

Make a Rock Beat in Redrum.

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Unlike many popular sequencers, like Fruity Loops, Reason is used by musicians across many genres; not just electronica artists, but rockers, folk artists and pop bands, too. I know one punk rock band that sold pretty well a few years back using completely programmed drums, and surprisingly nobody ever noticed—I'll spare their reputation the damage and keep the band's name to myself.

The point is that Reason is flexible and useful for all musicians. If you've got an itch to ditch your drummer, here's how to program a rock beat using ReDrum, Reason's resident drum machine.

Step 1

Open Reason and click File > New. Usually, your new Reason file will be set up with a mixer already in the rack, but if it isn't, right-click on any blank rack space and choose Mixer 14:2. Once there is a mixer in the rack, right click the blank space underneath it and click Redrum Drum Computer.

If all has gone well, your Reason workspace will look like this:

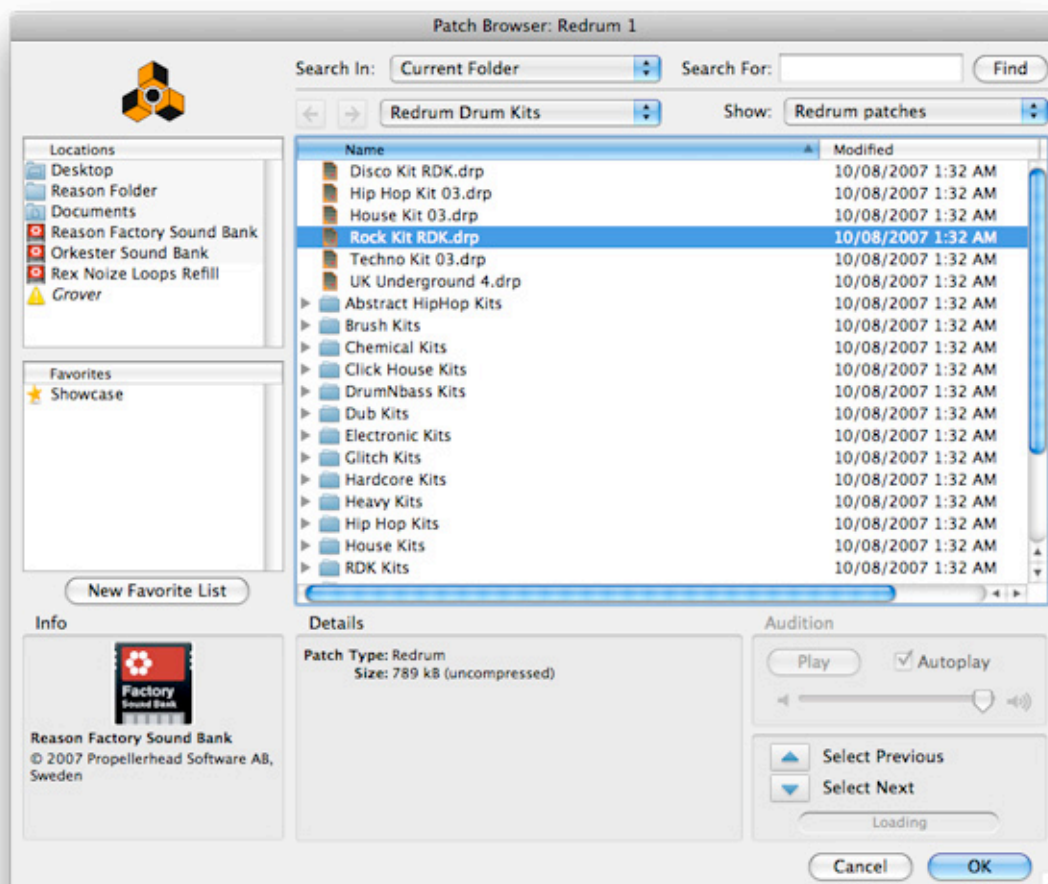


Step 2

Time to select a kit. In the bottom left corner of the Redrum unit, there's a section that looks like this:

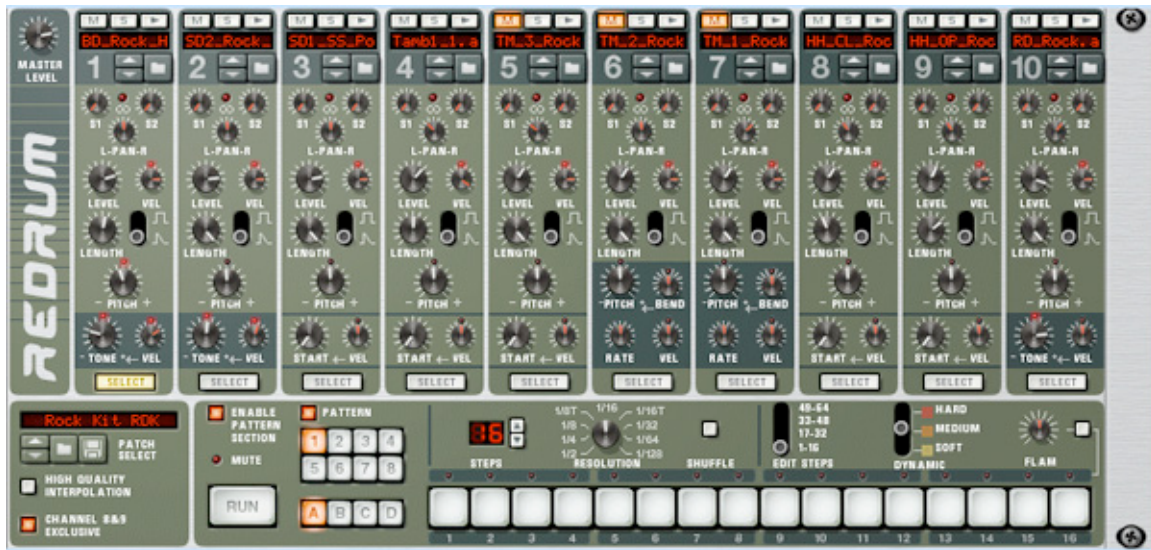


Clicking the icon of a folder beneath the kit name will bring up a dialogue box allowing you to choose a kit preset. I've chosen a rock kit for this job.



Step 3

Before you start programming your beat, you need to stop and have a closer look at the Redrum unit if you haven't worked with it before.



As you can see, the drum machine is made up of two primary components: channel strips for each sample and a sort of sequencer. To program hits for a given drum, press Select in the channel strip—as you can see the bass drum is selected in this screenshot—and then click on the beats in that row of white buttons at the bottom.

When you click, the button will turn yellow, which indicates the sample is to be played at that point in the pattern. Rinse and repeat for each sample.

To the left of the strip of white buttons is a bunch of smaller numbered buttons. These are for pattern selection and we'll be using these a few times in this tutorial. When I refer to the pattern selector, this is what I'm talking about.

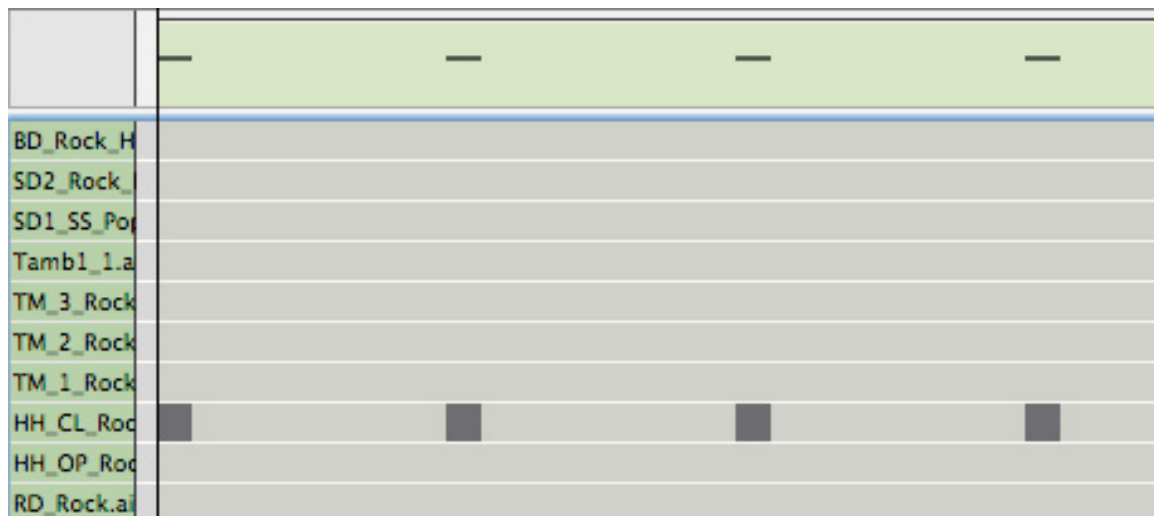
You'll also notice that the preset selector isn't the only place that has a folder icon. There's a button under the sample name in each channel strip with the same icon that allows you to pick individual samples.

