
MPC-SAMPLES
PadPIMPS
PAD PIMPS & MPC-SAMPLES PRESENTS
SONKAL
THE STANDALONE MPC SYNTH BASS EXPANSION

Contents

Sonkal: Introduction

- **Sonkal** is a ground-breaking bass synth expansion for MPCs which utilises the MPC's own synthesis engine combined with multisampled analog and digital synths to produce a gut wrenching collection of electronic bass sounds suitable for any modern style of music.

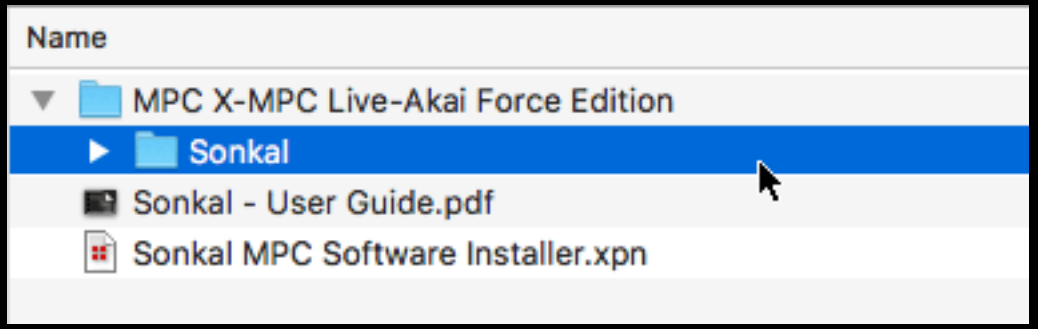
- This is the first MPC expansion to make extensive use of pure subtractive synthesis techniques, with many of the instruments built entirely from classic oscillators modulated with the MPCs filters, LFOs, envelopes and FX, resulting in huge bass sounds with a tiny memory footprint (only a few kilobytes per program, perfect for standalone MPCs).

- It also features an extensive suite of multisampled bass patches sampled from a collection of analog & digital synths, with seamless sample looping & highly memory-optimised programs (on average, only 3MB each). In total there are **over 200 bass instruments** included, making this the largest MPC instrument expansion ever created.

Install: MPC Live, MPC X, Akai Force

*The following instructions are suitable for installing the expansion in the **MPC X** & **MPC Live** in 'standalone' mode, as well as the **Akai Force** (screenshots taken from the MPC).*

Enter the '**MPC X-MPC Live-Akai Force Edition'** folder and inside you'll see a sub folder '**Sonkal'**– this is the folder we're going to transfer to your MPC X/MPC Live or Force.

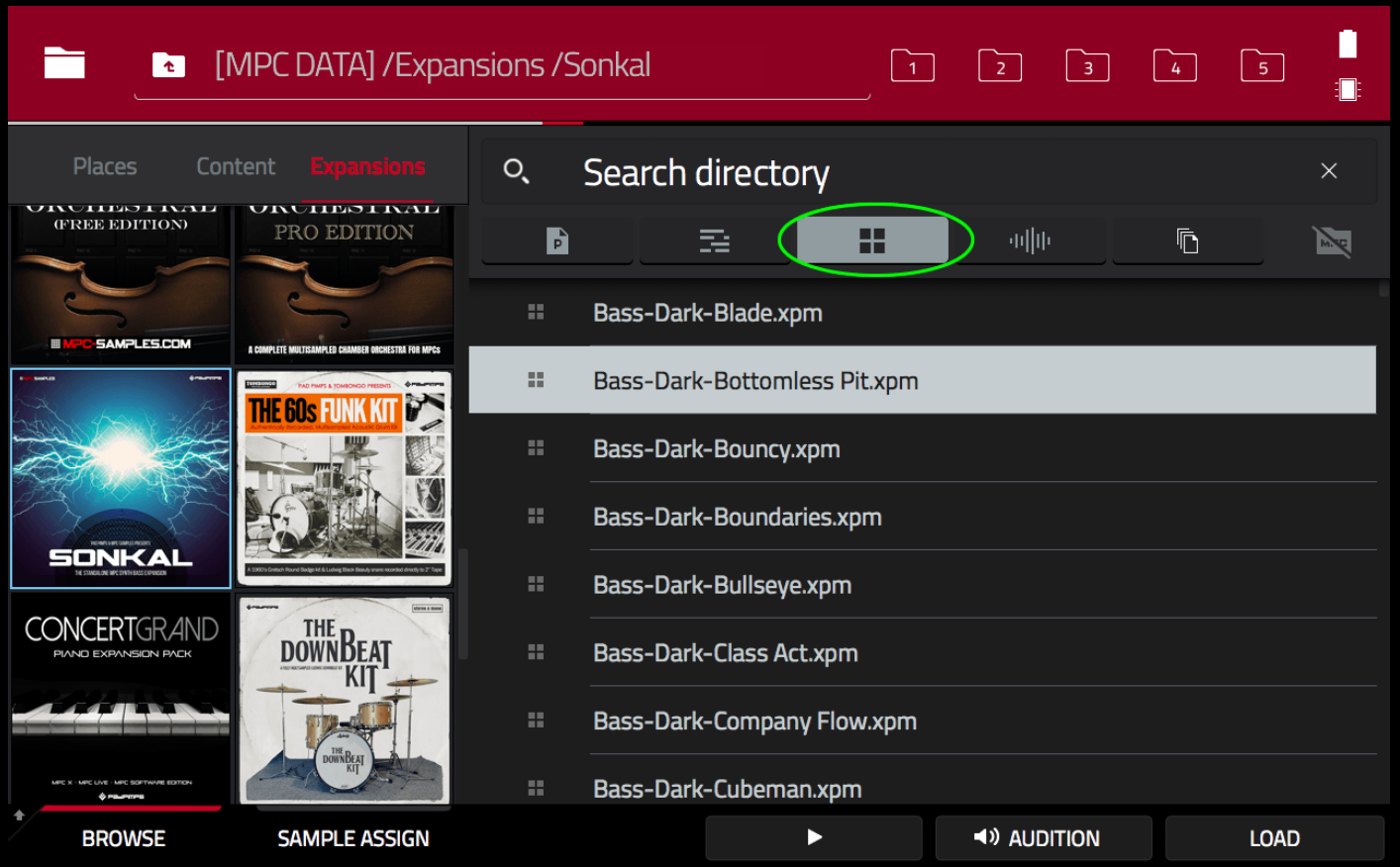


The factory-fitted internal drive on your MPC/Force is not externally accessible, so let's assume you have a USB drive called 'MPC DATA' connected to the USB port on your MPC Live/X/Force (you can also transfer to an SD card or internal SATA drive).

