



PRIME LOOPS

## **Grouping Your Sounds**

Reason is an incredibly flexible piece of software, allowing you a vast array of options for combining loops and modulating effects to create their masterpieces. However, with this flexibility comes the distinct danger of a cluttered interface and a resulting loss of inspiration. The solution to this issue is to group your sounds into different buses depending on what role they play in your track. For our purposes, a "bus" is simply a point where sounds combine into a unified output. For instance, you might have a "drum bus" for your drums or a "vocal bus" for the various lead and backup vocals in your track. There are two main solutions for busing your sounds in Reason since version 4. The first of these is the Spider audio merger/splitter device:

*Front View:*



*Back View:*



With the Spider, you simply run up to 4 stereo sounds into the Merger section, and these will all be combined into one handy output that can feed one of your main mixer's channels. It's as simple as that! The second possibility for grouping your sounds into a bus is the Line Mixer 6:2, a handy device which includes basic mixing features and a relatively small footprint for its features:

Front View:



Back View:



You may be asking why I even mentioned the Spider device when the Line Mixer is clearly more advanced in nearly every way, featuring pans, an effect send, and individual leveling for each sound. Mainly, it's a matter of screen real estate! The Spider device takes up half as much screen space, an important consideration when your Reason document starts to grow in complexity. Additionally, the Spider unit features a splitter section that can be of great help when you want to do complex effects routings for one of your sounds in addition to busing (see our Reason video tutorial entitled "Spider Tech House Drum Loops" for the details on this technique).

Regardless of which of these two devices you use, the result will be an uncluttered main mixer which is hugely important for when you get to that all-important task of actually mixing your track. If you want to turn all your drums down, you can just pull down one drum bus fader instead of individual ones for each individual drum:

*Doing it the hard way, with individual faders on your main mixer for every sound:*



The cleaned up version, with the drums properly bused to one fader on the main mixer. The sounds are now running into the Line Mixer for individual leveling (a Spider device could work here as well), and the "Drum Bus" fader on the main mixer is in charge of bringing the entire drum kit up and down in the mix:



Of course, if you are running all of your drums out of a Redrum or similar device, you already have your drums bused to one output of the device itself. However, it's very likely that you will be including extra sounds outside of the Redrum such as loops, one-shots from sampling devices, or drum stabs coming out of a synthesizers. When you have multiple sounds of the same type (such as "drums" or "pads") coming out of a variety of different devices, busing your sounds into a Spider or Line Mixer is the perfect way to clean up your interface.

Keep practicing, have fun, and stay creative!

- Nick Maxwell

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