

PAD PIMPS PRESENTS



THE PIANO SUITE^{2.1}

INSTALLATION & USER GUIDE

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Piano Suite 2: Introduction

- **Piano Suite 2** features 7 multisampled acoustic pianos covering a broad range of tones and character, with 72 different instrument sound patches fully configured and ready to play in all modern MPCs & the Akai Force.
- Each piano is recorded with up to **8 unique velocity layers** for the most expressive and realistic sounding pianos ever made for the MPC.
- 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). It is also fully compatible with the **Akai Force**, the **MPC Software** and the **MPC Beats App**.

What's Inside?

Piano Suite 2 contains **7 multisampled acoustic pianos**, each with a number of unique sound patches providing a total of **72** ready-to-play instruments, all featuring sustain looped samples for highly efficient memory usage.

- **Concert Grand** – A vintage concert grand piano with a dark, rich timbre. *8 velocity layers*
- **Studio Upright** – Clear tone with plenty of depth and presence. *8 velocity layers*
- **Console Piano** – A compact upright piano with a contemporary sound. *4 velocity layers*
- **Saloon (Tack) Piano** – Distinctive piano sound indicative of old Western movies. *4 velocity layers*
- **Toy Piano** – tine-based toy piano with distinctive bell-like sounds. *Single velocity layer with round robins.*
- **Parlor Grand** – a medium sized grand with a very pleasing tonal character. *4 velocity layers*

- **Spinnet Upright** – a small vintage upright with a timbre that falls somewhere between the console and saloon sound. *4 velocity layers*

All patches use a combination of FX and program parameters to create a unique sound from the same core instrument samples, each with its own unique ‘browser preview’.

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.

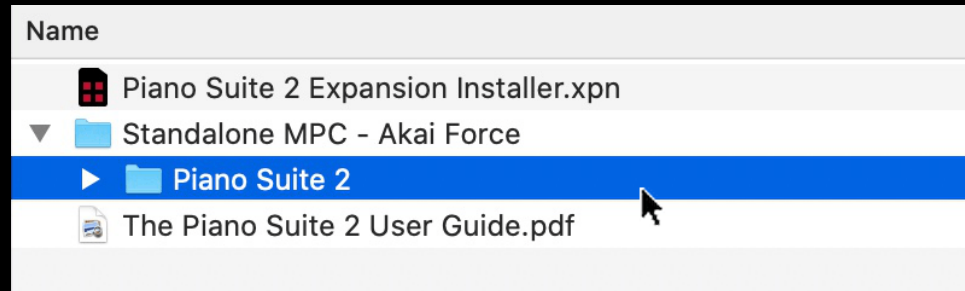
All instruments are 100% compatible with PAD PERFORM (‘Notes Mode’), and can of course be played with an attached MIDI keyboard for a more natural piano playing experience.

Since the 2.1 update, all instruments now use ‘Sample Chains’ which rapidly speeds up loading times in the browser. You can read more about sample chains here:

<https://www.mpc-samples.com/article/sample-chains-explained>

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 '**Piano Suite 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**.

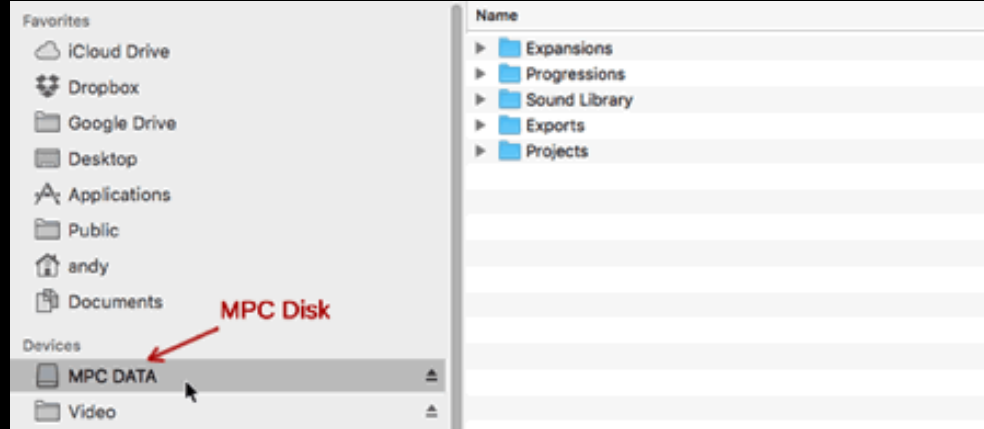
The first step is to mount this 'MPC disk' on your computer. If you use an SD card or USB disk, you can just eject the disk from your MPC/Force and physically insert it into your computer's SD card reader or USB port.

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).

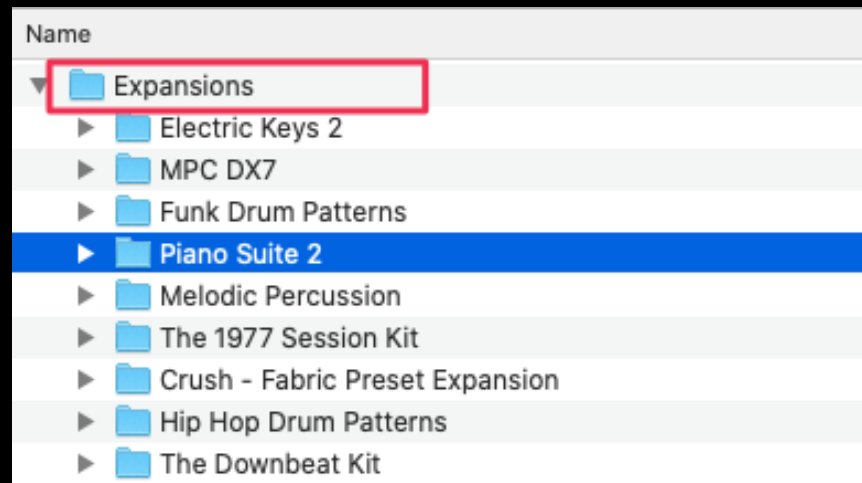


Now select **CONTROLLER MODE** ('**COMPUTER MODE**' in the Force).