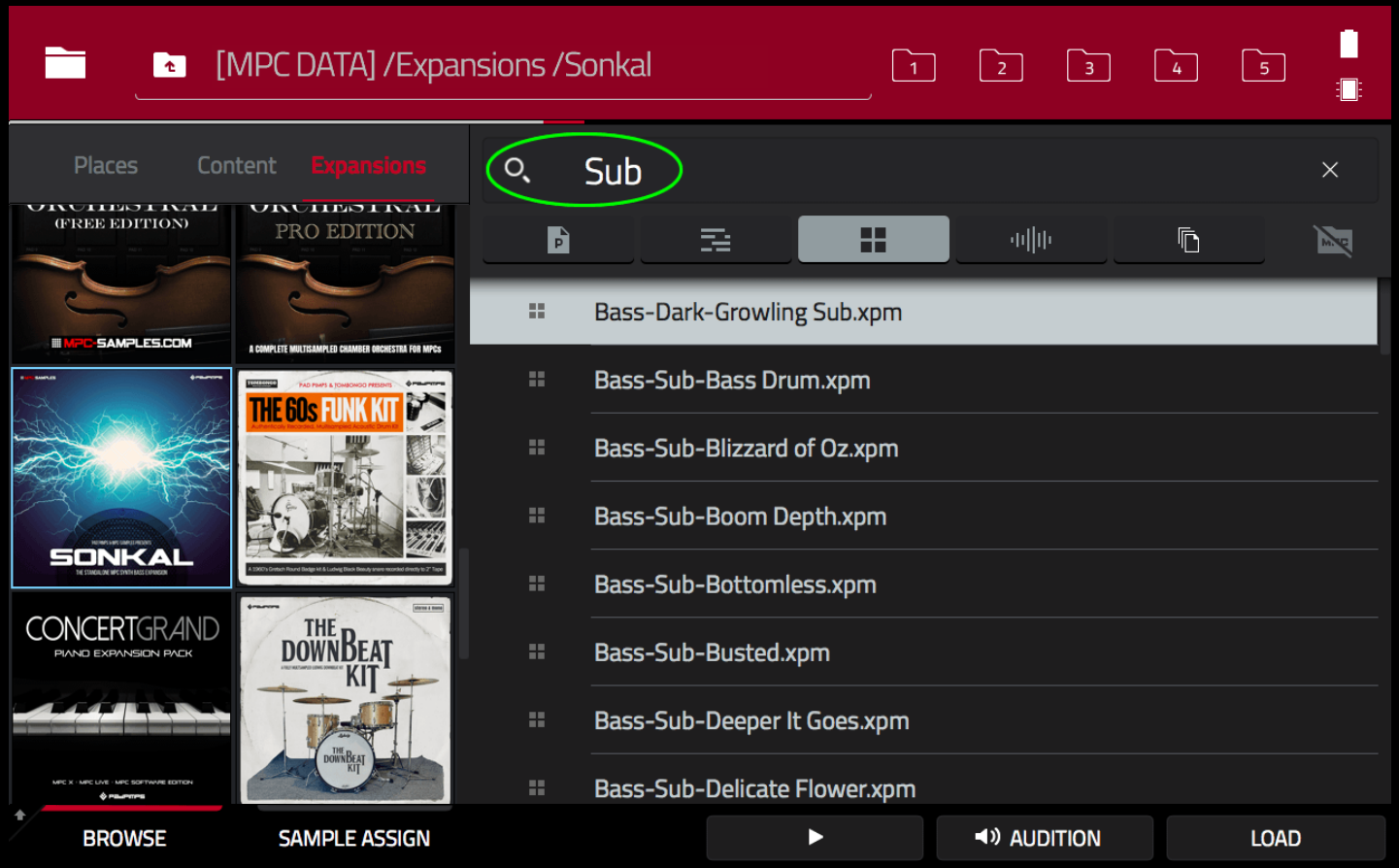
Connect your MPC or Force via USB to your computer and go to **MENU** and hit the '**MPC chip'** icon at the top of the screen (this is the '**Laptop**' icon in the Force); select **CONTROLLER MODE** ('**COMPUTER MODE**' in the Force). At this point, your USB disk will appear as a removable drive in your computer.

If it doesn't already exist, create a folder called '**Expansions'** in the root of your disk - now copy the '**Sonkal'** folder inside this 'Expansions' folder. You can now 'eject' the disk from your computer and in your MPC/Force return to 'Standalone' mode.

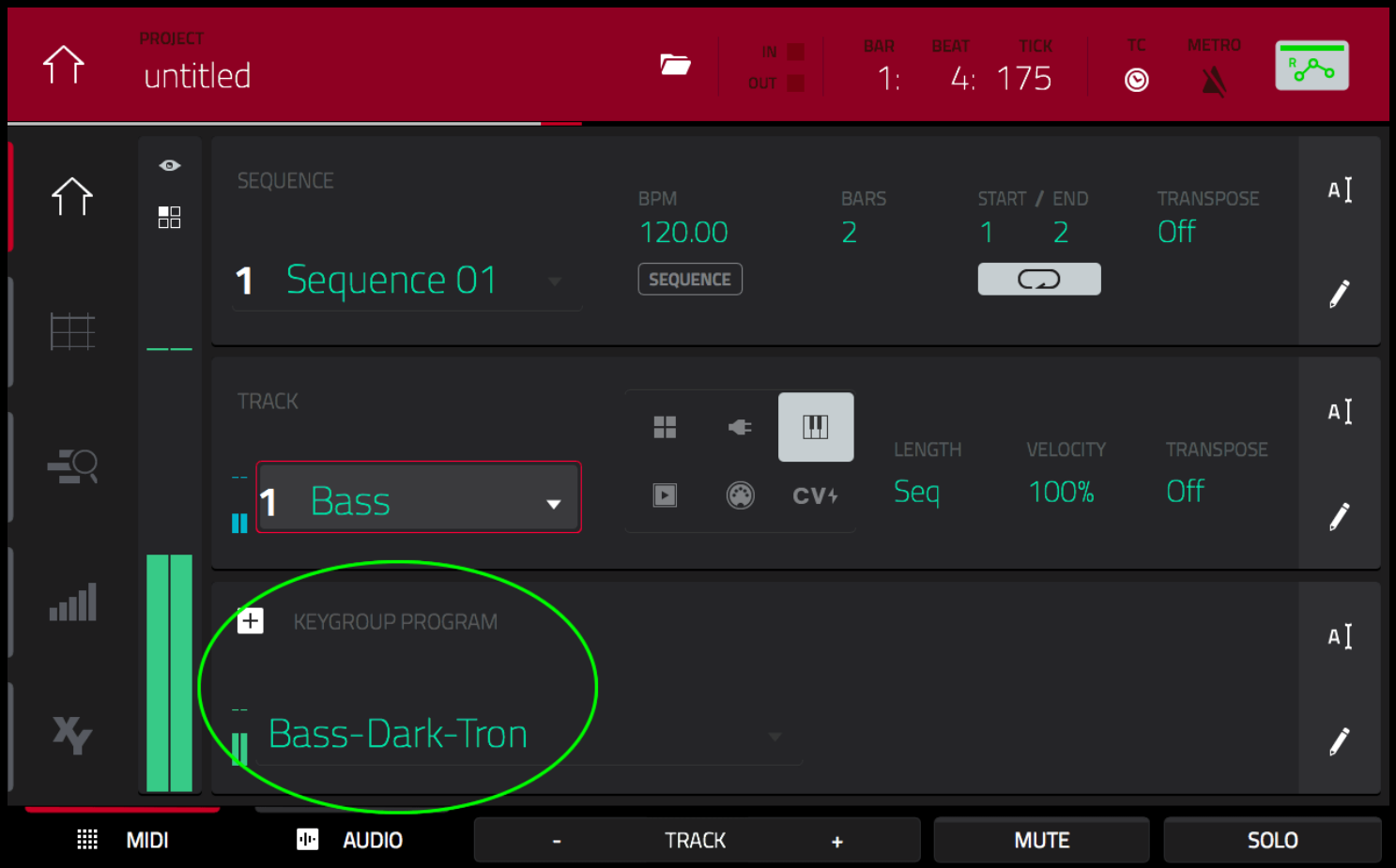
Make sure your disk is connected to your MPC/Force. Go to **MENU > BROWSER > Expansions** and tap on the **'Sonkal'** thumbnail to view the expansion. Select the **PROGRAM** filter to view all available instruments:



Each bass instrument is categorised by the type of bass sound, such as **'Sub'**, **'Low'**, **'Dark'**, **'Twisted'**, **'Simple'**, **'Squelch'**, **'Other'**. You can view a specific type of bass sound by entering the appropriate keyword in the 'Search' box. For example, to only view 'Sub' bass sounds, enter **'sub'** in the search box:



Single tap/click the program to hear a preview (requires '**AUDITION >AUTO**'). Double tap to load the instrument directly into the current sequencer track (this must be a '**KEYGROUP'** type track).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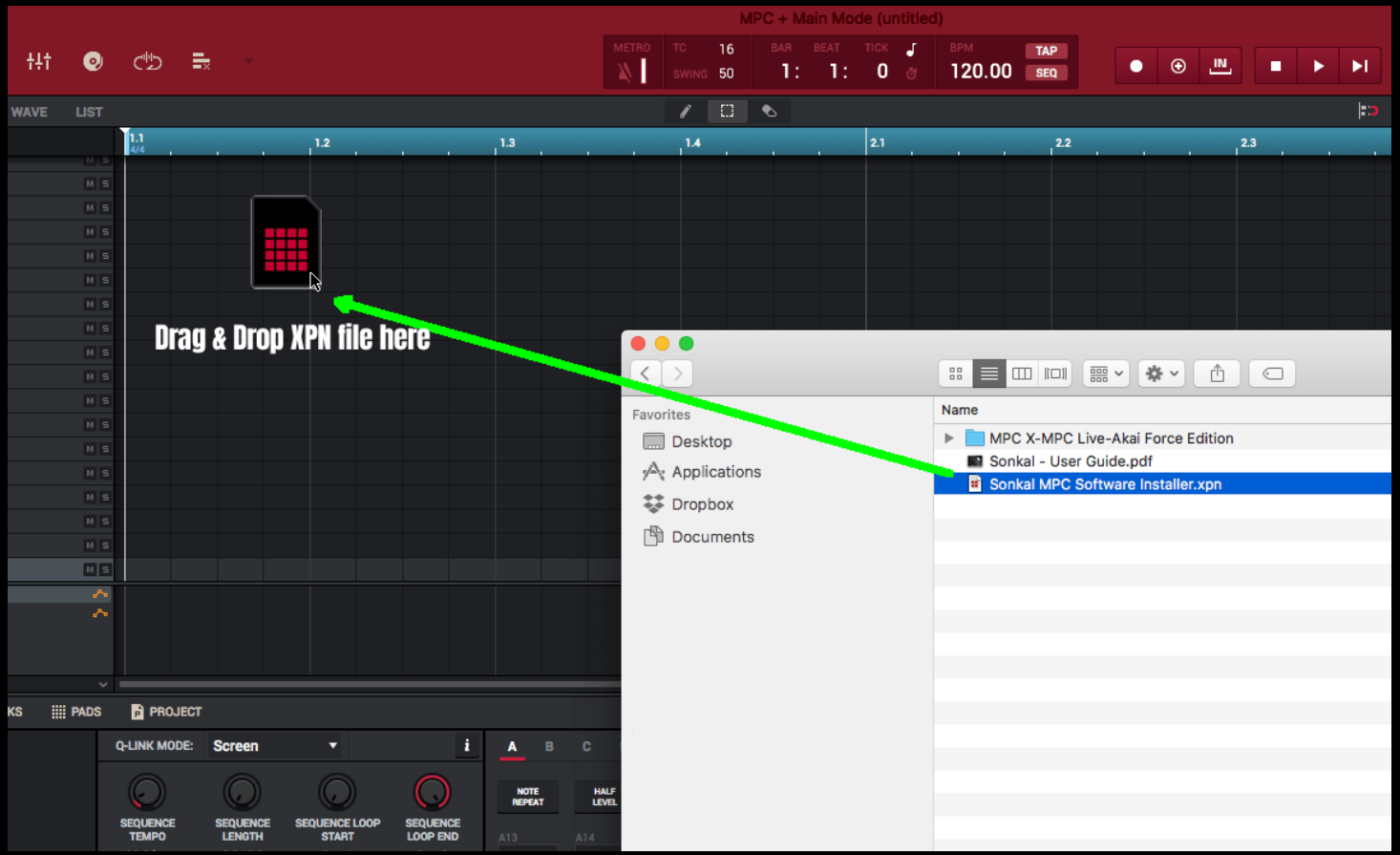
CV
KEYGROUP PROGRAM
Bass-Dark-Tron
MIDI
AUDIO
-
TRACK
+
MUTE
SOLO

Install: MPC Software Expansion Browser

Please note the following instructions use MPC Software 2 in all examples, but the install process is the same for MPC Software 1.9 (the UI just looks a little different)

Locate the '**Sonkal MPC Software Installer.XPN'** file and drag & drop it directly into the MPC Software UI from your computer's File Explorer/Finder:

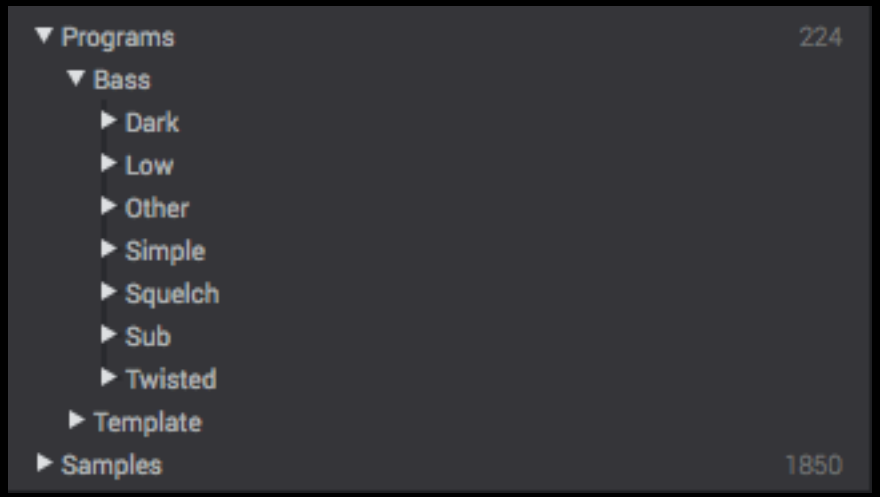


*Please note that an XPN file **cannot** be installed from the MPC Browser, nor can it be installed by double clicking*.

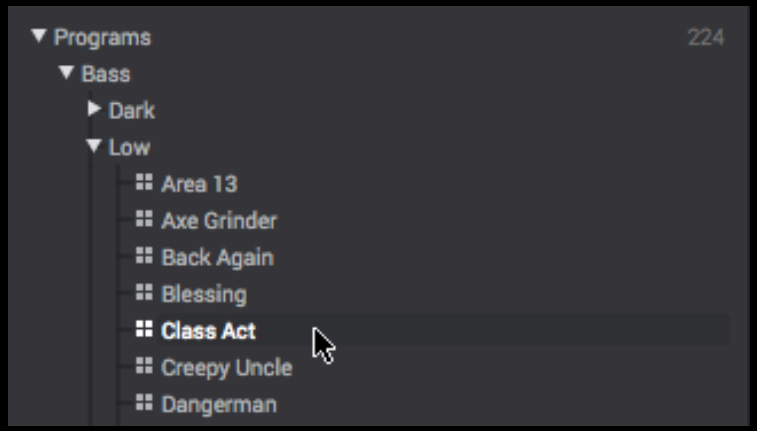
After dragging the XPN into the software UI you should see the following:

Select ‘**Import’** and once installed, open the **Expansion Browser** (shift & ‘E’ on your keyboard in MPC 1.9, ‘X’ on your keyboard in MPC 2.x) and click on the ‘**Sonkal’** thumbnail to view:

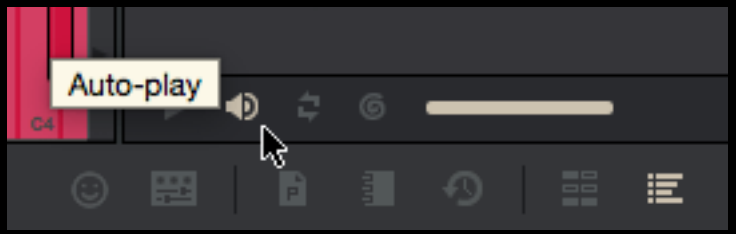
In the **MPC Software Expansion browser**, expand the '**Programs > Bass'** sub-category to reveal the different style groupings:



Click on a style to reveal all the instruments that have been tagged in that style:



Single click to hear the program preview - this requires ‘Autoplay’ enabled:



Double click a program to load it to the current ‘keygroup’ type track. Alternatively, drag the program directly into your project.

Please note: *Some programs share the same samples (i.e. oscillators & multisamples), so you sometimes might receive a message ‘Some samples already*

*Exist' in memory - you can safely select either '**Replace'** or '**Cancel'** – the program will load fine either way.*

Install: MPC Ren/MPC Studio

The MPC Studio and MPC Renaissance hardware (blue screen) browser does not have a dedicated expansion browser, so to browse any user expansions you've already installed in the MPC Software, hit the **BROWSER** button and navigate to the following location on your computer:

Mac: *User Folder > Library > Application Support > Akai > MPC > Expansions*
PC: *C:\ProgramData\Akai\MPC\Expansions*

This will show you a list of your installed expansions, which use Akai's unique naming system.

Sonkal is inside the **com.padpimps.sonkal** folder.

Unfortunately these folders might be hidden on some systems, so often a better alternative is to copy the provided '**MPC X-MPC Live Standalone'** edition of the expansion to any location on your computer (e.g. the location where you normally store your sound libraries) and simply access the program files within this folder instead (they are the exact same files that are used in the MPC Software version).

*Don't forget that you can configure a 'shortcut' to any location on your disk by navigating to that location in the BROWSER, hitting **SET (F5)** and assigning a folder number.*

MPC Expansion: What's Inside?

Sonkal is built using MPC 'keygroup' programs and uses two core sound generation techniques to create its bass sounds:

Subtractive Synthesis Programs

Pure **subtractive synthesis** programs are built using classic single cycle oscillators (e.g. sine, square, saw, triangle, noise, plus over 30 other unique oscillator

waveforms) which are then layered and modulated with the MPC's built in filters, LFO, envelopes & FX.

The advantage over pure multisampling is that these programs take up virtually no memory (only 2 or 3 kilobytes each) and by generating modulations directly within the MPC's own sampling engine we are able to produce powerful, evolving bass sounds which is generally difficult to reproduce using normal multisampling techniques.

Synth programs are coloured **blue**.

Multisampled Programs

Multisampled programs were made using traditional multisampling techniques, recorded from patches created in a variety of analog and digital synth, perfectly capturing their original, unique bass sounds. All looping was painstakingly performed manually, one sample at a time, to ensure perfect, seamless and click-free loops on every sample. There was absolutely no 'autosampling' here.

Where possible we've also added MPC modulation to these programs, such as velocity sensitive filtering and envelopes, as well as pitch bend and mod wheel

vibrato control. As you would expect from us, all multisample programs are highly optimised to ensure minimal memory footprint. Most programs are on average, a mere 3MB.

