Question:

How do I customize sounds and patches in Tripleplay?

Answer:

You would use the Parameters panel. TriplePlay doesn't merely connect your guitar to software virtual instruments — it lets you specify how those instruments interpret your guitar performances. These controls reside in the TriplePlay Parameters panel, a field attached to the left side of each plug-in edit window. The controls let you fine-tune the response of your TriplePlay patches to suit your particular touch on the guitar. They also open the door to inspiring and creative sound design.

What You'll learn:

- Working with patch parameters
- Modifying a patch's "feel"
- Working with pitchbend
- Transposing patches
- Adding effects in Kontakt

Read Me First!

If you encounter a confusing term or concept, all TriplePlay controls and parameters are explained in the online User Guide for your product. This tutorial requires installation of the TriplePlay hardware, software and partner sounds from IK and NI. Please consult the user documentation at http://www.fishman.com/tripleplay for more information on these installations, if necessary.

Requirements

- Internet connection
- Installation of Fishman TriplePlay hardware and software
- Installation of IK Multimedia SampleTank 2.5 XT
- Installation of NI Komplete Elements

Let's get acquainted with the Parameter controls by modifying one of TriplePlay's factory patches. Click the folder icon to open the Patches tab, and then click the factory Harpsichord patch to load it.



figure 20

Close the Patches window. In the TriplePlay mixer, double-click the box reading "Kontakt 5" at the bottom of the Synth 1 channel.



figure 21

This opens the Plug-In Edit window. The controls in the main window pertain to Kontakt, a sampler plug-in that TriplePlay uses for many of its factory sounds, including this harpsichord patch. For now, focus on the TriplePlay Parameters panel attached to the left portion of the Plug-In Edit window.

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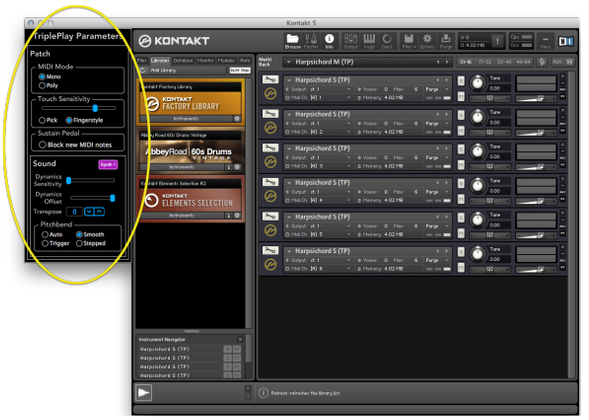


figure 22

The appearance of the main Plug-In window varies from virtual instrument to virtual instrument, but the Parameters tab remains the same (except in some special cases we'll look at later). Changing settings here doesn't change any settings within your virtual instrument — only the way TriplePlay "translates" your playing to the instrument.

Let's investigate the controls:

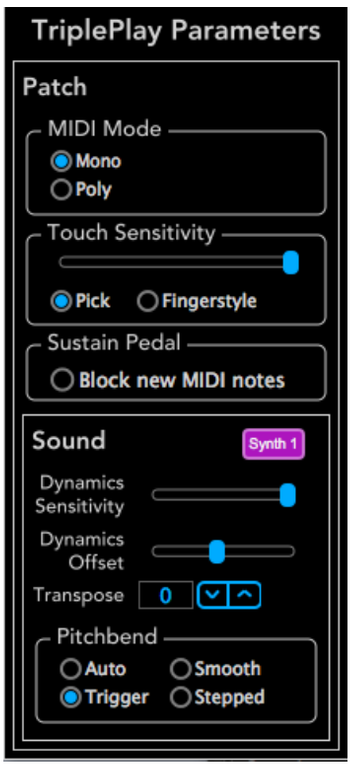


figure 23

The MIDI Mode setting determines whether TriplePlay transmits MIDI data from all six strings on a single channel (Poly mode), or whether each strings transmits on its own channel (Mono mode), as heard in this harpsichord patch. (We'll delve deeper into Mono and Poly modes in Tutorial Module #6.)

Even though TriplePlay lets you set your ideal touch sensitivity globally (see Calibrating TriplePlay in the online User Guide for more details), you can also set Touch Sensitivity on a patch-by-patch basis. For example, you might prefer a great deal of touch sensitivity to get maximum expression from a violin patch, but less sensitivity if you want to play drum sounds with every hit nice and loud. Take a moment to dial in the most comfortable settings for you. Does plucking some notes trigger unwanted sounds from adjacent strings? Lower the sensitivity. Are some of your quieter notes disappearing? Raise the sensitivity.

We'll look at sustain pedal settings in Tutorial Module #9

The Sound controls are particularly expressive, though they can be a bit tricky to understand at first. Let's unravel them.

The Dynamics Sensitivity slider determines how much dynamic range your sound has — that is, how much difference there is between your loudest and quietest notes. In MIDI, these levels are expressed on a scale of 0 to 127. At maximum sensitivity your loudest notes are close to 127 (absolute maximum volume) and your softest ones are close to 0 (silence). At minimum sensitivity, all notes are generated at the same medium volume of 64, regardless of whether you strike the strings loudly or softly.