Step 4


Let's get started on the beat itself, starting with the opening pattern. It's going to be a pretty standard opener for a rock song. Place hits on the closed hi-hat sample at 1, 5, 9 and 13, like this:



In this tutorial I'm including screenshots from the sequencer since you can only see one sample's hits at a time using Redrum. Here's what the intro pattern looks like:



Listen to the opening pattern:

 *1 intro pattern.mp3*

Step 5

Now that you've stored the opening pattern in pattern slot 1, go to the pattern selector and choose number 2. We'll program the main beat, or the chorus beat if you will. Here's where we want hits:

Bass Drum: 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 15

Snare Drum: 5, 13

Tambourine or Accent: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15


Closed Hi-hat: 1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15

Open Hi-hat: 3, 11

If you want to program it visually, here's the sequenced pattern:



Listen to the main pattern:

 *2 Main pattern.mp3*

Step 6

Now we need something quieter, like a verse beat. Switch to pattern 3 using the pattern selector.

Bass Drum: 1, 7, 11, 14, 15

Tambourine or Accent: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15


Closed Hi-hat: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15

Ride Cymbal: 5, 13

And here's what it should look like in a sequencer:



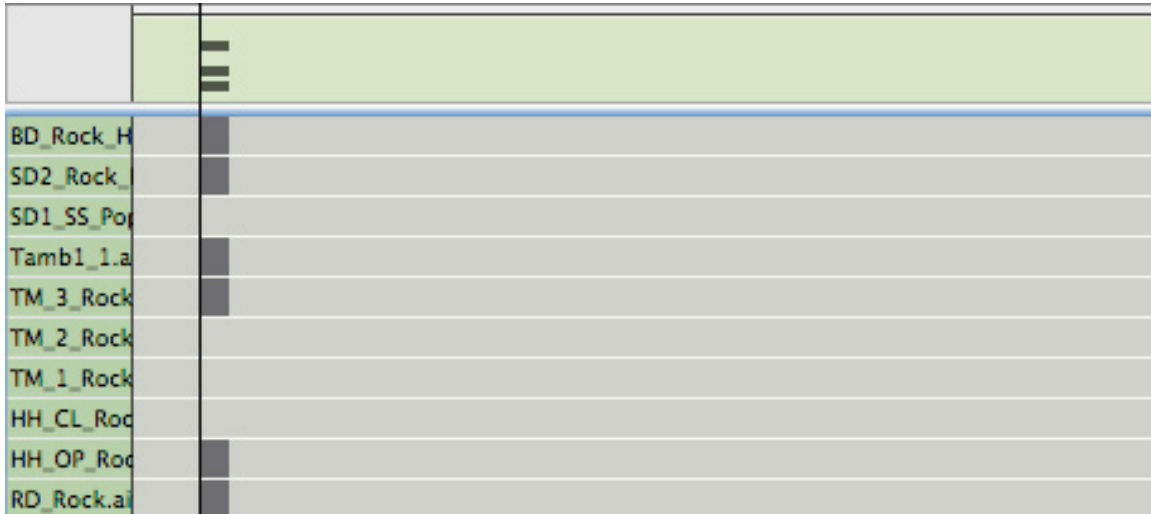
Listen to the verse pattern:

 3 Verse pattern.mp3

Step 7

Now we need something simple to end the song. Switch to pattern slot 4. I've got a snare, bass, tambourine, tom 3, open hi-hat and ride cymbal all firing on step 1. It should look like this:

Listen to the ending pattern:



 4 Ending pattern.mp3

Step 8

Now all the beats have been programmed, it's time to pick your samples. Perhaps you want a punchier bass drum, a snare that doesn't rattle so much, and a less irritating ride cymbal.

