

Band in a Box Tutorial

Setting up Your Band:

- ◆ The BIAB must know where to get its sounds from. Usually it will automatically connect itself to your computer's sound card upon installation of the program.
- ◆ To view the MIDI setup BIAB is using, from the options menu, select "MIDI driver setup". You should see your computer's soundcard as one of the options in the window. If you have the option of using the DXi synth (which comes with most versions of BIAB) it is suggested that you use it, especially if you plan to make audio files of your BIAB songs.
- ◆ To connect a MIDI keyboard or sound generator to your BIAB, you must have a MIDI – USB device to connect the MIDI device or keyboard to the USB port of your computer.
- ◆ To select your MIDI device as your new sound source (driver), select "MIDI setup" from the Options menu. Your MIDI device should appear as one of the options. Select it.
- ◆ Be sure your keyboard is set on the "General MIDI" setting.
- ◆ You should now see the keyboard on the GUI light up when you play notes on your MIDI keyboard, and you should be able to hear the sounds of the device coming through the computer.
- ◆ Having a MIDI keyboard connected to BIAB is great for laying in quick little parts that really make the song sound like *the song*. Example: the steel drums on "Margaritaville."

To select and play songs:

- ◆ You can open a song by selecting "open file" from the FILE menu.
- ◆ Navigate to a folder where you have stored song files, and double click on one to open it.
- ◆ Once you have opened a song from within a particular folder, ALL the songs in that folder can then be displayed in a list. View this list by hitting the SONG button.
- ◆ Just next to the SONG button is a small F button (for Favorites) which will display the last 50 songs you've opened. Handy when you use the same songs over and over again.

To select or change a song's style:

- ◆ You can select any style for your song by selecting the .STY button on the GUI. This brings up an alphabetical list of your styles separated into categories. To view ALL the styles in your BIAB, be sure the category selected in the left part of the display is "ALL".
- ◆ Select any style in the list by double clicking on it.

To Create a Song from Scratch:

- ◆ From the File menu, select "NEW".
- ◆ Type a chord symbol into the leadsheet and hit Enter.
- ◆ Continue entering chord symbols on the leadsheet until reaching the final measure.
- ◆ Set the length of the song (in measures) by clicking on the small box with a number in it, directly to the right of the song's name on the GUI. Type in a number, or click on the final measure on the leadsheet.
- ◆ Select how many choruses, or times around, you want your song to play by clicking on the other small button next to the song length display, and choosing a number from 1 to 40.
- ◆ You can add a tag, or coda to the end of your song. From the EDIT menu, select "Settings For This Song", or hit CTRL N. Fill in the measure numbers where indicated for where the tag begins and ends.
- ◆ To have drum fills play where you want them, use the blue and green part markers for delineating where the sections such as the verse and chorus of the song begin. Each *style* has an "A" and a "B" section, such as an "A"

Band in a Box Tutorial

with a closed high hat pattern, and a “B” with a ride cymbal, etc. BIAB will sense where the part markers are, and play fills in the appropriate measures before the marker.

- ◆ BIAB automatically switches to the “B” groove for the middle choruses, and uses the “A” groove for the first and last chorus.

Tips for entering chords on the leadsheet:

- ◆ To enter a major chord, type a letter and hit Enter.
- ◆ To type a sharp, use the # sign. To type a flat, use the lower case “b” and hit Enter.
- ◆ To enter a minor chord, type a letter and then a lower-case “m” and hit Enter.
- ◆ To enter seventh chords, type a letter and then a “7” and hit Enter.
- ◆ To enter a major seventh chord, type a letter, then “maj” then hit Enter.
- ◆ To enter a chord with tensions (9ths, 11ths, 13ths) type a letter then the number of the tension with or without an alteration. (Ex: G7b9 b13 = G seven, flat nine, flat thirteen.)
- ◆ To have the band play a SHOT, type a letter followed by “. .” Ex: G.. and hit Enter.
- ◆ To have the band LAY OUT, type a letter followed by “. .” Ex: G. and hit Enter.
- ◆ To have the band play a BREAK, combine a chord with a shot (G..) followed by chord(s) with a rest (G.) for the length of the break.
- ◆ To have the band HOLD a chord change, type a letter followed by “. . .” Ex: G...
- ◆ To have the band “push” a chord change by an eighth note, type a ^ in front of the chord symbol. To push the chord change by a sixteenth, type ^^ in front of the chord.