Actual harpsichords have no dynamic sensitivity — notes have uniform volume no matter how forcefully the player strikes the keys. Move the Dynamics Sensitivity slider all the way to the left and play, noticing how your touch no longer has any effect on the sampler's volume. This is a more authentic harpsichord sound.

Meanwhile, the Dynamics Offset slider shifts the entire dynamic scale. Now that we've dialed in minimum Dynamics Sensitivity, every note you play has the same median volume of 64. But if you slide Dynamics Offset toward the left, every note has the same lower volume. If you move it all the way to the right, every note has the same maximum volume.

In this video, you hear a phrase played loudly and then quietly. Notice how different settings yield very different results:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I5Za-dwl_o

Return the sliders to their previous positions (or just reload the patch).

The Transpose settings let you raise or lower the overall tuning of your sound. Raise the number in the Transpose window to "12" by clicking the Transpose up arrow button. You'll hear that the harpsichord has shifted up an octave. This is a useful setting if you want to play a high-pitched phrase that lies outside the standard range of the guitar.

Now replace "12" with "-12" to shift the harpsichord down an octave relative to where we started. This is a good setting for creating bass sounds that lie below the guitar's standard range.

The Pitchbend control helps TriplePlay interpret such guitar techniques as string-bends, slides, hammer-ons, and pull-offs. This patch's default setting of Trigger mimics a harpsichord, which can't produce any of the aforementioned guitar techniques. Pluck a single note and then try bending it, blues-style. You'll hear the bent notes as if they were struck anew, and you won't hear any of the pitches that "fall between the cracks" of the adjacent harpsichord keys. This is usually the setting you want when mimicking traditional keyboard instruments.

Change the setting to Smooth and play the same bend. Now TriplePlay follows your pitch, even if you're out of tune, and the bent notes are quieter than the picked notes, much as if they'd been performed on guitar.

The Stepped setting is similar, expect you don't hear any "between the cracks" notes. TriplePlay rounds off all notes to the nearest half-step.

Finally, the Auto setting is a "smart" version of the Stepped setting. Here small discrepancies in pitch are not reproduced, but larger ones — such as deliberate string bends — are.

This video features a single pitch bend (from G to A on the second) string, performed with each of the four Pitchbend settings.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtFQGUG4TdM

(Be aware that settings you make in the Parameters tab merely shape the MIDI info you send to you virtual instruments, but they can't override settings within the instruments themselves. If you attempt any of the edits demonstrated here on another patch and don't get the results you expect, you probably need to make adjustments within the virtual instrument. Consult the instrument's documentation for help.)

These controls not only let you evoke other instruments with maximum realism — they can also help you create new sounds. As an example, let's develop that idea of a low-pitched harpsichord sound as a bass patch. With the Harpsichord patch still loaded, dial in these parameter settings:

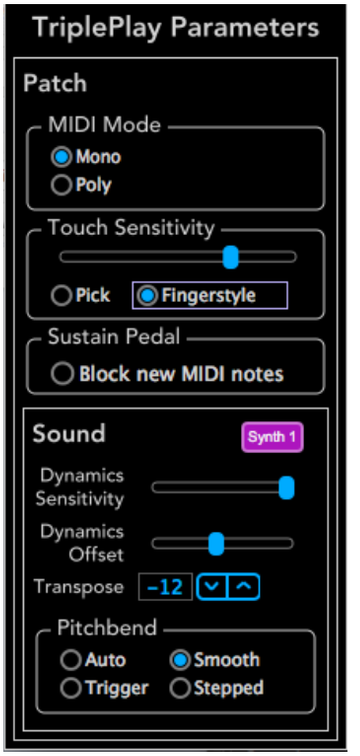


figure 24

Now we have an unconventional bass tone with the crisp attack of a harpsichord. But unlike a harpsichord, this edited patch has great dynamic sensitivity, and it tracks your fretboard pitch as if you were playing a stringed instrument.

Now let's "go under the hood" in Kontakt to see some of the ways you can alter sounds within a plug-in.

Check out the right portion of the Kontakt plug-in screen. It's a virtual rack containing six copies of the Harpsichord sound, one per each channel/string. (That's because, as previously mentioned, this is a Mono patch, with each string transmitting monophonically on its own channel.)

Now click the Output button near the center-top of the plug-in window. A little mixer appears at the bottom of the Kontakt "rack."



figure 25

This works like the mixers in any DAW. Let's customize this Harpsichord bass sound by adding some plug-ins to the leftmost channel strip, which controls the master output for this patch. Click-hold the top insert slot in the channel strip. From the pull-down menu that appears, select Effects, and then Rotator. This adds a rotating speaker effect that sounds interesting on this bass patch.



figure 26

Now let's rough it up a little. Click-hold on the second insert slot, and choose Effects, and then Tape Saturator.



figure 27

Double-click the second slot where you've just added Tape Saturator (signified by the letters "tp"). This makes the tape saturation controls appear above the output faders.



figure 28

Adjust the Gain, Warmth, and HF Rolloff controls to taste. Set the overall volume with the Output control.

Here's a video showing the steps described above:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E77DLqdVD0A

Whether or not you like this particular sound, you're probably getting a sense of just how easily a factory preset can generate intriguing new sounds.

Ready to go a bit deeper? Check out Tutorial Module #5 for more tools to customize your Sounds.