

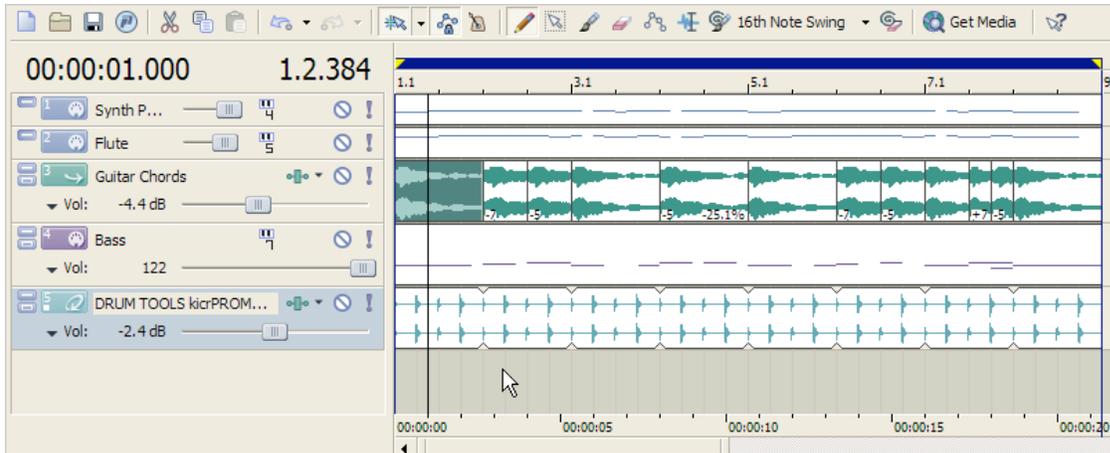
Hands-on Activity: ACID

Key Information

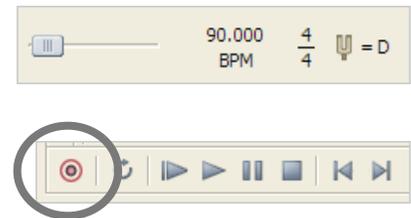
ACID Pro is PC-based software and is the top of the Sony New Media's line that includes Super Duper Looper, ACIDXPRESS, ACID Music Studio, and ACID Pro. (ACID Pro is \$130 ed price). Soft Synths used include: M-Audio KeyRig and Korg Legacy Collection: Polysix, Wavestation, and M-20.

ACID Characteristics: handles MIDI and audio loops and tracks, displays MIDI as piano roll only; modest library of loops and audio clips--additional loops can be purchased from many sources; some sound effects and options; MIDI and audio can be imported and can create your own loops; beatmapping provided to sync loops with recorded material.

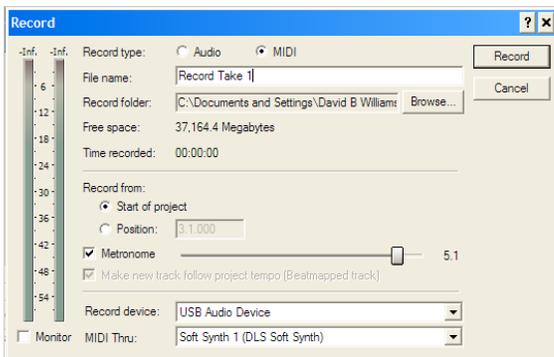
Activity Goal: This tutorial is design to introduce you to the variety of ways music can be created within a looping sequencer like ACID. The steps below are not meant to be inclusive; the documentation provides enough prompts so you can reconstruct the activity after the hands-on activity. DBW



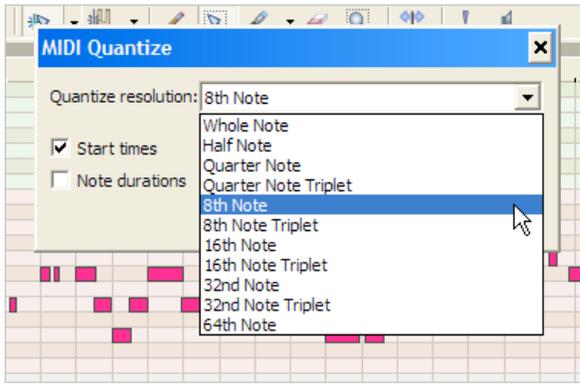
Step A: Recording a MIDI Track



1. Choose File > New to begin the project. Click to set the parameters for the project with Tempo = 90 bpm; Key D major; Time 4/4; Save As: "myFirstTune."
2. We will record the tune shown above. Press the RED dot on the Play Transport controls to see the Record dialog box.