Using the file button on the channel strips that you can see in the image below, load up your preferred samples, whether they're from within Reason's kits or your own sample library.



The key to choosing a good set of samples is knowing what the drums, as a foundational layer, are supporting. The samples need to work with the other instruments.

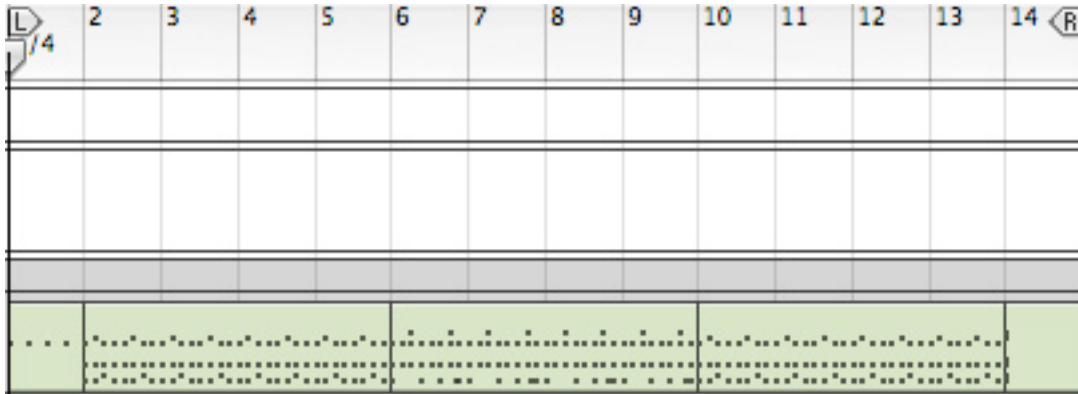
Step 9

Now you've got the sound you want, go back to pattern 1 using the selector. Position the Left and Right bars in the sequencer so they start at bar 1 and finish at the start of bar 2 (spanning one full bar). Now, right click on Redrum and click 'Copy Pattern to Track'. You should now have a hi-hat count-in in your sequencer.

Now, skip to pattern two and do the same, this time spanning four bars, and again with pattern three on another four bars. Now, alt/option+click on the first instance of the chorus pattern in the sequencer and drag it so that it's copied after the verse beat.

Finally, use the handles to select one bar at the end of the "song" and skip to pattern 4. Add in the ending.

You should now have a sequencer that looks like this:



It will sound like this:

 5 *Sequenced beat.mp3*

Step 10

We've got our beats sequenced but they sound so dry, it's time to put some reverb on. Right click on the Redrum unit, go to Create and then click RV7000 Advanced Reverb. For this beat, you can leave the preset on Warm plate and turn the Dry – Wet control right down, like so:



Listen to the sequence with reverb:

 6 *Reverb.mp3*

Step 11

When you're preparing your drum sound, it's important to know that you can route individual drums through to effects. In Step 10 we coated the entire kit in reverb, but what if we wanted just the snare to have some very light distortion?

Right click in the empty rack space, and click **Scream 4 Distortion**. Now press **Tab** on your keyboard to flick the rack around to the back. It should look like this:



The output from the reverb unit is going to the Scream unit, so unhook those cords (click and pull away).

Reattach the reverb to the mixer by clicking on the output and dragging to an empty channel.

Now, find the channel strip for the snare—it's number 2. There are two virtual plugs underneath it. Click on one of them and drag to the Scream unit's input. Both jacks will be hooked up automatically.

Press Tab again to flick around and mix the Scream unit and Redrum unit until they match up. You'll notice how dry and loud the snare sounds next to the rest of the kit now. Turn the Damage Control knob down on the Scream unit and the volume down until it matches.

Now add a reverb unit to the Scream unit with the same settings as the other reverb in the rack so the whole kit has a matching room sound. We're done!

Listen to the finished product:

 7 *Final product.mp3*