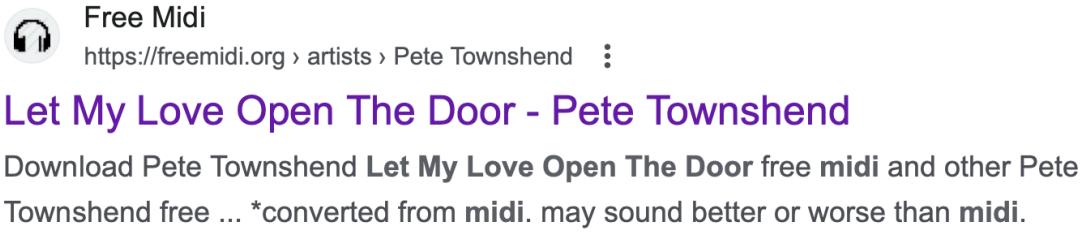
The Whole Entire Process of making a BB song from a midi file

First, you have know what song you are going to do. In this case, someone asked for an edit to “Let My Love Open The Door” by Pete Townshend. But, I had never done the song. This makes it a good candidate for explaining the process from square 1.

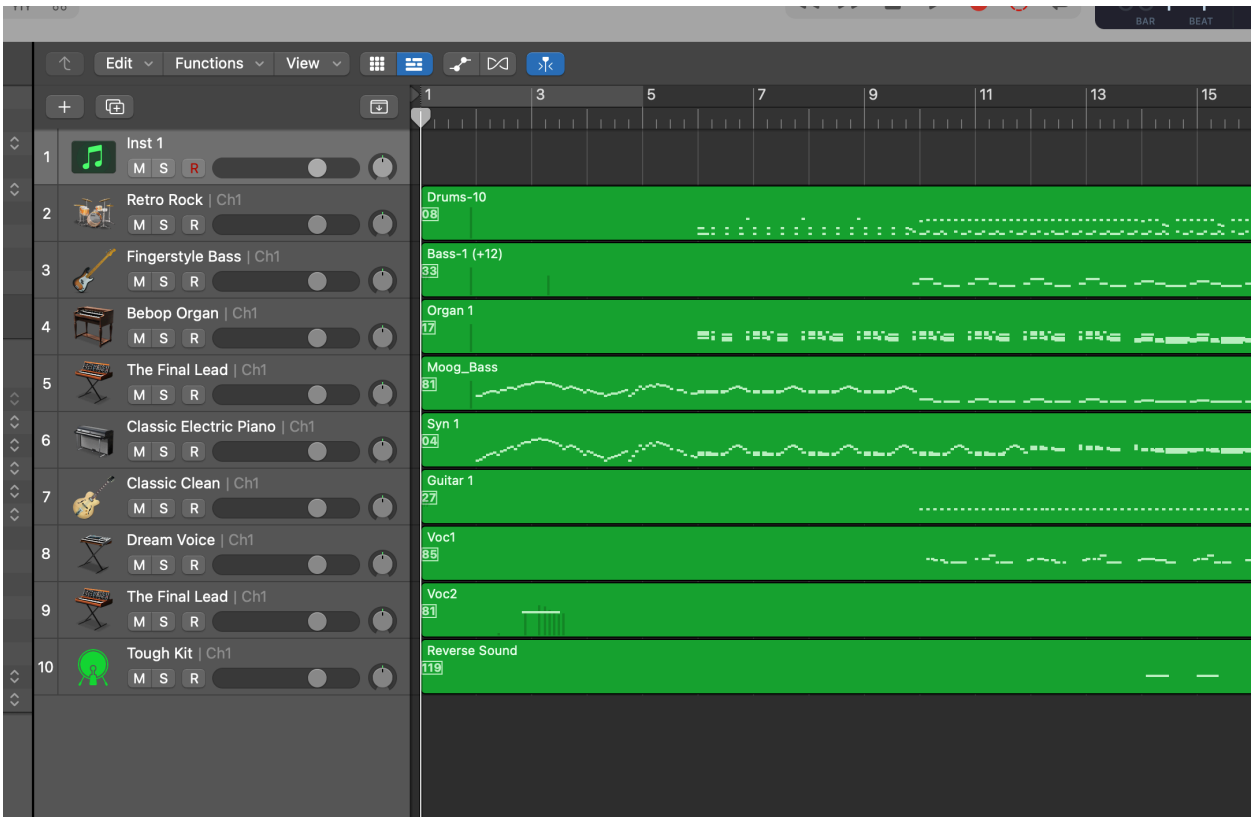
Let’s hope there is a midi file available. Google (that’s a verb) “Let My Love Open the Door midi.” The first hit was from Free Midi:



Great, I downloaded the file. Now I need to know the BPM. Google “Let My Love Open the Door BPM.” The various hits tell me it’s 165 bpm but could be a half-time, 83. I am first going to try it at 165.

I start a new project in Logic Pro, and I set the BPM to 165. Next, I drag the midi file I downloaded into the tracks area in the Logic Main window. I get a window asking if I want the tempo info that was encoded with the file. I’ll select Import Tempo, and we’ll see if it’s at 165. In this case it came in at 82. That’s fine I also get a SMTPE window asking me if I want a 29.97 frame rate or to keep the 25 frame rate. This is not a video. I’ll keep it at 25.

I now have a window with 9 populated midi tracks.