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 **'Piano Suite 2'** standalone expansion folder *inside* this **'Expansions'** folder.

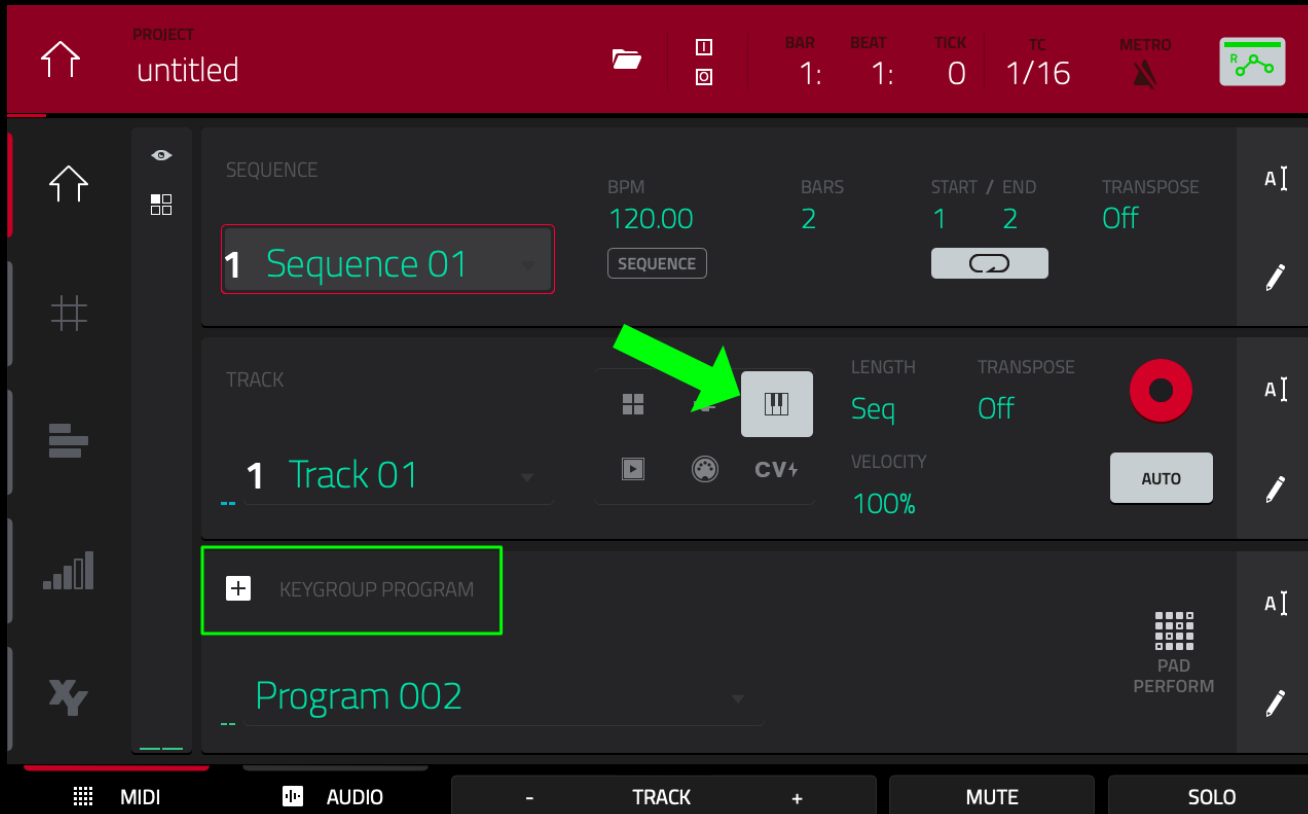


All done! If you had physically transferred the MPC disk to your computer you should now eject the disk from your computer and put the disk back in your MPC.

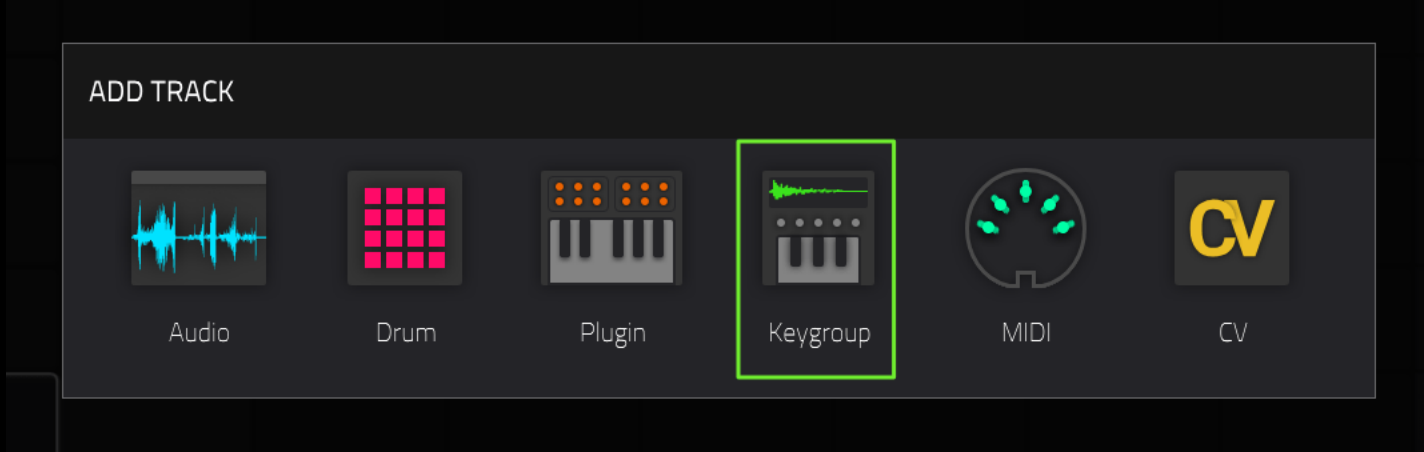
Alternatively, if you used USB transfer then go back to **MENU** and select the computer icon to return to standalone mode - *don't forget to eject/unmount the MPC from your computer first, this avoids any potential data loss.*

