

ELECTRIC KEYS^{2.1}

INSTALLATION + USER GUIDE

Rhodes
MARK I
STAGE PIANO



INPUT



BASS BOOST



VOLUME



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Electric Keys 2: Introduction

- **Electric Keys 2** features 8 classic electric pianos, all fully multisampled and ready to play in all modern MPCs & the Akai Force, along with 65 different sound patches and 65 MIDI patterns.
- Each electric piano is recorded with up to **8 unique velocity layers** to perfectly capture their full tonal range, providing an incredibly expressive and realistic recreation of each instrument.
- All programs have also been highly optimised to use minimal CPU & RAM and are built using '**Sample Chains**' to ensure incredibly rapid loading times in standalone MPCs and the Force.
- This expansion is compatible with all modern MPCs running with MPC 2.10 (or greater). This expansion is also fully compatible with the **Akai Force**, the **MPC Software** and the **MPC Beats App**.

What's Inside?

Electric Keys 2 contains **8 multisampled electric pianos**, each with a number of unique sound patches providing a total of **65** ready-to-play instruments:

- **Rhodes Mark I** – The classic electric piano, famously used on the Doors 'Riders on a Storm', the Beatles 'Get Back' and pretty much everything by Herbie Hancock. This one is an 88 key stage model with an exceptionally smooth tone. With 9 unique sound patches.
- **Rhodes Mark II** – A 73 key suitcase model; this one has a slightly thicker, grittier tone than the Mark I. With 10 unique sound patches.
- **Wurlitzer 200A** – The classic reed-based piano, as used on 'Heard It Through the Grapevine'. With 10 sound patches.
- **Wurlitzer 140B** – Predecessor of the 200A, with a completely different feel and tone. (6 patches).
- **Hohner Clavinet D6** – With its unmistakable and funky rhythmical sound, often used by Stevie Wonder. This was recorded with key noise releases and with muted/unmuted versions. 6 patches.

- **Hohner Pianet N** – The popular 1960s reed piano, as used by the Beatles on many classic tracks. (9 patches, including one with key release noises)
- **Hohner Electra** – An electric piano with a distinctive ‘dirty harp’ sound, famously used on Led Zep’s ‘Stairway to Heaven’. (8 patches).
- **Yamaha DX7** – while the DX7 is not an electric piano itself, this is an 8 velocity layer recording of the classic E.Piano 1 patch, which was the electric piano sound of the 80s! With 7 sound patches.

Each instrument patch comes with its own unique ‘browser preview’ and we’ve also included the original MIDI recordings for these as 65 separate **MIDI pattern files**.

All instruments come with a ‘**Classic**’ patch which is effectively the raw piano sound. The ‘**Compact**’ patch is a 4 layer version which uses approximately half the memory. All other patches use a combination of FX and program parameters to create a unique sound from the same core instrument samples.

Each instrument is pre-mapped chromatically for you so you can just load it and play; there’s no need for any configuration or tweaking, simply listen to the instrument previews in the browser, load your chosen patch into your project and start playing chords, riffs and melodies on your pads or an attached keyboard.

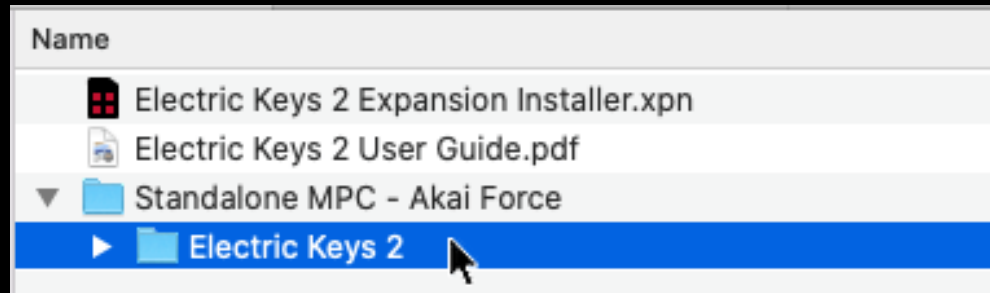
All instruments are 100% compatible with PAD PERFORM ('Notes Mode'), and can of course be played with an attached MIDI keyboard for a more natural piano playing experience.

All instruments are also fully editable via PROGRAM EDIT so if you wish, you can tweak the FX, filters, envelopes, portamento and LFOs as per your specific requirements.

More details on playing and editing the instruments can be found later in this guide.

Install: Standalone MPC & Akai Force

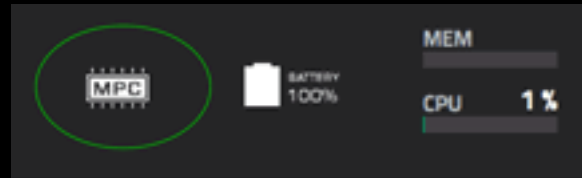
After downloading the expansion, extract the zip file contents to your computer. Enter the '**Standalone MPC-Akai Force**' folder and inside you'll see a sub folder '**Electric Keys 2**' – this is the folder we're going to transfer to your MPC/Force.



Expansions must be installed to either an **SD card**, a **USB drive** or, if you have one, an internal **SATA disk**.

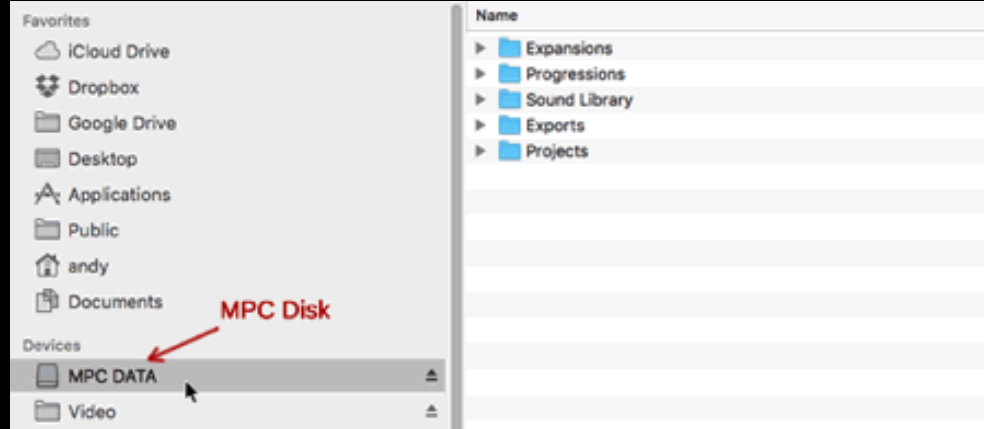
The first step is to mount this 'MPC disk' on your computer. If you use an SD card or USB disk, you can just eject the disk from your MPC/Force and physically insert it into your computer's SD card reader or USB port.

Alternatively, connect your MPC or Force via USB to your computer and go to **MENU** and hit the '**MPC chip**' icon at the top of the screen (this is the '**Laptop**' icon in the Force).



Now select **CONTROLLER MODE** ('**COMPUTER MODE**' in the Force).

Whichever connection method you choose, your MPC disk should now appear as a removable drive in your computer's file manager (e.g. Finder or File Explorer). Click on the drive to open its file system:



If it doesn't already exist, create a folder called **'Expansions'** in the root of your disk. Now copy the **'Electric Keys 2'** standalone expansion folder *inside* this **'Expansions'** folder.

