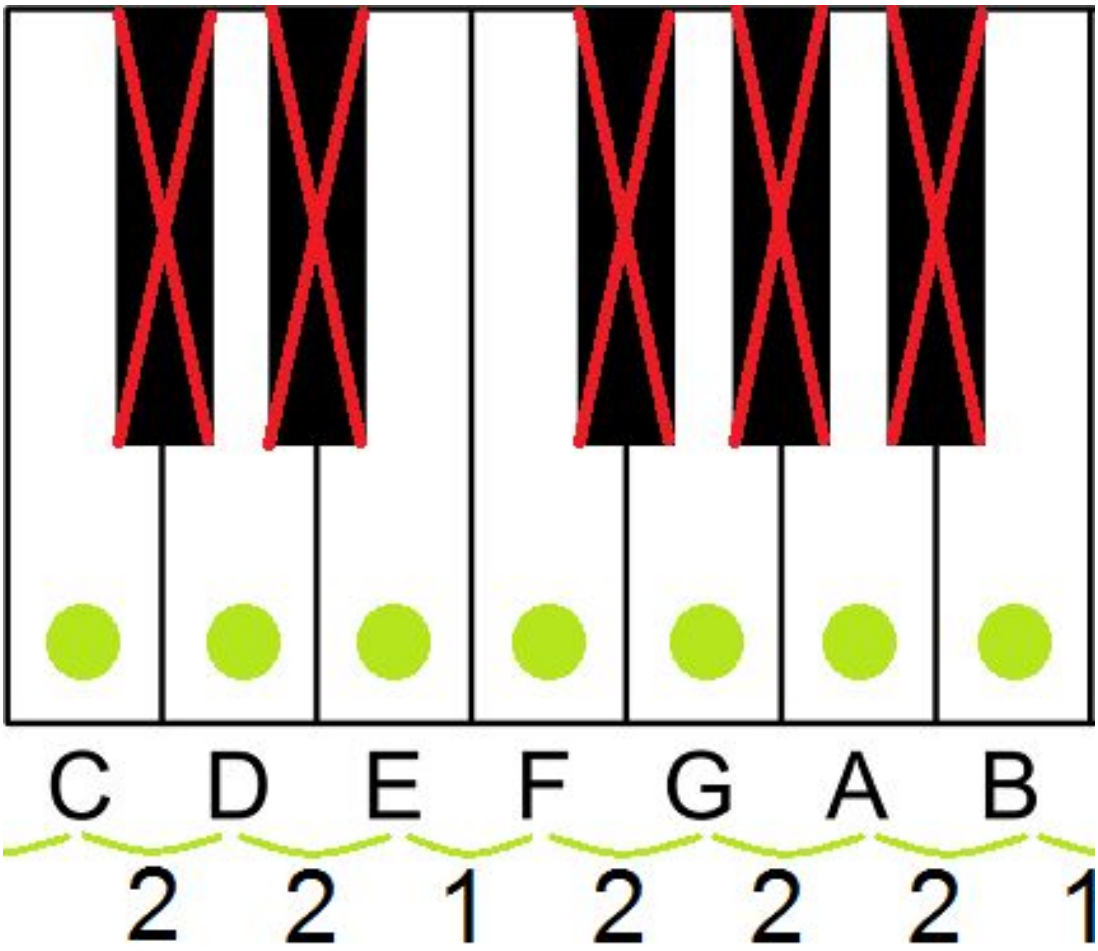
Remember these 12 notes (A to G#) in one octave? We can simply define the interval pattern by using numbers that will tell us which of these 12 notes we can use for our scale. The numbers represent the jumps to the next notes we are allowed to use.

For example, the major scale consists of 7 notes that we can use (5 notes we cannot use). That automatically means there are also 7 intervals (jumps) between them. If we just determine these intervals (jumps), we always exactly know which notes we can use. So, for the major scale the note intervals look like this:

2-2-1-2-2-2-1

What this means is that you start with the root note, like for example a C (C major). From this root note (C), you exactly make the jumps between the notes as described with that interval pattern. So, the first interval number is 2. This means the next note is 2 notes up from C, which is a D (jumping over the C# note). The interval number after that is also 2. This means that we now have to jump from D to E (skipping the D# note). The third interval number is a 1. The 1 simply tells you to go to the next note, which is an F in

this case. If you continue, you'll find all the notes that belong to the C major scale, which are: C, D, E, F, G, A & B.



This way you just use these interval numbers to decide which notes you can use and cannot use. All the notes you jump over (skip) you simply cannot use in your melody.

Let's do another example to make it clearer. We already know that by choosing a different root note, the notes we can use within our scale will be

different. That's why we can use these interval patterns, because the interval pattern that belongs to the scale never changes.

So, instead of picking C major, let's now choose D major and find out which notes we can use for D major. Again, the interval pattern for the major scale doesn't change, it's still 2-2-1-2-2-2-1. By simply starting on a D note we can predict all the notes by looking at the interval pattern. The first number of the interval pattern is a 2. So, what's the 2nd note after D? That will be an E (jumping over D#). What's the 2nd note after E? That will be an F# (jumping over F). What's the 1st note after F#? That will simply be the next note, which is a G. Now, repeat this for the whole interval pattern and you will get the notes: D, E, F#, G, A, B and C#. These are all the notes that belong to the D major scale.

Depending on the scale you choose, you can have a different interval pattern. Let's take a look at the interval patterns of the 3 most common musical scales:

- Major: 2-2-1-2-2-2-1
- Harmonic minor: 2-1-2-2-1-3-1
- Melodic minor: 2-1-2-2-1-2-2

By knowing this, you can now exactly determine which notes you can use and cannot use on any root note (key) you pick. But if you don't like having to calculate the notes within your scale manually, you can also use tools.

For example, there are websites that will help you determine the notes that belong to a scale. This way you immediately know the notes you can use without having to think. One of the websites I like to use is called looknohands. Simply click that link and you'll get a webpage where you can pick a scale and a root note (on the right side of that page). It will then show you the notes you can use.

If you're making music digitally in a D.A.W. (Digital Audio Workstation), you also often have tools or helpers that will help you to use the right notes when you're building a melody. For example, in FL Studio (the application I use), there's a scale helper tool on the Piano Roll (the place where you can make melodies). When you enable that helper, FL Studio tries to predict the scale you're using and it will show which notes belong to that scale.

Feel free to use these tools and find out what works best for you. It's a very good idea, because it will give you extra guidance, allowing you to make better musical choices. It also removes some of the thinking from your mind. Just keep it simple.

By the way, you don't even have to get too wrapped up around the idea of have to choose a root note (key) for your scale. When you have a melody that's built with the notes of your chosen scale (which will be covered in the next chapters), you can always move it up or down entirely to a different note/key. This can always easily be accomplished, because a scale is dictated by the interval between the notes. Moving an entire melody up or down a note doesn't change the interval of the notes, only the key at which

it plays. So, it’s a smart trick you can always use to get your melody to play at a different key.

Anyways, when you want to make a melody, the very first thing you always have to do is pick a scale. Then look at the interval pattern to determine which notes you can use. By knowing the available notes, you have a musical framework to follow. It’s really that easy.

To summarize:

- Pick a musical scale and stick to it. For example, the major scale.
- Pick a root note (key) which will be the very first lowest note in your melody. For example, C. This makes it the C major scale.
- Determine which notes belong to your chosen scale by using its interval pattern. For example, the major scale has these note intervals: 2-2-1-2-2-2-1. So, making a melody on C major only allows the C, D, E, F, G, A and B notes to be used.

Make sure to understand these concepts before you continue. It’s not hard, but very important to know and apply before you can move on. It will always come back as an essential framework for building musical arrangements and melodies. So, pick a scale, pick a root note and determine the selection of notes you can use. If you can do that, then let’s dive into the next step: understanding chords and making chord progressions.

Chords & chord progression

The third important step to take is understanding chords. Why? Although by just knowing notes, octaves and scales, you can already produce a good melody. Chords will bring that to the next level and will get your melody from a simple monolithic one to a professional multidimensional one.

You see, a good professional melody consists of different layers. When these layers play together, your melody sounds fuller with more musical and harmonic content. This allows for more complex melodies to arise and/or having different storylines playing together. By knowing chords, you know which notes can be played simultaneously. They help you define a structure that enables you to build these different melodic layers.

We will be talking about these melodic layers in the next chapter. For this chapter, let’s try to understand chords, but also chord progressions.

Chords

So, what are chords?

A chord is a stack of 3 or more notes being played together. When you play certain notes simultaneously, they’ll sound musically pleasing and you’ll

get a fuller and richer sound with more harmonic content. It’s important here to play the right notes, so they go together naturally. You can also play the wrong notes together, which generally results in an ugly or musically incorrect sound.

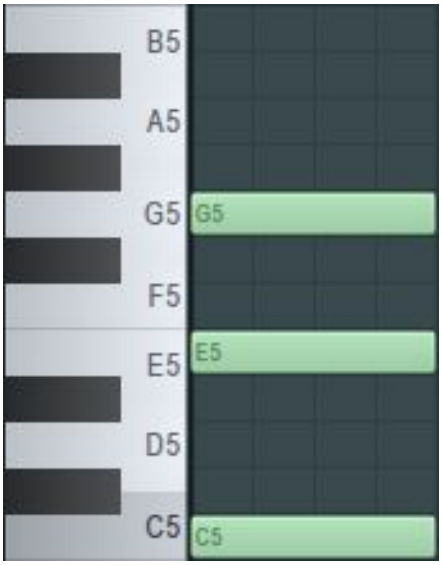
So how do we know which notes go together?

Chords can come in all kinds of different types, each with a different note combination or formula. To know every combination or possible chord structure would be way too complex/complicated. In fact, you don’t have to know all of that and still be able to produce awesome melodies. So, let’s only focus on the basics here that will immediately give you a guideline how you can go about making chords.

Remember the musical scales from the previous chapter? We need to use those again to determine our chords. Why? Because a basic chord is built up of 3 notes within a scale. This means that the notes of your chords always have to consist of the available notes of your chosen scale. An example will follow below.

You can determine a chord by looking at the interval size between the notes within the scale. Just like you look at the interval size of a scale to determine the right notes of that scale, you now look at the interval size of the notes within that scale. The typical interval size for a chord is 2. 2 means that you can play notes together that are 2 notes apart from each other.

For example, the C major scale consists of the notes C, D, E, F, G, A and B. When you start with a C note, the only thing you have to ask yourself is: what's the second note after C in my chosen musical scale? The second note after C will be the E (jumping over the D note). So, the C and E note can be played simultaneously. But to have 3 notes being played together we need to add another one. To find the next note, now pick the second note after E. Jump over the F note and you'll get the G note. This means that the C, E and G note can be played together as a basic chord. They're simply the first, third and fifth note within the scale.



Let's do another example, still using the C major scale, but this time starting on an F note. Can you find the chord that fits the F note? It's really simple. Always select the first, third and fifth note. F will be the first note. What is the third note? The third note will be the A (jumping over G). And what is

the fifth note? The fifth note will be the C (jumping over B). That leaves us with the F, A and C as a chord.

As a side note (“note” … get it?!), it’s generally not advised to play chords with notes that belong to a lower octave. If you’d play a chord at a “too” low frequency, it wouldn’t sound too pleasing, rather messy. So, I’d say it’s best not to play chords in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd octave range. Chords being played anywhere from the 4th, 5th or 6th octave typically sound best. That is, with the exception of the lowest chord notes that can function as the lowest layer (“carriers”) of your melody. We’ll discover that soon.

Anyways, as far as chords go there can be much more to it, but these are the essential basics that you have to understand. So for the sake of this guide, you only need to remember that chords are a set of 3 notes being played together. To get the right chords, always pick the first, third and fifth note within your chosen scale. If you can remember that, we can now take a quick look at chord progressions.

CHORD PROGRESSION

A chord progression is a series of two or more chords used in a musical piece. You can arrange chords in different ways that determine how your melody unfolds over time. It will simply serve as the musical foundation for your song and it will dictate the layers and storyline of your melody.