Loading Instruments (Standalone MPC/Force)

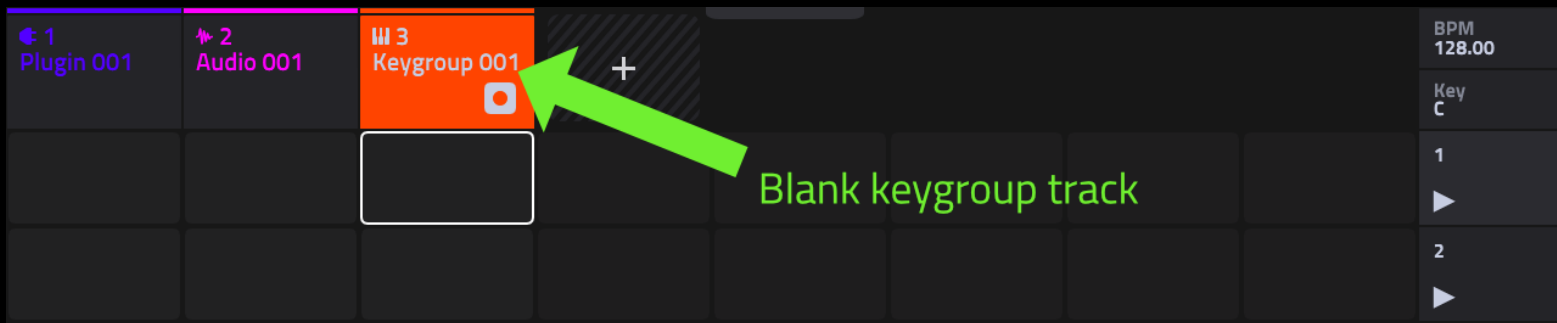
In your MPC, go to **MAIN** and create a **KEYGROUP** type track:



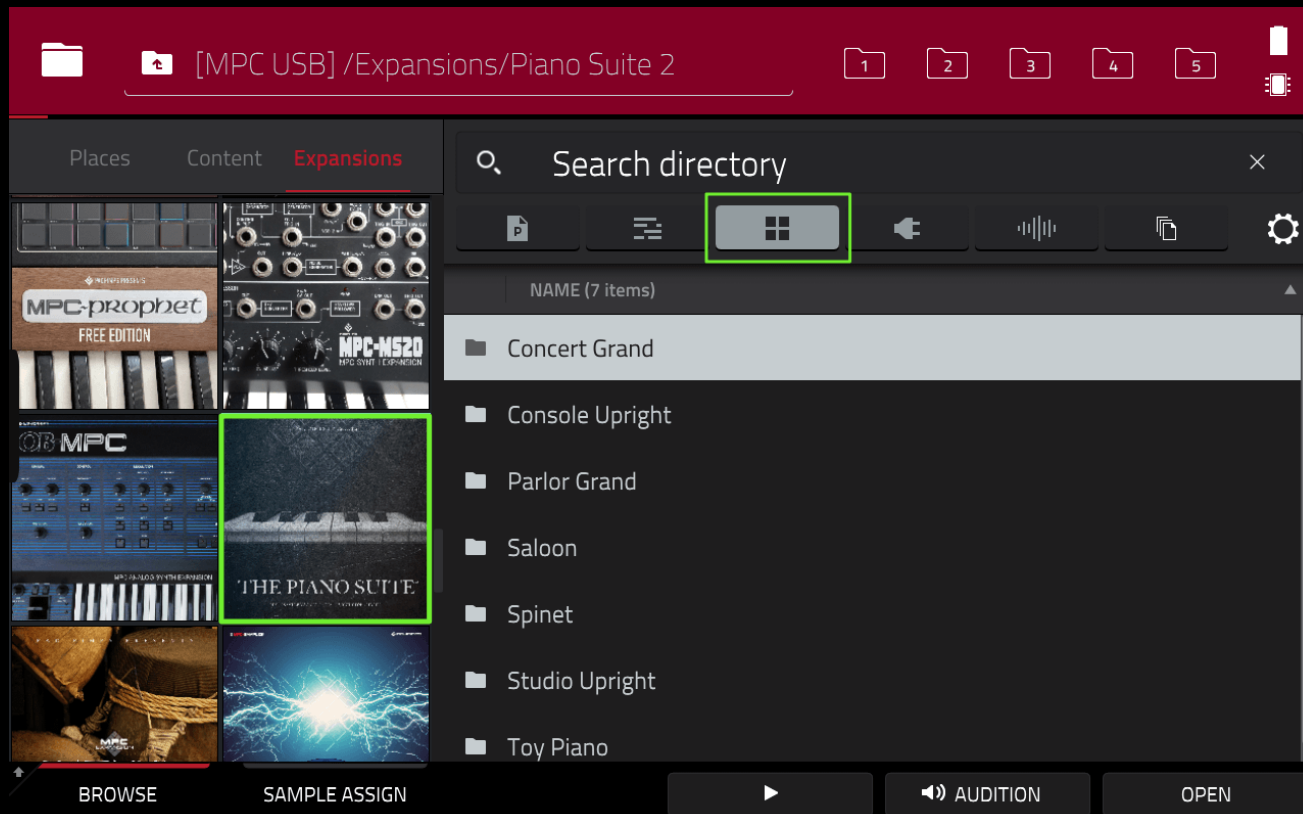
In the Force, hit the '+' icon in the touchscreen matrix and select a **Keygroup** track:



This adds a new blank keygroup track to the matrix:



Now go to 'BROWSER > Expansions' and tap on the 'Piano Suite 2' thumbnail.