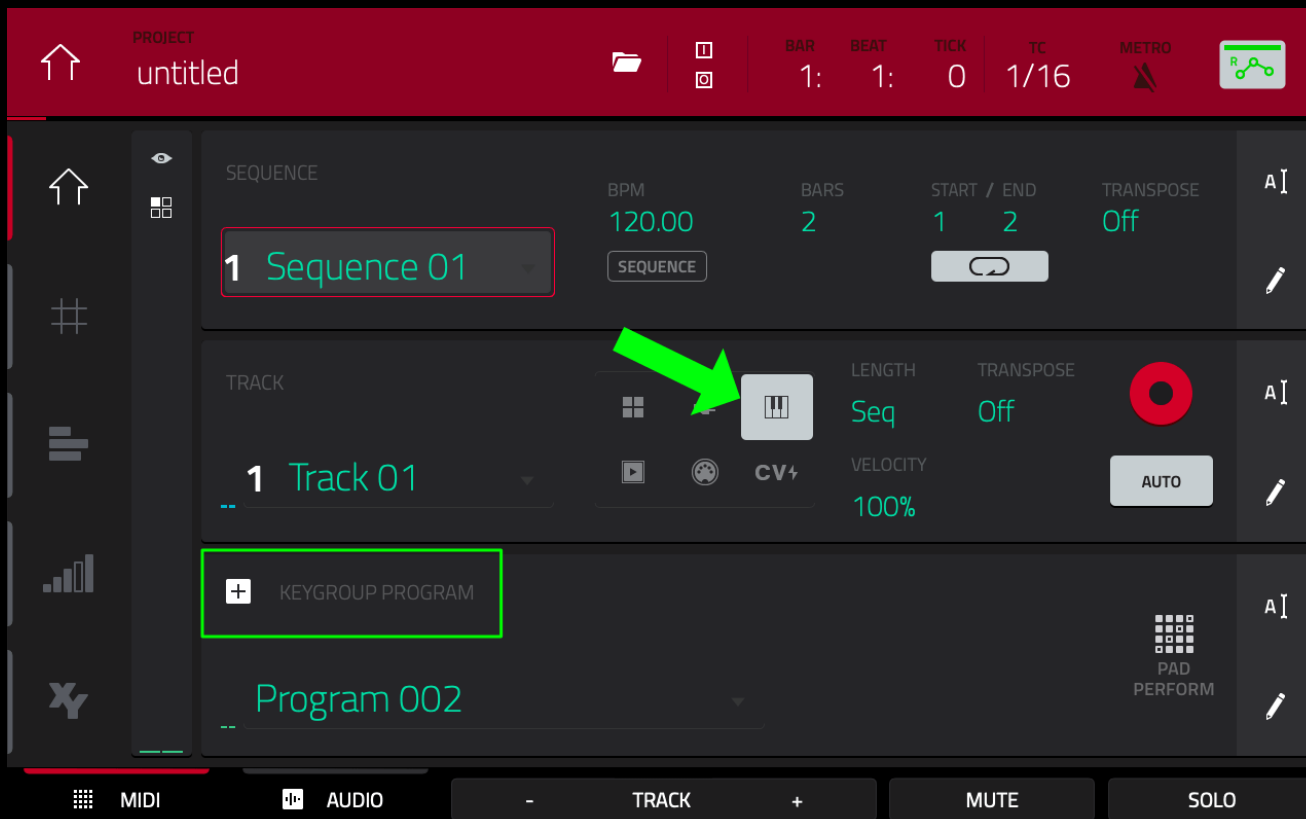


All done! If you had physically transferred the MPC disk to your computer you should now eject the disk from your computer and put the disk back in your MPC.

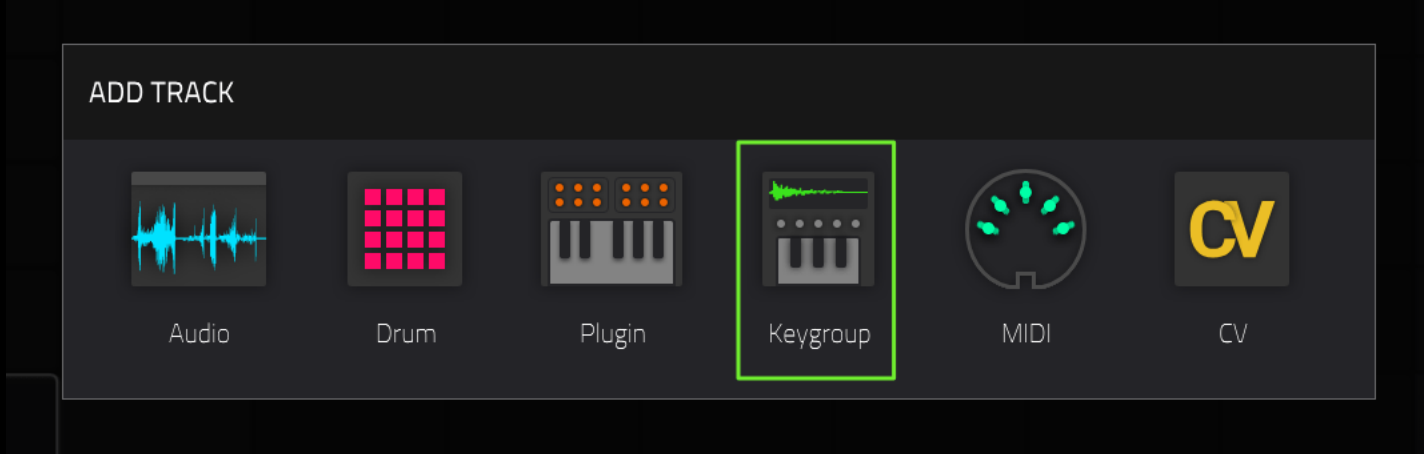
Alternatively, if you used USB transfer then go back to **MENU** and select the computer icon to return to standalone mode - *don't forget to eject/unmount the MPC from your computer first, this avoids any potential data loss.*

Loading Instruments (Standalone MPC/Force)

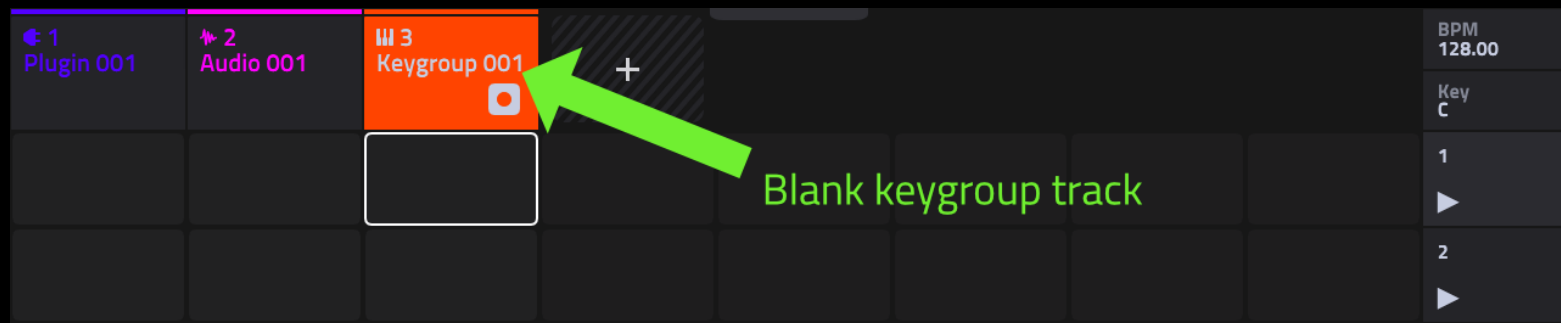
In your MPC, go to **MAIN** and create a **KEYGROUP** type track:



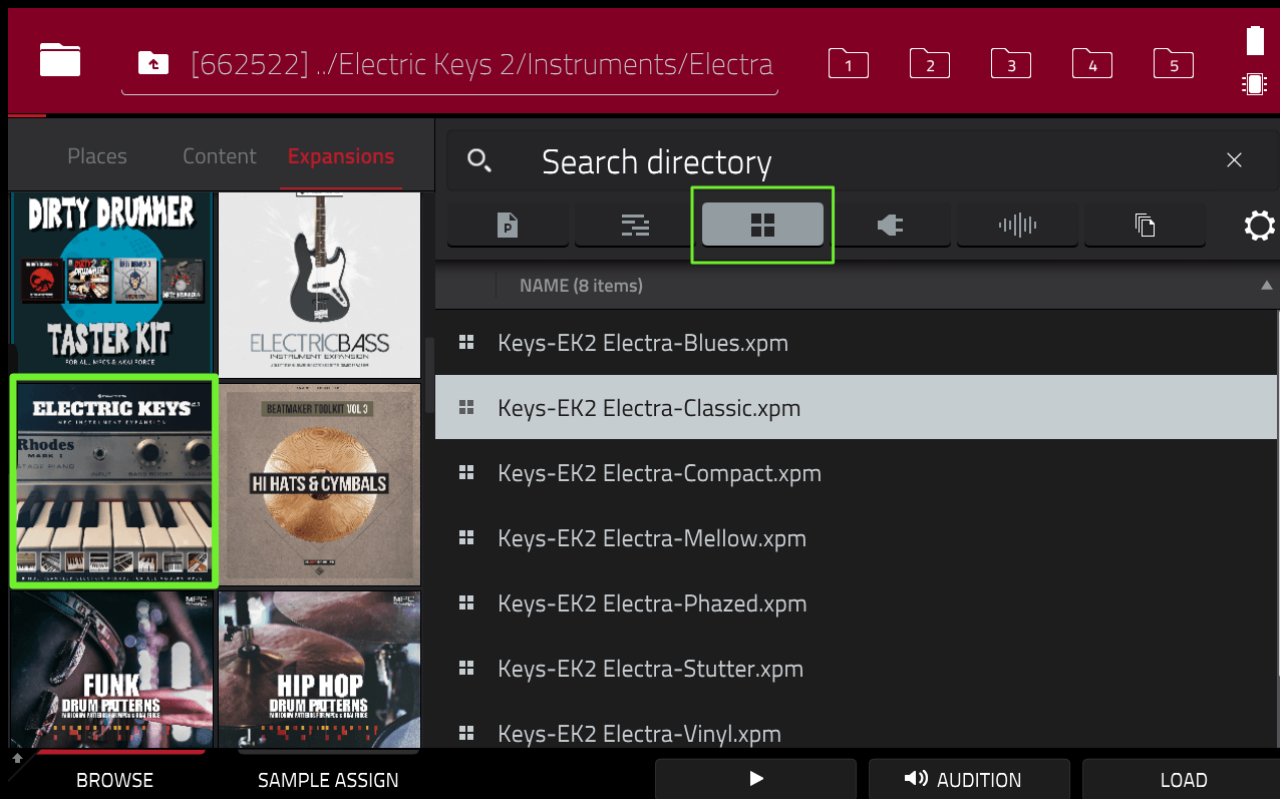
In the Force, hit the '+' icon in the touchscreen matrix and select a **Keygroup** track:



This adds a new blank keygroup track to the matrix:



Now go to 'BROWSER > Expansions' and tap on the 'Electric Keys 2' thumbnail. To load instruments, enter the 'Instruments' folder and select the **PROGRAM** filter:

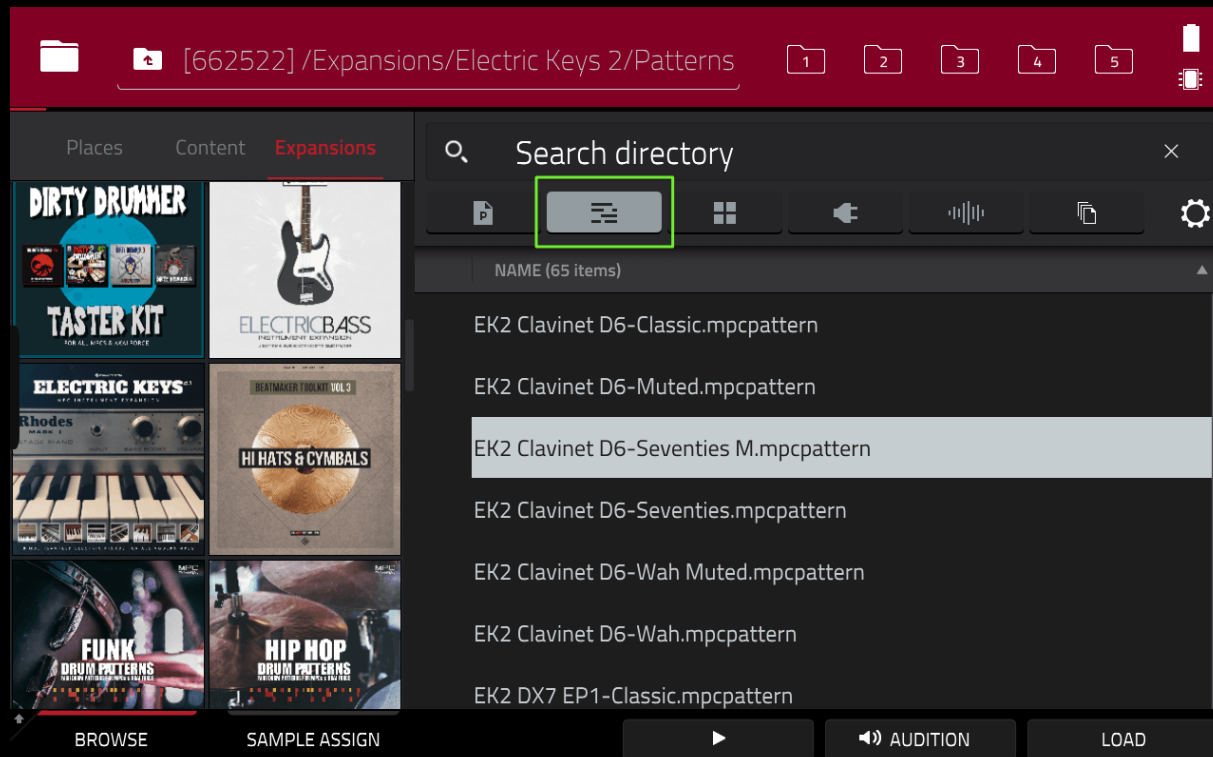


Single tap the program to hear a preview (requires '**AUDITION >AUTO**').
To load the instrument to the current track, either double tap the XPM file or single tap and press **LOAD**.

Loading MIDI Patterns (Standalone)

We've included the MIDI patterns that were used to create the 65 'browser preview' files; these can be loaded directly into MPC sequences or Force MIDI clips.