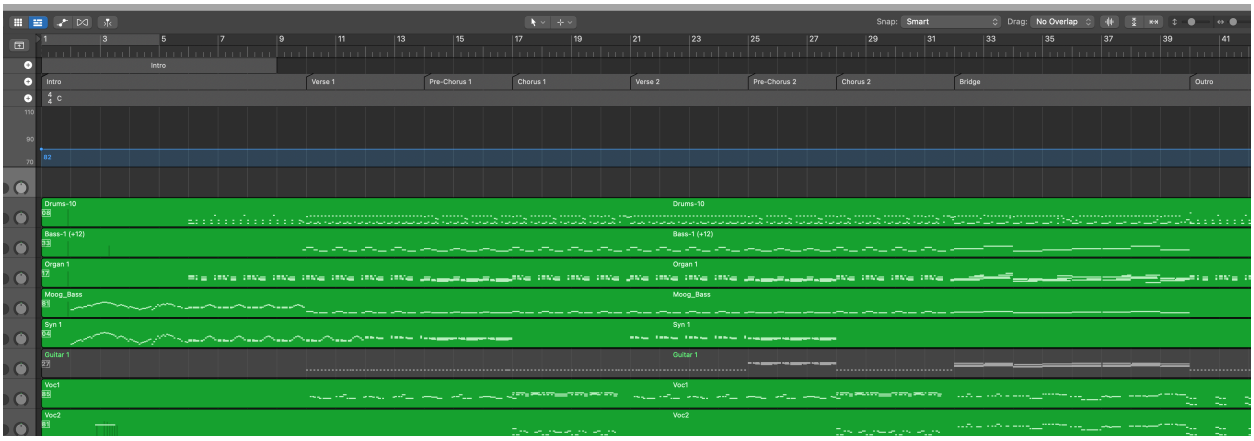


This midi song came in with instruments assigned. That is really good. sometimes they come in with nothing, and you have to figure out what belongs on a track. The next step is to listen to the midi.

Well, it's not too bad.

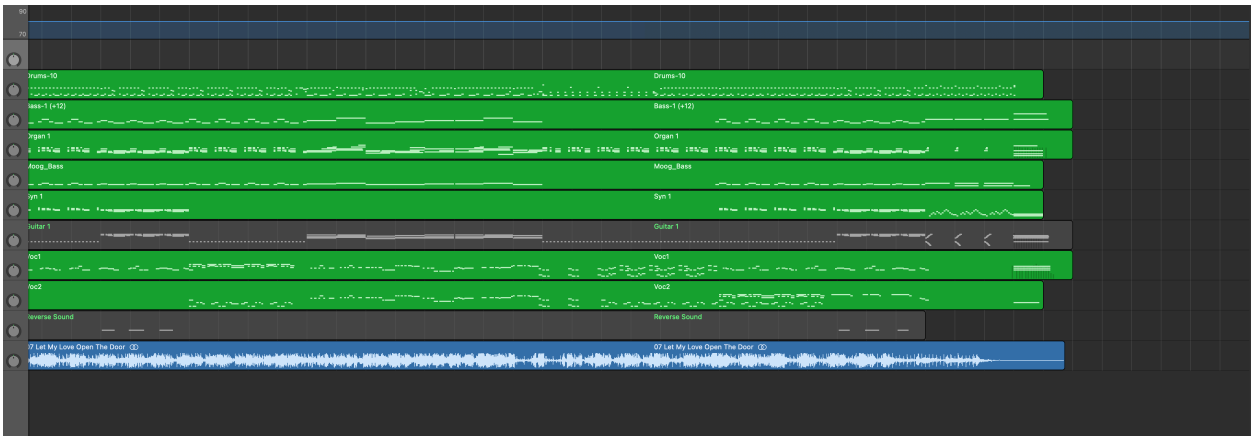
What I like to next it to mark sections of the song. This may be helpful when we get into editing it.

I use the marker track. Here we have the sections labeled:



I also like to listen to the original recording of the song, to see if the midi hits all of the sections we are going to want. I just add an mp3 of the song intro the project.

When I did that, it turned out it's about the same length. That's good



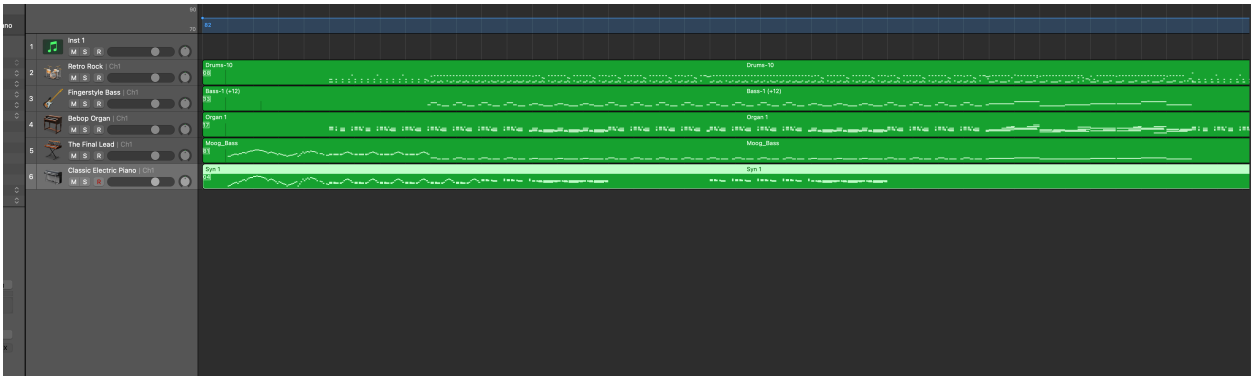
I solo the mp3 track and play it taking note of any major differences. As it turned out, the midi is fairly true to Pete's recording.

Now we have to edit the midi to get it ready for BB.

First, we can delete the mp3 track. we won't need it again.