To adjust the levels or the “mix” of the individual instruments you hear:

- ◆ Each instrument has its own button on the upper left part of the GUI. Ex: ● Piano
- ◆ Select an instrument by clicking on its button, or on its name on the GUI.
- ◆ You can then change the volume, panning, reverb and other aspects of the instrument by using the ↑ or ↓ arrows on the GUI next to each parameter.
- ◆ To change the actual sound that an instrument is playing, click on that instrument's button (● Piano) and then look just below it for a small window displaying the instrument type.
- ◆ By clicking on the instrument type, you should see a list of all the instrument sounds in your BIAB. Select an instrument you want to hear from that list.
- ◆ For example, if you like the piano part, but want the same part played by a Fender Rhodes instead, click on the ●Piano, then click on the instrument type, and select “Rhodes”.
- ◆ To mute any of the instruments, right click on the instrument's button, or hit ALT and then a number key for each instrument. Ex: ALT 3 mutes bass, ALT 1 mutes Piano.
- ◆ To save your song with all of the instruments you've called up and all of your mix parameters, you must do a special save. From the file menu, select “Save songs with patches and harmonies” , or hit ALT F2. In the window that comes up, click on the “Fill with Patches” option, and be sure to check every box pertaining to saving melodies, volume, etc.


To record a Melody on your song:

- ◆ Assuming you have a working MIDI connection from a MIDI keyboard, you can record a single track of MIDI to the melody track, then swap that to the soloist track later, in order to free up another melody track for a second part to be recorded.
- ◆ Be sure to set the cursor to the beginning of the song (bar 1) before beginning.
- ◆ Type an “R” to bring up the recording window. The click will count you in to begin.

Band in a Box Tutorial

- ◆ Record your part, then either re-take it again, or keep it, and copy it over the whole song by checking the “copy to whole song” option in the recording window.
- ◆ You can assign any instrument to play your melody by clicking on the • Melody instrument on the upper left of the GUI, and then clicking on the instrument type window to display your list of instruments.
- ◆ You can also record a melody specifically over an intro, a particular chorus, or a tag.

To view the Notation for an instrument’s part:

- ◆ Call up the Notation window by hitting CTRL W, or clicking on the  icon on the GUI.
- ◆ The notation window will appear, displaying several measures of an instrument’s part.
- ◆ Just above the staff, square buttons with letters appear, one for each instrument. Click on an instrument’s button to call up its notation.
- ◆ You can loop a 4 bar section by clicking on the LOOP button on the GUI.
- ◆ The Notation window is great for viewing a part that you want to learn up and play, such as a Dr. John piano riff (Drjon.STY) or a reggae bass line (Reggae3.STY).

To turn a BIAB song file into a .WAV file for CD burning:

- ◆ Be sure you have set all the song parameters, mix parameters and instruments on the settings you desire, as these will affect the ultimate quality of the audio file you create.
- ◆ Click on the .WAV button on the GUI.
- ◆ If using the DXi synth, click on the “DXi-direct render” button to create an audio file of your BIAB song.
- ◆ If using the Roland VSC3 (also comes with most versions of BIAB) click on the “Render w/ Roland VSC3” button to create an audio file of your BIAB song.
- ◆ The audio file will be saved to the same folder as the original BIAB song file was stored.

To call up a soloist for your song:

- ◆ From the Soloist pull down menu, select “generate a solo”.
- ◆ Choose from the list of available soloists. BIAB will call up the appropriate instrument.
- ◆ You can tell the soloist which choruses to play on, or which to lay out of.
- ◆ You can have the soloist play double time by checking the “double time” box.
- ◆ You can trade fours with the soloist by selecting “Trade 4’s” option.
- ◆ You can save the song with the soloist by doing the special “save with Patches and Harmony” save from the FILE menu, or by hitting ALT F2, and then save.