When you have this musical foundation for your song, it’s very easy to make a melody out of it. How you can make a melody out of it will be covered in the next chapter. But for now, let’s first discover how we can make a chord progression. Personally, I very often start with a good sounding chord progression and use it to have a direction/guideline for my melody.

Please keep in mind that you don’t necessarily have to start with a chord progression when you’re making a melody. It’s just a strategy to do this first. You can also do it later, or if you want to make a more basic melody you don’t even have to do it at all.

Anyways, a chord progression consists of different chords being played when time “progresses”. Time in music basically works with a logical time loop. This time loop follows a consistent beat/rhythm. A steady sequence. That’s why you can easily count the beats in a musical piece and always get a number that repeats itself. This number is 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, etc. So, music follows this logical number of beats to get these natural sounding loops and rhythms.

To get a chord progression that follows this logical time loop, we simply have to make sure that it has a total duration of 4, 8, 16, 32 or 64 beats. In modern music or electronic dance music this number is usually 16 or 32. This means that the chord progression (or melody) is often 16 or 32 beats long. After these 16 or 32 beats, it will repeat itself again. So besides having

a logical number of beats, a chord progression should also be repeatable. The last notes should connect naturally to the first notes.

Now, let’s say you want to make a chord progression of 16 beats, how do you do that?

I got some bad news for you and have to say: there are no real rules for you to do that. It’s basically just a matter of using your ears and find notes and chords that sound good and are progressing nicely together. But there are some guidelines to follow.

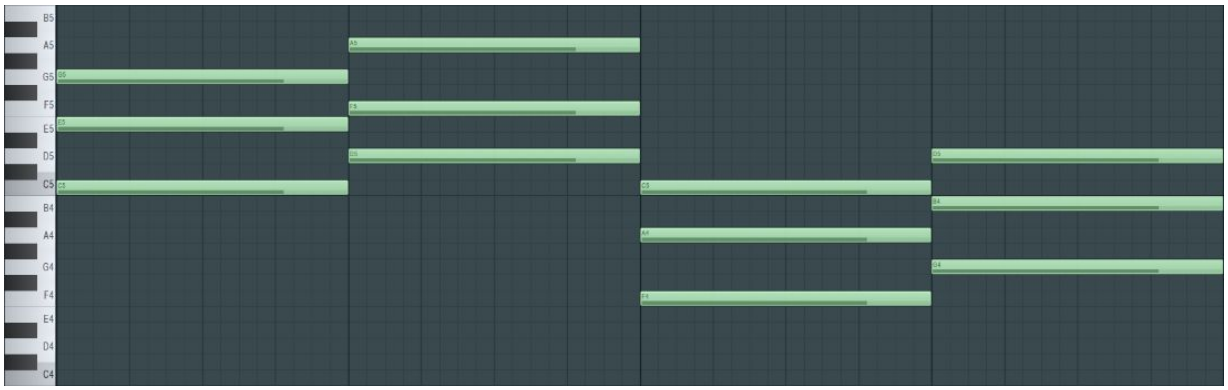
First of all, you can only use the notes within your chosen scale. This has already been discussed, so that simply leaves you with a set of notes you can use that belongs to your chosen scale.

Secondly, when you’re making a chord progression it’s a very good idea to use the logical time loop as a guideline for making different chords. For example, when you want to make a chord progression of 16 beats, it’s very handy to split it up in 4 beats sections and thereby make 4 different chords. So, the first chord has a duration of 4 beats, the second chord has a duration of 4 beats, the third chord has a duration of 4 beats and the fourth chord also has a duration of 4 beats.

But what does that really look like? Let’s say you’ve chosen the C major scale and you can only use the C, D, E, F, G, A and B notes. To make a 16

beats chord progression with 4 different chords, it may look something like this:

- First 4 beats: C5, E5, G5. (Starting with the C root note, because it’s the C major scale.)
- Second 4 beats: D5, F5, A5.
- Third 4 beats: F4, A4, C5.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4, B4, D5.



Feel free to try these chords out yourself. Whether you’re using a D.A.W. (Digital Audio Workstation) or just a musical instrument, it’s always a good idea to practice what you learn, so you get that intuitive “feel” what it actually means.

Anyways, you don’t have to do it this way, but using the logical time loop will help tremendously to keep your progression flow naturally and sound correct. You can also use a variation of different logical beats. For example,

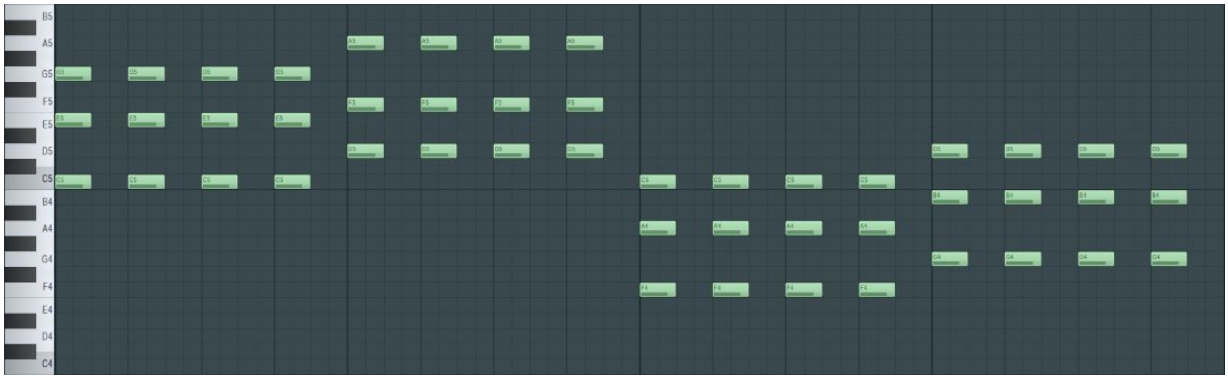
you can make the first chord 8 beats long, make the second chord 4 beats long and make the third chord also 4 beats long. In total the chord progression still has a duration of 16 beats and each chord still follows a logical number.

Let’s also do an example for that. This time we’re going to choose the C harmonic minor scale. This leaves us with the C, D, D#, F, G, G# and B notes. Instead of making a 16 beats chord progression, let’s go with a duration of 32 beats. Now we can make something like this:

- First 8 beats: C5, D#5, G5. (Starting with the C root note, because it’s the C harmonic minor scale.)
- Second 4 beats: F5, G#5, C6.
- Third 4 beats: G5, B5, D6.
- Fourth 8 beats: C5, D#5, G5.
- Fifth 4 beats: G#4, C5, D#5.
- Sixth 4 beats: G4, B4, D5.

Again, feel free to give these chords a try. When you just play them, you immediately get to see/hear how easy it is.

Now, because a chord progression has a quite slow tempo, it’s often a good idea to create a nice rhythm with your chords. This will give more drive and speed to your song. So for example, instead of playing 1 long chord at each 4 beats, you can also play 4 short chords in those same 4 beats. You can play them onbeat or offbeat. You can actually do anything you want, as long as you keep the chords consistent to the chord progression. So, in a 4-beats section you don’t play different chords, you play the same chord, but with a nice rhythm.



This actually also depends a lot on the genre you want to make, the instrument you want to use or the timing in your song. For example, chords being played with a violin string often sound best when you simply use long chord notes. But chords being played with a trance lead often sound best when they have a fast pace. So, it’s totally up to you to decide what you

want to achieve. Whether it’s a fast or slow rhythm, as long as you know what a chord progression is and how to make one, you’re good.

But we don’t have to stop here. In fact, we can get these chord progressions to sound even more interesting. To get more interesting chords and a more complex musical “steering”, you don’t have to keep the notes of the chords closely together in the tonal ladder. You can also place different notes on different octaves, as long as they’re within that chord.

Let’s use the first example of the C major chord progression again. The C major chord progression now looks like this:

- First 4 beats: C5, E5, G5.
- Second 4 beats: D5, F5, A5.
- Third 4 beats: F4, A4, C5.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4, B4, D5.

When you play the first 4 beats for example, the C, E and G notes are all pretty close together within an octave. But how about we put the C note at a lower octave? And how about we put the E note at a higher octave? Can we do that?

Absolutely! We can arrange the notes of the chords however we want. As long as we play the notes of that chord, it doesn’t really matter at which

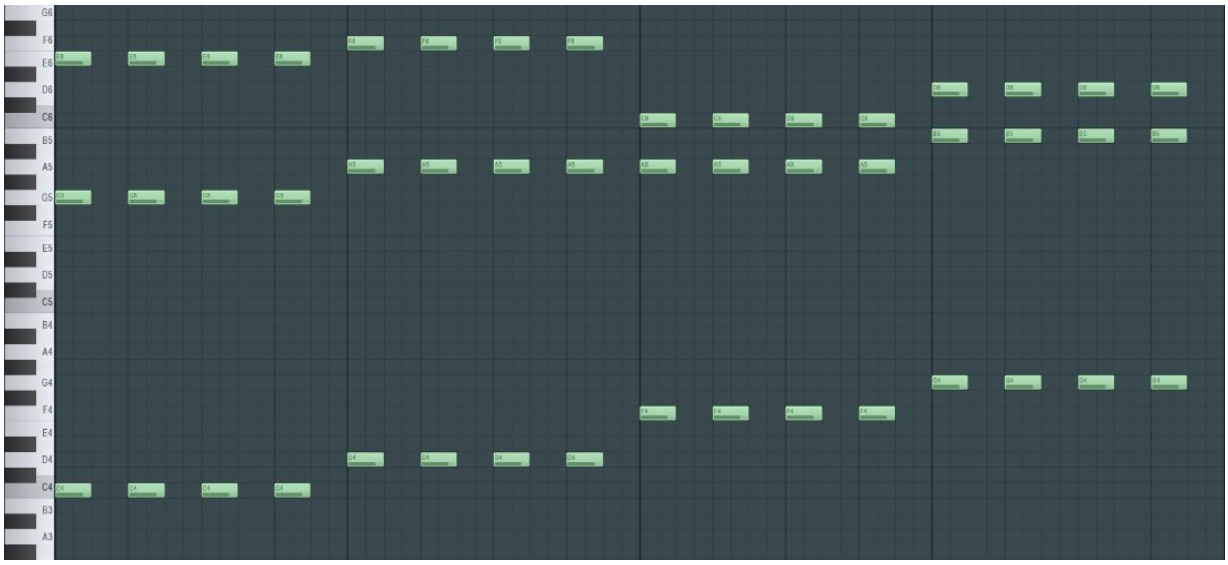
octave we play each note. This allows us to create different “feels” for each chord, but still keeping true to our musical logic.

So, instead of playing all chord notes in the same octave, we can play different chord notes in different octaves for each chord differently. It’s the difference that can make a difference. But let’s give an example here:

- First 4 beats: C4, E6, G5.
- Second 4 beats: D4, F6, A5.
- Third 4 beats: F4, A5, C6.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4, B5, D6.

May be this confuses, so let’s start with the lowest note first and the highest note last.

- First 4 beats: C4, G5, E6.
- Second 4 beats: D4, A5, F6.
- Third 4 beats: F4, A5, C6.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4, B5, D6.



It may look a little bit complicated right now, but it really isn’t. Simply understand that for each chord in your chord progression, you can arrange the notes differently. This can put different notes on top or different notes at the bottom of your chord progression and melody. It allows you to create a more interesting musical piece. As long as you start with the first lowest note as the root note (key) of your chosen scale, you can do about anything you want.

Again, you’re the one that has to make the choices. It all depends on what you want to achieve or what sounds nice. I highly encourage you to experiment with this. Just try out different chords, chord progressions and different arrangements of the notes within a chord. Use your ears and stay true to your chosen musical scale.