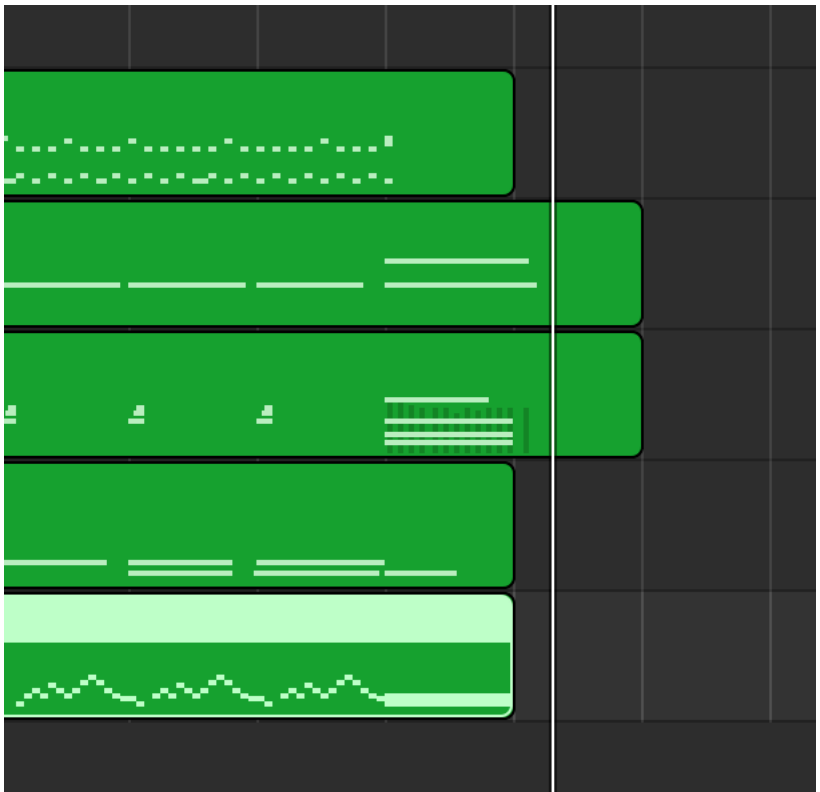
Then, there are two other tracks, that we won't use. One is a repetitious single note guitar track. We're gonna play guitar, so that can go. There is another track called "tough kit" that added some extra kicks. I don't hear that in the original, so it can go. Finally, there are two tracks that were in the midi playing the notes of the lead and backing vocals. We don't want those.

This leaves 5 tracks.

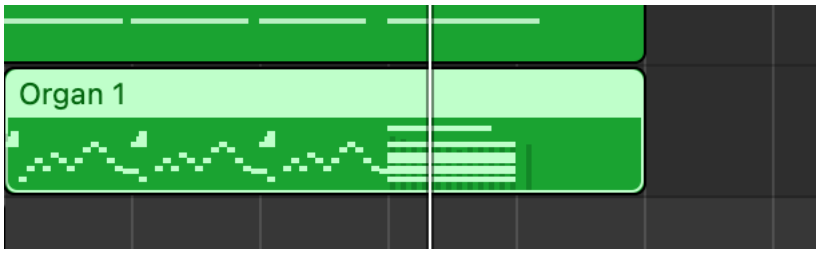


These are drums, bass, bebop organ, final lead synth, and electric piano. This is where things get subjective and questions of art and craft come into play. The piano and final lead, look to double each other in several place. I decide to mute the piano and play the track. It still sounds like a good arrangement.

At the very end of the song, the piano plays the arpeggiated notes. I probably want to keep that.



Piano is the bottom track I am going to merge this part of the track with the organ.



Other than sounding an octave too low, it works. Lets move those notes up an octave.

Much better.

Now we can delete the rest of the piano track.

I now have a bass, a synth bass, organ and drums. The question is now whether I have kit already made that might work with that configuration.

Some kits I might try are:

NP TMB BAss and Electronic Rose
NP Toothy Synth and Bass
and, ahh
STAX T.M. Bass& Final Lead and & Acous Piano.

Unless you want to be stuck making a kit for every song, you just have to accept that sometime, you are going to change the instrumentation a bit.

What's in the STAX kit:

Synth bass from D! through G3
Drum 36-39 Fairly normal
Synth C1 - B2, and oops

The Piano is not there - boo.

Well, what else might work. You know, clavinet might sound interesting for the synth sounds. Can we make Motown Stevie Funk work?

Slap Bass C1 - G3
Drums 32 -59 fairly robust kit
Horns C3 (60) - G4 (79)
Clavinet -G#1 (80) - G5 (127) that's a great range

Alright, we're going to try to make this work.