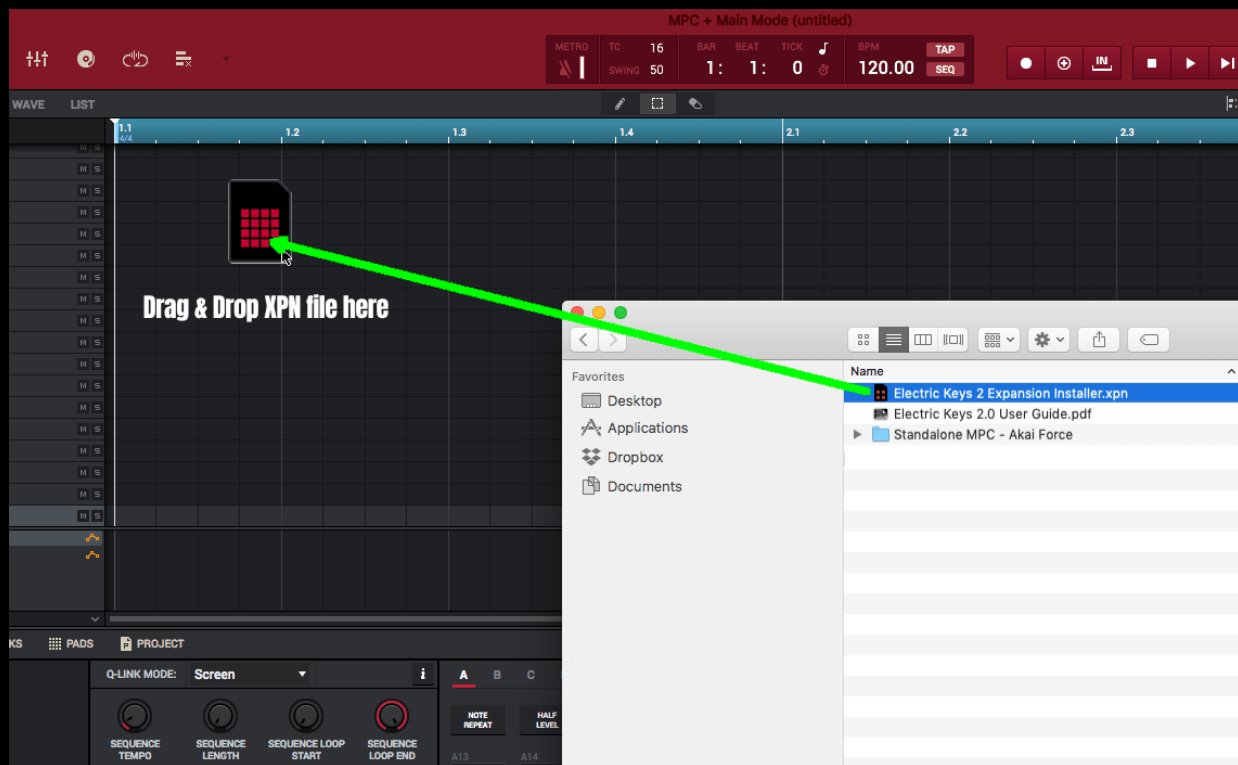
Simply head over to the **BROWSER**, enter the '**Patterns**' folder and select the '**Sequences**' filter:



You can see that we've named the patterns after the instrument preview they were used to originally generate. Single tap a pattern to hear a preview (required AUDITION > AUTO) and double tap to load the MIDI pattern to the next available 'unused' track in your sequence. You can then configure it to play back any of the instruments in this expansion – remember, as this is just standard MIDI data it can also be used with any keygroup, plugin or MIDI program.

Install: MPC Software/MPC Beats App

Locate the 'Electric Keys 2 Expansion Installer.XPN' file and drag & drop it directly into the MPC Software/MPC Beats UI from your computer's File Explorer/Finder:



Please note that an XPN file **cannot** be installed by double clicking from your computer's file explorer.

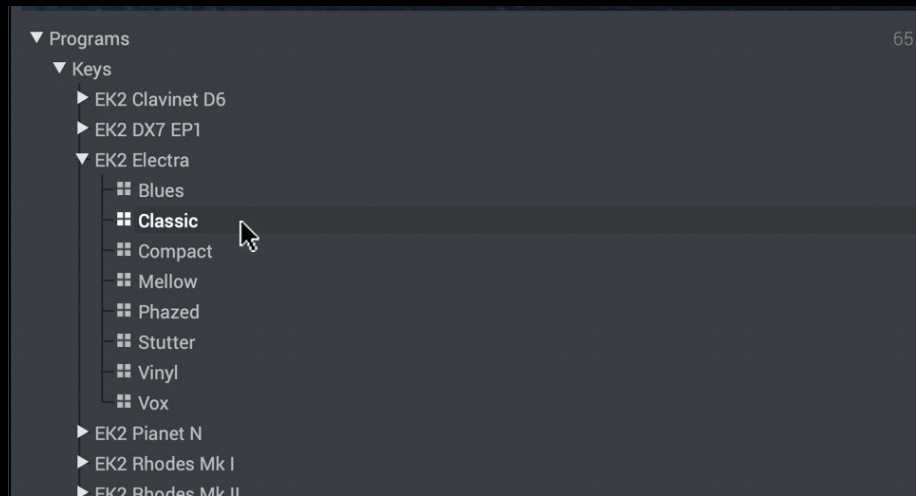
After dragging the XPN into the software UI you will see the following:



Select 'Import' and once installed, open the **Expansion Browser** ('X' on your keyboard) and click on the 'Electric Keys 2' thumbnail to view:



Expand the 'Programs' group to reveal all the instruments, all organised into sub-categories based on the electric piano type:



Single click any patch to hear its program preview - this requires 'Autoplay' enabled:



Double click a program to load it to the current sequencer track. Alternatively, drag the program directly into your project. All instruments are **'keygroup'** programs and must be assigned to a **'KEYGROUP'** type track in your sequencer.

Loading MIDI Patterns (MPC Software)

In the MPC Software Expansion Browser, expand the **'Patterns'** folder to view all the MIDI Patterns:

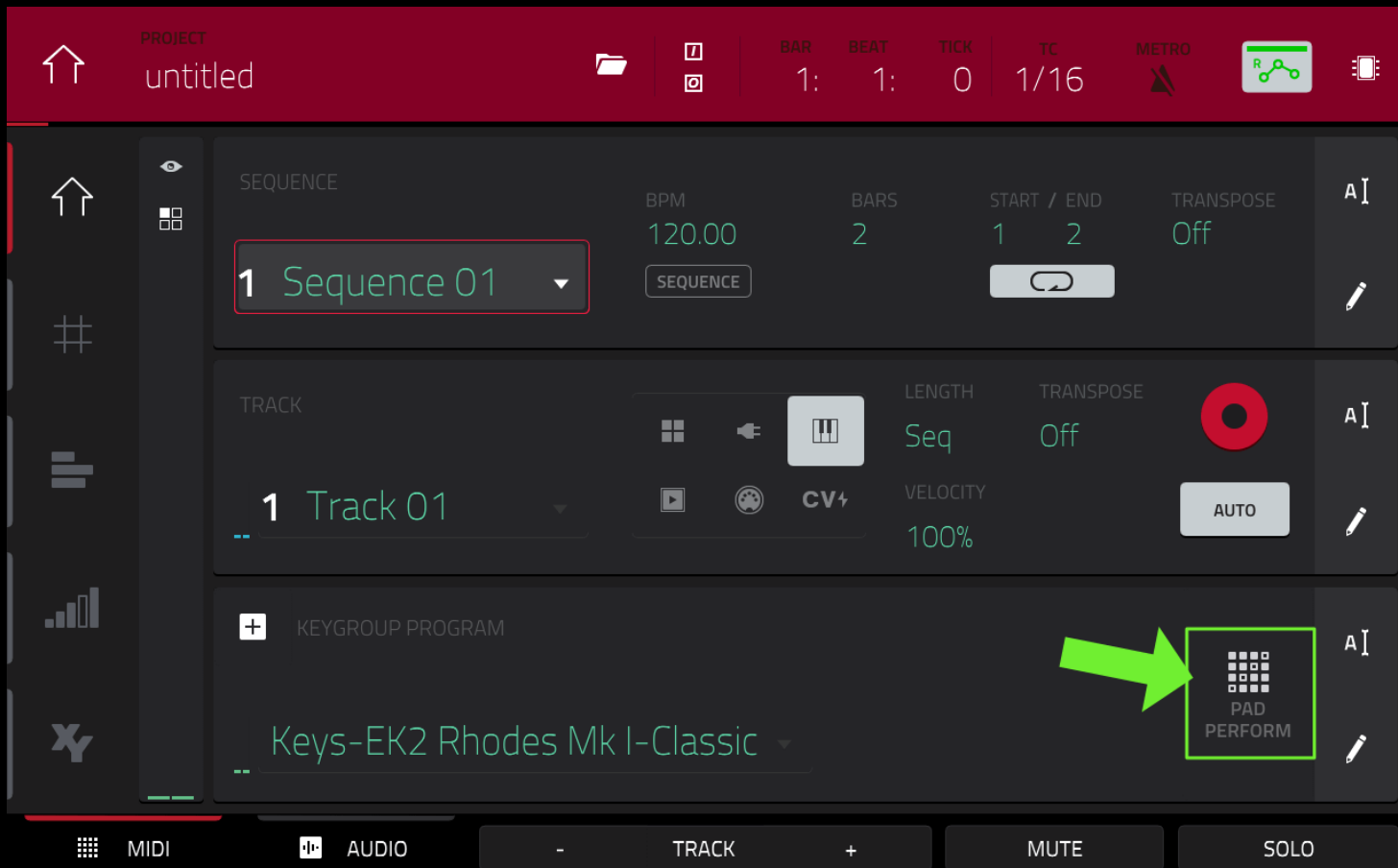


Simply drag and drop your selected pattern into the grid and it will be automatically assigned to the next 'unused' sequencer track. Set this track as a 'KEYGROUP' type and assign your chosen instrument to this track.

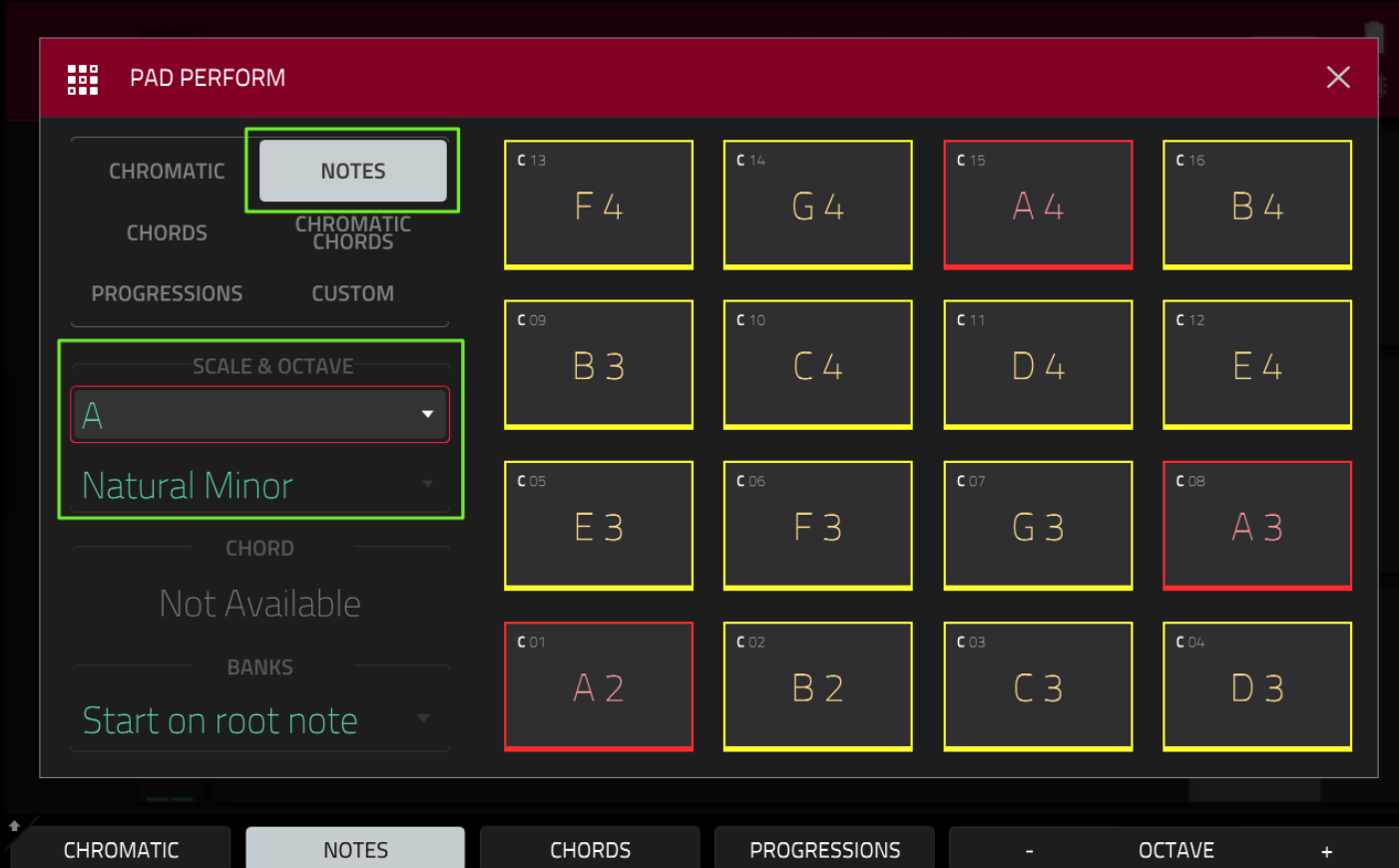
Using Pad Perform Mode

Instruments can be played using the MPC/Force pads, or using an attached MIDI keyboard. In the MPC, all keygroups will be automatically configured to use 'Pad Perform' mode which will set your pads to only play back notes from specified scales (or even trigger an entire chord from each individual pad). The equivalent in the Force is 'Notes' mode.

