

Drummer Help

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Overview: Drummer is a Windows95 and Windows NT program designed specifically to allow easy production and manipulation of MIDI drum patterns. With Drummer you can create any number of repeating patterns of up to eight (8) different measures each in 3/4 or 4/4 time. These patterns can be modified in real time, and ordered into a song (a set of patterns played in a specific order).

Shareware Statement: If you have the shareware version of this program, you may freely distribute it provided no changes are made to any of the files. If you have the registered version of this software, you may make backup copies, and install as many copies on your personal computer or computers as you wish, but you may not install this software on other people's computers, on a company computer, or a computer network (or give the registered version to anyone else, of course).

Registration: Skip this if you already registered this program. If you haven't registered this program, everything works except Midi file export. There are no other limitations, and no nag screens. That junk's just too annoying. I hope you'll like this program enough to register it, and encourage me to continue to write updates and enhancements. The registration fee is \$30. For your \$30, you get a new version that will export to Midi, and a free upgrade to the final Version 1. Probably to be released some time this summer. (If enough people register this one.) To register, send me a check at the address below with your name and address, and I'll get you a new version asap.

Special: I want to get a new guitar, so I'm having a little special to get up some money fast. Be one of the first 50 people to register (or by May 1, whichever comes first) and you pay only \$12 instead of the usual \$30. Really, help me out, OK?

[Menu Bar](#)

[File Pane](#)

[Pattern Pane](#)

[Song Pane](#)

[Using Drummer](#)

Disclaimer: The author and/or distributors of this program make no warranties as to the function of this program. We will not be held liable for damage resulting from use of this program, nor for any failing of this program.

Final note: I'm always interested in what you think of my programs, and what you'd like changed / improved. Feel free to contact me about it.

About the Author: I'm a graduate student in Sociology, and I make computer programs in my spare time (precious little). I always loved music, and have been interested in computer music since about 1985. I play guitar and most of my software relates to music on the PC in some way.

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Menu Bar

File

Exit - Exit the Drummer program.

Options – Configure user settings.

Patch Names – This tab allows you to change names of patches for your Midi device. The program begins with the default General MIDI percussion patch names. These names can be recovered at any time by clicking the Default button. Please note, you can only have one set of patch names at this time, so if you want to have different patch names for different Midi devices, you should have different copies of the Drummer program in different directories, configuring each one differently.

Colors – This tab allows you to change the colors of the pattern display. The display elements that can be changed are:

Background	Color of the background
Grid	Color of the time/patch grid
Beat Division	Color of the line marking each beat
Playback Pointer	Color of the line marking playback progression
Drum Hit	Color of the box indicating a drum hit is to occur

Divisions – This tab allows you to change the number of beats in a quarter note (3 gives $\frac{3}{4}$ time, 4 gives $\frac{4}{4}$ time), and the number of ticks in each beat. The number of ticks per beat determines the pattern's resolution, the greater the number, the more different places a drum hit can occur within a beat. There are no penalties for using the maximum number of 12.

Midi Settings – This tab allows you to choose the Midi output device and channel. Currently Midi recording is not supported. With General Midi devices, channel 10 is usually used for drum patches, but your equipment may differ.

File Save – This tab allows you to determine how the Drummer handles your files and changes you make to these files. You can make the same choice for both pattern and song files. If the box is checked, Drummer automatically saves any changes you make to the file (provided there's a file name and you aren't working on a new file). If you uncheck the box, Drummer will prompt you to save changes, which can be really annoying when you know what you're doing and want to work quickly. I recommend leaving both boxes checked.

Help - This file.

Contents - View the main page of the help file.

Search - Search the help file for key words.

About - Display copyright, version, and registration information.

File Pane

The Drummer's File Pane allows you to see a list of pattern (*.ptn) and song (*.sng) files you're working on in any given directory. In the pane, the drive appears at the top, followed by the directory then the pattern list with the song list at the bottom of the pane. Using the File Pane is relatively easy.

To change disk drives, click on the dropdown list arrow and choose a new drive. To change directories, double click on the directory you want. Double click on a directory higher in the directory tree to go up to that level, and double click on a subdirectory to go into that directory.

The pattern and song files will automatically be displayed for the current directory. To load a song file, click on the song filename in the song file list. The song will be loaded into the Song Pane. If a different song is playing, the new song will replace it, and play will continue.

To load a pattern file, click on the pattern filename in the pattern file list. The pattern will be loaded into the Pattern Pane. If a different pattern is playing, the new pattern will replace it, and play will continue.

To add a pattern to a song, load the song and left click and drag the pattern from the pattern file list in the File Pane to the Song Pane's pattern list.

Pattern Pane

The Pattern Pane (or Pattern Builder Pane) is where you build a pattern. The pane contains a pattern grid with a tab above the grid and some text below the grid. The tab above the grid allows you to select the measure of the pattern you are looking at. There will be one tab for each measure in the pattern. Click the appropriate tab to go to that measure.