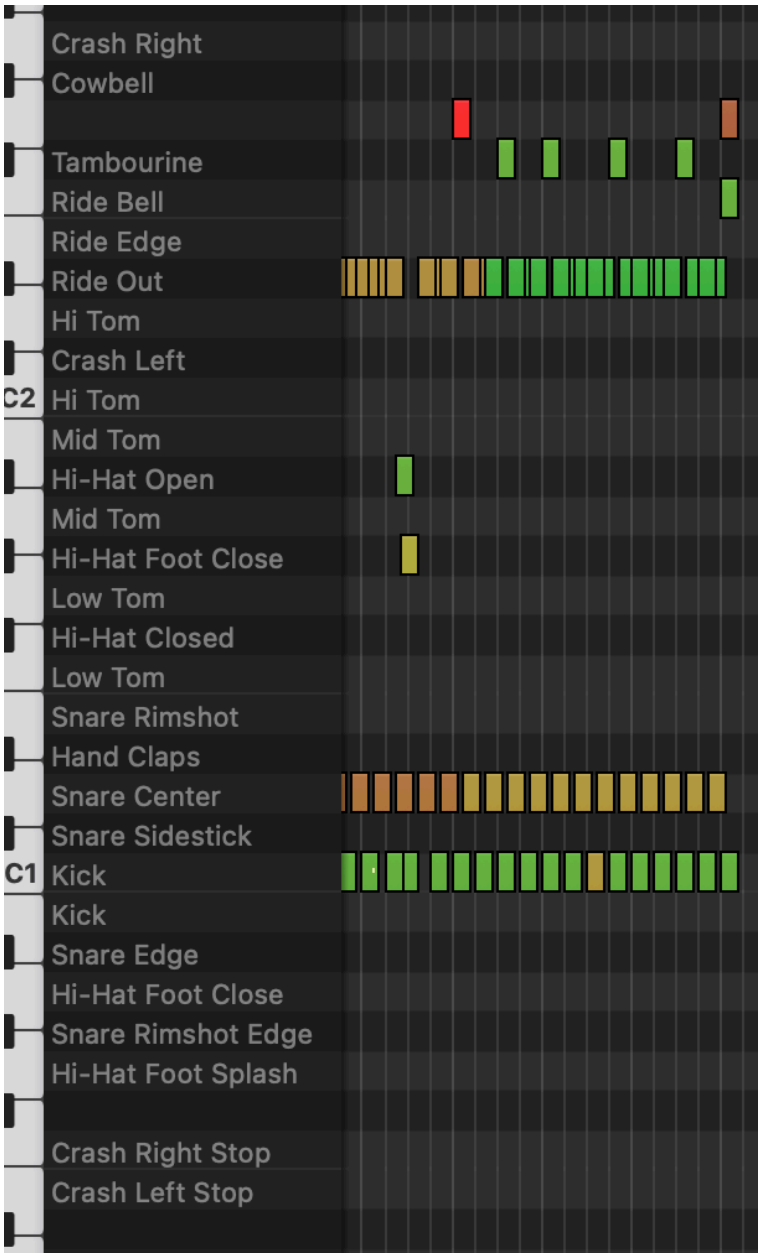
Let's check the drumkit pieces to make sure it's good. The midi is using:

C1 kick
D1 snare
41 low tom
42 closed hat
43 low tom 2
44 foot hat
45 mid tom
46 open hat
47 mid tom 2
48 hi tom
49 crash left
50 hi tom 2
51 ride out
52 ride edge
53 ride bell
54 tambourine
55 splash
57 crash right

Does the Stevie kit have all that?

At 55, Stevie kit has a conga.

The 55 only show up for two hits near the end of the song.

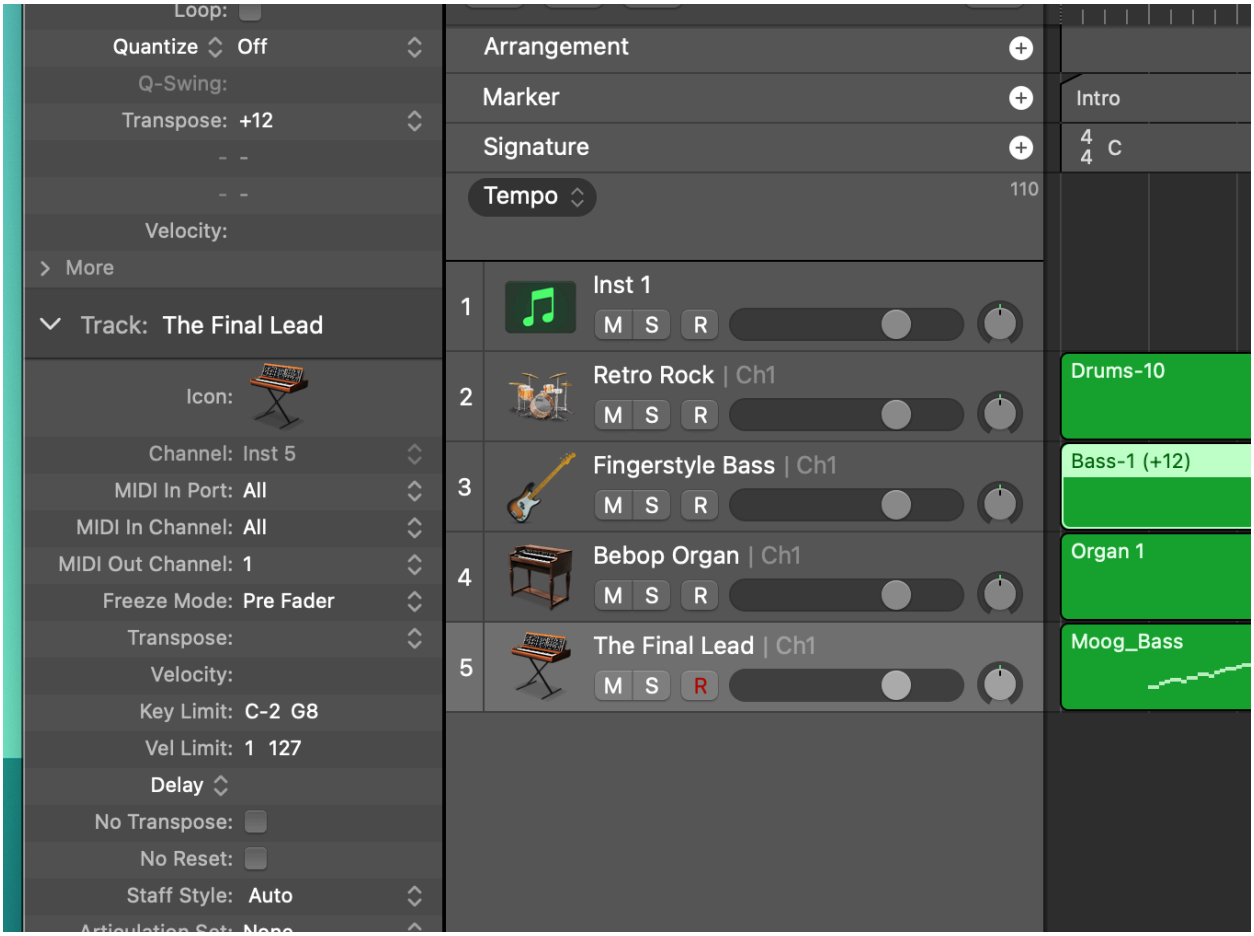


It's the unnamed line above the tambourine. I'm going to move it to the 57 crash, and lower the velocity.

