# Exploration of Plug-ins

1.   STRUMMER

<u>Purpose</u>
Strummer is a Sibelius plug-in written by David Harvey. It provides some realism to chord articulation on playback. This is most use for guitar parts, as a real strum will always involve some delay from the first string played to the last string played.

<u>Operation</u>
To use Strummer:
1.   Select the section (or all) of the desired chordal part to be strummed
2.   Choose Strummer from the Playback sub-menu of the Plug-ins menu
3.   The Strummer window will appear:
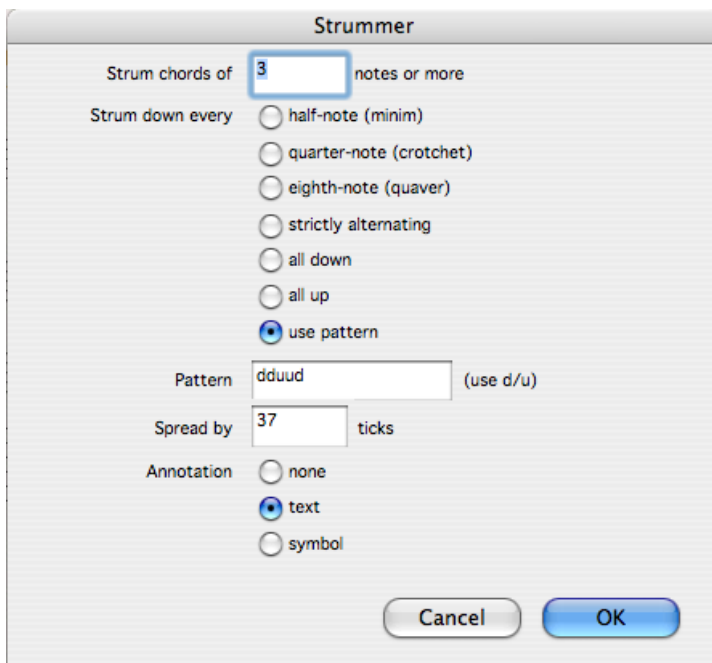
Here you can set several conditions of how the plug-in will 'strum'. In the top field enter the minimum number of notes in a chord for Strummer to act on. Below this is a set of seven radio buttons, where you select the desired rhythmic pattern for the strum. The last button will let you set a pattern (in this example it is dduud, where d= a down stroke, and u= an upstroke). The next field down allows the user to set the total delay time across the chord. This is in ticks, where 256 ticks =one crotchet. Finally, three radio buttons allow for annotation of the strums, either with text (d or u), or symbol (same as used for violin).
4.   Click OK, then playback the piece.

<u>In Use</u>
Strummer does provide some realism to guitar playback. As it can also generate stroke articulations, it could be used to provide these on a guitar score. Some editing may still be required but on a long piece it would be quicker than entering them all manually. I applied it to the guitar part on "In a Year" and it worked fine. Tick settings of between 20 to 30 ticks gave the most realistic results. I then tried it on Chopin's Suffocation Prelude:
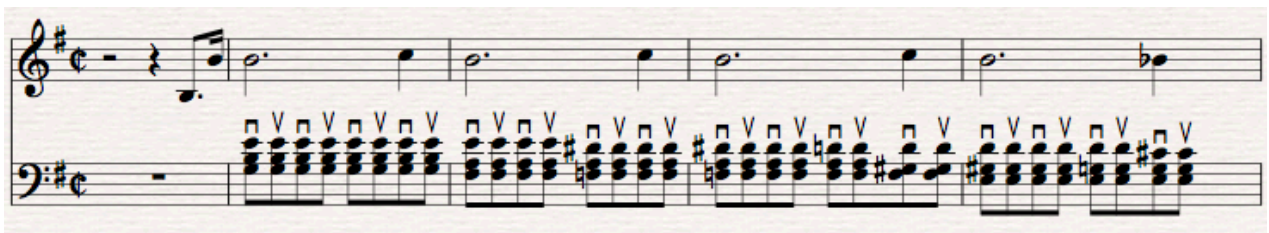
Here you can see the articulations (on the alternating setting).