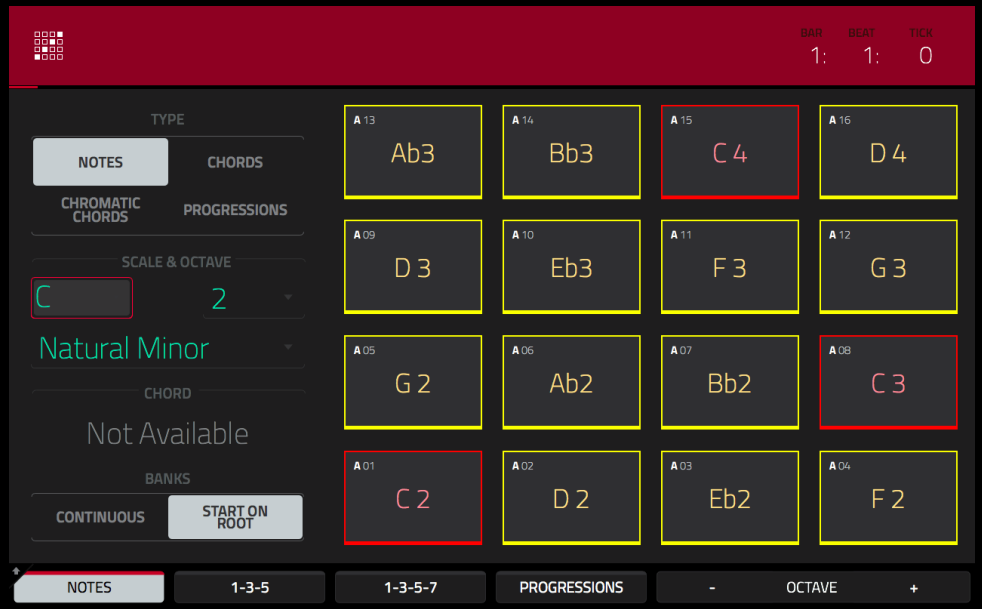
Standard multisample programs are coloured **torquoise**; we've also provided some 'layered' programs which mix multisamples from different patches, there are coloured **white**.

Playing the Instruments with MPC Pads

The MPC pads in a keygroup program cover the MIDI notes ‘C-2 to G8’, but you’ll typically find that the notes in pad bank A (and often bank B) are just too low to be usable so typically we’d recommend you select BANK C.

Additionally, all instruments are fully compatible with **Pad Perform Mode** which can configure your pads to only playback notes from specified scales, or can be used to trigger entire chords from each pad. With your instrument loaded, go to **Pad Perform Mode** :

MPC Live/X/Touch: **MODE > PAD PERFORM**, MPC Ren/Studio: **PAD ASSIGN**



MPC Ren/Studio: **PAD ASSIGN:**

Select BANK A, **NOTES** & under '**SCALE & OCTAVE'** select your preferred scale & musical key. The 16 pads will now only play back the notes in this specific scale. Red pads indicate the 'root' note in the scale.

We have incorporated velocity sensitive filters on many programs, so to take full advantage of these features we recommend that **FULL LEVEL** is set to '**off'**

Playing the Instruments with a MIDI Keyboard

Instruments can be played using an attached MIDI keyboard. For the **MPC X/Live** you can connect a USB keyboard via your MPC's USB port, a Bluetooth keyboard via **Preferences > Bluetooth**, or connect a keyboard via the 5 pin MIDI ports.

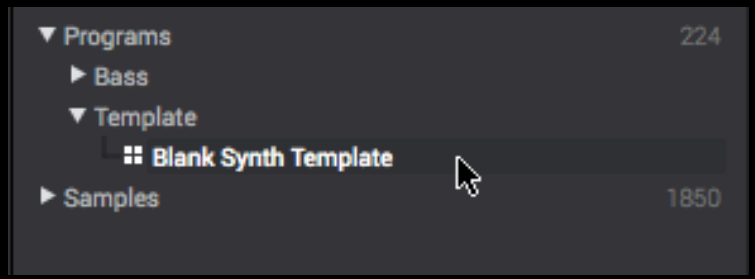
For **MPC Renaissance**/**Studio/Touch** you can connect the keyboard via a physical MIDI cable to the MPC MIDI 'in' port (a minijack-to-5 pin adapter is required for the Touch/Studio). Alternatively you can connect a USB MIDI keyboard to your computer and configure it as the active MIDI input via **Preferences > MIDI**.

Custom Subtractive Synth Programs

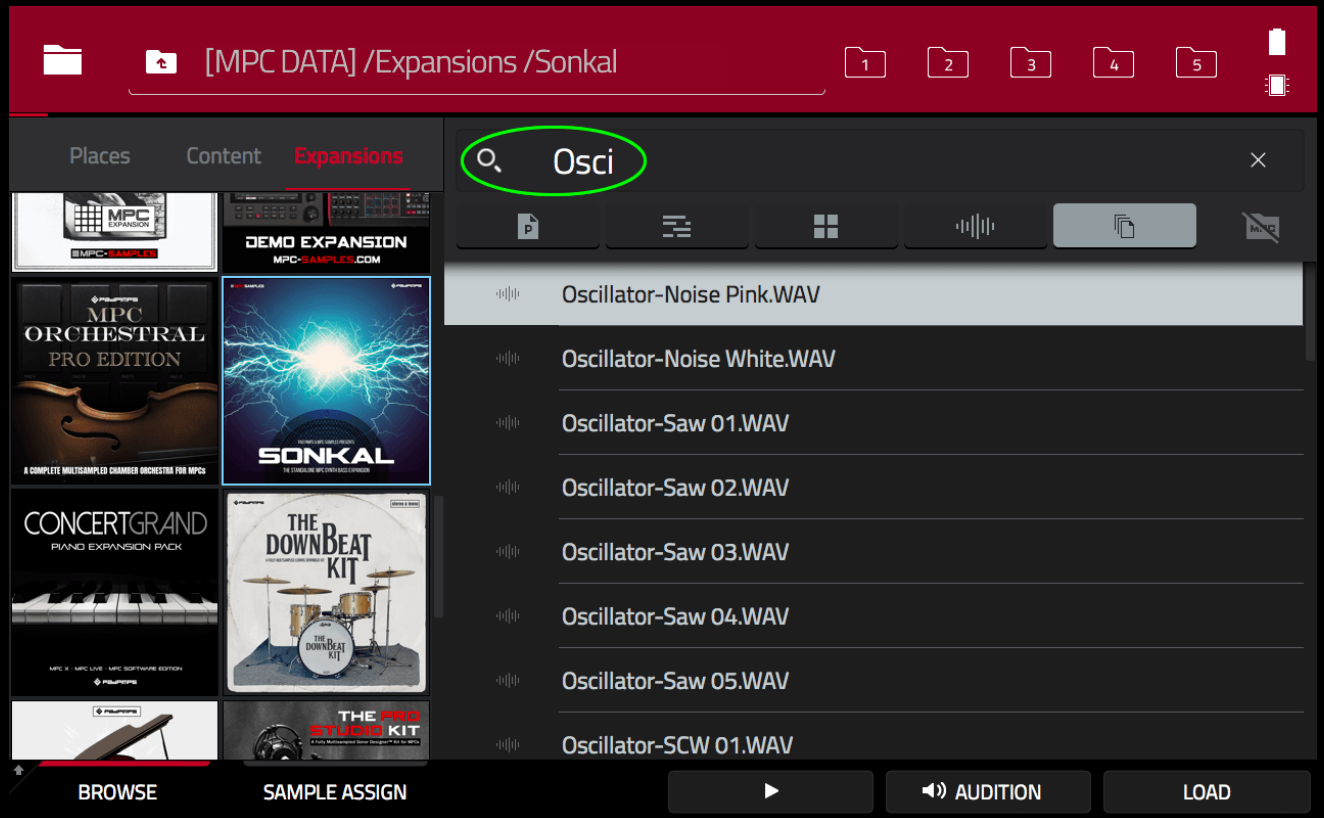
If you want to move beyond the preset sounds, you can build your own custom sounds using the provided '**Blank Synth Template**' program as your starting point. We outline the basic procedure below using the MPC X/Live, but the procedure is similar in the MPC Software - if you want to learn more about building keygroup programs and MPC synthesis techniques, the '**MPC Bible'** covers these in great depth:

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

In the hardware browser, search for the keyword '**template'**. In the MPC Software browser, you'll find the template in the '**Programs > Template'** group:



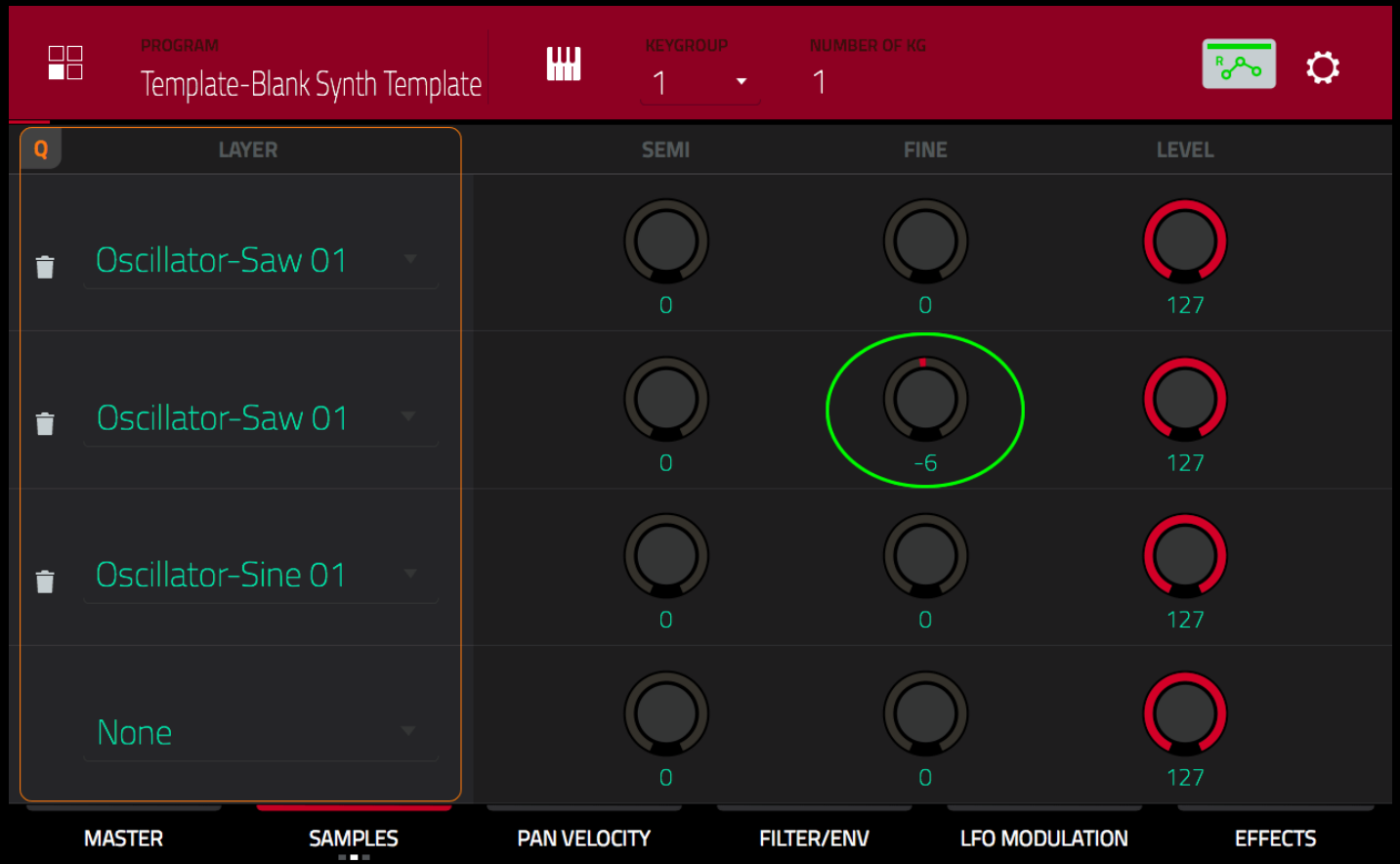
You can find the single cycle oscillators in the '**Samples > Oscillators'** group. In the hardware UI, search for '**oscil'**.



The Blank Synth Template is a keygroup program which contains a single keygroup. Load template and then load your chosen oscillator samples; I would suggest initially sticking to the 'classics', i.e. **Sine**, **Saw**, **Triangle**, **Square**.