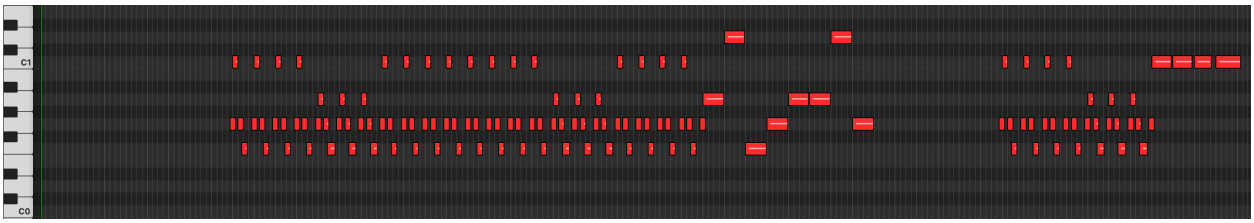
Now the Drums track will all be played.

Next we look at the bass. The track is transposed up an octave. We'll need to get rid of that for merging the tracks in a bit.

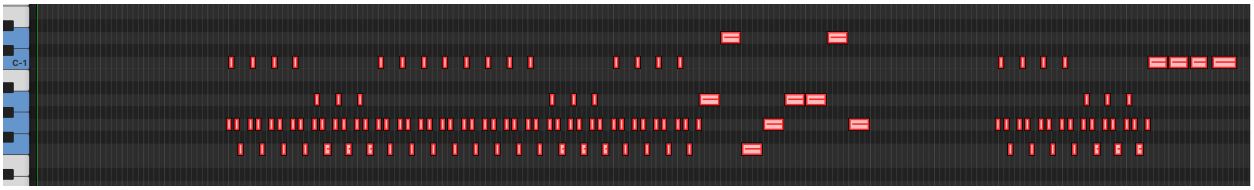
Set the transpose to 0.



Now the entire bass track sits between F0 and D1. But our bass is mapped only as high as G0, although it will play back notes from C1 through G3

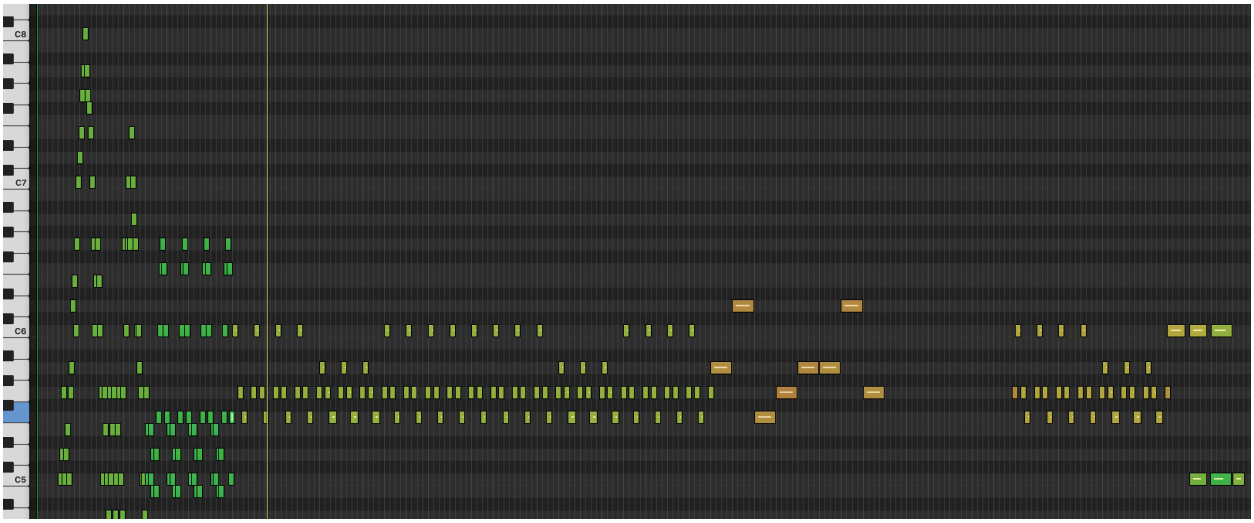


If we move all the bass notes down two octaves, it will be in the correct range for the kit.



This bass is going to be played by the slap bass in the Stevie kit.