Now, you don’t necessarily have to start with chords or a chord progression when you’re building a melody. But you have to understand what chords

are and what a chord progression is. They're a musical framework for your melody. By having a good chord progression, you have a perfect foundation for your melody. But you can also make one after you've made a melody, or even not making one at all. However, you always have to know the theory of chords and chord progressions while building your melody. It has to be in your mind for you to be able to make good choices and build musically pleasing melodic layers, as you will learn in the next chapter.

To wrap this one up, simply understand this:

- Chords are a set of 3 notes being played together within a musical scale and are usually 2 notes apart from each other. For example: C, E and G in the C major scale.
- A chord progression is a series of two or more different chords usually within a logical time loop of 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, etc. beats.
- You can give a chord progression a rhythm (depending on the music you want to create) and experiment by arranging the notes of your chords differently, playing them at different octaves.
- Remember that it's often best to have the lowest note in your first chord as the root note of your chosen scale. For example, the lowest note of the first chord in the C major scale is a C note.

It's important that you really understand these ideas. You don't necessarily have to use them instantly, but you do have to know them before you continue. So, always pick a musical scale and try to make a good sounding

chord progression within that scale. If you can do that, you’re ready to move on.

MELODIES

The fourth and final important step to take is to build an awesome melody. A melody is often the climax or highlight in your music. It's the anticipated reward when you listen to an entire track. In song-building you usually start with a good melody and build everything else around it.

We can only talk about melodies at this stage, because to make one you have to know notes, octaves, scales, chords and chord progressions. That's why by knowing the previous chapters you have the mental foundation to kick some ass in this one.

Now before we start, let me say that there are many different ways how you can go about making melodies. I know people that can hear new melodies in their head and I've seen people just hitting some notes and make amazing musical content this way. We are all different and we all need different tools or strategies, depending on where we are in our evolution and how we function. This is perfect, because it allows us all to learn from each other and discover new ways of achieving results.

But for the sake of this guide, I will share 2 easy strategies you can use as tools to build your own melodies as a beginner, intermediate or even as an advanced. These strategies will follow musical logic and don't take into account your feeling or intuition that much. But if you can learn to do it on a feeling or intuition level, please by all means, drop the logic. The logic is

simply needed to help you give that understanding first. It provides some “rules” to follow, so you can make it work. The better you’ll get, the less “rules” you’ll need.

So, with that out of the way, what are the 2 melody making strategies you can use that give great results very quickly?

1. Use your chord progression to build a melody.
2. Use different layers to build a melody by keeping the chords theory in the back of your mind.

Let’s discuss both these methods separately by dividing this chapter into two paragraphs.

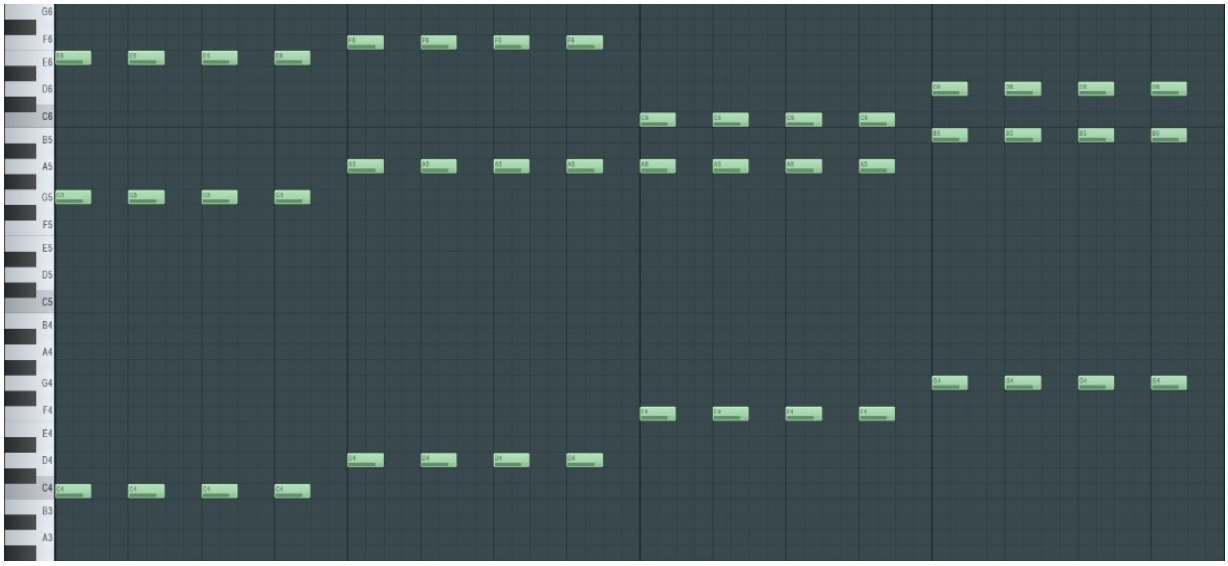
Melody based on a chord progression

Making a melody based on a chord progression is actually the easiest method. You simply use the logical musical structure of the chords in your chord progression and make a melody out of it. But here’s the catch: you do need to make a chord progression first. So, it’s not necessarily the “best” way or the “quickest” way. However, it’s still a very solid strategy to make sure you almost never make a musical error.

As mentioned, you need to have a chord progression first. If you don’t have one yet, use all the previous lessons to make one. So, pick a musical scale, stick to it and build a couple of different chords following the beat. This will be your framework to work with.

To stay consistent, let’s use the C major chord progression from the previous chapter as an example here. Again, the C major scale consists of the A, B, C, D, E, F and G notes. These are the only notes you can use within that scale. The 16-beats chord progression we’ve build, looked like this:

- First 4 beats: C4, G5, E6.
- Second 4 beats: D4, A5, F6.
- Third 4 beats: F4, A5, C6.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4, B5, D6.



Now, to build a melody with this, you have to use the structure and logic that's already there. The logic already tells us how the melody should progress and the rhythm/beats it should follow. For the sake of this example, let's just make a simple onbeat melody. Onbeat melodies are very easy to begin with. You can always transform them into offbeat melodies or create different rhythms once you have your melody loop and storyline.

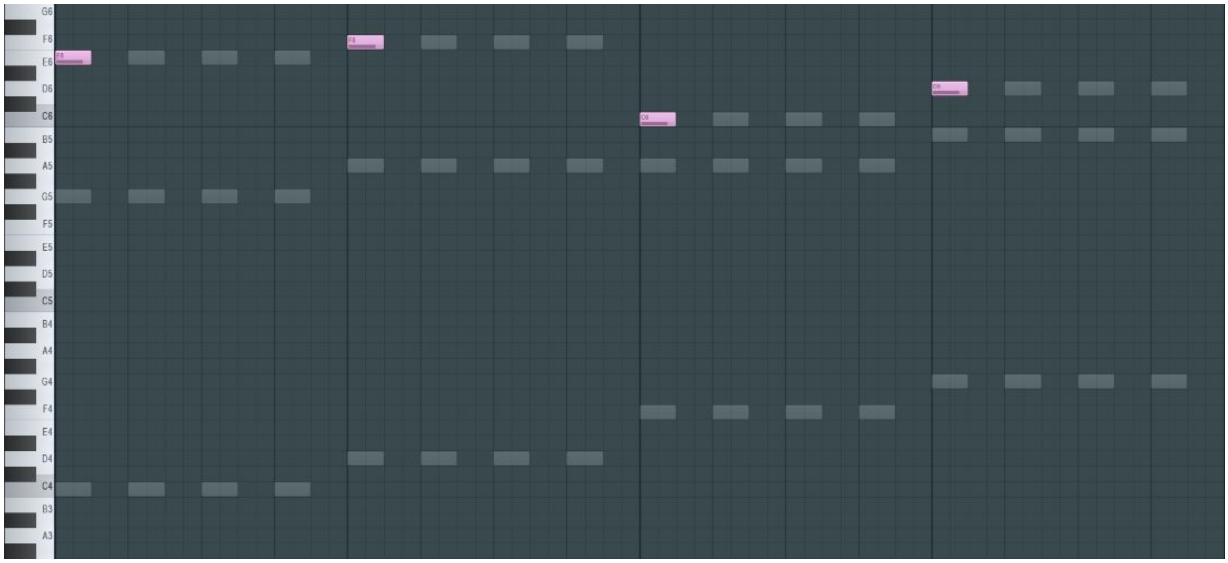
To start building a melody from this chord progression, always begin with just 4 notes. These 4 notes are always at the first beat of each chord and are part of those chords. To keep it simple, use the highest notes of all the chords for this. So, for example:

- Beat 1: E6.
- Beat 5: F6.
- Beat 9: C6.
- Beat 13: D6.

Understand that the loop of the chord progression is 16 beats in this example. So, each chord has a duration of 4 beats (4 beats for 4 chords is a total of 16 beats). That's why you can see each FIRST chord note being at these particular beat numbers.

We still don’t have a melody right now, only the outline of a few notes from the chord progression. But we will use this outline to build a melody. So to be clear, our “melody” now looks like this (dashes represent the beat and are still empty):

E6 - - - F6 - - - C6 - - - D6 - - -



Now, by having these chord notes already defined, we are 100% sure that our melody always starts with the right note on the right chord. Use that as a rule for this melody making strategy: each first note at each chord has to be a note from that chord. This way you can progress your melody correctly and build a musically pleasing storyline by using this structure.

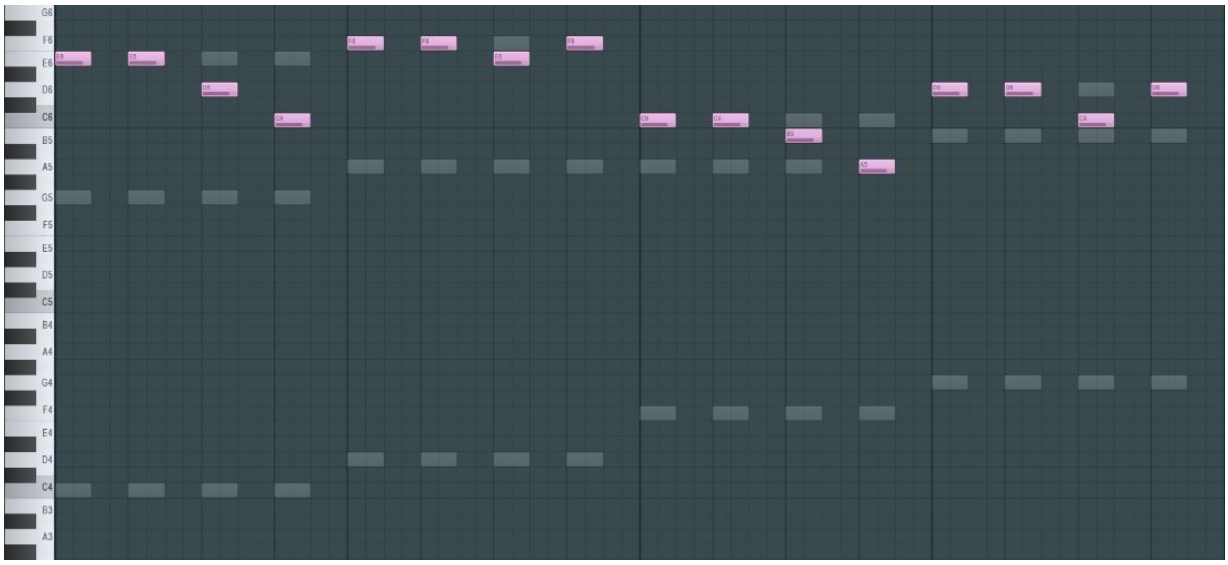
So, by having these 4 notes already in place, how do we fill up the other empty spots? Basically, for all the other spots you are completely free to fill

it up with any notes you want. Of course, the notes always have to be part of the musical scale (C major in this case).

This means that you have to use your ears and your creativity. But it’s easier than you might think, because you already have a couple of notes at exactly the right places.

One of the tricks I use is to fill the empty spots with notes that are related to the note before. The relationship with the note before is either just using the same note or simply using the next note close by. It becomes clear when we’re using an example. So, let’s make a melody with the notes we’ve already defined.