Instruments are categorized by piano type. Double tap a category folder to enter and select the **PROGRAM** filter to view all the patches available for this piano:

[MPC USB] ../Piano Suite 2/Concert Grand

Places Content **Expansions**

Search directory

NAME (11 items)

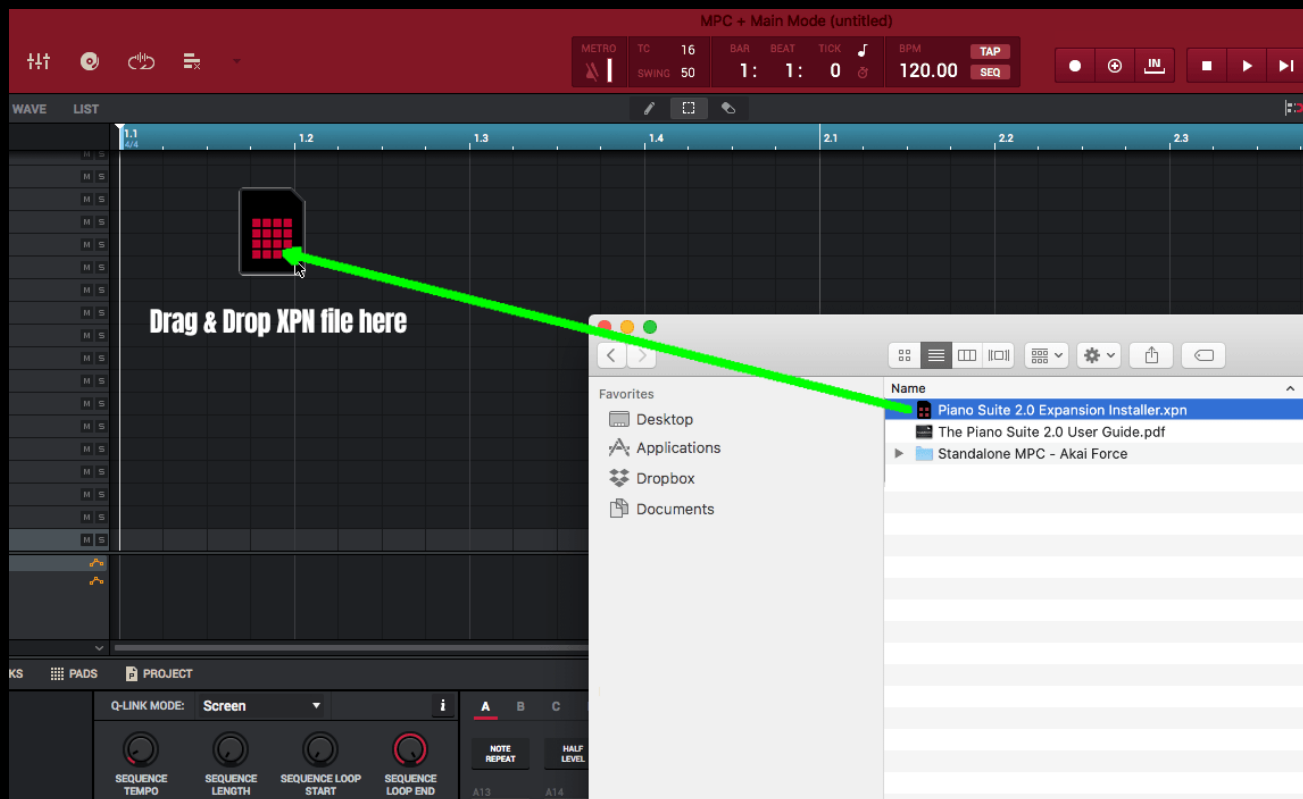
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-Ballad.xpm
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-Bright.xpm
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-Classic.xpm**
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-Compact.xpm
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-Copter.xpm
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-EP.xpm
- Keys-PS2 Concert Grand-Intimate.xpm

BROWSE SAMPLE ASSIGN ▶ AUDITION LOAD

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**.

Install: MPC Software/MPC Beats App

Locate the 'Piano Suite 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.*

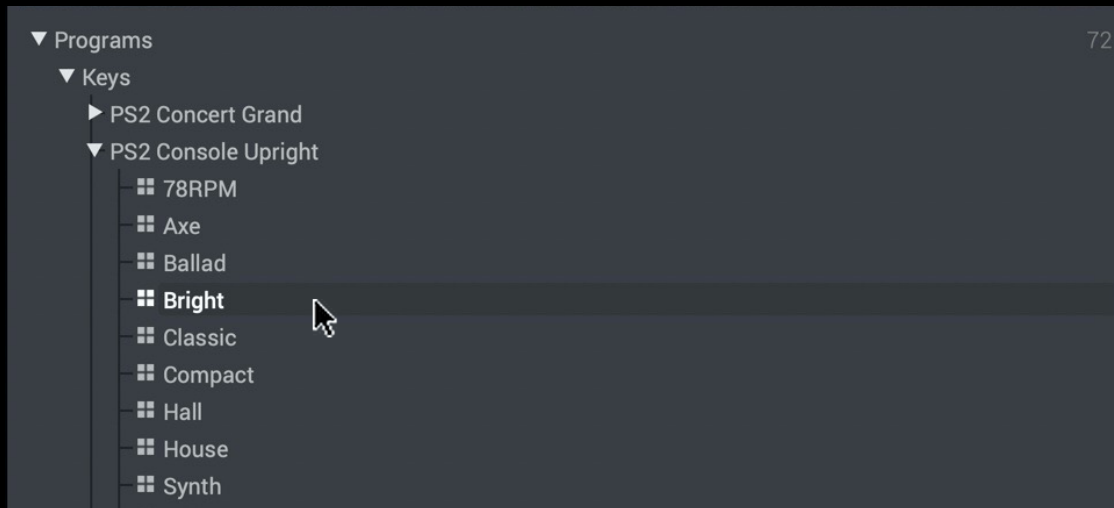
After dragging the XPN into the software UI you will see the following:



Select **'Import'** and once installed, open the **Expansion Browser** ('X' on your keyboard) and click on the **'Piano Suite 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:

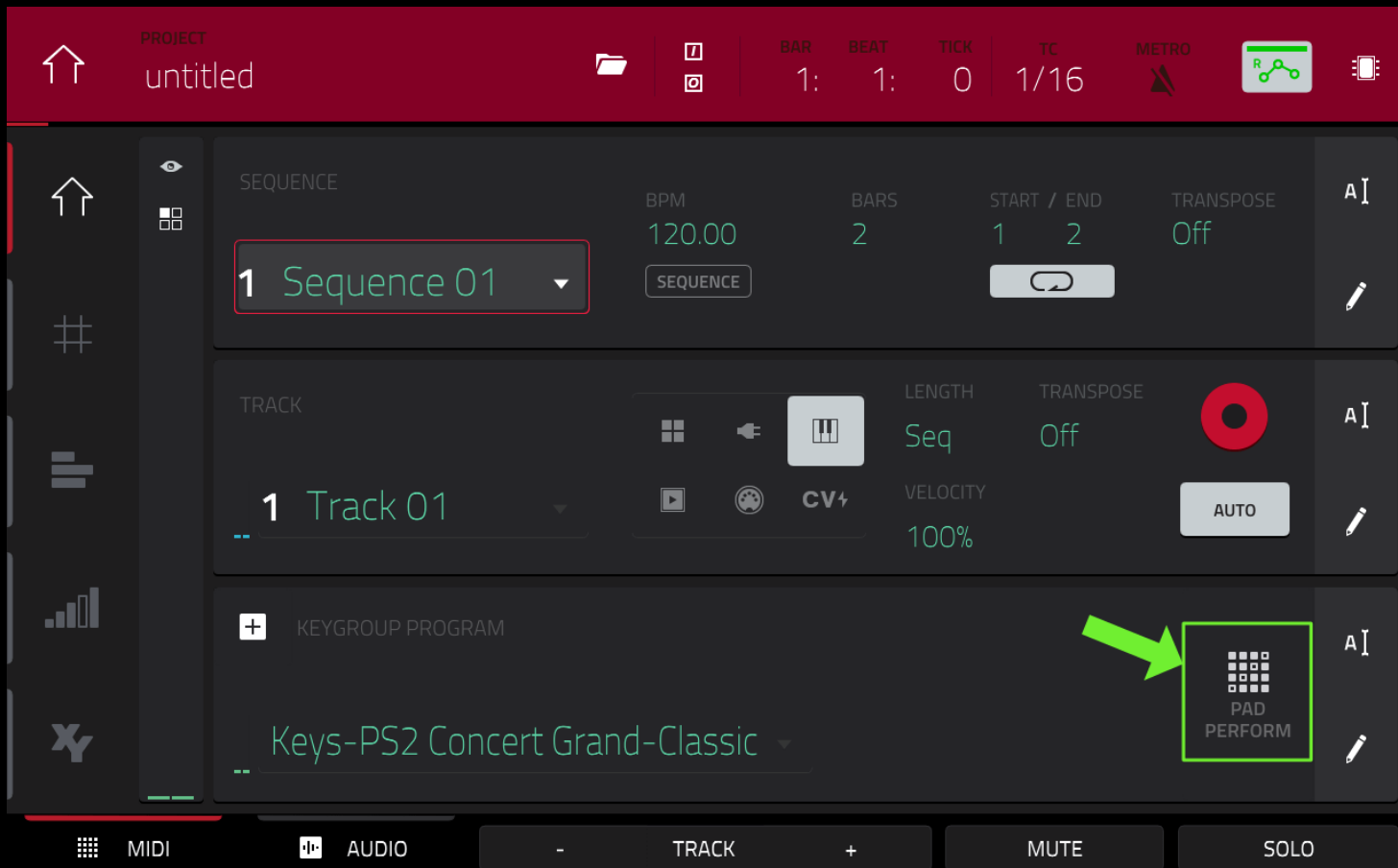


Double click a program to load it to the current sequencer track. Alternatively, drag the program directly into your project. All instruments are '**keygroup**' programs and must be assigned to a '**KEYGROUP**' type track in your sequencer.