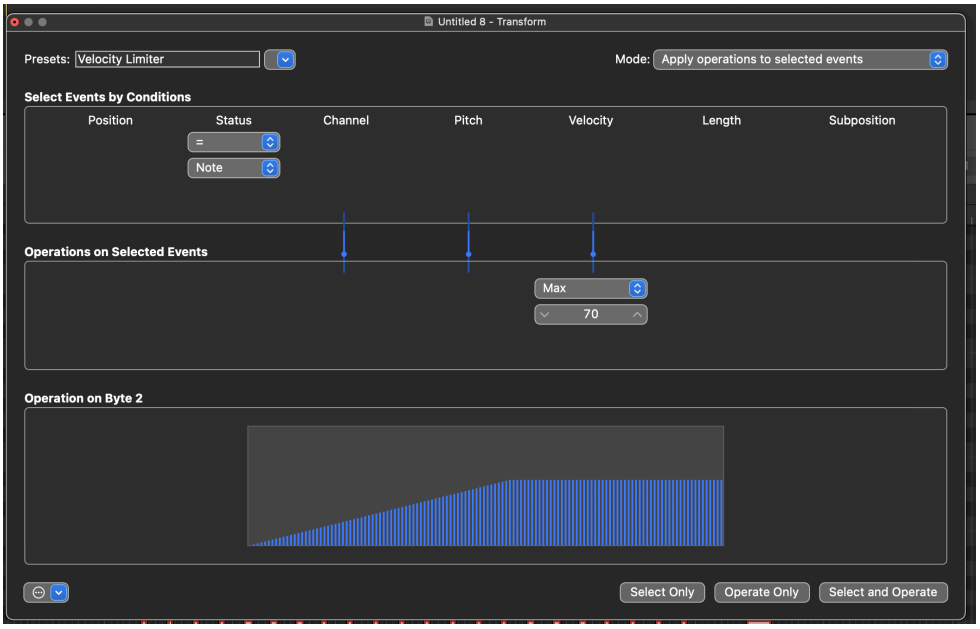
Now. the Final Lead/Moog bass track needs to get handled. It ranges mostly from C0 through D1. Our clavinet only goes down to G#1. We have to transpose all these notes to fit into the 80 to 127 range. This is what that look like.



We have the organ left. And we have Stevie's horns left. That is where the organ is going. We'll fit it between 60 and 80. Fortunately, it is mostly in that range. There are a few notes that are too high, and a couple sub notes too low. In this case, we just cut those.

The tracks are now almost ready to merge into a single track for the BB. My only remaining concern is the volume of the tracks. There are many red 100+ velocity notes. These may cause clipping in the final playback.

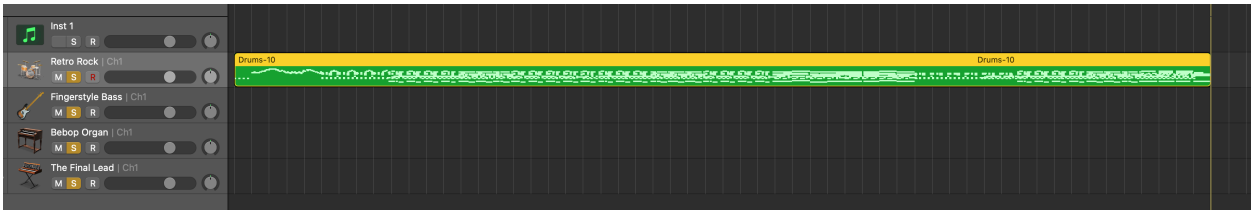
I am going to set the maximum velocity at 70.



Now, we will merge the tracks into one track. But first, since I have a blank measure at the beginning, I'll add a 4 beat count in.

In Logic, you merge tracks with the join command.

Now we have one track



We will now export this track as midi to the hard drive. File>Export>Selection as Midi File.

We'll name it and pick a location for it.

Now, we are on to BB Manager.

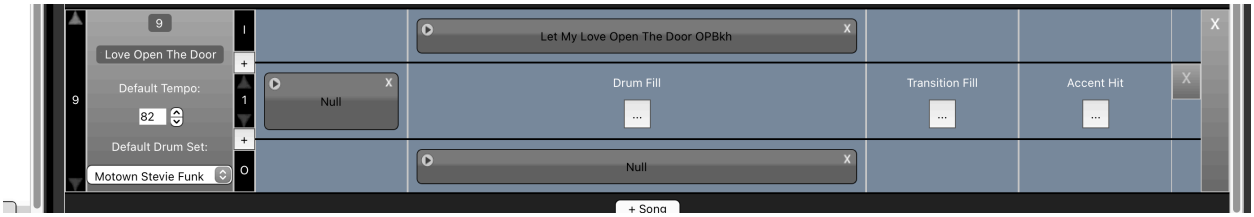
In BB Manager, select a folder with less than 99 songs, click on the +Song under the last song in the folder a new blank song will be created. Enter the title, and the BPM. Select the Motown Stevie Funk kit. You'll have to import it into BBM is you have not already done so.

The first version of this song will be a Phil Flood style OPB.

Click on the box below Intro Fill and navigate to the Let My Love Open The Door midi file. It will get added to the intro slot. Then, place a null file in the main loop and outro files using the same. The easiest way to get a null file is to export one from an existing file. There is also a null file included in the new post for this song that we have just made.

This type of OPB will play when the song is selected and the pedal is press once. The full song plays. You cannot stop it. When it is finished, your pedal will be looping on the null loop. Double tap to end the song, which will enable you to then select another song.

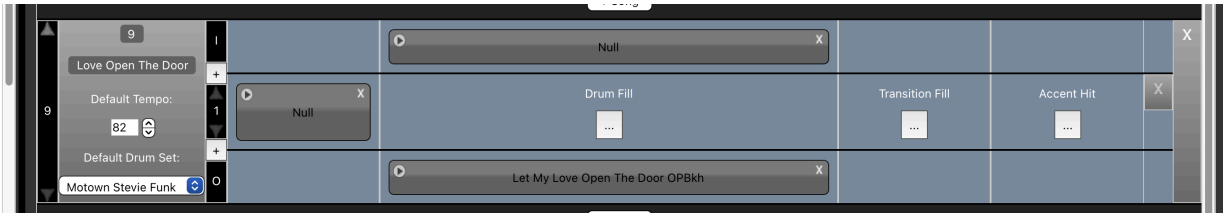
And, yeah, it's a little weird for the intro with the clavinet, but it's still useable.



The second version is done in the style of Phil (not Flood):

Here, there is a null in the Intro slot and the main loop slot. The body of the song is in the Outro.

This type of OPB will play when the song is selected and the pedal is press once, to get past the intro, and then double tapped to get out of the main loop.The full song in the Outro then plays. You cannot stop it. When it is finished, your pedal will be ready to select the next song.