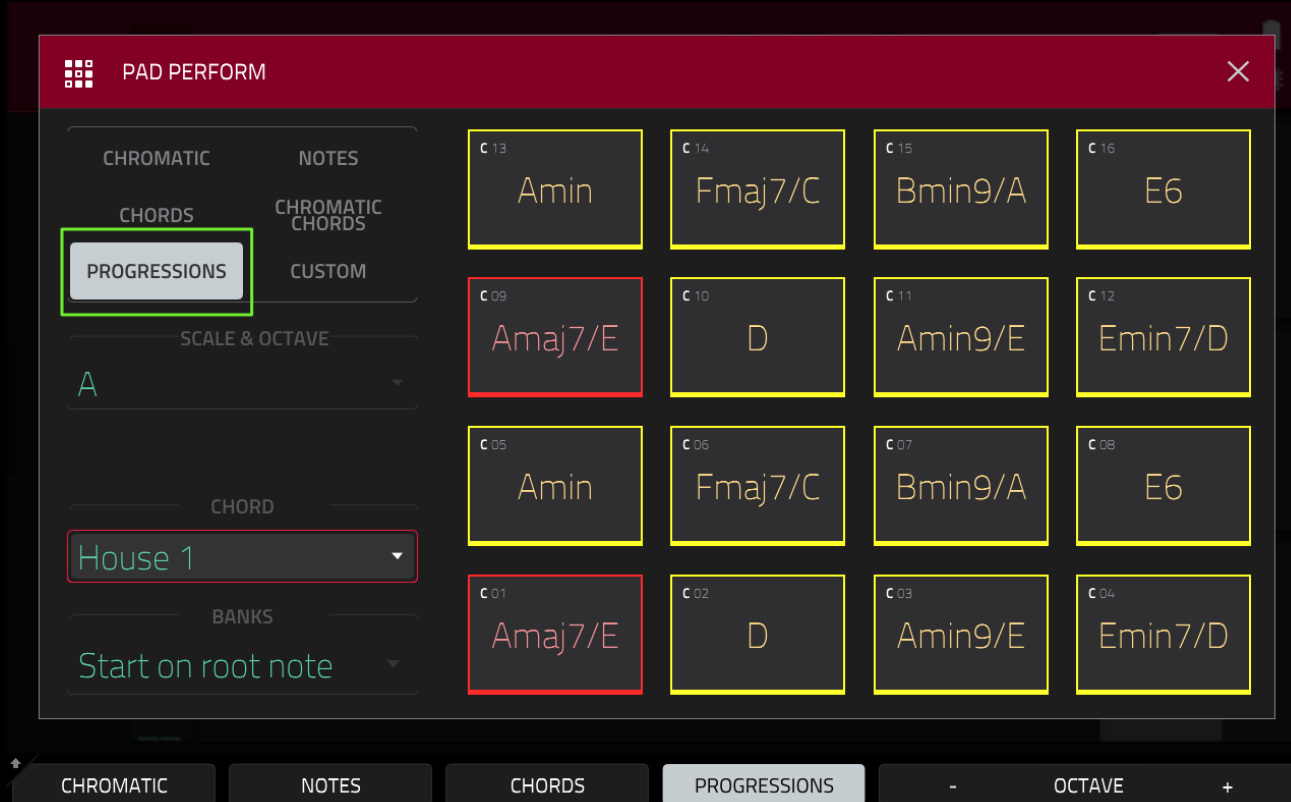
With your instrument assigned to a track, in the MPC go to **Pad Perform Mode** by hitting the **PAD PERFORM** icon on the 'PROGRAM' row in MAIN. Alternatively, press **SHIFT & 16 LEVEL**.



To create melodic leads and riffs, select **NOTES** & under '**SCALE & OCTAVE**' select your preferred scale & musical key.



The 16 pads on your MPC will now only play back the notes in this specific scale. Red pads indicate the 'root' note in the scale. You can also play a complete chord on a single pad by selecting the **CHORDS** or **PROGRESSIONS** options.



Important: If you don't want your pads to be fixed to a particular scale, set PAD PERFORM to 'CUSTOM' mode (which effectively turns off pad perform). Alternatively, select CHROMATIC mode - here the pads remain fully chromatic, but the lit pads can be set to show which pads fit into a selected scale. In this example,

the lit pads show the pads that fit into a D Natural Minor scale (but you are still free to play the unlit pads).

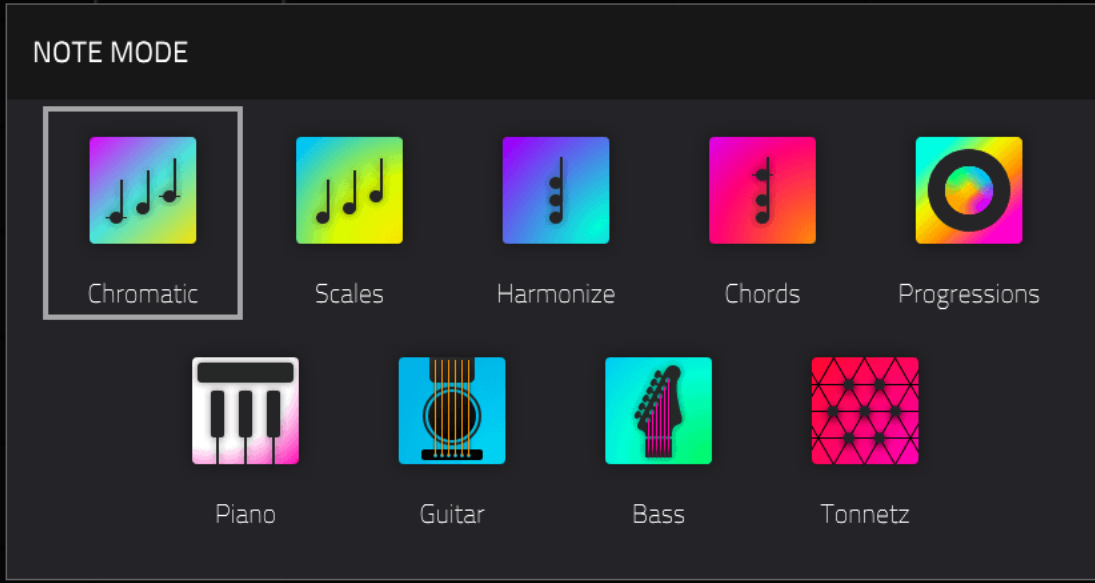
The screenshot shows the 'PAD PERFORM' interface with a dark background and a red header. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Header:** 'PAD PERFORM' with a grid icon on the left and a close button on the right.
- Left Panel:**
 - CHROMATIC:** A button highlighted with a green border.
 - NOTES:** A section with 'CHORDS' and 'CHROMATIC CHORDS' options.
 - PROGRESSIONS:** A section with 'CUSTOM' options.
 - SCALE & OCTAVE:** A section with a root note dropdown set to 'D' and a scale dropdown set to 'Natural Minor' (highlighted with a red border).
 - CHORD:** A section with 'Not Available' text.
 - BANKS:** A section with 'Start on root note' text.
- Grid of Pads:** A 3x4 grid of chord pads, each with a label and a small ID:
 - Row 1: C13 (D6, red border), C14 (D#6, grey), C15 (E6, yellow border), C16 (F6, yellow border)
 - Row 2: C09 (A#5, yellow border), C10 (B5, grey), C11 (C6, yellow border), C12 (C#6, grey)
 - Row 3: C05 (F#5, grey), C06 (G5, yellow border), C07 (G#5, grey), C08 (A5, yellow border)
 - Row 4: C01 (D5, red border), C02 (D#5, grey), C03 (E5, yellow border), C04 (F5, yellow border)
- Bottom Panel:** A row of buttons: 'CHROMATIC' (highlighted), 'NOTES', 'CHORDS', 'PROGRESSIONS', '-', 'OCTAVE', '+'. The 'CHROMATIC' button is highlighted with a white background.