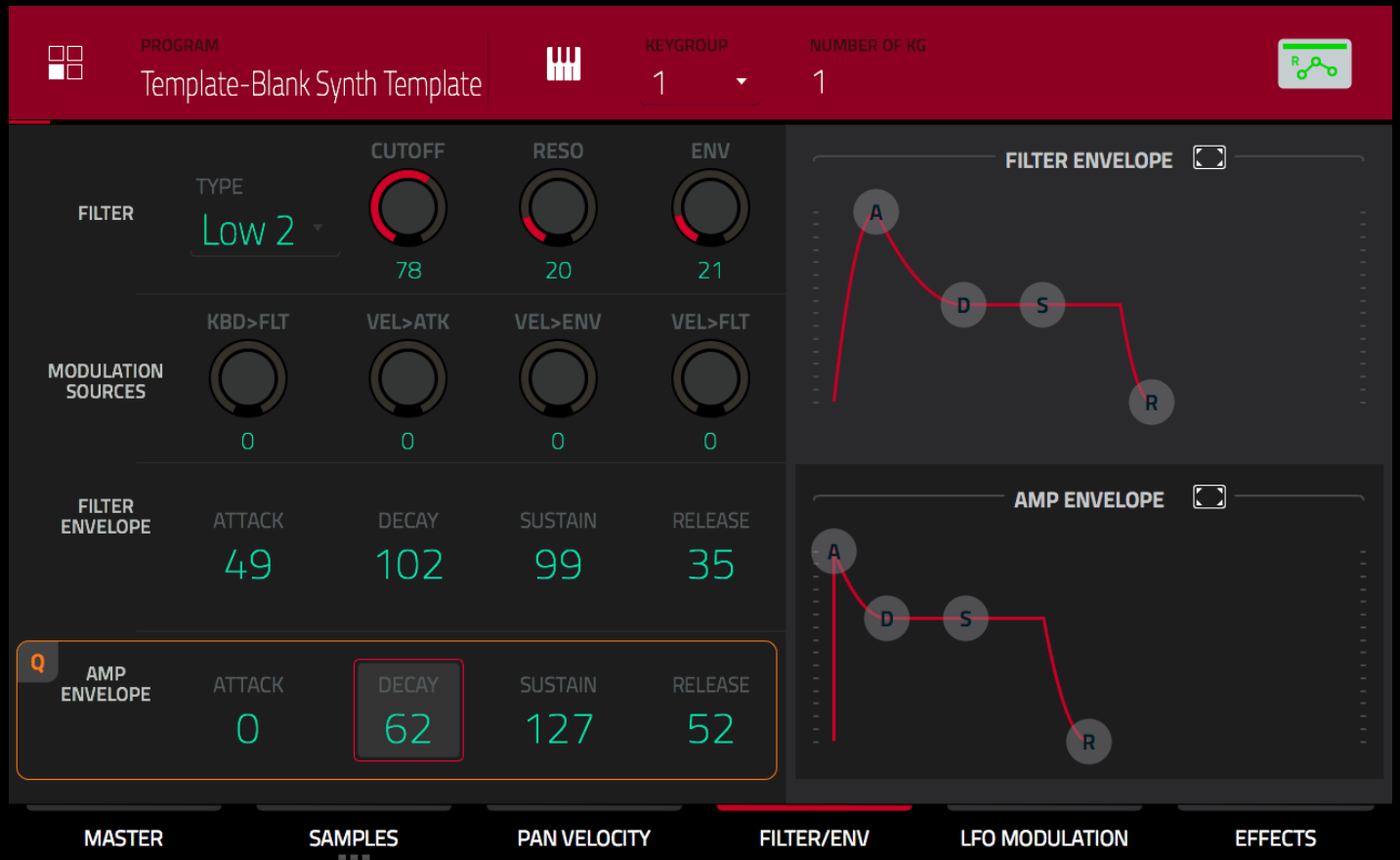
In the hardware UI, head over to '**PROGRAM EDIT > SAMPLES'** and add your chosen oscillators to the layers in keygroup 1. Adjust the LEVEL, TUNE (i.e. SEMI & FINE) accordingly. The second SAMPLES screen works well for all this.

Example: you could add the same Sawtooth wave to layers 1 and 2 and adjust the 'FINE' tune slightly on layer 2 to produce a nice fat phasing sound. Then add a sinewave to layer 3 to add more bottom end. Your SAMPLES screen could look something like this:

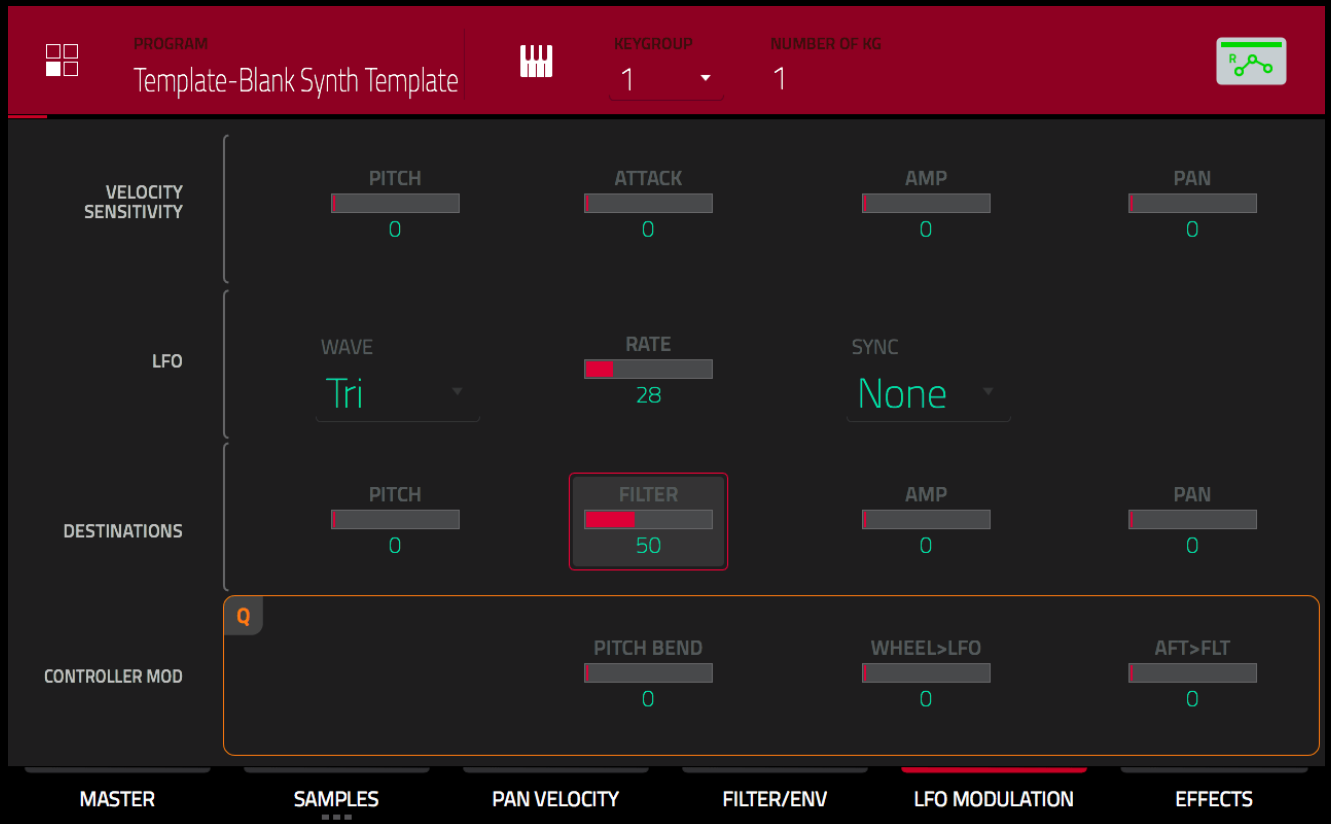


(Remember to reduce the overall LEVEL of your keygroup in 'PROGRAM EDIT > MASTER' to avoid clipping/distorting the output).

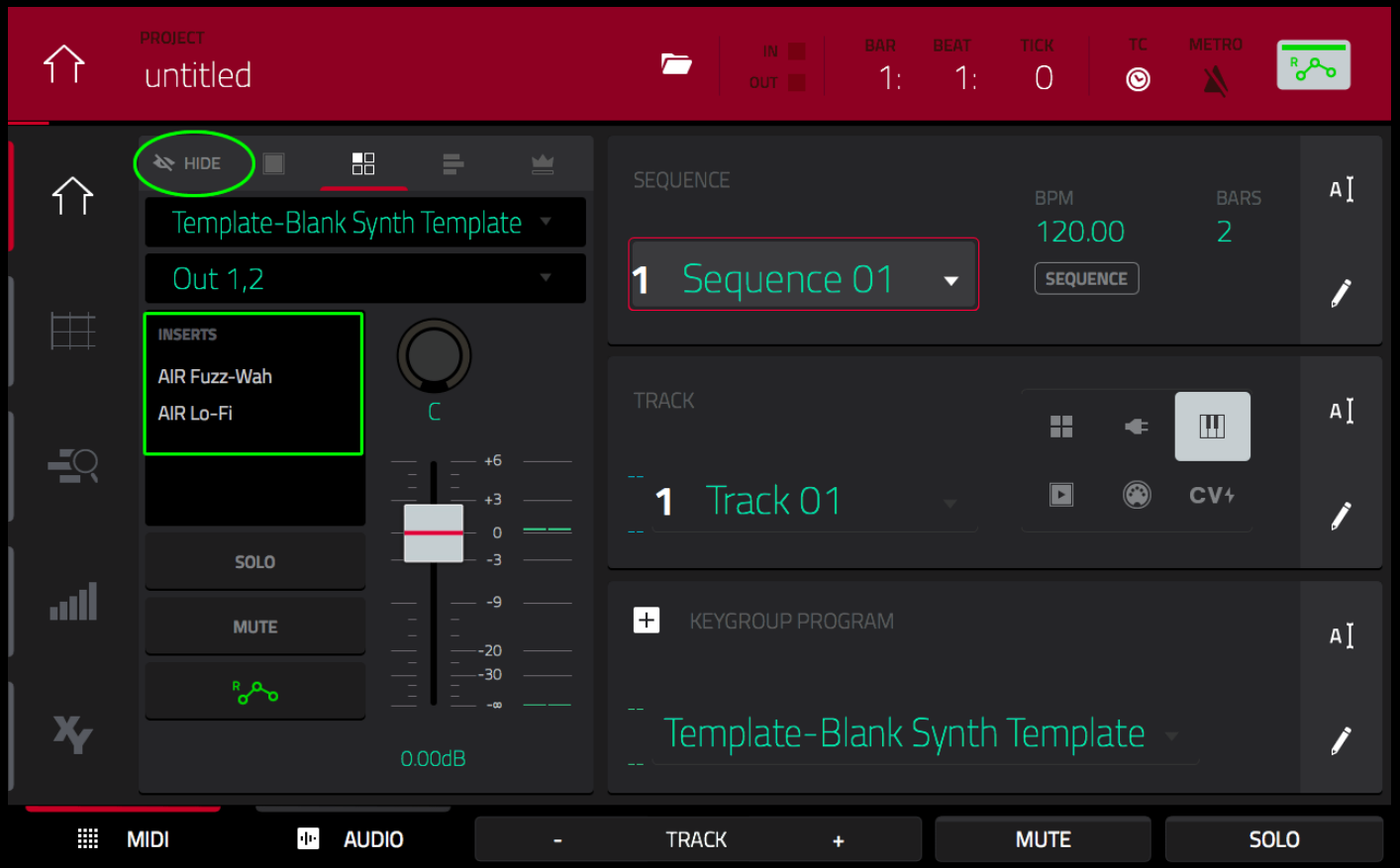
Now head over to **FILTER/ENV**. Shape your sound with the AMP ENVELOPE. Add a filter (e.g. LOW PASS 2) and adjust the CUTOFF and RESO until you get the sound you desire. You could then send some of the filter through the FILTER ENVELOPE.



Consider modulating an aspect of your sound via the LFO (**PROGRAM EDIT > LFO MODULATION**). Most typically you would modulate the FILTER, but you could try modulating PITCH as well. Adjust the RATE to see the rate of modulation.



Finally, you could add up to four insert effects across the entire program; a quick way to do this is via the ‘inspector’ **(MAIN > eyeball icon**).



Once you’ve sculpted your sound, give your program a unique name and save it.

In the MPC Bible you'll find chapters dedicated to building and working with keygroups along with tutorials covering the MPCs filters, LFO, envelopes and FX and all the other parameters that can be used to shape and manipulate sounds.

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

Troubleshooting

The XPN will not install in the MPC Software?
Make sure you drag the XPN file directly into the MPC Software's interface (for example, directly into the GRID).

Why do I get a message 'Samples already exist in memory?
Some programs in Sonkal share the same samples, for example synth programs share the same core sample oscillators, so if you have multiple Sonkal programs already loaded in your project you are likely to see this message appear when loading a new program. Simply hit 'Cancel' or 'Replace'; either one will load your new program without affecting the existing programs.

Further Resources

To learn more about creating your own MPC programs, sequences, sounds and expansions, please refer to MPC-Tutor's range of **MPC tutorial** books at:

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

Sonkal is part of our growing range of MPC instrument 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/73/0/mpc-instruments/