Well, smarty pants, what if I want the song in the main loop so, I can double stop to end it when I want. Well, yes you can do that, and you don't even need the Null loops. But, If you

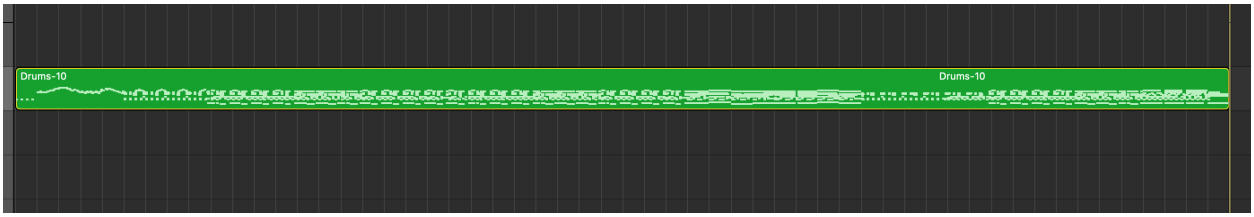
don’t stop it right on the end measure if will start to play again, and you won’t look very professional.

So, here is the cure:

Song Type 3 - Song Body in main loop.

For this, we first go back into Logic. Start Logic and open the OP midi file.

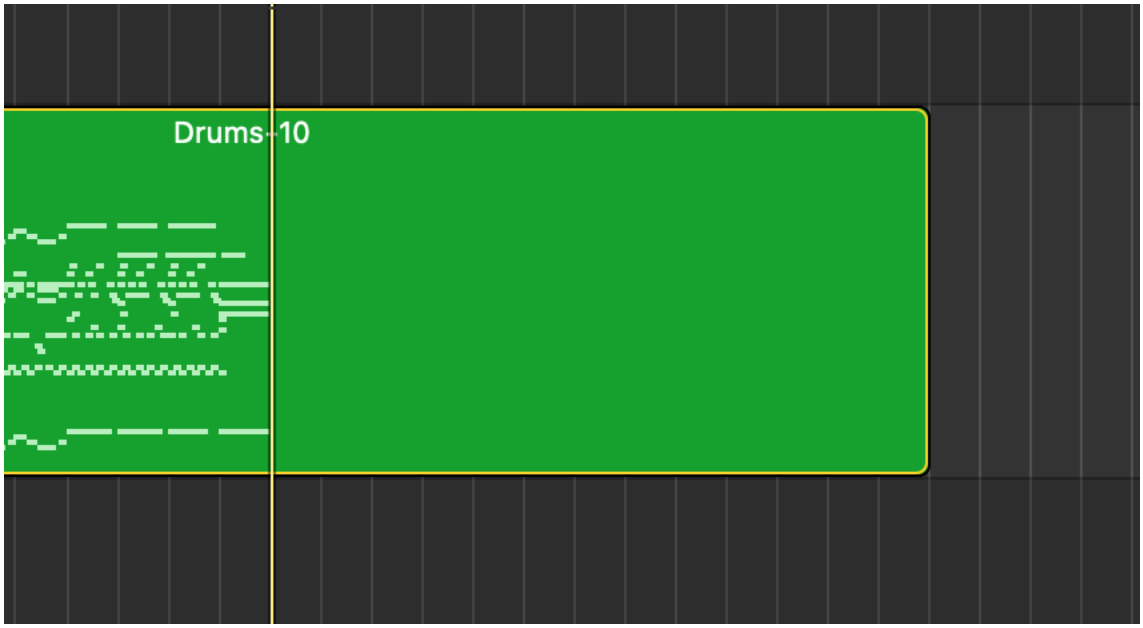
Remember, it looks like this:



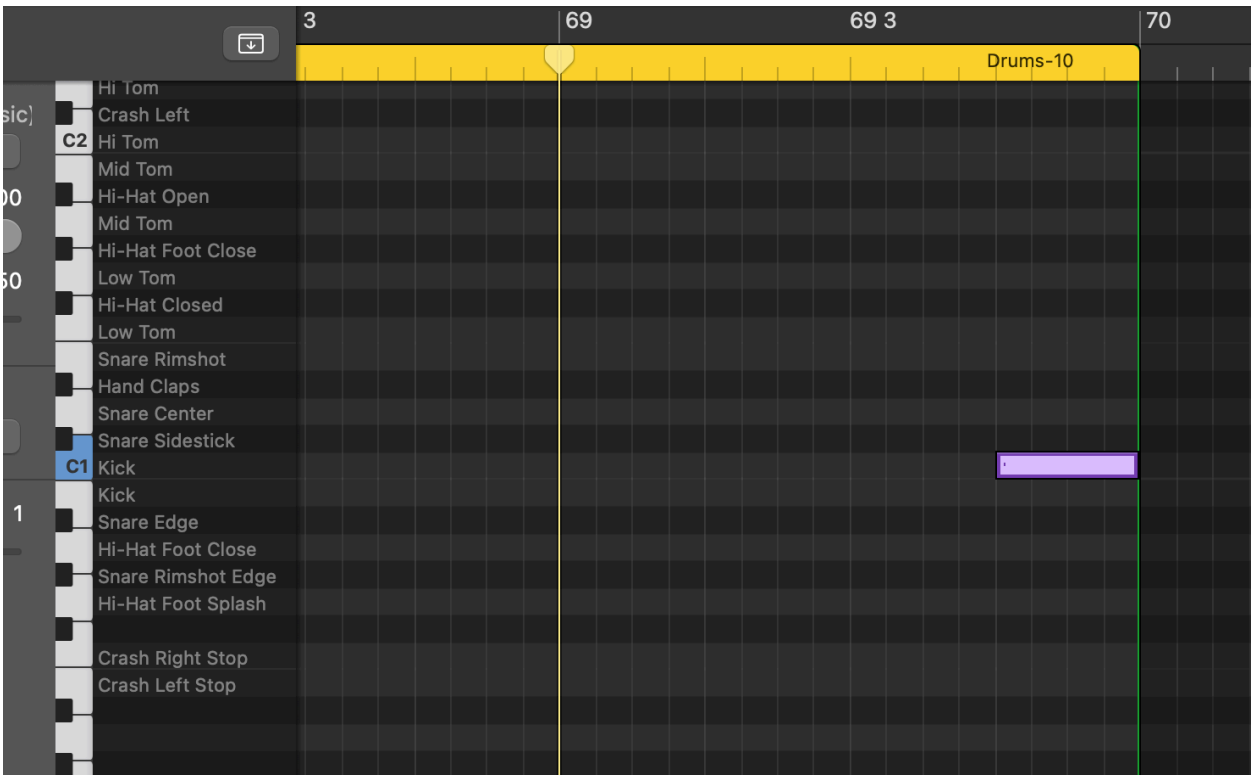
Notice how the song goes to the end of the last bar line. We need that with the first two types of OP files, or the song may not start correctly.