As you move the mouse over the grid, you'll notice that the text under the grid changes. The text in the lower left indicates the patch the mouse is over. As you move the mouse up and down, notice the patch changes accordingly. Patch names can be configured in the Patch Names box. The text in the lower right indicates the beat and tick the mouse is over in the current measure of the pattern. As you move the mouse left and right you'll notice this changing accordingly.

If you click on a box in the pattern grid, the box will be filled in, indicating the patch will be played at that beat and tick in the current measure of the pattern. Clicking again on the box returns it to the original grid background color, indicating that the sound has been "turned off."

Right clicking on the pattern grid brings up a menu of things you can do to the pattern:

Measure Activities

Add Measure – Select this to add a measure to the end of the pattern (if you already have three (3) measures, selecting this will add a fourth after the first three). You can have up to eight (8) measures in a pattern.

Remove Current Measure – Select this to remove the currently displayed measure from the pattern. You must have one (1) measure in any pattern, so you cannot remove the last measure.

Clear Current Measure – Select this to retain the measure in the pattern, but to clear all notes from it, so the measure is silent (and ready for you to add new material to).

Clear All Measures – Select this to retain the measures in the pattern, but to clear all notes from every measure.

Pattern Activities

Clear this Pattern – Selecting this retains the pattern name, but removes all measures (but the first) and all note information. It also returns the pattern to the default 4 beats and 8 ticks setup.

Begin New Pattern – This clears the pattern (see above) and also clears the name, so you will not overwrite the original pattern on your disk.

Save Pattern – Select this to save the current pattern with the current name. If you have Auto Save on (and you should), you should never need this menu command.

Save Pattern As – Select this to save the current pattern with a new name that you will be asked to supply. This is the best way to clone a base pattern to create new variations on the original.

Export Pattern to MIDI - Select this to save the current pattern as a MIDI Type 0 file. You will be asked to supply a new name for the pattern.

Song Pane

The Song Pane (or Song Builder Pane) is where you build a song. A song is comprised of a number of patterns. The pane merely lists the patterns of a song, with a number of repetitions for each pattern (on the left). Each pattern entry can be repeated up to 99 times, and a pattern can be entered as many times as you like. There can only be 250 patterns in a song, however.

To add a pattern to a song, Left click and drag the pattern filename from the pattern list (in the File Pane) on to the Song Builder display.

Using the Pattern Builder

Clicking on a pattern listed in the Song Builder loads that pattern into the Pattern Builder for inspection or editing, and places the keyboard focus on the Song Builder. With the keyboard focused on the Song Builder, you can use keyboard shortcuts for the following:

Key	Event
Up arrow	Move highlight up in pattern list
Down arrow	Move highlight down in pattern list
Home	Move highlight to the top of the pattern list
End	Move highlight to the bottom of the pattern list
Page Up	Move pattern up in pattern list
Page Down	Move pattern down in pattern list
+	Increase the pattern's number of repetitions by one (1)
-	Decrease the pattern's number of repetitions by one (1)
*	Set the pattern's number of repetitions directly
Delete	Remove the selected pattern from the song (This does not remove the pattern from the disk)

Right clicking on a selected pattern will also bring up a menu for the following:

Pattern Activities

Increase Repetitions – Select this to increase the number of times the selected pattern is repeated in the song before moving on to the next pattern.

Increase Repetitions – Select this to increase the number of times the selected pattern is repeated in the song before moving on to the next pattern.

Shift Pattern Up – Select this to move the currently selected pattern higher in the list of patterns.

Shift Pattern Down – Select this to move the currently selected pattern lower in the list of patterns.

Remove Pattern – Select this to remove the currently selected pattern from the song. This does not delete the pattern from the disk.

Song Activities

Clear this Song – Selecting this retains the song name, but removes all patterns from the pattern list.

Begin New Song – This clears the song (see above) and also clears the name, so you will not overwrite the original song on your disk.

Save Song – Select this to save the current song with the current name. If you have Auto Save on (and you should), you should never need this menu command.

Save Song As – Select this to save the current song with a new name that you will be asked to supply.

Export Song to MIDI - Select this to save the current song as a MIDI Type 0 file. You will be asked to supply a new name for the song.

Using the Drummer

Once you understand how everything works, all that's left is the bar at the top of the window. The two buttons play songs and patterns respectively. Click one to start and click either to stop. You need to have a pattern in the Song builder before you can play a song. Also note: when you click the song play button, playback begins on the highlighted pattern in the Song Builder's list.

The Tempo and Volume slider are next to the Play buttons, and do what you'd think.

Finally, Tips for successful use.

- 1) Maximize the Drummer window to get the pattern grid as big as possible (and reduce your eye strain.)
- 2) Do not try to use other applications while actually playing a pattern or song (that includes switching windows, moving windows around, minimizing things, etc. If you wanna do that stuff, click the stop button first). This is important because the Drummer is very time sensitive. It's trying to play your patterns to within 1 millisecond accuracy, and will have a hard time if you're dragging windows around the screen, eating up valuable processor time making things look pretty. Do that stuff while a pattern or song is not playing.
- 3) Always leave AutoSave on.