E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |



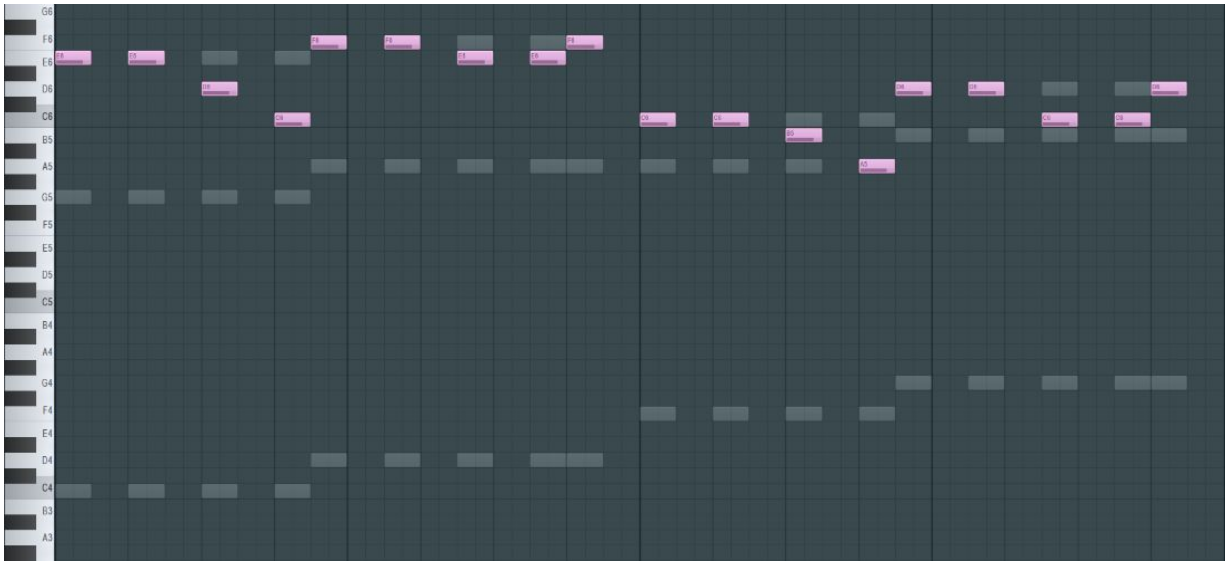
The vertical lines represent the chords changes, dividing the melody into 4 sections. Let’s quickly take a look at the first section. In the first section you can see an E6 note right after the very first E6 note. Playing multiple notes on the same key always sound musically correct. But if you only do that, it would sound a bit boring. So, the note after that plays a D note. The D note is simply the first note below the E. The last note of the first section is the C. The C note is simply the first note below the D.

So, the strategy I often use is to build little “stairs” in each section by just defining the next note in line. Whether it’s the same note (extending the step) or just the first next key (step up or down). They’re just tricks to get a nicely progressing melodic storyline that always works.

Let’s also take a look at the second section (beat 5 to 8). Do you see the logic I just told you? The second section starts with an F note. The next note in line is again the F, repeating the same key. The note after that is simply one step down, getting an E. Instead of going another step down for the last note, I decided to go back up one step to the F. My ears and creativity helped me to decide that. That’s how your ears and creativity have to work in association with the strategies and “rules” you follow.

You can look to the third and fourth section yourself and find the exact same strategy as the first two sections. It’s all just building a couple of steps (little stairs) in each chords section, which results in a musically correct melody. Feel free to play it yourself to get a better understanding.

Now again, it’s only a simple onbeat melody, but it’s a perfect way to start. Once you have a simple onbeat melody-loop like this, you can create different rhythms with it. For example, put the first 4 beats onbeat and put the second 4 beats offbeat. You are completely free this way to change rhythms, add variations and change the speed of the notes. You can also add notes in between notes and find different emphasizes. You simply have to use your ears and try to connect your feelings to it. Play the melody thus far in your head and try to fill in the gabs. It’s a good mental exercise to try hearing note variations and use those in your melody. When you can do that, it will definitely help you guide in making awesome choices.



To backpedal a little bit and go back to our example, you may have noticed the first note of the melody not being the root note in the C major scale. Didn’t I tell you to always start with the root note when you’re building a melody in a certain scale? So, how do we explain that?

Well, we just have to change our perspective. You see, the first note of the melody is only PART of the first chord. The chord already dictates the C as the lowest first note of our musical piece. The first chord contains the C as the lowest note. You can't see the melody being separate from the chord progression. They work together and follow the same musical structure. So, absolutely not a problem there. The chord progression got you covered!

Let me also say that when you're a music producer (using a D.A.W.) it can be a good idea to use 2 different instruments or synthesizers for both the chords and the melody. This way you can use different sounds for both musical pieces. It can get a little bit messy if you want to play the chords and the melody with a single instrument or synthesizer. Besides, it can also give a more organized overview of your musical composition.

Now, playing the chords and the melody together should always sound musically pleasing. They have to go together naturally. If that's not the case, you probably play some wrong notes or you've made some less profitable choices, either in the chord progression or in the melody. It's very common as a beginner to have this experience. Heck, I also have this all the time. It's no problem at all, just good feedback that you probably need to change something. It's just a nice game of trial and error to find the right chords and make sure everything works well together.

Anyways, before we're going to look at the second melody making strategy, let's quickly recap the most important topics for this one.

- Pick a scale, make a nice chord progression and use that as the structure for your melody. You can only use notes within the scale.
- Start making an a simple onbeat melody by using the notes at the first beat of each chord (for example, at beat 1, beat 5, beat 9 and beat 13). It’s a good idea to just pick the highest note of each chord from the chord progression.
- Now fill in the empty gabs of the melody by using your ears and creativity. You can model the “stair” (or steps) strategy explained in this paragraph.
- To get more variations, make rhythmical changes, add extra notes, change the speed, give emphasizes, etc. You’re totally free to do anything, as long as you follow the chord progression and musical scale.
- Practice the mental exercise by hearing melodies in your head and filling in the gabs.

If you can implement this, you are well on your way in making awesome melodies. Once you’ve practiced it a few times, you will immediately see how easy this strategy actually is. Just try it out and be amazed by how fast you can achieve good results. But if you want a different approach, let’s take a look at the second strategy. It’s basically just as easy, yet it allows you not having to make a chord progression before you start.

Melody based on different layers

All right, let’s dive into the second melody making strategy. Instead of using a chord progression to build a melody, you can also work with layers. A layer is just like one entire note row of a chord progression. This way you can have a lower layer, middle layer and upper layer. Together they basically form the same structure as a chord progression. Good melodies usually have these layers and/or a chord progression.

There are many different ways how you can arrange or build these different melodic layers. There’s no superior method. It always depends on what you want to create and how you want it to sound. In this paragraph you will find a couple of examples to get an idea of building melodies with layers. But be aware that these are only a few of many perspectives.

To quickly learn to make these melodic layers, we’re going to use some “rules” again. These rules are just guidelines to help you get fast results. When you don’t need the “rules” anymore, drop them, because else they will limit your possibilities.

Now, when you want to make a good melody, it’s very common to create 3 different layers. Just like a basic chord progression has 3 notes in different spots per chord. The different layers mainly represent these chord notes in a chord progression. In that sense the concept is the same, except this time you keep the chord progression theory in the back of your mind while creating these different melodic layers.

So, for this strategy we need to make 3 different layers. One for the lower notes, one for the middle notes and one for the upper notes.

- The lower notes represent the “carriers” of the melody. The note changes typically have a slower pace. Usually, a kickdrum or bassline can also follow this lower layer.
- The upper layer represents the main melody. The note changes typically have a faster pace.
- The middle layer represents an additional or extra voice to the main melody. It can either play along with the melody (fast note changes) or follow the chords like in the chord progression (slow note changes).

When you want to build these layers, you basically have to create them one at a time. You can always choose the layer you want to start with, but I would recommend starting with the lower layer or upper layer first, then fill in the rest. Why? Because this will be the easiest, as you will find out in the examples below.

Before you start, always pick a musical scale. You can only use the notes within that scale. Also, define the root note of that scale. Always start the lowest note of your melody with that root note. In the layering method, the root note is the first note in the lower layer.

Now, let’s pick the C major scale again and try to recreate the melody from the previous paragraph. But this time with the layering strategy. The C major scale consists of the A, B, C, D, E, F and G notes. C is our root note. We’re going to start with the lower layer first, because that’s the easiest.

To make the lower layer we have to start with the C note. Then, we simply have to create a C major storyline from there. This is where your ears come in and where the logic needs to be applied. You have to hear your lower layer telling a nice C major story, but that layer also needs to follow the logical time loop. It’s always a good idea to just make notes at 4-beats intervals (or variants of the 4 beats), just like the chord progression examples. At each 4 beats, the lower notes change. For example, it can look something like this:

- First 4 beats: C4.
- Second 4 beats: D4.
- Third 4 beats: F4.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4.

When you just play these notes in that order, you can immediately hear it playing a logical C major storyline. It loops naturally and sounds musically correct. You can repeat it in your head and it makes sense. But let’s say if you’d put the final G4 notes on B3 (or B4), you can also immediately hear that it doesn’t “loop” that well. It sounds kind of off. Although the B note is part of the C major scale, it doesn’t necessarily mean that the entire layer

plays a C major storyline. It can as well be a note combination of a different scale that happens to have the same keys in its selection.

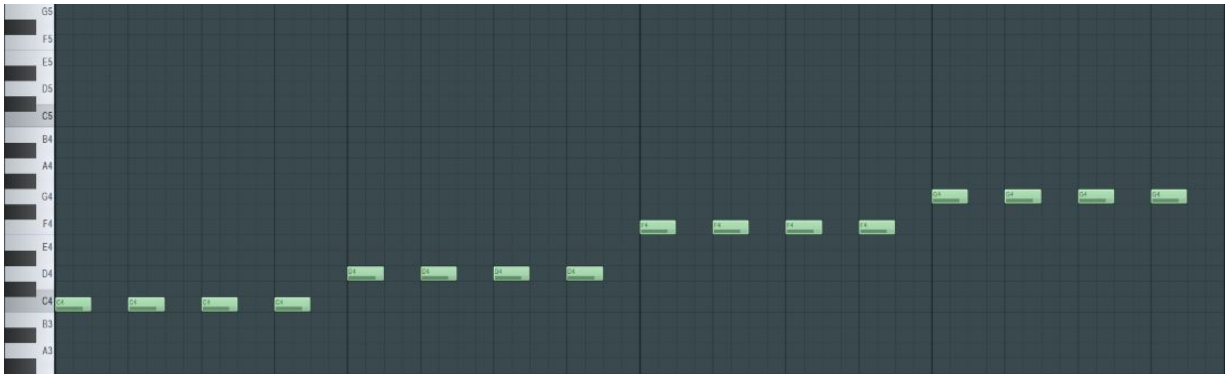
This is where your ears come in and your experience. But luckily there are also tools and helpers in certain applications that can help you guide. For example, in FL Studio there are scale helpers that help you determine which scale your melodic layer is playing. If you're a music producer, I encourage you to use the helpers available in your application to make sure your melodic layers play a correct storyline.

Because the lower layer usually has a slow pace, you have to wait long for a note to change to the next key. This can make it more difficult to really hear if this layer is playing a correct storyline within your scale. A trick to get a better idea if your lower layer is playing a logical musical loop within your scale, is to temporarily speed it up and then listen to it. For example, you can temporarily set the BPM (Beats Per Minute) in your application to a much higher number. This way the lower layer has a very fast pace where the notes follow up on each other quickly, so you can get a better sense how the storyline sounds. Try to connect to this storyline in your head and get a "feel" if it loops well and sounds like a short story that loops naturally. When it sounds logical and naturally, you're probably on the right track and you can set back the BPM to its original speed again.

Anyways, just start building a simple lower layer. Let it loop in 16 beats or so and give it an onbeat rhythm for now. It doesn't have to be perfect yet.

But as a “rule”, always make sure that the lower layer plays a story within your musical scale (C major in this case). It should look something like this:

C4, C4, C4, C4 | D4, D4, D4, D4 | F4, F4, F4, F4 | G4, G4, G4, G4 |



Once you have a good lower layer, it’s best to immediately create the upper layer (skipping the middle layer for now). The upper layer will be your main melody. It should represent a tune that keeps listeners fall in love with your music.

So, how do we make the upper layer?

You may not like the answer, but again, it’s a matter of using your ears. But luckily, you can still follow some logic.

First of all, each first note in the upper layer right on top of each first note in the lower layer, should be part of a chord. This is where the chord

progression theory comes in. You see, every time a new chord starts (the lower layer changes to another note), the note in the upper layer should play a note from the corresponding chord. This will become clear in the example below.

Secondly, the entire upper layer should ideally also play a C major story that follows the time loop. You will have to use your ears again, but you can also fall back onto the scale helpers as mentioned before. That is, if you're using certain software for your music.

In general, when you just keep the chord progression in the back of your mind (use it as a guideline) and make sure the storyline plays the correct scale, you almost always end up with a musically correct melody. It's almost impossible to mess it up, especially when you're also connecting your ears and feelings to it.

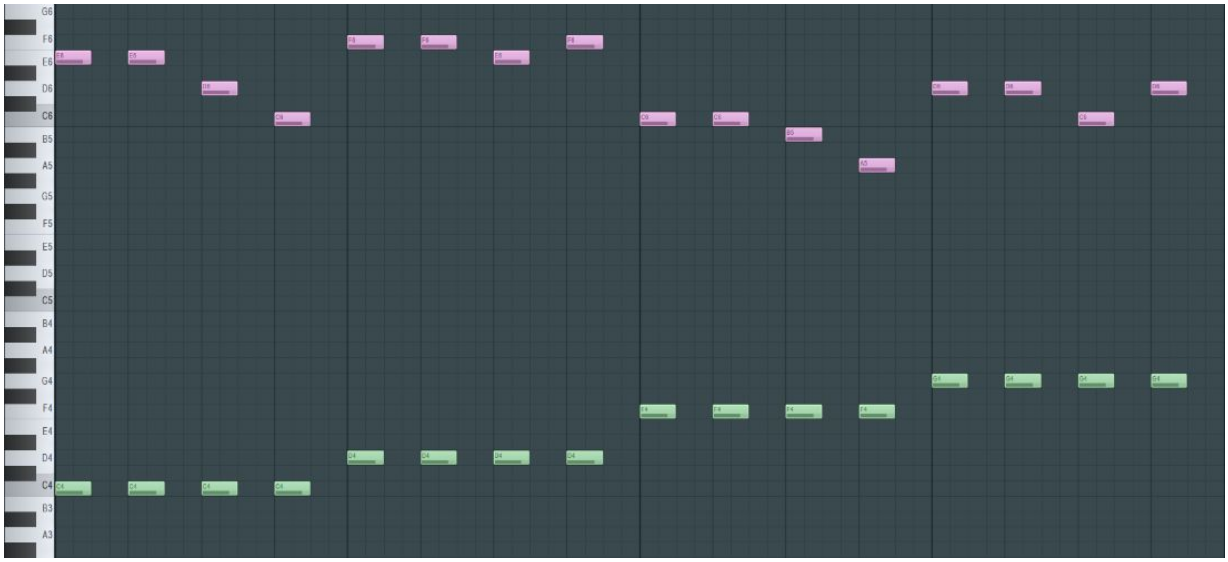
So, let's take a look at the example of a C major upper layer that fits the lower layer perfectly.

This will be the upper layer (main melody):

E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

This was our lower layer:

C4, C4, C4, C4 | D4, D4, D4, D4 | F4, F4, F4, F4 | G4, G4, G4, G4 |



You see, each first note in the upper layer of every 4-beats section, is part of a chord with the notes in the lower layer. So, the E6 note (upper layer) plays together with the C4 note (lower layer). C and E are both part of the C, E and G chord. The same is true for each first note in each 4-beats section. The F goes together with the D (D, F, A chord), the C goes together with the F (F, A, C chord), the D goes together with the G (G, B, D chord).

So, only these first notes need to match the exact chord. You then basically build a melody from these chords. They define the direction and progression of the melodic storyline. But every other note after the first chord notes can be chosen to your desire.

So, it’s just this mental guideline you have to follow to make sure the upper layer will always fit the lower layer. That’s why you need to have the chords and chord progression theory in the back of your mind. Then you will immediately know if your melody works together with your lower layer.

And as mentioned, all the other notes in between a chord change, can always be filled up as you desire. Simply stay true to your chosen scale an experiment with different notes. You can choose to build small “stairs” (as explained in the previous paragraph), but you can also get very creative. Just try different things and feel free to arrange the notes differently with different rhythms and paces. It’s completely up to you. But keep using your ears.

Let’s move on with our example and explore the middle layer now. I call it the “middle” layer because it’s a good idea to place these notes in between the lower layer and the upper layer. This way the “carriers” of the melody stay at the bottom, which should be there to “carry” your song. Also, it allows the main melody to stay at the top as the most important or most dominant tune to listen to.

The middle layer basically consists of the notes of the chords we haven’t used yet. So, this should really be a piece of cake. We only need to take a look at each chord in the melodic progression and determine which note we haven’t used yet that belongs to it. These are the chord notes (from our upper and lower layer) that we’ve already used in each 4-beats section:

- First 4 beats: C4 & E6.
- Second 4 beats: D4 & F6.
- Third 4 beats: F4 & C6.
- Fourth 4 beats: G4 & D6.

Can you find the missing notes for each chord? I’m sure you can, so let’s define them:

- First 4 beats: G5 (of the C, E & G chord).
- Second 4 beats: A5 (of the D, F & A chord).
- Third 4 beats: A5 (of the F, A & C chord).
- Fourth 4 beats: B5 (of the G, B & D chord).

Now that you know which notes haven’t been used yet for each chord, you have defined the middle layer right there. Wasn’t that easy? It looks like this:

G5, G5, G5, G5 | A5, A5, A5, A5 | A5, A5, A5, A5 | B5, B5, B5, B5 |

It may sound a bit boring on its own, but it should be played together with the other layers. Also, this middle layer doesn’t necessarily have to play a C major story. It just consists of the remaining notes that belong the chords.

How these remaining chords play out is always different, depending on your melodic layers and chord progression. So, don’t get too wrapped up around the C major story idea here.

Let’s take a look at all our 3 layers right now.

Upper layer:

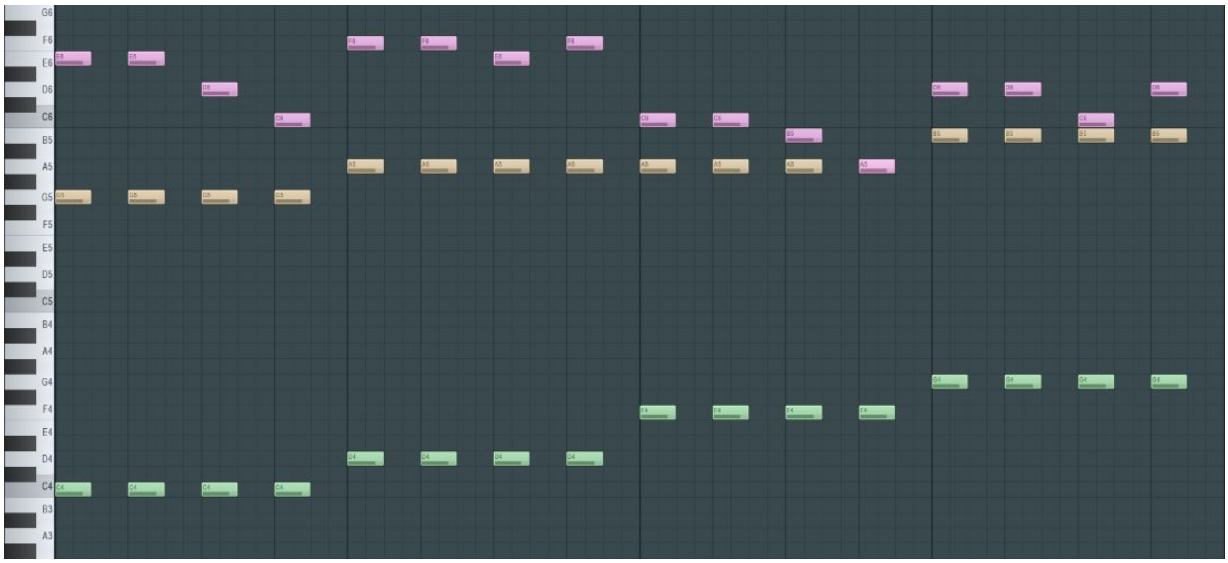
E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

Middle layer:

G5, G5, G5, G5 | A5, A5, A5, A5 | A5, A5, A5, A5 | B5, B5, B5, B5 |

Lower layer:

C4, C4, C4, C4 | D4, D4, D4, D4 | F4, F4, F4, F4 | G4, G4, G4, G4 |



When you play all these layers together, you'll get a very simple and happy melody that sounds musically correct. It's not a brutally epic melody like Mozart, but that's not the point. The point is that you now have strategies and structures to follow to build you own melodies. Simple straightforward examples help to get the understanding. It's your challenge to use these strategies and structures to make awesome musical pieces.

That's why you're the architect of your melody. You have to find nice rhythms and variations. This is something you have to do on your own, because there are no real rules to follow other than staying true to the logical time loop and musical scale.

To help you get more advanced melodies, let's present a few new tricks in the next chapter. However, before you go there, make sure you understand this chapter perfectly. I know it can be a lot to take in in the beginning, but just practice. It's absolutely not hard, but you have to develop that intuition.

So, before we're going to look at the new tricks, let's quickly recap the most important topics for this particular melody making strategy.

- Pick a musical scale and make 3 different melodic layers. One lower layer (the "carriers", start with the root note), one middle layer and one upper layer (the main melody). Ideally, start with the lower or upper layer first.
- The 3 layers basically follow the same structure and rules as a chord progression. Always keep that in the back of your mind when building a melody. Each first note of each layer that is a new chord, has to be part of that chord. Just like all first notes in a chord progression.
- For the lower and upper layer, try to tell a nice story that fits your chosen musical scale (for example a C major story). Use your ears and helpers in your software to help you determine this.
- For the middle layer, just use the notes of the chords that haven't been used yet. They're the remaining chord notes after you've defined the upper and lower layer.

Make sure you really understand this before you move on. If you can do all of this successfully, you're awesome! You now have 2 melody making strategies that you can always use to create musically pleasing songs. And hopefully you can see the connections between the two. They're both good methods, but they also have the underlaying music theory structure that help you guide.

Anyways, you can already go ahead and use all the information provided to kick some melody making ass. When you’re just starting out, this is probably more than enough to get professional results. Just go wild with these ideas and strategies. But if you want some extra tricks to create different types of melodies, stay tuned for the final chapter.

Melody making tricks

Let’s use the final chapter in this book to add onto the melody making information that’s already been provided. It’s slightly more advanced stuff, but still very easy to implement. You absolutely don’t have to use it to get great results. However, you may want to know about a few extra tricks to have more options available, so you can also create different types of melodic structures. All set? Then let’s begin.