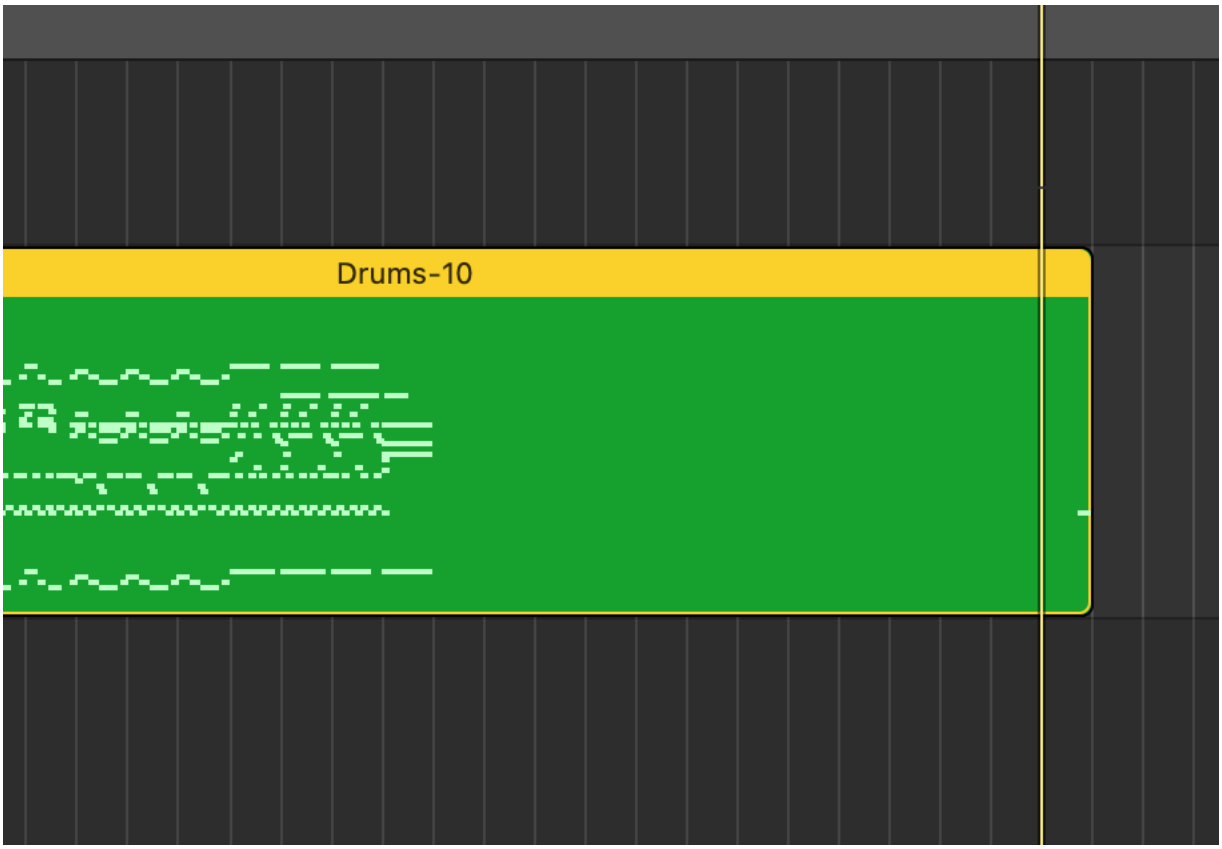
Make sure one note, usually the last kick drum, extends to the end of the bar.

So, here is the trick. We need to have time to hit the double tap to end the song before is begins to loop again. What do we do? We add dead space.



But, remember you need a note going to the end of the last bar. Add a velocity 1 kick drum at the end of that last bar.


3
69
69 3
70
Drums-10
Hi Tom
Crash Left
C2
Hi Tom
Mid Tom
Hi-Hat Open
Mid Tom
Hi-Hat Foot Close
Low Tom
Hi-Hat Closed
Low Tom
Snare Rimshot
Hand Claps
Snare Center
Snare Sidestick
C1
Kick
Kick
Snare Edge
Hi-Hat Foot Close
Snare Rimshot Edge
Hi-Hat Foot Splash
Crash Right Stop
Crash Left Stop


Drums-10

This give you plenty of time to end the song and not have it restart. If you do forget and it restarts, there will just be a barely audible note before the restart.

Save the edited loop with a new name to identify it. I called mine “Let My Love Open the Door Main Loop Version.”

Back in BB Manager, we have this: