

P A D P I M P S P R E S E N T S

PIANO SUITE3

MULTISAMPLED ACOUSTIC PIANOS BUILT FOR THE MPC



MPC3
EDITION

USER GUIDE

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INSTALLATION

Thank you for purchasing **Piano Suite 3**. For the most up-to-date, step-by-step installation instructions for your MPC/Force, please refer to our comprehensive set of installation guides on our web site:

<https://www.mpc-samples.com/support/expansions>



Existing Piano Suite 2 Owners: After installing Piano Suite 3 you can safely remove your existing copy of Piano Suite 2 – simply delete the 'Piano Suite 2' expansion folder (standalone MPC) or in the MPC Software uninstall via 'Tools > Expansion Manager'.

WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE PIANO SUITE 2?

Piano Suite 3 introduces new and improved **MPC3** versions of all instruments, utilising 'advanced keygroups' and adding custom Q-LINK macros to provide control of a range of FX and piano mechanics. We've also added an **MPC Sample** edition.

COMPATIBILITY

Piano Suite 3 contains instruments built for **MPC 3.9** or greater and also includes 'starter projects' made specifically for the **MPC Sample**. For backward compatibility purposes we've also included the previous versions

of the instruments from Piano Suite 2 which are suitable for **MPC 2.13+**.
Requirements are as follows:

MPC 3 Edition:

Any modern standalone MPC running MPC 3.9+
MPC Software 3.9+
Akai Force 3.9+

MPC Sample Edition:

MPC Sample firmware 1.3.0+

MPC 2 Edition:

Any modern standalone MPC running MPC 2.13+
MPC Software / MPC Beats 2.13+
Akai Force 3.3+

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Piano Suite 3 is built around 7 multisampled acoustic pianos, each recorded with up to **8 velocity layers** and mapped to expressive MPC3 advanced keygroups to create a collection of realistic pianos for all modern MPCs and the Akai Force.

The expansion features the following acoustic pianos:

- **Concert Grand** – A vintage concert grand piano with a dark, rich timbre.
- **Studio Upright** – Clear tone with plenty of depth and presence.
- **Console Piano** – A compact upright piano with a contemporary sound.
- **Saloon (Tack) Piano** – Distinctive piano sound indicative of old Western movies.
- **Toy Piano** – tine-based toy piano with distinctive bell-like sounds.
- **Parlor Grand** – a medium sized grand with a very pleasing tonal character.
- **Spinet Upright** – a small vintage upright with a timbre that falls somewhere between the console and saloon sound.

We've created a total of 70 ready-to-play instrument patches which build upon the seven core pianos, utilising different FX and track parameters to achieve a range of additional piano sounds.

Play the instruments using pad perform or with an attached keyboard. All instruments feature **Q-LINK controllable FX and piano mechanics** so you can shape and mould each piano sound to your exact needs.

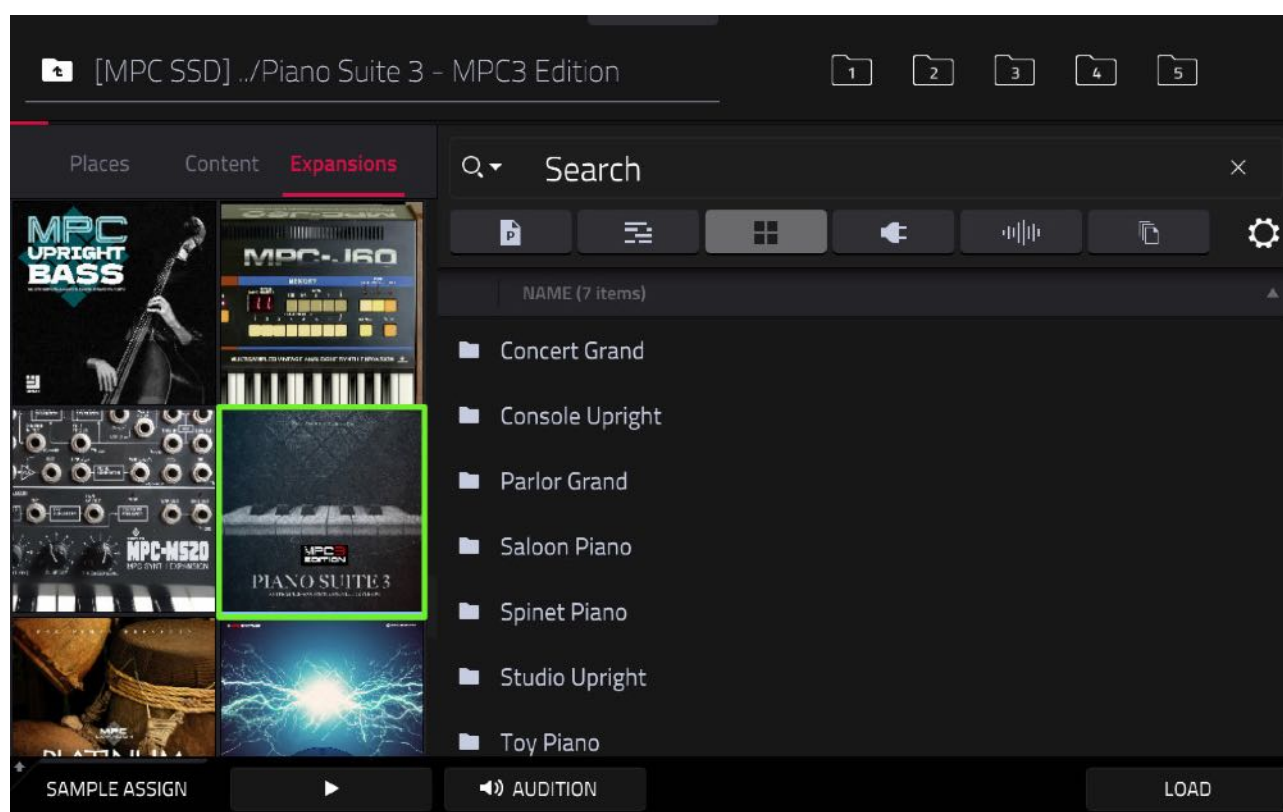
We've also created a special **MPC Sample edition** which contains **45 one shot piano multisamples** for use with 16 LEVELS, plus **7 'starter' projects** each with a ready-to-play, multisampled piano instrument pre-mapped across multiple pad banks.