Copy the lower layer

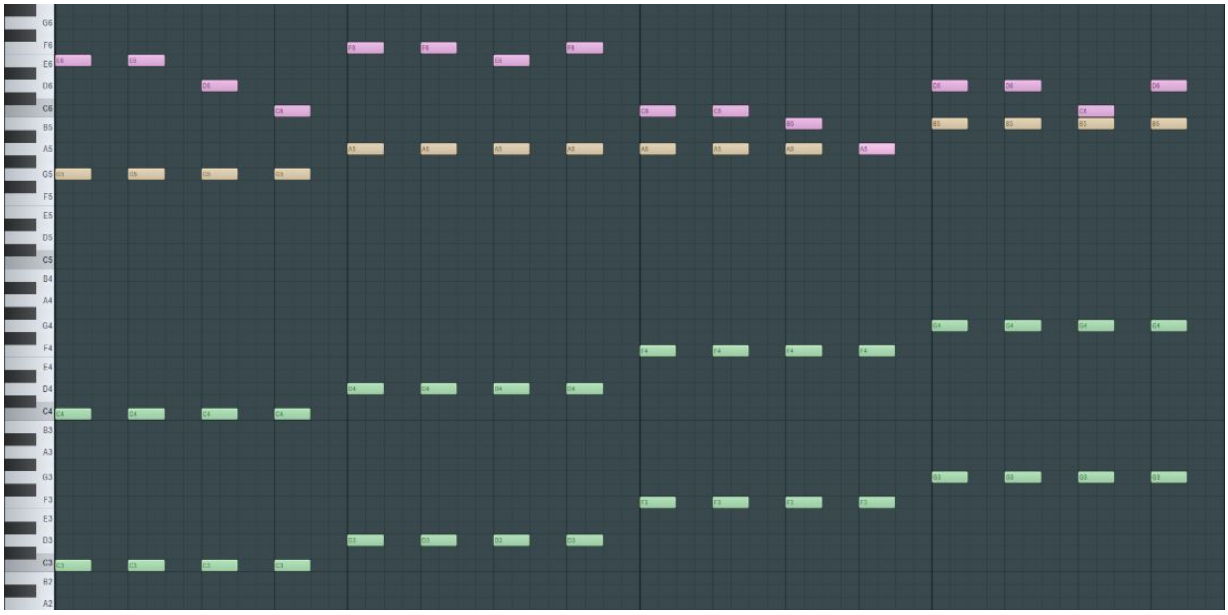
The first trick is really easy. When you want to give your melody or chord progression more balls, copy the lower and paste it one octave down. In other words, play 2 notes of the lower layer at the same time, both one octave apart from each other. This will beef up your melody or chord progression and create more heaviness.

So, let’s say this is your lower layer:

C4, C4, C4, C4 | D4, D4, D4, D4 | F4, F4, F4, F4 | G4, G4, G4, G4 |

Then simply add this one to it:

C3, C3, C3, C3 | D3, D3, D3, D3 | F3, F3, F3, F3 | G3, G3, G3, G3 |

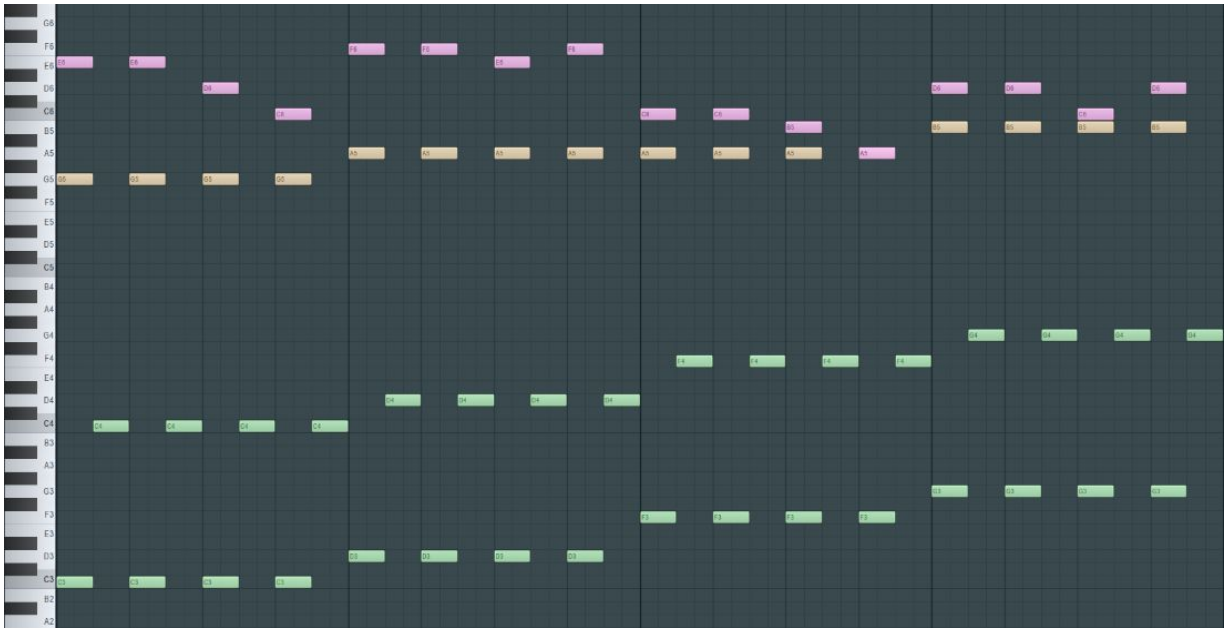


You will end up with 2 lower layers playing the same notes at a different octave. In total, your melody or chord progression will then have 4 layers, but there are still only 3 different notes being played (which are the 3 chord notes). So, you simply rearrange these 3 notes in a way that the lowest note is being played twice.

This copying of the lower layer trick is also perfect for getting heavy EDM leads. It’s not a “must”, only a smart trick.

You can use this idea in a different way too. Instead of just playing these double lower notes at the exact same time, you can also alternate them in an onbeat and offbeat rhythm. For example, you can play the notes in the lowest lower layer onbeat and play the notes in the highest lower layer

offbeat. This creates a lot of drive in your melody and can fill up empty gabs. Feel free to try this out. I do this quite often to get a fuller and richer melody.



Notes in between notes

The second trick is actually an extension of the alternating onbeat/offbeat rhythm of the lower layer notes. What you can do with your melody is creating notes in between notes. This can give your melody much more drive and “epicness”.

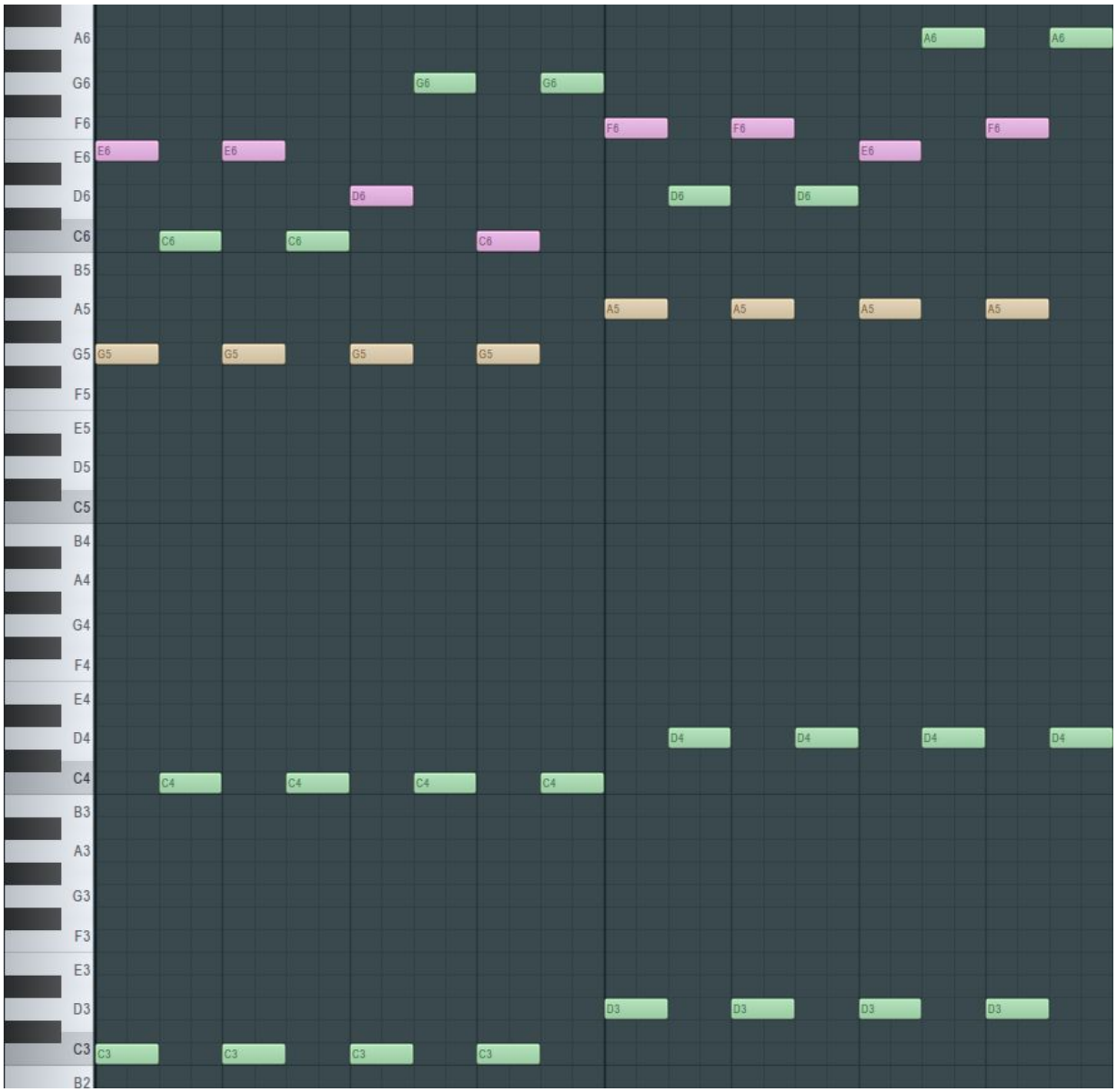
So, let’s say that this is your simple onbeat melody:

E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

What you can do now is add notes in between the notes that are already there. This way you'll get a quick alternating onbeat/offbeat rhythm in your main melody. Depending on how you want it to sound, you can do this only in a couple of spots, or just in every spot. Also depending on how you want it to sound, you can choose the same notes/keys or different notes/keys (or combinations of both).

Let's use the example above and take a look at the first 8 beats of that simple onbeat melody. But this time, we've added notes in between the notes (the notes in bold are the already existing onbeat notes).

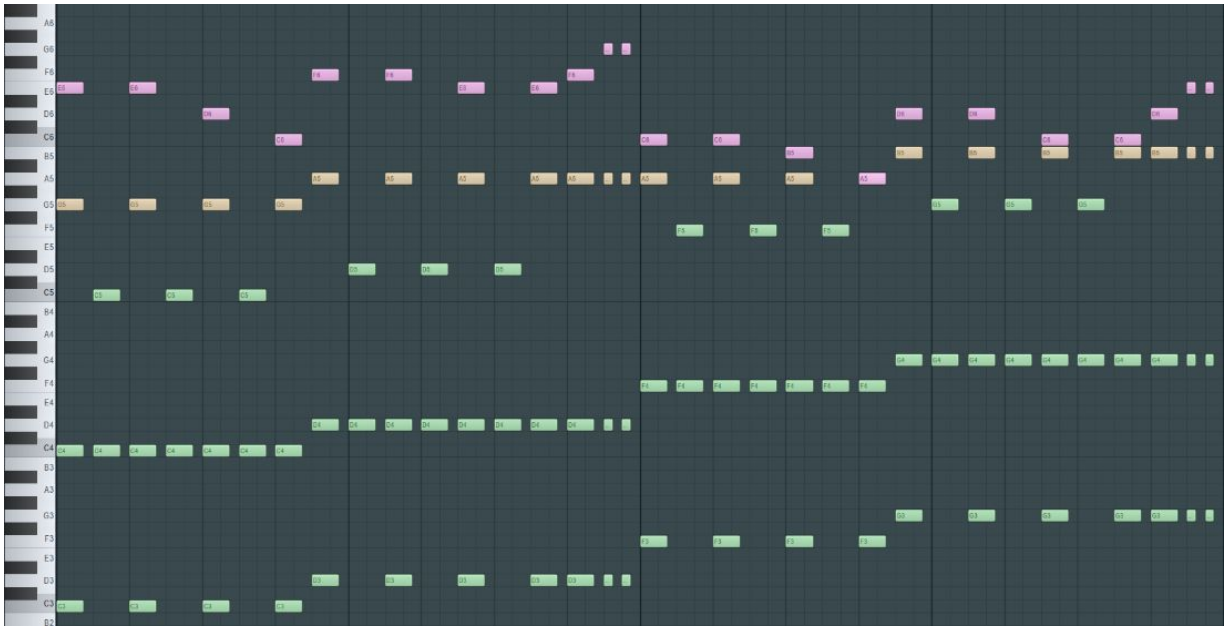
E6, C6, **E6**, C6, **D6**, G6, **C6**, G6 | **F6**, D6 **F6**, D6, **E6**, A6, **F6**, A6 |



When you play these first 8 beats you'll get a much faster melodic pace and by choosing different keys, you'll also get more "bounce" and jumpiness to it. This is just an example, you can really do it however you want. The point is that you usually want to create more drive in your melody and the notes in between notes trick is what helps you get there. At which places you play these and which notes you pick, is totally up to you.