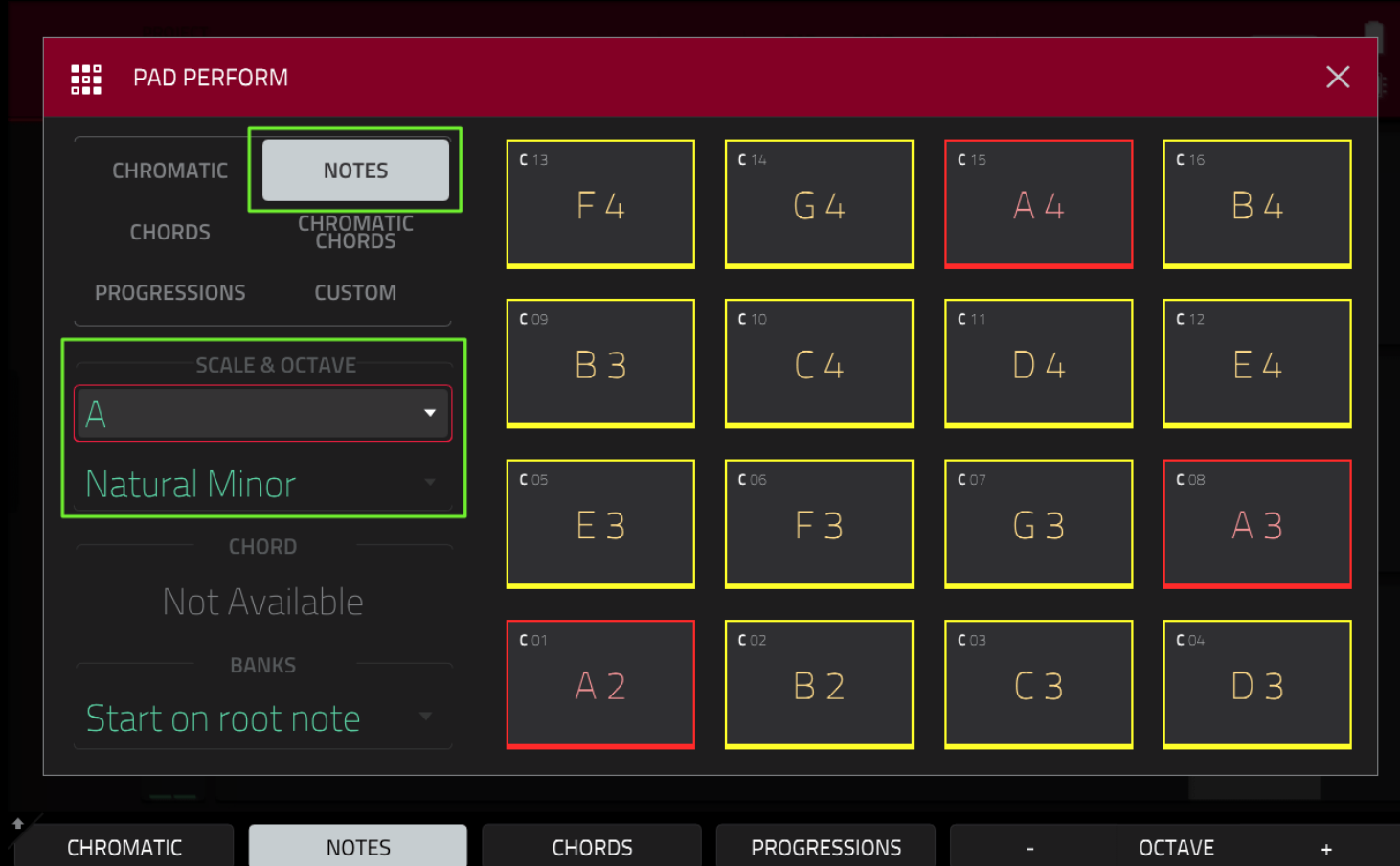
Using Pad Perform Mode

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.

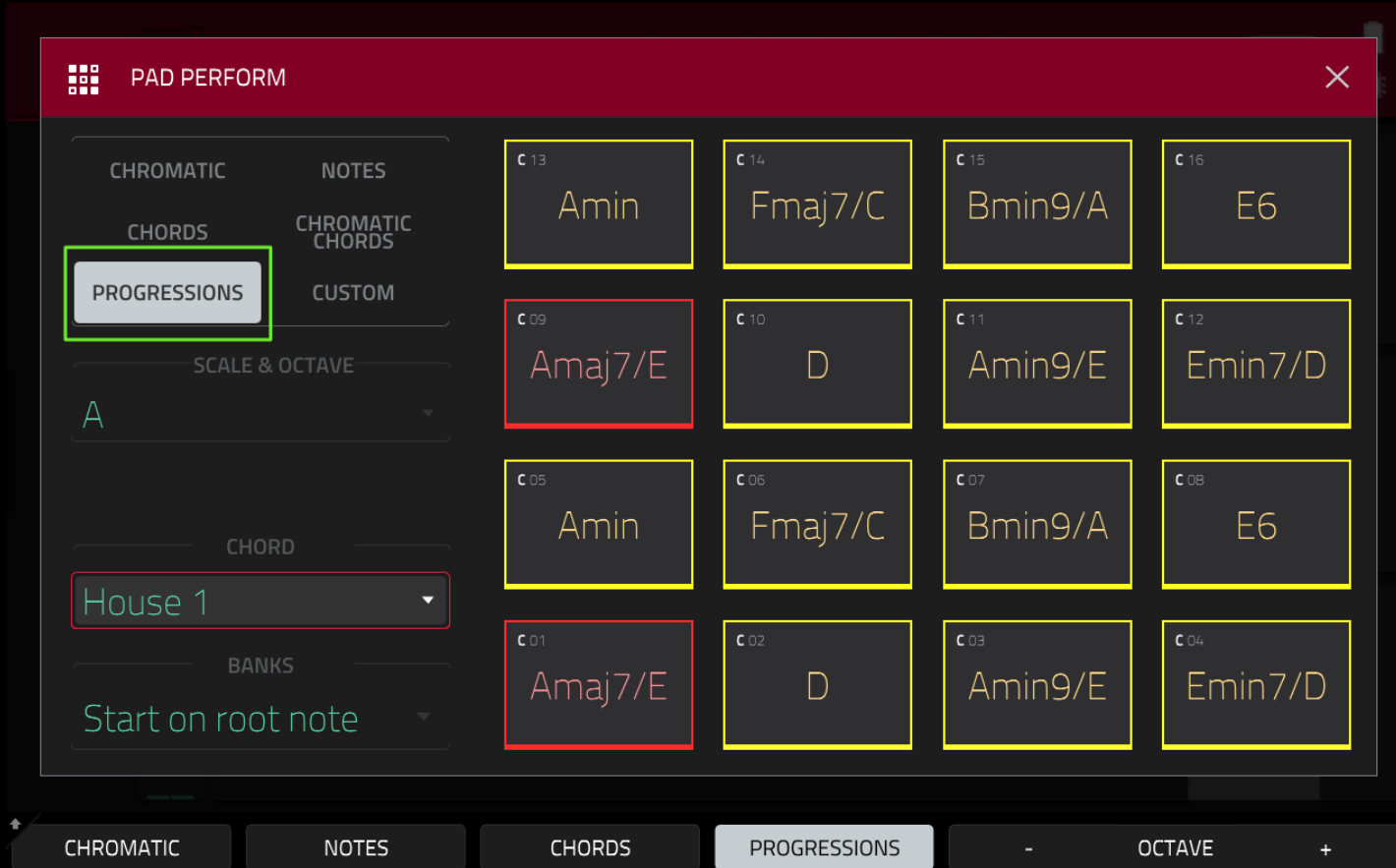
With your instrument assigned to a track, in the MPC go to **Pad Perform Mode** by hitting the **PAD PERFORM** icon on the 'PROGRAM' row in MAIN. Alternatively, press **SHIFT & 16 LEVEL**.



