

Lesson 4: Song Mode

Song mode seems to be a bit confusing, so let me shed some light on the subject. A really good way to see song mode in action is to play the demo song in Bank 1. This song really shows off how Extended Pattern Mode and Song Mode work together. I really take it for granted that using PSP Rhythm is so easy for me, but I have been working with this program since before it was released, so I've been able to learn each additional feature as it comes, and not all at once. I would also like to add that I know that all of you have your own views on music and what types you like, so don't think that I am trying to influence you or persuade you into making music like us. With this example, I am just try to make the best out of the generic real drum sound kit. So by all means, explore your own music style! I wish you the best of luck! In this lesson, we're going to learn how to create a song. This lesson was originally created as 'part 2' of lesson 3, but the lesson got too big. That being said, this lesson is directly based off of the pattern created in lesson 3.

- 1) Let's get familiar with how song mode works. Go into SONG MODE by pressing Select until the word "Song" is displayed in the upper left hand corner. In the display you'll see a box in the upper center part of the screen. This box contains 2 numbers. The top number represents the song step. The bottom number represents which pattern in your bank will play during the song step. With empty songs, the SONG STEP is always 1 and the PATTERN is also 1. To the right of the box you can see the next 3 songs steps and if this is a blank song, there will be dashes representing the patterns. Now Press the D-pad left or right. You will notice that the numbers across the bottom of the screen represent each sound in your drum kit as well as the patterns in the bank. Now, let's activate the first SONG STEP by pressing the X button. Once you have activated the song step, you see vertical bars in the center of the screen. Each vertical bar represents the VOLUME of that sound.
- 2) Let's see how we can manipulate the VOLUME. First, press the CIRCLE button while the Kick drum is selected. You'll notice that the drum volume is taken down to 0, essentially muting the sound. Now press UP on the D-pad. You can hold UP or press it once to either rapidly change or increment it. UP and DOWN on the D-pad raise and lower the VOLUME per song step. Press the SQUARE button. You'll notice that it ERASES all of the volume bars. Finally, press the X button one more time to activate the song step. You can see that when you press X, after a step has been edited, the volume bars keep the previous settings. This is very helpful when writing long songs. You don't have to repeatedly change the volumes every step to match the previous step.
- 3) Now that you are introduced to the basic song mixing controls, let's get working at making a song. First, let's move the cursor over the step 3 button at very bottom of screen and then hit the X button. You have now make the first song step play pattern 3. I want to start this off slow, so press the SQUARE key once to mute all of the sounds. Notice that the

- current pattern in SONG STEP 1 is still pattern 3.
- 4) There shouldn't be any volume bars showing so move the cursor over to sound 15: SpknSpl Rhythm. Turn the volume up to max by pressing UP on the D-pad. Press the START button to preview what the song sounds like. You will notice that the SpeaknSpell vocal sample does not get cut off like it does in pattern mode. This is a key feature of song mode where a playing sample will play it's entire set length. In this case, the PSP Rhythm sound plays for longer than 1 pattern length. This is particularly useful when you are ending a song, you can have a very long decay of a sound, as in the demo song.
 - 5) Now, press the RIGHT TRIGGER button to change the song step to STEP 2. Activate step 2 with pattern 3 by moving the cursor over the step 3 button at the bottom of the screen and press the X button. Delete all of the mixer volumes by hitting the SQUARE Button. Go ahead and set up SONG STEPS 2-4 like this (use the trigger buttons to navigate the SONG STEPS). On song step 3, turn up the volume on sound 15 to max. Instead of using the D-pad to change the volume for the vocal sound, press the CIRCLE button. The CIRCLE button will either make the currently selected sound volume 100% or 0%. Go back to song step 1 and preview the song. The vocal should say P-S-P-Rhythm twice.
 - 6) Make sure you're on song step 1 and use the CIRCLE button to turn the CHH up. Turn the CHH up on steps 1-4.
 - 7) Go to song step 5. Use the X button on pattern step 3 at the bottom of the screen and activate song steps 5-16. Don't forget to use the SQUARE button to erase the mixer volumes so that every step is set to play pattern 3, but no sound will play. On song step 5, press X, then press SQUARE, then press RIGHT TRIGGER. Repeat that. Go back to Song step 5 when you are done.
 - 8) We have an intro to our song, now let's get into the first part. We're going to bring in some drums and the bass line. So use the CIRCLE button to turn the volume up on the Kick, Snare, CHH, OHH, and Bass Line. Do this for song steps 5-7.
 - 9) When you play the song it will start on which ever song step is currently selected (when the systems setting Song Mode - Loop is activated, the song will play from the current song step, play until the last active song step, and then repeat at the original current song step). So play the song from song step 5 to hear the second part of the song. You'll notice that as long as there is a pattern activated to a song step, the song will play. This is useful when you have very long sounds that need extra time to play, such as the vocal.
 - 10) On song step 8, I want to put a little variation in the song so only activate the Kick, Snare, CHH, High Tom, Side Stick, HH pop, and Cross Stick.
 - 11) On song step 9-11, match song step 5, but add the Electric Guitar. The electric guitar volume is a little too high, so bring it down about 5 notches by using DOWN on the D-pad . Also, go to song step 9 and activate the Crash and Splash sounds.