Adding notes in between notes isn’t solely a trick for the main melody layer. You’ve already seen an example in the lower layer as well, but you can also use it in the middle layer. There are no rules here. Simply use this idea to fill up your melody, get more drive or create nice melodic bounces and steering directions.

Try out different rhythms and different notes. You can even play notes in between notes in between notes to get superfast paces or stuttering emphasizes. Don’t limit yourself to just a plain and simple rhythmical structure, like an onbeat rhythm. The possibilities are endless and it’s up to your creativity and imagination to get the most out of it.



Middle layer as a secondary melodic voice

The third trick is a very common one. It’s used quite often to get a fatter or bigger sounding main melody. To get a fatter or bigger sounding main melody, you can build the middle layer slightly different than explained in the previous chapter. In the previous chapter you’ve learned to build the middle layer simply by playing the remaining notes within each chord and keeping them at that same key throughout the whole chord duration. This is a perfect strategy, but you can also do this differently.

To get more emphasis on the main melody, you can play the middle layer as a secondary melodic voice. What this means is that you use the middle layer to basically play the exact same melody as the upper layer, except you will be using different notes. These different notes are just different chord notes. You see, the upper layer begins from a certain note within a chord, but the middle layer also begins from a certain note within a chord, only a different one. This way the upper layer and middle layer can play the exact same melody, except they both use different notes.

It’s really easy to build a middle layer in this manner. You can just use the middle layer chord notes that you already know about from the previous chapter. In the previous chapter the example of the upper layer and middle layer looked like this:

Upper layer:

E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

Middle layer:

G5, G5, G5, G5 | A5, A5, A5, A5 | A5, A5, A5, A5 | B5, B5, B5, B5 |

The only thing you have to do now is to create the same note jumps/steps with the middle layer as you've done with the upper layer (main melody). You also always keep each first chord note a note from that chord. This way, you always progress from a correct chord, just like you have to do with the upper layer.

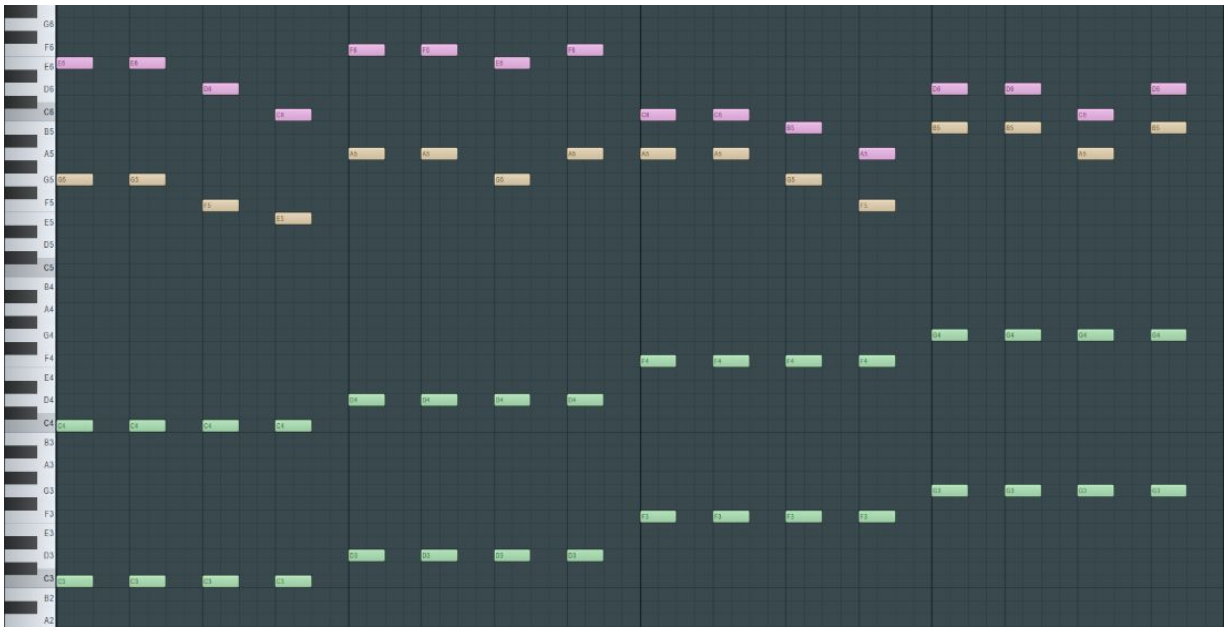
In our example this means that each first chord note of the middle layer can stay exactly where it is. It's already a correct chord note, because that's been defined in the previous chapter. Now you simply build from each first chord note and progress the exact same way as the upper melody progresses. So, if a next note in the upper layer makes a 1-note jump, you also make the exact same 1-note jump with the middle layer. Of course, you can only use the notes within your chosen musical scale (C major in this example). So, it will look something like this:

Upper layer:

E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

Middle layer:

G5, G5, F5, E5 | A5, A5, G5, A5 | A5, A5, G5, F5 | B5, B5, A5, B5 |



As you can clearly see, the middle layer makes note jumps/steps in the exact same manner as the upper layer does. If the upper layer goes down 1 note from E6 to D6, the middle layer also goes down 1 note from G5 to F5. If the upper layer goes down another note from D6 to C6, the middle layer is doing the exact same from F5 to E5. Of course, the middle layer starts at a different chord note than the upper layer, so you're using different notes than the upper layer. But the pattern and progression are exactly the same.

When you use this trick, you can hear the melody having more “dramatic” emphasizes. It’s like an additional voice that plays along to get a fuller melody. It simply creates a slightly different atmosphere than having the middle layer notes only playing one key in each chord. It’s a really easy trick to implement, but it can definitely help to get a different feel to your melody.

Now, if you really want to push this to the next level, you can also add the lower layer ass a melodic progression in between the upper layer and middle layer. This will put a big fat layer of 3 (chord) notes on top, all playing the same melody, but with slightly different notes. This can make your melody sound even fatter and bigger.

To do this, you can use the exact same strategy as with the middle layer. Just pick/copy the lower layer of your melody and place/play it at a higher octave in between the upper layer and middle layer. Then just make the exact same note jumps as the upper and middle layer. So, you may get something like this:

Upper layer:

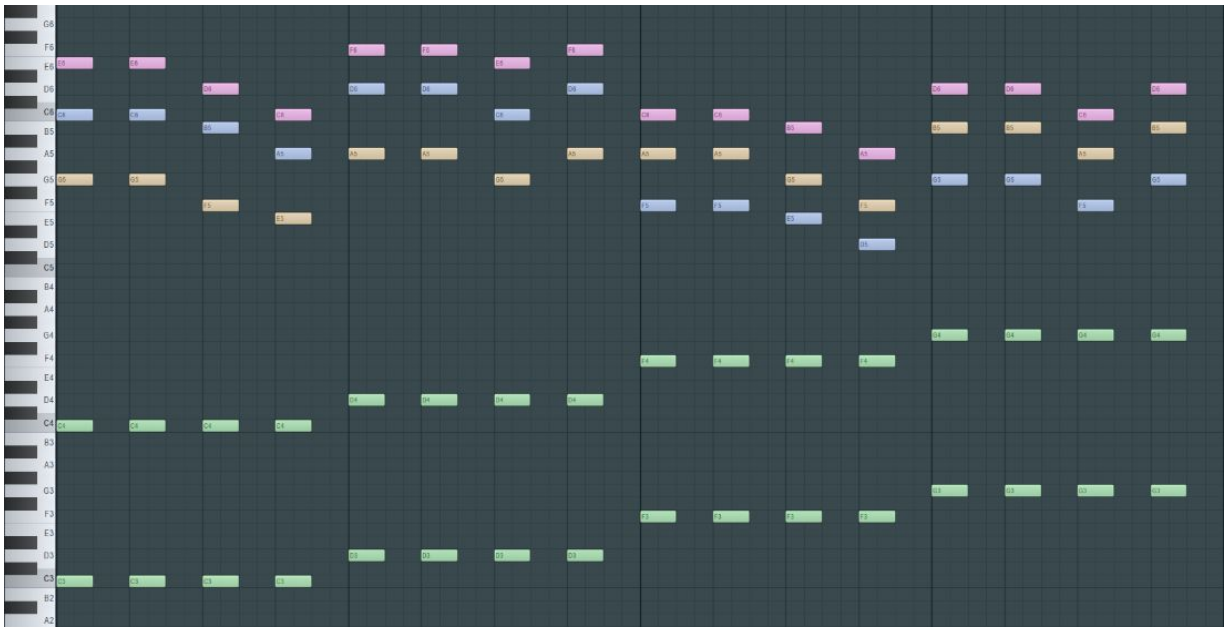
E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

Middle layer:

G5, G5, F5, E5 | A5, A5, G5, A5 | A5, A5, G5, F5 | B5, B5, A5, B5 |

Extra “lower” layer at a higher octave:

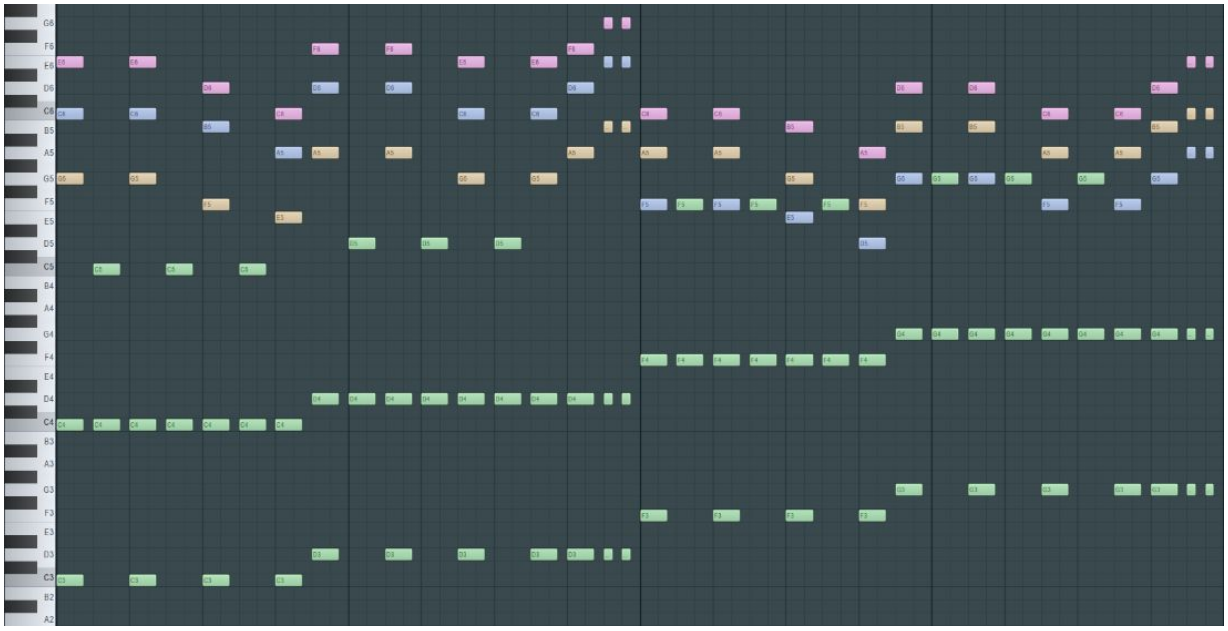
C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 | F5, F5, E5, D5 | G5, G5, F5, G5 |



You may have to rearrange the octave of the extra “lower” layer a little bit at some chords if it doesn’t fit between the upper layer and middle layer. This always depends on how a chord is being played and where the upper and middle layer notes are relative to each other. As a general rule: make sure the upper layer always stays on top. If the extra “lower” layer doesn’t fit in between the upper and middle layer, just play it right below these 2 layers.