Piano chords, of course, are not strummed so I used a tick value of 12. The idea was to get a sort of 'humanise' function, as available in some sequencers. It is not quite the same thing though (humanise is completely random, working up to the set maximum delay, and middle notes may be first or last to play).

Without Strummer it is possible to get a more human feel in the playback of a Sibelius score using the Espressivo settings (Play menu/ Performance). This however, works globally, and cannot prescribe details in the same way as Strummer. It also moves the timing of whole chords, whereas Strummer is adjusting the note timings within the chords.
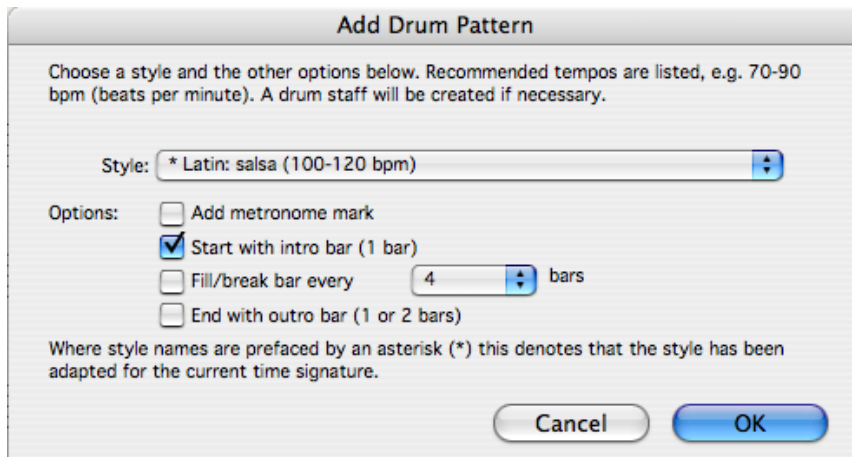
2.   ADD DRUM PATTERN

Purpose
'Add Drum Pattern' is a Sibelius plug-in written by Gunnar Hellquist. It generates a staff of drum patterns.

Operation
1.   Select the section where a drum pattern is required
2.   Choose Add Drum Pattern from the Composing Tools sub-menu of the Plug-ins menu
3.   The Add Drum Pattern window will appear:

Here you can select one of 24 drum patterns. There is a selection of various rock, blues, country, pop, R &B, rap, Latin and jazz rhythms. The tempos indicated are for guidance only and do not effect playback. Note that the actual style choices available will depend on the time signature of the selection.
Tick any of the option boxes as required. A fill bar can be set anywhere between every 2 and 16 bars.
4.   Click OK. A drum staff is created along with the drum pattern.

In Use
For a quick and easy drum part Add Drum Pattern works really well. I added a 16 note rock pattern to Chopin's Suffocation Prelude and got instant Chopin a la Disco. Of course, Add Drum Pattern has no idea of what it is playing along to. Some editing will be needed in most cases. For this piece I changed some of the high-hat hits to ride cymbal to fit with the chordal movement.

Add Drum Pattern is no Band in a Box and in 3/4 time there are only two patterns. All the "normal" time signatures are catered for (2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 2/2, 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8), but not any others. I discovered this when trying to get it to do 5/4 time. While the name of this plug-in suggests adding a drum part, it is also possible to start a score with a new drum pattern. This is probably a more useful way to use this plug-in (ie start with the drum part and add the others).

The other way to quickly get a drum score is to import a MIDI file. This could be a drum track exported from a MIDI sequencer, or a ready to use MIDI drum file from a music magazine CD or website (use a Goggle search to find something). For simple songs this may be all that is required. If more specific drum parts need to be scored, it may be just a quick to write the patterns from scratch. Given that many of the bars of drum music in most songs are identical this is not such a daunting task. Sibelius has a useful repeat function (shortcut R) to speed up this process.