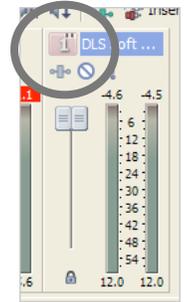


3. Record the English Dance melody with MIDI keyboard. Hint, play as smoothly as possible holding notes for full duration. When you are done, it will automatically add a track for you. Do not check Monitor; make sure you've checked Start of Project; check metronome and MIDI as noted. There is no count-off feature so just start playing when you feel comfortable doing so.
4. Edit track to fix timing, velocity, durations. Right click on the track, select Properties to open the Piano Roll editor. Clear out any extra silence by doing a Select All and then dragging all the notes to the first beat of the Piano Roll.

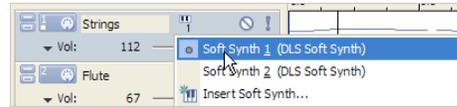


5. Fix timings by selecting the Quantize button on top of the Piano Roll editor: do a Select All then choose the 1/8 note option. Use the eraser and pencil tools to delete or change notes as needed.

6. Change track instrument to Strings. Click on the Instrument icon in the Track control area (see graphic). Select Soft Synth 1 (DLS Soft Synth). A fader control panel should show up in the Mixer window on the screen. Click on the "1" in Mixer panel and find the Strings instrument from the list that appears. Change the label in the Track panel manually to "Strings."



7. Duplicate the String track (Right-click on the Track > Duplicate Track); Create a Synth 2 with the DLS Soft Synth (Hint: Insert Soft Synth from Instrument icon pop-down menu.) Set instrument to Flute with Synth 2; use Piano Roll Editor to raise all notes an octave. (Hint: do a Select All, then click and drag up an octave.)

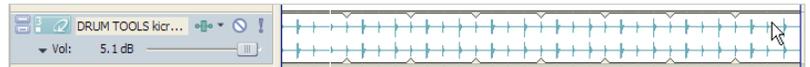


Step B: Adding Loops

8. Set looping on and adjust the loop track for 8 bars. See the blue/yellow slider/tabs at the top of the Track window.

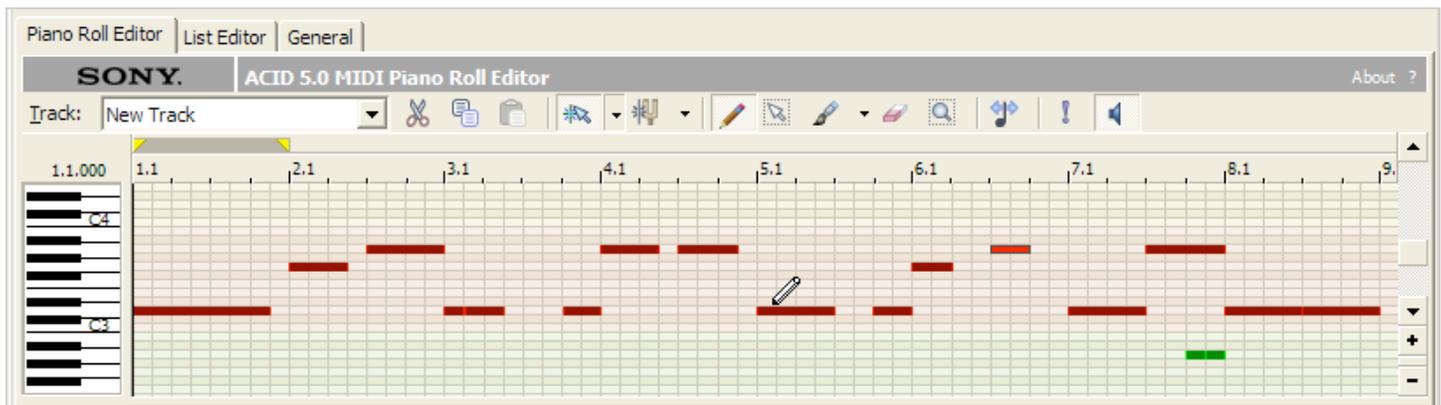


9. Use the Explorer (see Tab at bottom) to find a drum loop (e.g., Sound Series/Loops/Standard Collection/Drum Tools/kicrPromo 01.wav); Double click the file to pop it into the Track window as a Track; then use the Pencil tool to drag over the measure to fill in the number of loops needed to complete 8 bars. Caution: after selecting a loop file, you have to "draw" the loop into the track to make it appear!