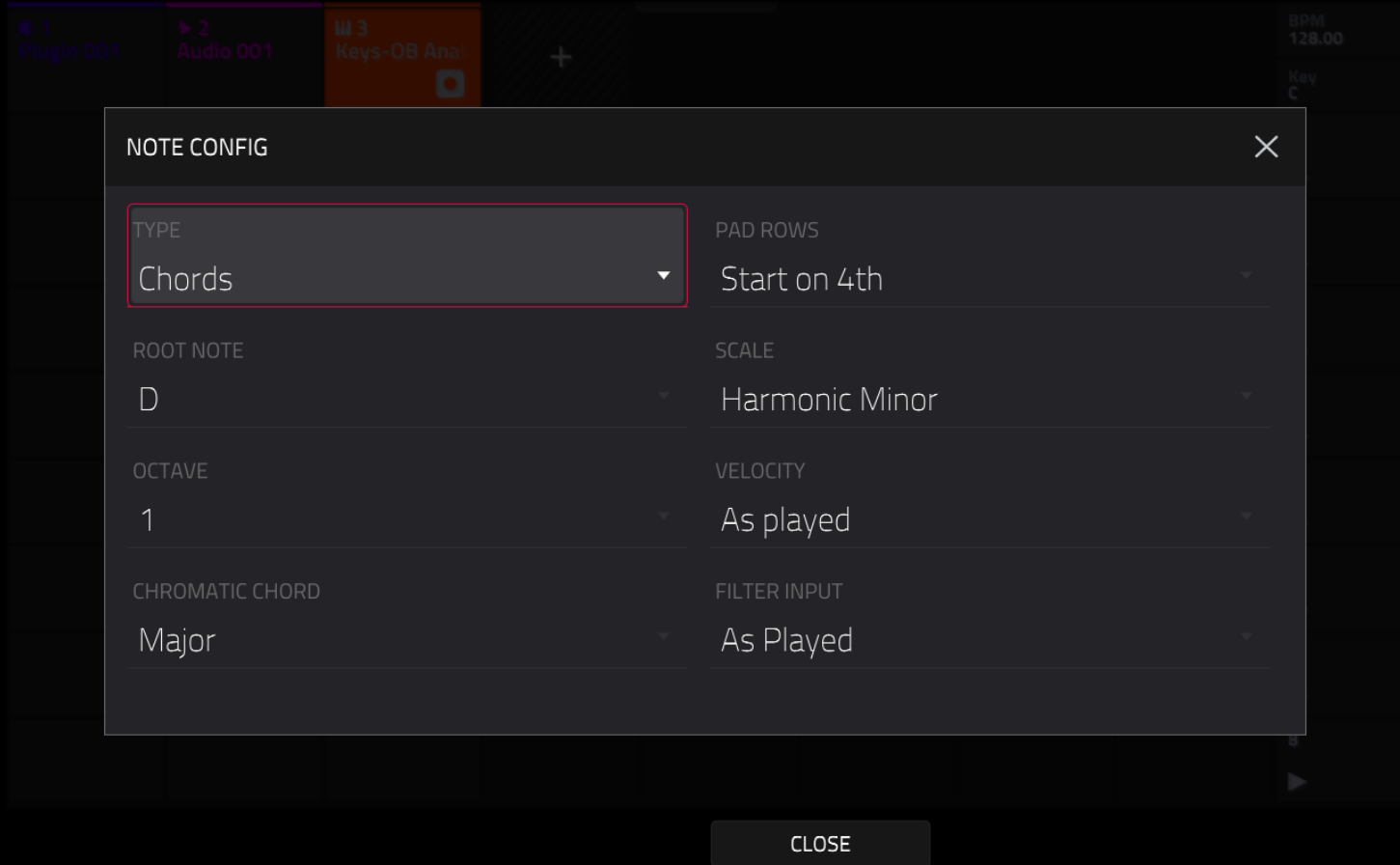
Please note that we've configured all instruments in Electric Keys to mirror the same note scale found on the original pianos, for example the Rhodes Mark II had a note range of E0 to E6, so any pads/keys outside of this note range will not emit any sound.

If you are playing with PAD PERFORM set to 'CUSTOM you'll notice that all pads with active notes are illuminated (each piano has its own unique pad colour) so you can quickly identify the usable note range. In 'custom' mode most instruments will start in pad bank B or C.

In the Force, hit the **NOTE** hardware button to enter **NOTES** mode. Now press and hold the **NOTE** button to select the preferred note mode:



Press **SHIFT** and **NOTE** to launch the full **NOTE CONFIG** screen:



You can now play the instrument across the Force's 64 pads.

Playing the Instruments with a MIDI Keyboard

Instruments can be also played using an attached MIDI keyboard, which we recommend for creating the most realistic sounding performances. For standalone MPCs/Force you can connect a USB keyboard directly to your MPC's USB port and you should immediately be able to play the instrument assigned to the current track, no additional configuration needed.



If your MPC has Bluetooth support you can configure a Bluetooth controller via **Preferences > Bluetooth**. Alternatively connect a keyboard via the 5 pin MIDI ports.

If you are using the MPC Software/MPC Beats you can connect your controller to your computer directly via USB or use a 5 pin MIDI cable connected to a suitable USB-MIDI interface. If you have an MPC controller such as the MPC Touch, MPC Renaissance or MPC Studio already connected to your computer, you use the MPC itself as the MIDI interface.

For more information about connecting MIDI controllers to the MPC, check out my dedicated article:

<https://www.mpc-tutor.com/mpc-midi-tutorial-connecting-midi-controllers/>

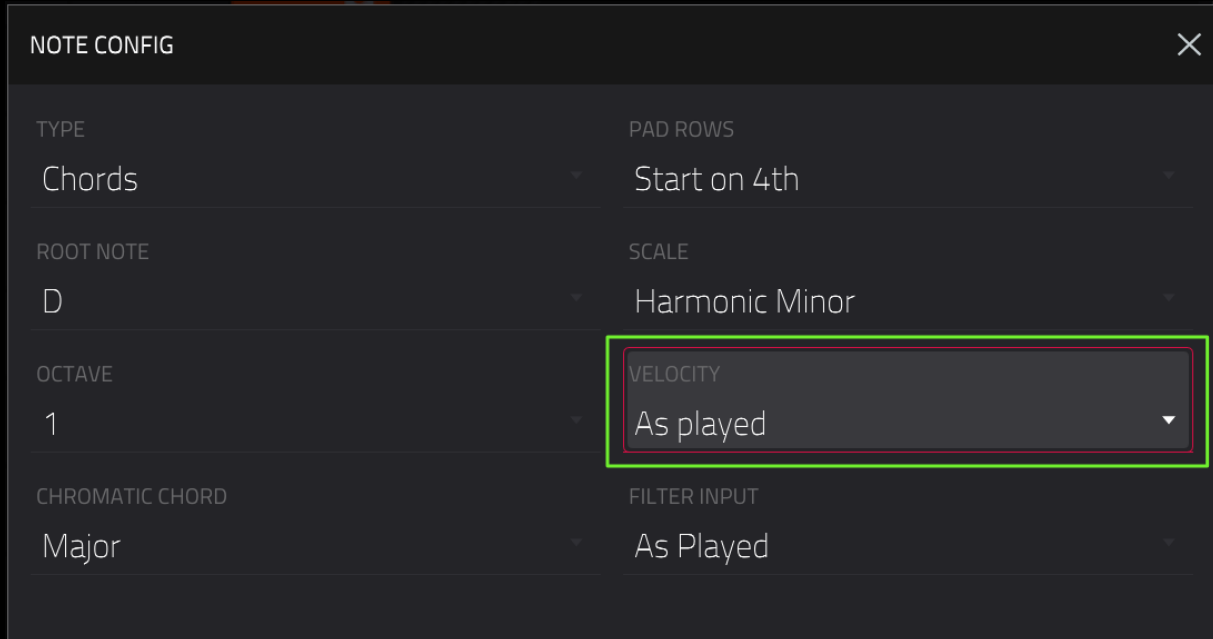
Usage Tips

Velocity Sensitivity

The instruments in Electric Keys are built with 8 velocity levels to capture the wide range of dynamic tones available in electric pianos. For example, softly played notes in a Rhodes patch will produce soft, mellow, bell-like tones, while aggressively played notes will produce 'growly' basses and more piercing high notes.