3.   REALIZE CHORD SYMBOLS AND DIAGRAMS

Purpose
'Realize Chord Symbols' is a Sibelius plug-in written by Bob Zawalich. It generates notes from given chord names.

Operation
1) Select the desired section of music where chord names are present
2) Choose Realize Chord Symbols from the Composing Tools sub-menu of the Plug-ins menu
3) The Realize Chord Symbols window will appear:
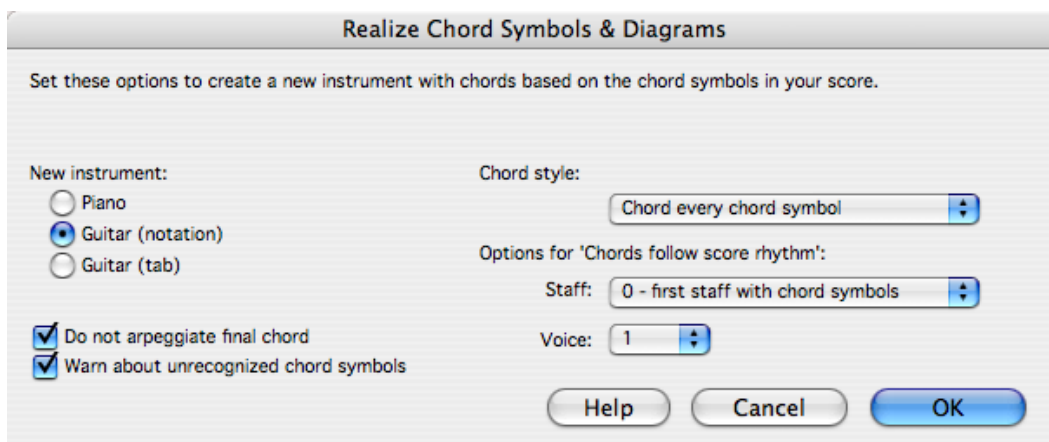
4) Choice the new instrument required. Piano will add treble and bass staves with the chord split between them, eg:

The Guitar (notation) setting will put up to six notes per chord on the treble staff:

The Guitar (TAB) setting will create a TAB staff:

5) On the right hand side of the window select the chord style. There are seven choices which are:
   - Chord every chord symbol
   - Chord every beat
   - 8th note Alberti
   - 16th note Alberti
   - 8th note arpeggios
   - 16th note arpeggios
   - Chords follow score rhythm. If this style is chosen you can also select which staff to get the rhythm from, as well as which voice.

Here is an example using the "chords follow rhythm" option:

An arpeggio generated using the 16th note arpeggios option:

6.   Click OK. A chord staff is created from the chord names.

<u>In Use</u>

Realize Chord Symbols (or to use its full name Realize Chord Symbols and Diagrams, because it will also work from fret diagrams) is handy for quickly generating scored notes from chord names. It would be useful where a lead sheet was available and actual notes were needed for a pianist. This situation is not uncommon. For example a guitarist may write a song with no more than the melody and chord names, whereas many pianists need written notes to play.
This plug-in does have a little bit of 'musical intelligence'; it understands inversions, 'slash' chords, and open chords, and can therefore generate realistic chord voicings with acceptable voice leading.
It is not expected that Realize Chord Symbols will put musical arrangers out of a job – the algorithms it is working from provide an acceptable but basic chord progression. Nonetheless, it would do for such occasions as where a piano pupil wished to play a contemporary song for which the sheet music was not available.
Without this plug-in the next quickest way to get some piano score would be to play it in real-time. Less quick but possibly requiring less editing would be to enter chords from a MIDI keyboard in step time.
Incidentally, Sibelius has the 'reverse' plug-in to Realize Chord Symbols. It is "Add Chord Symbols" and is in the Text sub-menu. I tried it on the same two bars and all the chord names except the CM9 were generated correctly. The Realize Chord Symbols excluded the G when it generated the chord. Add Chord Symbols could not then see it as a CM9 and called it an E7(b13)(omit3).