

CUBASE - the basic deal*

Twiddly.Bits - short musical 'motifs' recorded directly in MIDI by real musicians - can be imported into Cubase very simply. They will appear as a series of short MIDI phrases, on individual tracks, that you can loop or combine to form complete tracks.

The Twid libraries cover everything from drums, to synths, guitars, brass... and in styles ranging from dance to funk, country, reggae, and jazz.

Once loaded into Cubase, a Twid can be viewed in as musical notation, as event data, or simply as blocks of data you can freely kick about the screen. It's up to you.

You can simply call up some Hip Hop MIDI drum loops and use the Twids like a human drum machine, or you can edit, mix and match, transpose guitar strums, basslines etc. until you get the exact performance you want.

Finally, by recording the output of your chosen sound source (sound card, hardware synth or sampler, softsynth etc) back into Cubase as a WAV/AIFF, you can use the Twids to generate cool MIDI performances and effects, and then convert them into audio clips or tracks for final processing and assembly.

Here is a quick Step by Step tutorial that'll give you a good basis from which to explore and use regular (.MID file) Twiddly.Bits in Cubase.

• Loading Twiddly.Bits

1. Load a Twiddly.Bits library onto your Mac/PC and open up Cubase.
2. Go to FILE, OPEN/IMPORT, and load in a Twiddly.Bits file. You will be given the option to Merge in-coming Twiddly.Bits data with your existing arrangement or starting afresh.
3. The Twiddly.Bits .MID file will load as a series of MIDI tracks, with each groove or loop on a separate track, i.e. each track will contain one "Twiddly.Bit."
4. Select the output/device you want to use from the track Output column, then solo one track, and hit PLAY.

• Sounds

Twiddly.Bits are MIDI data. They have no fixed 'sound.' As a default, Track one in a Twiddly.Bits .MID file will contain a GM Program Change message that will call up an appropriate sound. If you do not wish to use this sound, erase the Program Change message in event edit. *[On some older versions of Cubase if you do not see Program Change messages go to EDIT, PREFERENCES, and select MIDI File Pro mode. Then close, and re-open the file.]*

In some Twiddly.Bits .MID files you may find a SetUp track. What's this? Well, when we record guitars, bass, fiddle, etc, we often use a wider-than-normal pitch bend range, say, +12, or +7. This produces far greater expression and sensitivity in the part. The SetUp track automatically 'sets up' the required pitch bend range for you.

Solo it, and play it once, and it'll configure the MIDI Channel on your connected sound source/device to the necessary pitch bend range. You'll know if this hasn't been set correctly because the parts will sound very strange indeed!

- **Looping & Compiling**

You can move a Twid anywhere you like by clicking on the file and dragging it to another location.

To loop a Twid select the loop icon to the left of the main transport controls, and input the 'from' and to' positions in the bar counter.

To transpose a Twid: highlight the part you want to transpose, then select Control H and set the transpose factor.

- **Importing Twids into an existing song**

A collection of Twiddly.Bits is essentially a library of musical clips and beats. Sometimes you simply need to import a particular drumloop... or guitar phrase... or sax lick... into a song you are already working on.

Here's how:

Open a Twid file. Select the track/part that you want to use in another song. Control C will put the selected part into the Clipboard. Control V can then paste it into your pre-existing song.

- **Converting a Twid to audio (WAV/AIFF):**

Route the audio output(s) of your sound source/device to the input of your soundcard. Select an audio track, and select the input as your sound source/device's output. As the (MIDI) Twid plays you can now record the data as an audio WAV/AIFF file.

If you want to record, say, individual instruments within a drum kit, use the Z file version Twids (where individual drums are saved on separate tracks), and record each instrument separately. Now you can process the snare WAV/AIFF file independently from the kick, hats etc.