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).

PAD PERFORM

CHROMATIC NOTES
CHORDS CHROMATIC CHORDS
PROGRESSIONS CUSTOM

SCALE & OCTAVE
D
Natural Minor
CHORD
Not Available
BANKS
Start on root note

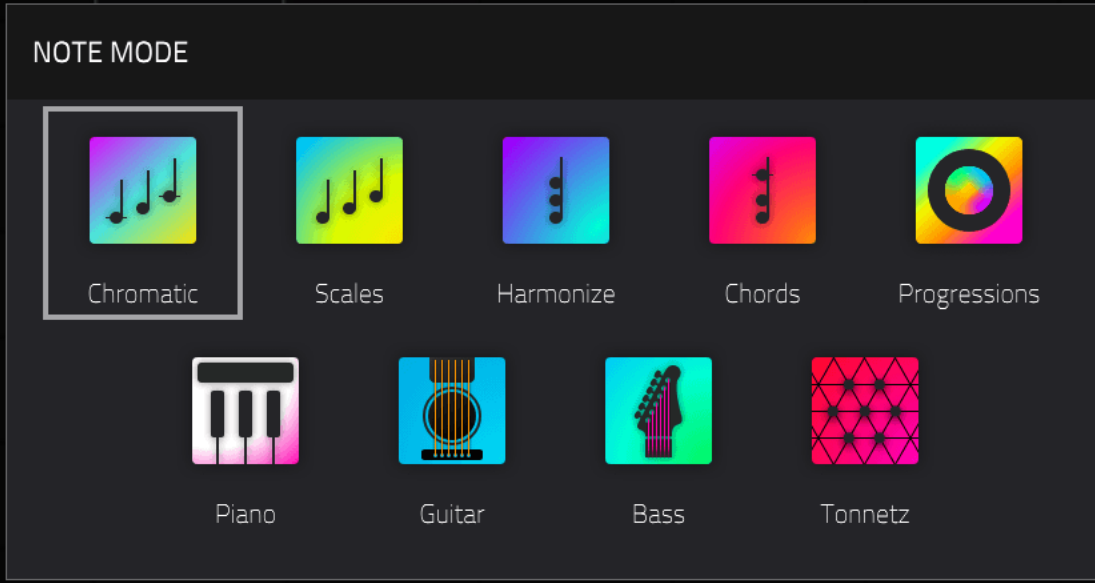
C 13 D 6	C 14 D#6	C 15 E 6	C 16 F 6
C 09 A#5	C 10 B 5	C 11 C 6	C 12 C#6
C 05 F#5	C 06 G 5	C 07 G#5	C 08 A 5
C 01 D 5	C 02 D#5	C 03 E 5	C 04 F 5

CHROMATIC NOTES CHORDS PROGRESSIONS - OCTAVE +

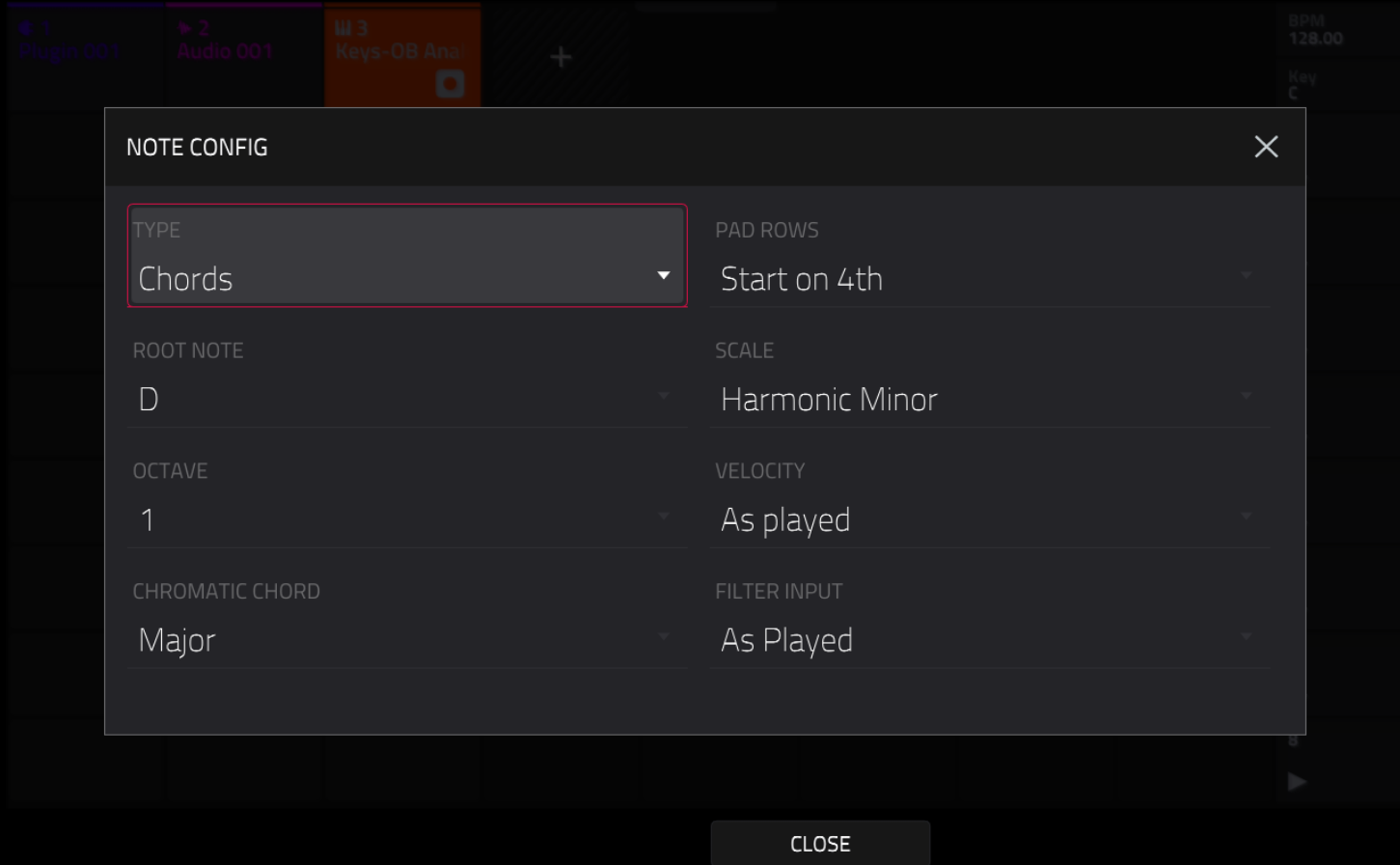
Please note that we've configured all instruments in Piano Suite to mirror the same note scale found on the original pianos, for example the Concert Grand had a note range of A-1 to B6, so any pads/keys outside of this note range will not emit any sound.