- 12) On song step 12, copy the volume settings on song step 8.
- 13) On song step 13-15, match song step 9 (without the Crash and Splash on steps 12-15). Now add SpknSpl Rhythm to song steps 13 and 15.
- 14) On song step 16, only turn up the electric guitar to max. to 'solo' it.
- 15) On song step 17, let's make our second part of the song. Use the X button to activate pattern 3 on song steps 17-32 (remember to use the X-SQUARE-RIGHT TRIGGER-repeat method). OK once you got some blank song steps activated to pattern 3, go back to song step 17. Use the CIRCLE button to turn up the volume on the Kick, Snare, CHH, Electric Guitar, PSP Click, PSP Launch sound, PSP Launch Error, and bass line. Turn down the electric guitar 5 notches. Copy the volume settings of song step 17 to song steps 18 and 19. Once that is done, go back to song step 17 and turn up the Crash and Splash sounds.
- 16) On song step 20, copy song step 8.
- 17) On song steps 21-23, copy song steps 17-19 and add the SpknSpl Rhythm vocal to steps 21-23. Also turn the volume of the Bass Line down to 0 on steps 21-23.
- 18) On song step 24, copy song step 8.
- 19) On song steps 25-27, turn the up the volume of the CHH, HH pop, Electric Guitar, PSP Click, PSP Launch Sound, PSP Launch Error. On step 25, turn up the Crash and Splash.
- 20) On song step 28, copy song step 8.
- 21) On song step 29-32, copy song steps 5-8. Add the Crash and Splash to song step 29. Also, add the SpknSpl Rhythm sound to song steps 29 and 31.
- 22) Let's end this with a bang, so activate song step 33 with pattern 3. Mute all sounds except for the Crash and Splash. Once you're all done, rewind the song by holding down the LEFT TRIGGER button. When you reach step 1, press the START button to listen to the complete song. I know it's a little cheesy, but you get the point!
- 23) Let's save what we have by going into system mode and saving the bank. While we are in system mode, scroll to "Bounce Song to WAV?" if you have about 15 megabytes of memory stick space, press the X button to render the song. Now the speed of rendering really depends on your memory stick. I personally have a SanDisk 256Mb card and a SanDisk 1Gb card. Surprisingly enough, the 1Gb card actually writes slower! You can see the rendering progress displayed on the screen. I'm writing to the 1Gb card right now it is slooow! This may be a good time to get up and stretch!!
- 24) You can find the newly rendered song in the PSP\Music\folder The song name is Rhythm2-1, which tells you that it is the first song rendered from Bank 2. Now having a PSP with a high firmware version really pays off! I'm not sure which firmware it is, but some should be able to play pcm .wav files straight from the PSP music folder. If you have 1.5 firmware, you'll have to convert the song into a useable format such as MP3.

Wow! We actually created song with only 1 pattern! If PSP Rhythm didn't have the sound mixer in song mode, this song would have taken at least a dozen patterns to create!! To quickly recap, we learned the standard functions of SONG MODE, we learned how to use the volume mixer and we learned how to make the most of a pattern. Good luck with writing songs, I hope to see everyone making some killer beats! Oh yeah, make sure you let everyone check out your new songs on our Forum!
<http://www.psprhythm.com/forum/>