

## Chapter 8: Pure Polished Platinum Skill

### *Wisdom, Gear, and Attitude: A New Producer is Born*

Okay, G, we know it's been tough goin' through all these dry concepts. Yet, these are the vital foundations one must absorb in order to move up and progress as a producer. Now that we've divulged the essentials spanning chapters 1-7, it's now time to drop all pretense and train you how to compose – how to bring together all this knowledge and use it to write hits. These are skills that must be practiced every single day - no matter what happens, man, do your thing. Get ready for the homework section of Hit Theory.

#### *I. Play the Studio, Rule the Game*

You know what we mean by “rule the game,” but “play the studio?” We mean *play* that studio... just like you would play any instrument; play the studio like Wyclef plays guitar. What we're talkin' about is executing a smooth, lightening-fast workflow where sampled one shots, looped beats and multisampled instruments, are all managed simultaneously and instantly; ideas for melodies, harmonies, and beats arise spontaneously, then are transferred into the mix instantaneously. Once you're king of smooth workflow execution, your studio becomes your creative interface. Sound good? Sound confusing? Here's an example of what we're talking about:

There's a video on Youtube, maybe you've seen it, of Timbaland in the Studio with Busta Rhymes. In the video, Busta's been with Timbo in the studio for 2 days, and though he's still in a good mood, you can tell he's gettin' damn impatient for a beat. During the filming of the vid, Busta is sitting at Tim's sampler casually exploring the keyboard. Suddenly he finds a beat he digs while pressing a key on the sampler. The beat loops over and over, and Busta gets pretty excited about how it sounds. Tim sees

his chance to give Busta what he came for. Tim takes over the keys building upon the beat Busta is feeling, quickly improvising new beat elements on-the-fly, using classic 808-style bass hits and more. Satisfied, Busta gets out his pen and the lyrics pour out.

Tim is playin' the studio. *That* is what we mean. As soon as inspiration strikes, the workflow streamlines; launching serious hits, fast and far! So, what can you do you to improvise on-the-fly like master Tim?

Having explained how a sampler midi map works, let's go deeper. We're now going to show you the perfect midi map layout for on-the-fly production. Yea, you'll still gonna need the sequencer for arranging and quantizing, but think of this as the best layout and format for generating a surge of inspiration and ideas.

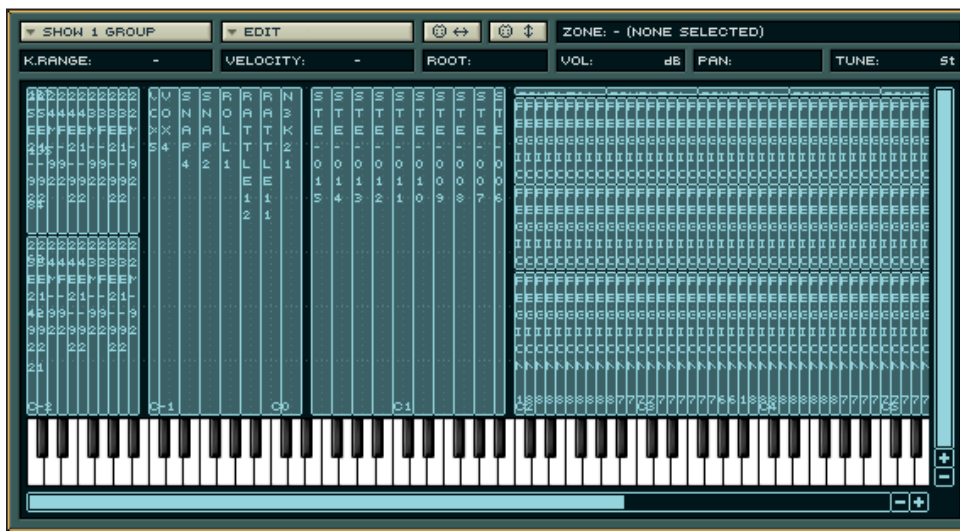


Fig. 31: Here's a way of organizing a midi map that gives you the creative freedom that got Busta and Timbo rollin' on a hit track.

There are no set rules on how to set up a midi map. Matter of fact, you can assign any sample to any key at any velocity range, but an organized and carefully planned midi map is the key to a hit-making workflow. The above layout earns the Modernbeats seal of approval.

On the midi map in figure 31 are four sections of zones. For the sake of illustration, each section is separated by a blank region (black line) on the midi map. On the far

left are beats from MB's Platinum Rhythmz loopset. Each key is assigned two zones, each containing one Platinum Rhythm loop. Since each key is assigned two loops within two velocity ranges, when you strike the key hard you get one loop, when strike it soft you get another. If you want the loops to repeat over and over, simply hold down the key. Since all ModernBeats' loops are sample accurate, they all loop perfectly to tempo upon each repeat when your sampler's loop settings are turned on. Some third party loops may not loop or repeat perfectly, there may be a few extra milliseconds at the end of each loop file, causing the loop to jump out of sync. However, most samplers allow you to correct loop length by either trimming the end of the file destructively or by setting sample accurate start and end loop values within a loop editor.

Inspiration is all about variety; that's why you want to map numerous beats into the sampler. If you're working with the ModernBeats libraries, take advantage of the variety of beats provided by organizing different loop styles, one next to the other. With the first section of zones in figure 31, you can trigger a variety of beats/loops at will using your left hand, mixing 'n' matching them according to what sounds good. Now, what about that right hand?

The second section of sampled audio (second from the left) contains samples from the Modernbeats Neptunian Drumz sample library. Reserve this section of zones for all those single hits, percussion, bass notes, and orchestral stabs: in short, any single hits with which you can improvise new rhythmic elements. While your left hand picks which beats to loop, your right hand can trigger keys over the second section to improvise fills, accents, and power layers. This systematic approach to creativity in the studio provides both a solid rhythmic foundation, and an improvisational freedom. But yo, we don't stop there.

Still to be explained are the remaining two sections of the midi-map. Within these two sections is where all the empowering, melodic content resides. We save the third section for last, as it requires the most explaining. The fourth section (the zones at