Hopefully you can see that the way you arrange these melodic layers always follows these same logical musical patterns and structures. They always progress from the underlaying chord progression and they also always make the same note jumps/steps. It’s very easy to do when you understand this simple concept.

If you really want to go wild you can put all these tricks and structures together and create one big epic melody. There’s no end to it in what you can achieve. Just for the sake of it, let me add an image here as an example of all these tricks being applied to our 16-beats C major melody.



The pink notes represent the upper layer, the orange notes represent the middle layer, the blue notes represent the extra “lower” layer and the green notes represent the lower layers. You can see added layers that play as extra voices. You can see an added double lower layer. You can see added notes

in between notes. You can also see each second 4-beats section playing an offbeat rhythm instead of an onbeat rhythm.

So, all these tricks can help to get different melodic “feels”, like more drive, more heaviness, more variation, different emphasizes, more fatness, etc. It al just depends on what you want to achieve. But by knowing these tricks, you’re able to apply anything that can help you get what you want.

Please keep in mind that the C major melody example is a very basic melody. It’s nothing special really, but it’s done on purpose. By keeping it simple, it’s much easier to follow and implement. So, if you’re not impressed by this melody, don’t let it fool you. These tricks, structures and strategies really work. Just pick a different scale, use different chords, make different layers, etc. Don’t stop until you’re satisfied.

In fact, I always use all the ideas presented throughout this guide myself. I’ve created many awesome EDM melodies with all these simple strategies. You can always go to my website (https://screechhouse.com) or YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/c/screechhouse) and look up some of my melody, song or chord lessons. You then get to see/hear many different melodies and musical structures in “action”.

Multiple different melodies

If you master all the ideas throughout this book, you can even push things to a whole other level. This other level is the fourth and final trick, but really advanced stuff. So, don’t feel like you have to do this. Heck, not many EDM producers do it anyways.

What you can do when you’ve got your first melody, is to start making a different melody that plays together with the first one. You can also make multiple different melodies for different parts in your song. You can choose to give each melody a different sound or instrument. This creates a more complex arrangement with nice contrast and more melodic content. But still, every melody should follow the same musical scale and work together to get insane intelligent musical progressions, emphasizes and steering directions.

When you want to play two different melodies together, it’s a good idea to use some strategies that help to make them work together in a nice way. Let’s take a look at 5 of these strategies, but keep in mind that they’re just general ideas, not hard rules.

First of all, if your main melody is finished and plays a relative fast pace, it’s a good idea to make the second melody playing a slower pace, or vice versa. This way both melodies fill up different rhythmical spaces and they’re more easily distinguishable.

Secondly, it’s a good idea to create musical contrast by playing the second melody in a different direction or progression than the first melody. For

example, if melody 1 goes up, melody 2 goes down, and vice versa. However, you have to keep listening to the second melody and make sure that it stands on its own. It doesn't have to be an exact opposite progression or direction. As long as you try to make a different progression and storyline than your first melody, you're good.

Thirdly, your second, third, fourth or even twentieth melody should still follow your chosen scale and ideally also your chord progression (although sometimes this doesn't have to). This way you make sure that all your melodies follow the same musical structure and they will automatically fit together.

Fourthly, besides following the scale and chord progression, it's a good idea to start your second melody at different chord notes than your first melody. This way you force yourself to create a different storyline. Also, it helps to create more contrast, get more musical content and get a more complex sounding melodic harmony. They all hit different chord notes at different times.

And finally, it's almost never a good idea to give all melodies that play together chords and multiple layers. This is simply too much and gets too messy. So, if your first main melody already consists of chords and/or different melodic layers, just make the second melody 1 single layer that plays a different storyline. This keeps your song clean, yet still very professional and intelligent.

So, if you want to make 2 melodies that play together, you can use these simple strategies (not rules) to get professional results:

- If one melody has a faster pace, make the other one a slower pace.
- Play the second melody in a different/opposite direction than the first melody.
- Keep true to your musical scale and chord progression.
- Start the second melody at different chord notes than your first melody.
- Generally, only use 1 layer for the second melody that plays a different storyline than the first melody.

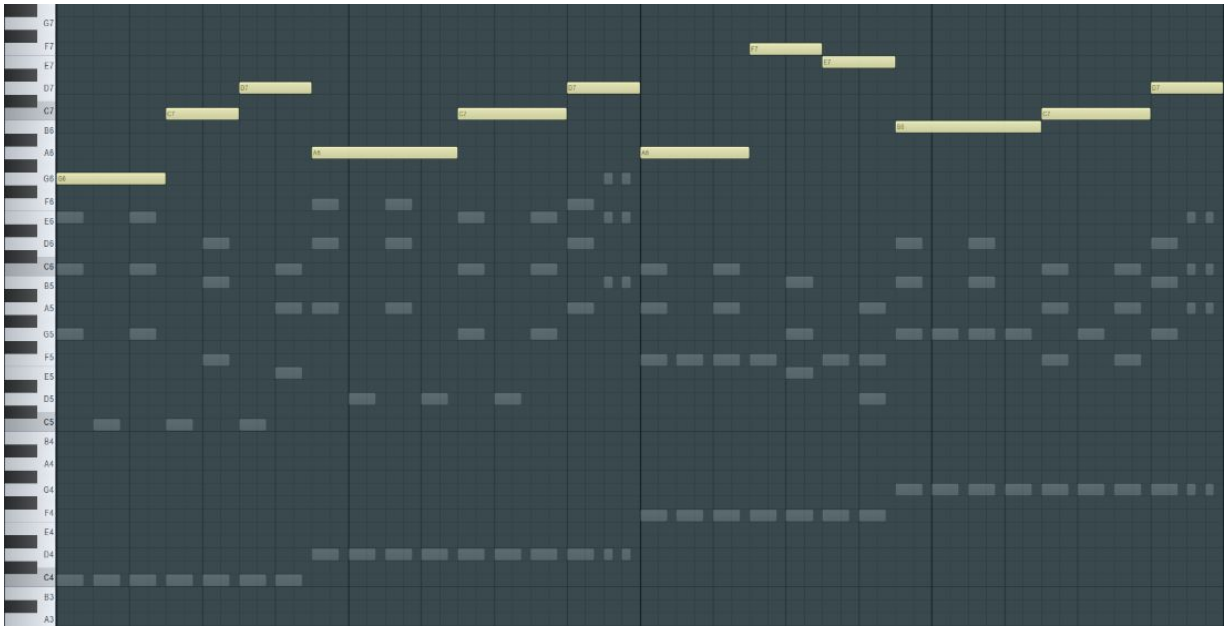
So, with that being said, let’s look at an example here by simply taking the C major melody we’ve already created before and add a secondary melodic layer to it.

The main melody (upper layer) looks something like this:

E6, E6, D6, C6 | F6, F6, E6, F6 | C6, C6, B5, A5 | D6, D6, C6, D6 |

Now, the secondary melody layer may look something like this:

G6, C7, D6 | A6, C7, D7 | A6, F7, E7 | B6, C7, D7 |



In this example, the secondary melodic layer (the longer yellowish notes in the image) only consists of 3 notes per 4 beats (per chord). These 3 notes are playing a slightly spaced out rhythm that puts certain emphasizes on different notes and beats. You can change this rhythm however you want though, depending on how you want it to sound.

Also, this secondary layer plays a short C major storyline, which automatically fits the C major melody we've already created. In fact, if you'd only try to play a C major storyline, without looking at the chord progression at all, it almost always fits the first melody anyways. It can really be that simple.

So, as you can see all these strategies work immediately if you use them correctly. They're really easy to follow and you can build very professional

melodies in no time.

Throughout this guide we've mainly used a simple C major melodic example. It's one of the easiest scales to start with, but personally, I'd rather use one of the minor scales. The minor scales sound a little bit more serious yet can yield very impressive euphoric results. The major scales are just a little bit too happy and don't carry that much drama. So, if you want to make your music sound a little bit more serious, pick one of the minor scales.

Well, how about we tie an end to it? Do you have enough ideas, tricks and strategies to get started making awesome melodies? I'm sure you have.

If you implement all the structures covered throughout this book, there's absolutely no doubt in my mind you will make amazing musical arrangements. Just practice everything step by step and understand the meaning of all these principles. They are my "to go" methods for all the songs and snippets I've build throughout my FL Studio career. This stuff simply works quickly and effectively. It's up to you now to model everything and get your songs to that professional level in no time.

So, we can easily recap everything as simply as:

- Pick a musical scale and stick to it.
- Make a chord progression.

- Make melodic layers.
- When needed or desired, use some (or all) of the melody making tricks from this chapter to get a more advanced musical compilation.

Yes, it can really be that simple. It’s only a matter of understanding and applying. And when you do, you have yourself that awesome melody in no time without having to drown in the huge pile of information music theory has to offer.

Now it’s your turn…

Feel free to leave a message and share your melodies. It would be great to hear your success which can work very motivational for other people that are also trying to better themselves.

So, let the music play!

- Cep

(Music producer, author and creator of *Screech House*)

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About the Author

Cep from *Screech House*, a high-skilled Dutch EDM producer, CEO and international best-selling author.

Cep is single-handedly responsible for the success of thousands of producers worldwide. They finally had their breakthrough by using Cep's notorious, but exclusive "less is more" strategies.

Cep's rise to success did not come easily. The amount of time and energy he had to put in is unheard of. This came with inevitable consequences…

Most people didn't understand Cep's career path and quietly gave up on him. Without any support, he had to deal with all the struggles and frustration that comes with becoming a professional artist. This almost led him to give up his dreams on many occasions.

But there was something inside of Cep that kept him going. Locked away inside a tiny room he had one mission and one mission only: being the absolute best in creating exceptional high-quality songs on a simple computer. He just had to succeed. And that's exactly what he did.

But once his music far surpassed that desired professional level, Cep wanted to quit. For good. He felt that it wasn't his calling in life anymore. He felt a much bigger calling was waiting: giving people the lifetime opportunity to replicate his success.

After more than a decade, he worked himself into the powerful position to show everybody how to get the same results. He feels responsible for sharing the truth and giving people ultimate shortcuts in making their own music. This gave birth to *Screech House*, the definitive platform for making electronic dance music, mainly in FL Studio.

Cep wants to show you how to keep it simple and still yield incredible professional results. He strongly believes in removing the fancy tools or equipment and only focusing on the essential basics. This means that, when you discover his techniques, you will understand that high-quality music always follows the same proven tricks and secrets.

Now, Cep's work isn't just for everyone. He advocates that only dedicated producers will ever get to the top. That's why he has a big preference of only sharing his work with highly committed people. They need to have a learning mindset.

If you think you have the learning mindset, Cep's books are must-reads. They offer you to do less work, yet get much better results. How is this possible, you may ask? Simple. You don't understand the essential music-

making basics well enough yet. Because if you do, creating a professional song becomes a walk in the park.

Get FREE access to Cep's work by visiting the *Screech House* website:

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