We've also included the previous MPC2 compatible edition as a separate installer; this is suitable for people running **MPC 2.13+**, **Force 3.3** and **MPC Beats 2.13+** (*please note that these instruments do not feature Q-LINK macros or advanced keygroups*).

STANDALONE MPC/FORCE

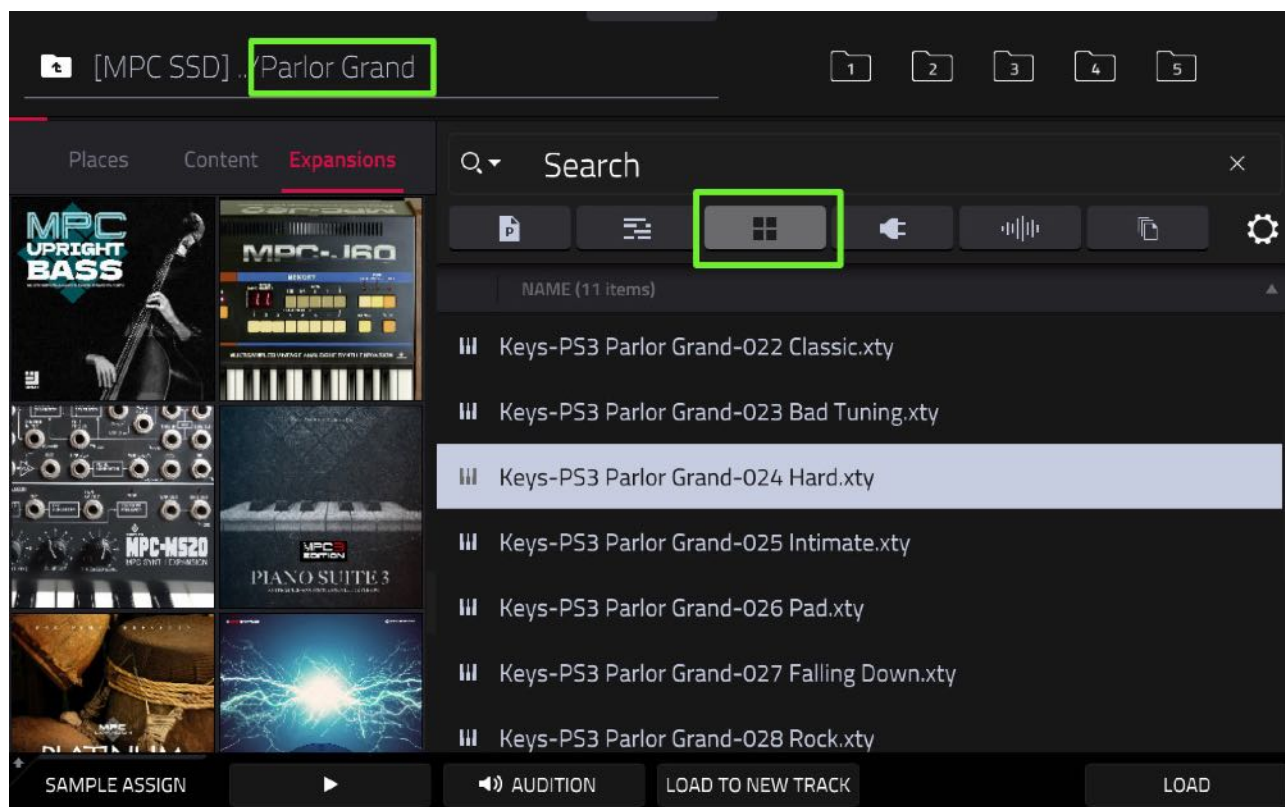
Please note that this expansion features separate installers for MPC2 and MPC3 – please ensure you install the correct version for the firmware generation you are using.

After [installation](#), boot up your MPC and go to **BROWSER > Expansions** and tap on the **Piano Suite 3** thumbnail to reveal the expansion on the right side of the screen.



Loading Instruments:

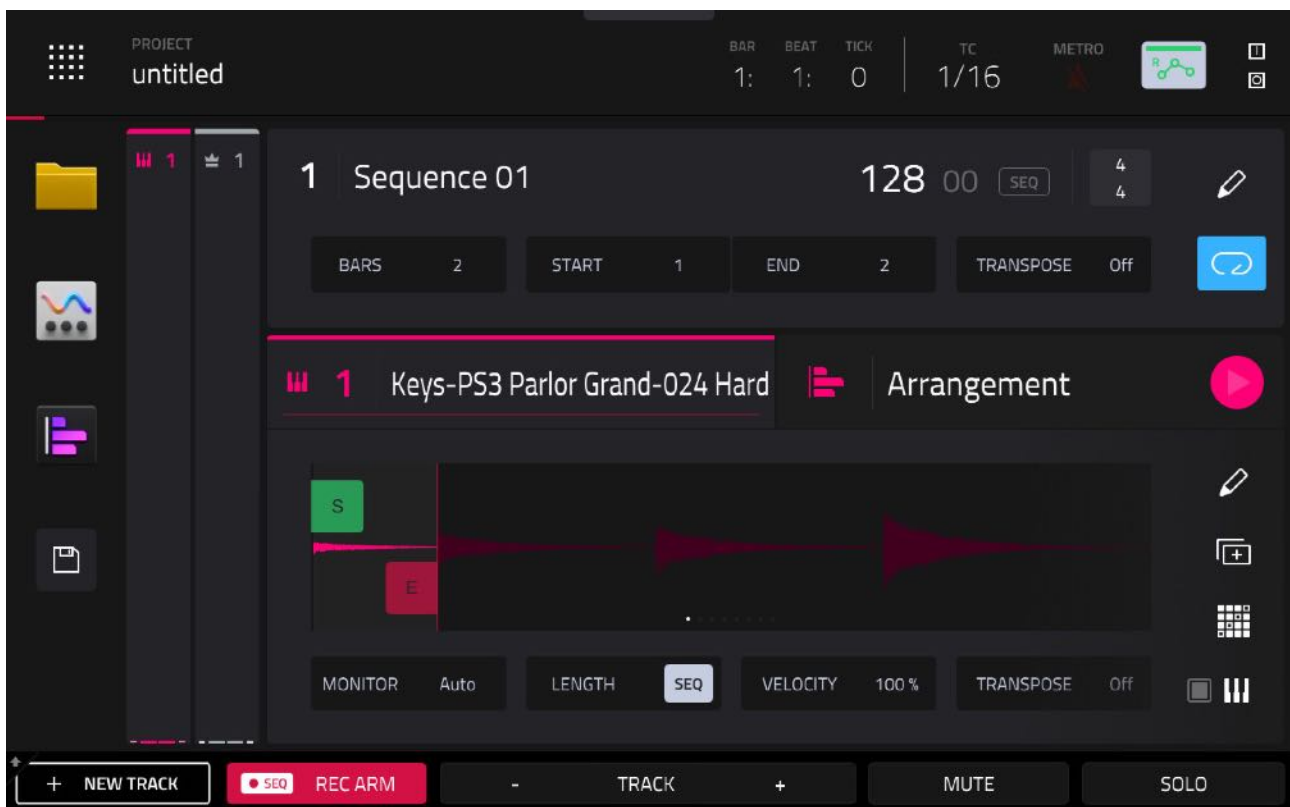
Select a piano instrument and enter its folder; ensure the **PROGRAMS/TRACKS** filter is enabled to view the available instruments:



Each piano is provided in its standard '**Classic**' patch alongside several additional patches which utilise different FX and track parameters to achieve a range of different piano sounds.

Single tap on an instrument to select it and press the 'audition' triangle in the bottom menu to play a pre-recorded preview of the instrument. For automatic previewing, tap on **AUDITION** and select '**AUTO**'.

To load an instrument to the current track in an MPC3 project, either double tap the instrument file or single tap and press **LOAD**. This will overwrite the existing track; if you prefer to load to a new track, press **LOAD TO NEW TRACK** instead. You can now view your loaded **KEYGROUP** track in **MAIN**:

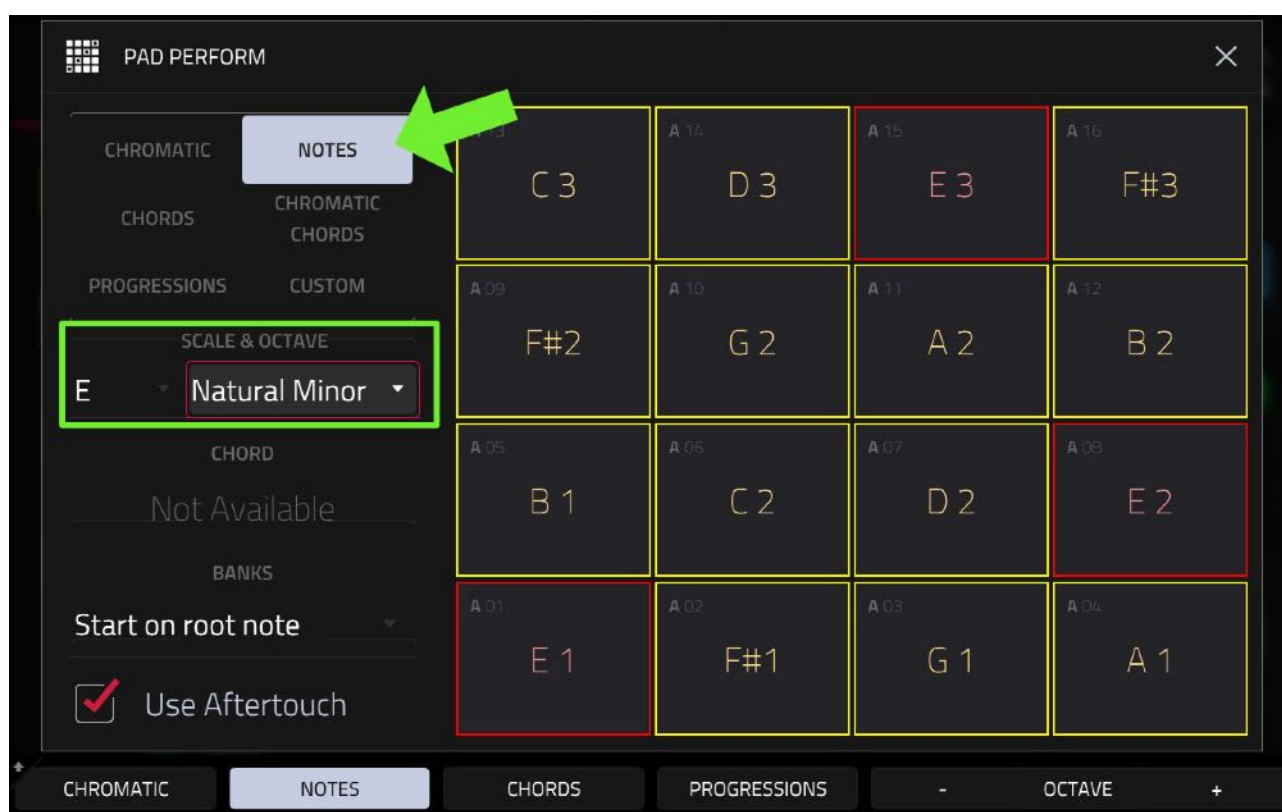


 *MPC2 users: To load an instrument to the sample pool in your project, either double tap it or single tap and press **LOAD**. Now go to **MAIN**, select a **KEYGROUP** type track and assign the instrument to this track.*

PLAYING THE INSTRUMENTS

Instruments are all standard 'keygroup' instruments and can be played using the pads and/or an attached keyboard (or via the built in keys on an MPC Key model).

To access the **PAD PERFORM** configuration, press the [**NOTES**] button (if you don't have a NOTES button, hold down [**SHIFT**] + [**16 LEVEL**]):



Select the desired key and scale and then choose an appropriate playback mode, which for bass guitar is normally going to be '**NOTES**' mode. Use the [**OCTAVE**] buttons to select an appropriate octave range.

You can also attach a MIDI keyboard to a spare USB port (or via the MIDI IN port, or if supported, via Bluetooth). You can now play with your keyboard.

CUSTOMISING INSTRUMENTS

The expansion features 70 presets containing unique FX and track parameters to create a variety of different piano sounds, but this is just the beginning of what is possible in terms of customisation and sound design.

The physical configuration of all instruments can be adjusted to suit your particular requirements, including:

- **key release sounds** – the subtle 'knocking' sound made when releasing a key
- **damping** – models the effect of the damper pedal, giving a more muted sound
- **hammer** – adds extra 'bite' to the initial hammer strike
- **dynamic range** – controls the difference in volume between soft and hard notes
- **note release length** – how long the note itself 'fades' out after releasing the key
- **velocity curve** – adjust the velocity response of the keys (default action is linear)
- **key tracking** – control the stereo position of each key to determine whether it is being heard from the perspective of the pianist or the audience. When configured for the pianist, the lower keys will be panned increasingly to the left, higher keys panned increasingly to the right.

Q-LINK Macros (MPC3 Only)

For quick 'hands on' changes to any instrument we've pre-mapped the track Q-LINKS with a variety of different macros that control a range of different FX parameters and piano mechanics.

Hold down the [**Q-LINK**] button and select the '**Track**' Q-LINK page:



With 'Track' Q-LINKS enabled, all Q-LINKS are pre-mapped to sixteen different macro controls and these will remain available no matter what screen you are currently working in.

Q-LINK	Macro	Details
<i>Column 1</i>		
Q13	Treble	High Frequency Gain
Q9	Mid	Mid Frequency Gain
Q5	Bass	Bass Frequency Gain
Q1	HP Filter	Apply high pass filter to entire instrument
<i>Column 2</i>		
Q14	Delay Mix	Delay amount
Q10	Delay Time	Delay sync time
Q6	Reverb Mix	Reverb amount
Q2	Reverb Time	Length of reverb tail
<i>Column 3</i>		
Q15	Dynamics	Difference in volume between soft and hard notes
Q11	Release	How long each note 'fades out' after releasing
Q7	Damping	Apply dampening to the strings for a more muted sound.
Q3	Randomise	Adds some subtle randomised variation in timbre for each note
<i>Column 4</i>		
Q16	Compression	Amount of compression applied to instrument
Q12	Key Release Volume	Control the volume of physical noise made when releasing a key
Q8	Hammer	Control the amount of hammer sound (modelled)
Q4	Vinyl Crackle	Add some lofi vinyl noise

In addition to the 'Track' Q-LINKS we've also configured the 16 Track FX Q-LINKS to provide quick control of some additional FX parameters – these can be accessed via **Q-LINK EDIT › Track FX**.



Please note that Q-LINK assignments do vary depending on the FX utilised within each patch.

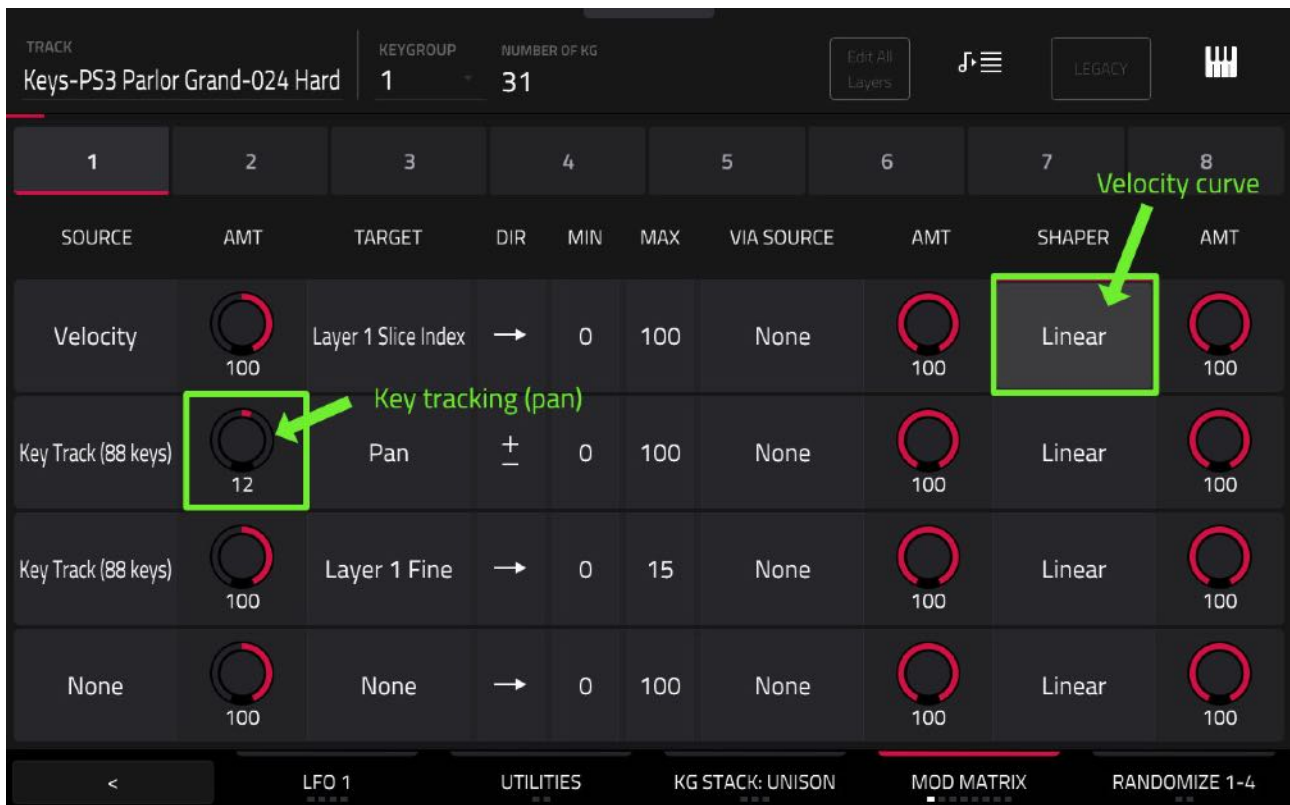
More Detailed Editing (MPC3)

To adjust all possible FX settings, or to change which FX plugins are inserted across an instrument, you can use the **XL CHANNEL STRIPS** in **[MAIN]** – choose the '**FX**' tab on the instrument channel strip. You can also use the **CHANNEL MIXER** in MPC3 and MPC2.

Piano Suite 3 is built using advanced MPC3 keygroups, so for more detailed editing of any instrument, go to **[MENU] > TRACK EDIT** where you can tweak any available track parameter.

ADJUSTING VELOCITY CURVE & KEY TRACKING

Go to **TRACK EDIT > MOD MATRIX**:



In **MOD 1** you adjust the **SHAPER** parameter to change the **velocity curve** used in an instrument, which by default is configured to be perfectly **linear**. You can try any of the preset shapers (e.g. sine, inverse cubic, square root etc) but avoid the 'Quantize' options.

In **MOD 2** you can use the **AMT** value to adjust how the panning of each key within the instrument changes across the entire key range. Set **AMT** to **0** for all notes to pan centrally, which is how all the notes in a piano would sound to someone listening from afar. Increasing this value will cause lower notes

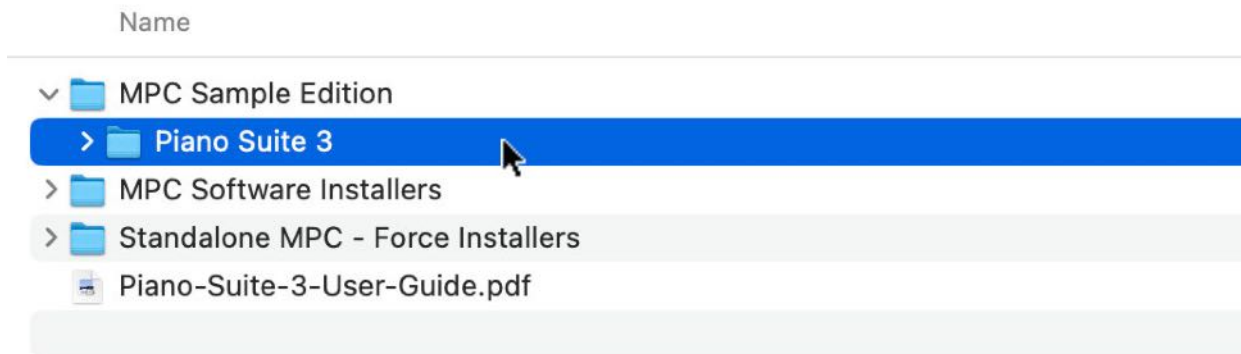
to be panned increasingly to the left, while higher notes are panned further to the right, mimicking the listening experience of the pianist themselves.



Check out the [MPC Bible](#) for structured tutorials on all aspects of configuring FX and editing keygroup tracks.

AKAI MPC SAMPLE

From the downloaded files, enter the '**MPC Sample Edition**' folder:



Now copy the folder '**Piano Suite 3**' to your preferred location on your MPC Sample SD card; check out our [MPC Sample Expansion Installation](#) guide for more details.

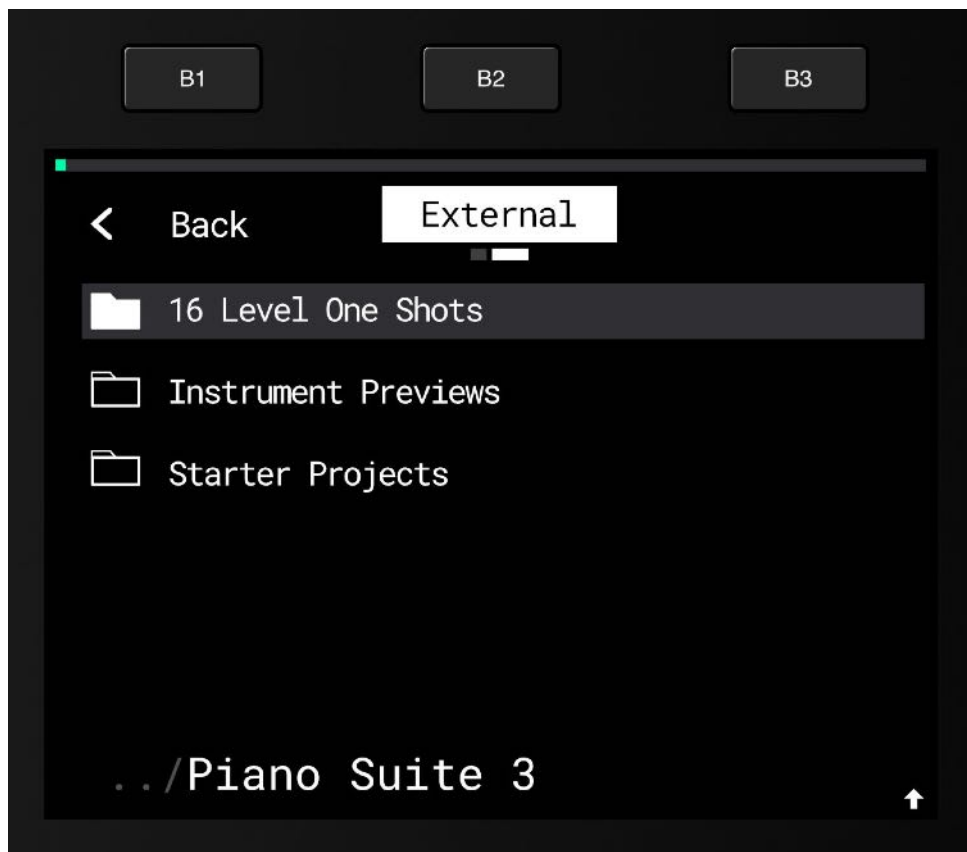
LOADING PROJECTS

At the time of writing the MPC Sample does not support loading 'keygroup' instruments and only supports a single 'drum' track per project. To workaround these limitations we've created two distinct resources for MPC Sample users.

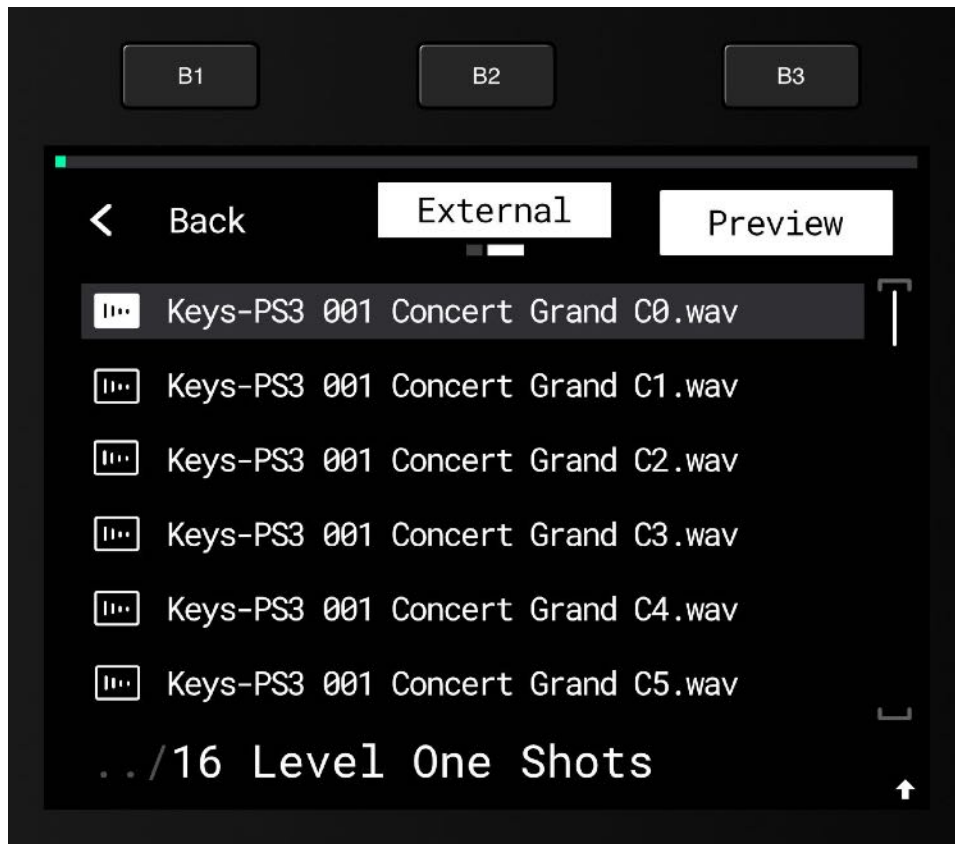
16 LEVELS MELODIC ONE SHOTS

We've created hundreds of multisampled piano 'one shots' for use with the 16 LEVELS feature; this temporarily pitches a single sample across all 16 pads to allow you to easily create melodic bass lines.

In your MPC Sample, hit the [**SAMPLE SELECT**] button, navigate to your copy of the '**Piano Suite 3**' expansion folder on the '**External**' disk.



Enter the '**16 Level One Shots**' folder:



Inside you'll find 7 multisampled notes for each acoustic piano (C0 to C6), and C3 to C5 of the Toy Piano. This gives you a wide range of options when deciding which 'root' sound to use for 16 LEVEL tuning.

Use your (ENCODER) to preview the piano sounds. When you find a sound you wish to use in your current project, highlight the sample you wish to use and hit the destination pad in your current kit – you can assign it to any pad you wish. With the destination pad lit in yellow, click down on your (ENCODER) to load the sample to it.

Now go to [**SAMPLE**] – by default your pad will play the sample as a 'one shot' which sounds great for the toy piano but for the other pianos, configure a 'note on' style playback as follows:

1. Hold down [**SHIFT**] and press [**CHOP**] to set the pad as '**NOTE ON**'.
2. Press [**B1**] twice to enter the **AMP ENV** screen and set your preferred **Release** time with the (K2) knob. **75** is a good starting point.
3. For polyphonic 16 LEVEL performance, press [**B2**] twice to enter the **PLAY** screen and set your pad to **Poly** using the (K1) knob.

Now press [**16 LEVELS**] to enter **16 LEVELS** mode. The pad colours indicate the type of 16 LEVELS currently selected, if the pads are not purple, hold down [**SHIFT**] and keep pressing [**16 LEVELS**] until the screen says '**Tune**'.

Your sample is now tuned chromatically across all 16 pads; you can now perform and record piano lines to your sequencer. After recording, simply hit the [**16 LEVELS**] button again to return the pads to their standard pad layout in SAMPLE mode.



*To access 16 LEVELS when working directly in the sequencer, press [**SAMPLE**] and [**SEQ**] together, press the pad you wish to assign to 16 LEVELS and then press the [**16 LEVELS**] button.*

USING A STARTER PROJECT

A '**starter project**' is a way of loading a pre-mapped, ready to play multisampled instrument to multiple pad banks in a blank project. So instead of starting a song by loading a drum kit, we start with a high quality piano instrument, ready to play in multiple pad banks; we can then build our kit and other sounds *around* this instrument using the empty banks.

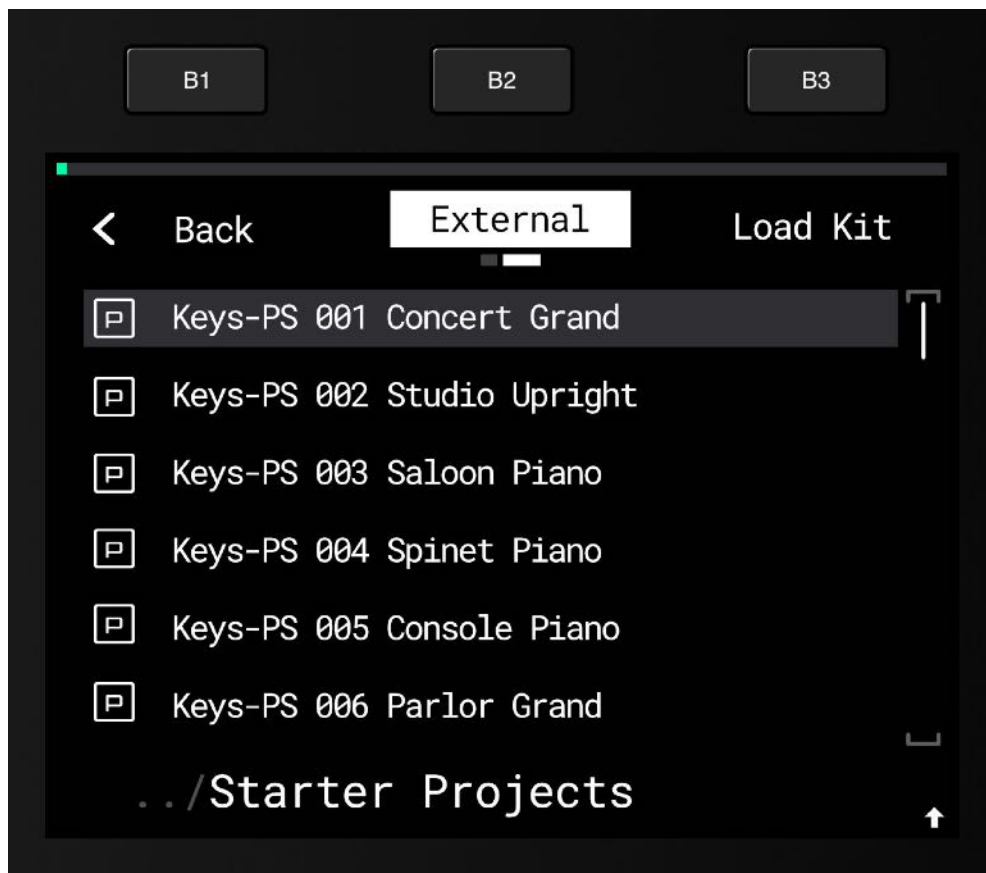
Multisampled instruments are sonically superior to 16 LEVELS as they utilise many more samples and also include multiple **velocity layers** to add even more realism, subtly changing the tone and timbre of a note depending on how hard or soft the note is played.



The disadvantage of starter projects is they cannot be loaded into an existing project (as the MPC Sample only supports a single track) – if you need to add piano to an existing project, use the 16 LEVELS 'one shot' option instead.