It's therefore important that your pads or keyboard are configured to allow full control of note velocity. In an MPC, this is achieved by setting the **FULL LEVEL** button to 'off' (unlit).

In the Force, you can adjust the velocity output of the pads in the NOTE CONFIG screen: press **SHIFT & NOTE** and set **VELOCITY** to 'As played':



Your control keyboard is likely to default to full range velocity sensitivity – please consult the manual for your keyboard for all the options.

Adjusting 'Volume' Sensitivity

Volume (amplitude) sensitivity effectively controls the difference in volume between the hardest and softest played notes. Go to **PROGRAM EDIT > ENVELOPES:**



PROGRAM
Keys-EK2 Pianet N-Deep Tones



KEYGROUP
All

NUMBER OF KG
92



Q

KEYGROUP

LEVEL



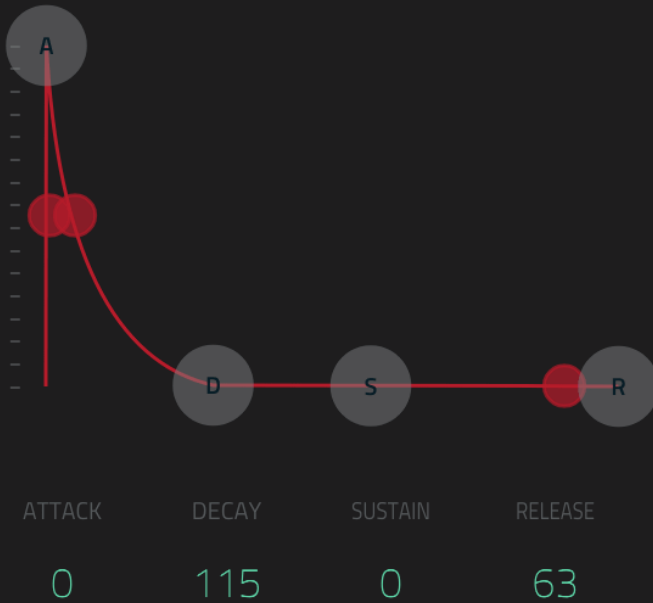
-3.17dB

PAN



0

AMP ENVELOPE



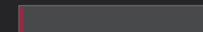
VELOCITY
MODULATION

AMP



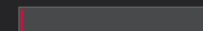
127

AMP ATTACK



0

PAN



0

GLOBAL

SAMPLES
.....

ENV: AMP
-...-

LFO

PORTA / MOD

EFFECTS

Make sure you select 'ALL' keygroups. Adjust the **AMP** setting under **VELOCITY MODULATION** on the right side of the screen. A lower value will increase the output volume of any softly played notes. A setting of 0 will effectively make the soft notes just as loud as the hard played notes, which could be useful if you want your performance to emphasise the softer sounding, tones of an electric piano.

Setting this to a high value (up to 127) will mean your softly played notes are more quiet and gentle.

Vibrato (Tremolo) Control

Most instruments in this expansion have been pre-configured to provide some form of 'vibrato'; we use the term 'vibrato' to match the wording found on the control panel in many of these electric pianos, but strictly speaking the actual effect is a type of tremolo, typically a continual 'pan' between left and right channels.

For most programs this is achieved using the LFO modulating the 'pan' of each keygroup in the instrument, and the intensity can be dynamically controlled with the modulation wheel of a MIDI keyboard.

You can also manually adjust the tremolo within each supported instrument. First, go to **PROGRAM EDIT > PORT/MOD**:

The screenshot shows the 'PORTA / MOD' menu in a synthesizer software interface. The top bar displays 'PROGRAM: Keys-EK2 Rhodes Mk II-Classic', 'KEYGROUP: 1', and 'NUMBER OF KG: 128'. The main area is divided into three columns: 'PORTAMENTO', 'VELOCITY SENSITIVITY', and 'CONTROLLER MOD'. The 'PORTAMENTO' column contains 'TIME' (0), 'QUANTIZE', and 'LEGATO'. The 'VELOCITY SENSITIVITY' column contains 'PITCH' (0), 'AMP ATTACK' (0), 'AMP' (54), 'PAN' (0), 'KB>FLT' (0), 'FILTER ENV ATTACK' (0), 'FILTER ENV DEPTH' (0), and 'FILTER CUTOFF' (127). The 'CONTROLLER MOD' column contains 'PITCH BEND' (0), 'WHEEL>LFO' (100), and 'AFT>FLT' (0). The 'WHEEL>LFO' parameter is highlighted with a green box. At the bottom, the 'PORTA / MOD' menu is highlighted with a green box, and the 'LFO' menu is also highlighted with a green box.

PORTAMENTO	VELOCITY SENSITIVITY	CONTROLLER MOD
TIME: 0	PITCH: 0	PITCH BEND: 0
QUANTIZE	AMP ATTACK: 0	WHEEL>LFO: 100
LEGATO	AMP: 54	AFT>FLT: 0
	PAN: 0	
	KB>FLT: 0	
	FILTER ENV ATTACK: 0	
	FILTER ENV DEPTH: 0	
	FILTER CUTOFF: 127	

MASTER SAMPLES ENVELOPES LFO **PORTA / MOD** EFFECTS

The key parameter here is **WHEEL > LFO**. If you wish to control all tremolo via a keyboard modulation wheel, set this to 100. If you prefer to manually set the amount of tremolo within the program, set this to 0. And if you wish there to be some tremolo at all times, but with the ability to increase it via the mod wheel whenever required, set this to a value in-between (try 40 or 50).

Adding & Editing FX

You can edit existing FX to any of the instruments. Go to the **CHANNEL MIXER > Programs** and select your piano program. On the left you'll see the existing FX plugin configuration in the **INSERTS** box:



Tap on the **INSERTS** box to edit the settings of any of the plugins, or to add different FX to your instrument.

Note Decay Times

All instrument samples in Electric Keys employ sustain looping, which not only reduces memory requirements but also allows us to control the decay time of sustained notes (i.e. how long a sustained note takes to completely fade out).

To adjust this, go to **PROGRAM EDIT > ENVELOPES (ENV:AMP)** :

PROGRAM: Keys-EK2 Rhodes Mk I-Classic

KEYGROUP: All

NUMBER OF KG: 128

KEYGROUP: LEVEL: -3.46dB, PAN: 0

AMP ENVELOPE: ATTACK: 0, DECAY: 113, SUSTAIN: 0, RELEASE: 53

VELOCITY MODULATION: AMP: 43, AMP ATTACK: 0, PAN: 0

MASTER, SAMPLES, ENV: AMP, LFO, PORTA / MOD, EFFECTS

Make sure ALL keygroups are selected at the top of the screen. Now adjust the DECAY parameter in the amp envelope, up to a maximum of 127 (for a very long decay time).

Further Resources

If you need help learning how to use your MPC, check out MPC-Tutor's range of **MPC tutorial** books and courses at:

<https://www.mpc-samples.com/section.php/8/0/mpc-tutorials-courses/>

'Electric Keys 2' is part of our growing range of MPC and Force expansions – check out our entire range here, with loads of acoustic keys, pianos, drum kits, bass, synths & much, much more:

<https://www.mpc-samples.com/section.php/78/0/mpc-expansions/>

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'Electric Keys 2', originally published by MPC-Samples.com, 2022.

2.1 Update published September 2023.

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Many thanks to Amit Talwar for his various MPC/Force utility scripts:

<https://github.com/intelliriffer>

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