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.

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:

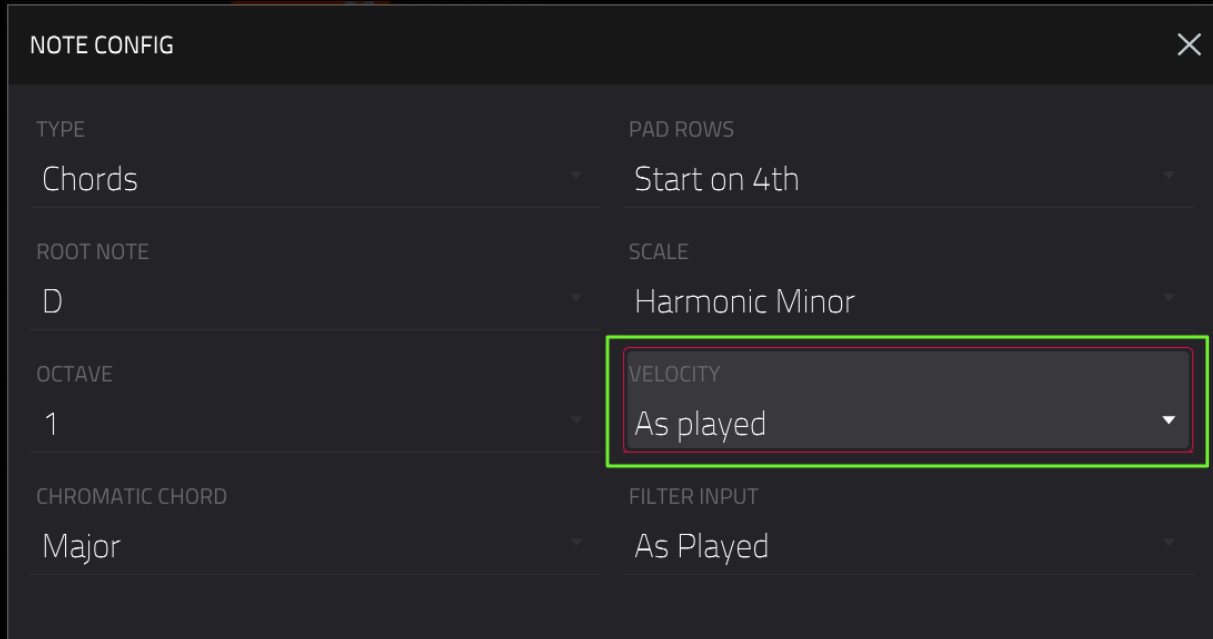
<https://www.mpc-tutor.com/mpc-midi-tutorial-connecting-midi-controllers/>

Usage Tips

Velocity Sensitivity

The instruments in Piano Suite 2 are built with up to 8 velocity levels, producing soft, deep tones at low velocities and brighter, sharper tones at higher (hard) velocities. It's therefore important that your pads or keyboard are configured to allow full control of note velocity to allow you to produce a range of dynamic tones while you play. 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-PS2 Concert Grand-Classic

KEYGROUP: All

NUMBER OF KG: 58

Q KEYGROUP

LEVEL: -0.96dB

PAN: -14

AMP ENVELOPE

AMP: 69

AMP ATTACK: 20

PAN: 0

ATTACK: 0

DECAY: 126

SUSTAIN: 0

RELEASE: 89

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 a piano.

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

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 samples in Piano Suite 2 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-PS2 Concert Grand-Classic

KEYGROUP: All

NUMBER OF KG: 58

KEYGROUP: LEVEL 0.00dB, PAN -14

AMP ENVELOPE: ATTACK 0, DECAY 126, SUSTAIN 0, RELEASE 89

VELOCITY MODULATION: AMP 69, AMP ATTACK 20, 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/>

'**Piano Suite 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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Many thanks to Amit Talwar for his various MPC/Force utility scripts:

<https://github.com/intelliriffer>

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