Step C: Write Your Own Bass Line

10. Create a New Track for a Bass line: Choose Insert > MIDI Track to open the Piano Roll editor directly. Enter notes using the pencil edit tool in the MIDI editor (Hint: Click the Monitor speaker icon on the Toolbar so hear the notes as you enter them). Close window when done. Then, create a Soft Synth 3 with the DLS Synth and choose the "Bass" instrument. Label the Track "Bass." (Hint: If you have trouble getting it to make 8 bars, take the paint brush and paint 8 bars of any note; then go back with pencil and edit in notes.)



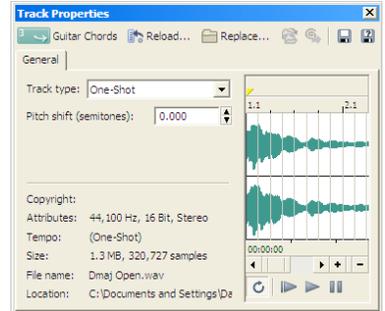


Step C: Using External Soft Synths

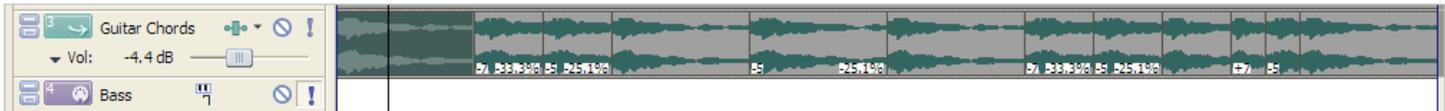
11. Select the Bass track and then the Instrument icon for Insert Soft Synth. From the “Soft Synth Chooser” window examine all the Soft Synths added to your system. We selected M-Audio’s KeyRig in this case. We could also pick from Korg’s Legacy Collection of Polysix, Wavestation, or MS-20. Make whatever settings you want to create an instrument of choice. Now Play the composition with the new instrument sound. ACID will save all the settings for this soft synth. Notice, again, when you add soft synths, a fader control panel will appear in the Mixer window.

Step D: Adding Chords and Making Final Mix

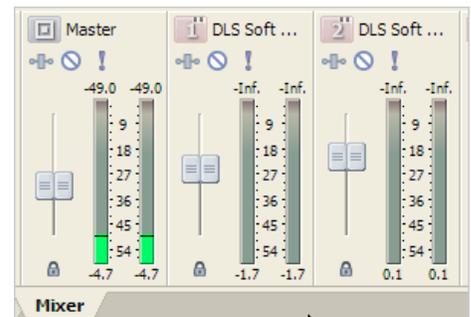
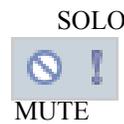
12. A folder of recorded guitar chords is provided. Drag the D Major chord into ACID to automatically create a new track. Resize the chord to fill in the first measure. Right-click on Track; select Properties. Change the Track Type to “One-Shot” as shown. This last step is critical!



Use the Control key and drag another copy of the chord into the next measure; resize to fill the 2 beats needed for the G chord; then press the minus (-) key 7 times to transpose the chord down 7 steps to G. Use the G chord to clone an A chord (hold down the Control key when dragging); press (+) key twice to step -5 for the dominant. Continue until all the chords are assigned as shown below.



13. Play with balance and mixing; Click on the mute and solo icons to audit selected tracks; adjust volume L and R with the mixer faders until you’ve got a good mix!



Other Features to Try

- Find a MIDI file of any music; drag it into ACID and then re-score (re-assign) the instruments to whatever you want. See the gigue.mid or sinfonia.mid file provided.
- Use ACID to edit digital audio files; drag the digital audio file into a Track and use the Editor to crop or change the audio, add effects like some reverb, and so on. See the guitarLicks.wav file provided. Experiment with ACID’s beatmapping features.
- Record live music directly into ACID. With the addition of a microphone your PC and ACID can serve as a digital recorder.
- ACID has some neat Groove tools. Check out the different performance styles you can use to enhance your project.
- Search the Web for resources for ACID loops; there are many free and pay-per-view sources of loops for ACID.