To utilise a starter project, press [**SHIFT**] + [**PAD 16**] and select **Load Project**. Now press [**B2**] to select your '**External**' disk and if required, use the [**B1**] button to navigate inside the **Piano Suite 3** folder.

Enter the '**Starter Projects**' folder:



Here you'll see a list of 7 starter projects (one for each 'raw' acoustic piano); turn your (ENCODER) to highlight a project and press down to select it - confirm '**Yes**' with the [**B3**] button to load the project.

A starter project consists of a multisampled piano mapped across multiple pad banks, the 8 velocity layer concert grand and studio upright cover **BANK B** to **BANK H**, starting at note **Ab-1** (pad C01), and moving chromatically up to note **C7** on pad H08.

Other acoustic pianos feature 4 velocity layers and utilise BANK B to BANK G. The toy piano is uses 2 layer round robins and covers banks C and D.



Remember, BANK A and BANK B are purposely left blank for you to add drums and other sounds. The underlying default MIDI notes for the pads in banks C to H also match the actual pitches of the assigned bass notes, just one octave higher (pad range is Ab0 to C8, note range is Ab-1 to C7).

Press the [**PLAY**] button to play a four bar piano pattern – this is pre-loaded to sequence **A01** and is in the key of 'E' for all starter projects. If you don't need this example sequence, go to [**SEQ**], hold down [**ERASE**] and hit pad [A01] to clear the sequence – alternatively, use the '**Load Kit**' method described below.

LOADING THE INSTRUMENT ONLY

To load just the instrument project without any starter sequence, head back to the **Load Project** screen, enter a project folder but instead of clicking down on the project with your (ENCODER), hit [**B3**] – '**Load Kit**'. This will load the piano instrument but will skip loading the ready-made piano sequence (any existing sequences in your project are untouched). Please note that both 'Project' and 'Kit' loading methods completely replace all 8 pad banks in your existing project, it's not possible to avoid this so 'starter projects' must always be used as the starting foundation of a song.

INSTRUMENT PREVIEWS

The MPC Sample browser does not currently offer any way to 'audition' the sound of a complete project or instrument, so as a workaround go to **[SAMPLE SELECT]** and navigate inside the '**Instrument Previews**' folder where you'll find short audio file previews of all 7 starter projects.

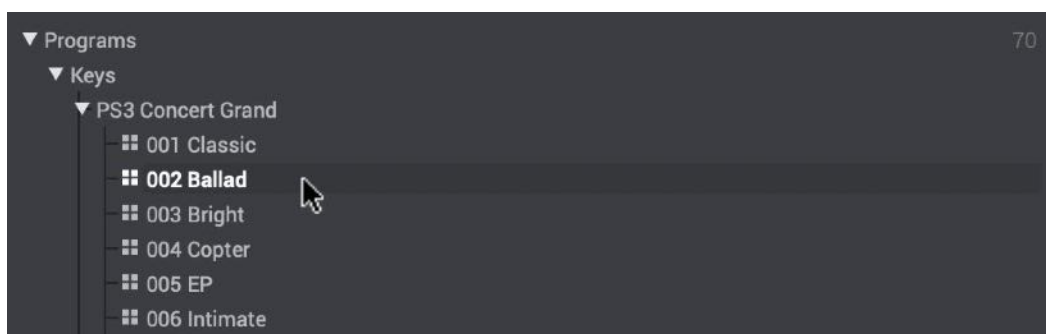
MPC SOFTWARE/MPC BEATS

Please note that this expansion features separate installers for MPC Software 2 and MPC Software 3, so please ensure you install the correct XPN file for the version of MPC Software that you are using. MPC Beats users should use the MPC Software 2 installer.

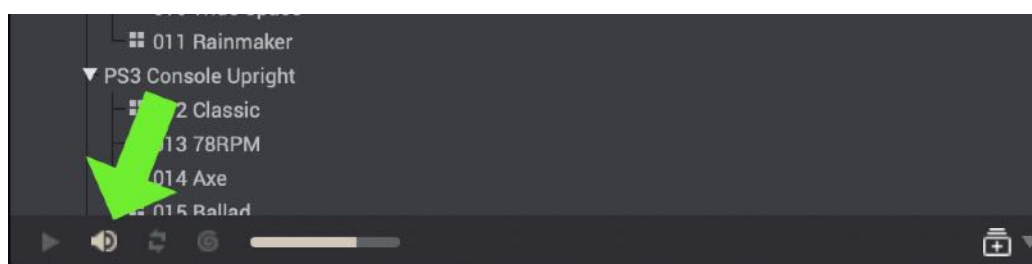
After [installing](#) into the MPC Software via the provided XPN file, open the **Expansion Browser** (shortcut X) and tap on the **Piano Suite 3** thumbnail:



Expand the '**Programs**' group and then the '**Keys**' sub-group to view the various piano instruments:



Click to select an instrument. Press the 'play' triangle to hear a pre-recorded preview, or enable the 'Auto Play' option to launch previews automatically.



To load an instrument to the current track in an MPC3 project, either double click it or drag it into the MPC Software grid. This will automatically convert the current track to a KEYGROUP track containing the instrument.



MPC 2 users: to load an instrument to the sample pool in an MPC2 project, either double click it or drag into the MPC Software grid. To assign it to a track, select a **KEYGROUP** type track in the 'Inspector' and manually assign the instrument to this track.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Piano Suite 3 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/>

If you need help learning how to use your MPC, check out the MPC Bible at:

<https://www.mpc-samples.com/product.php/268/mpc-bible/>

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