Question:

How do I create music notation and scores with TriplePlay?

Answer:

TriplePlay is a MIDI controller which can create notation within any popular composition software allowing MIDI input devices. Your provided software bundle includes a powerful program called Progression, which we'll discuss in this tutorial. As with other partner software, the features are extremely detailed, and the tutorial below only scratches the surface of what Progression can do. We encourage you to read the manufacturer's support materials for the program to get the most from its many features.

What you'll learn about:

- How guitarists can use music notation software
- Setting up Progression for use with TriplePlay
- Using Progression to notate your music
- Some helpful Progression tools and controls

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

Many modern composers notate music by connecting a MIDI keyboard to their favorite music notation software. With TriplePlay, guitarists can also notate music simply by playing their instrument. TriplePlay even comes bundled with Notion Music's Progression, a powerful notation program with lots of great features for guitarists.

By combining TriplePlay with notation software like Progression, music teachers can quickly prepare lessons. Composers can capture, edit, and circulate their music. Progression also supports guitar tablature ("tab" for short), the alternate notion system of numbers and lines favored by many guitarists.

(Just one caution: Music notation is as much an art as a science. Sometimes notation only approximates what is to be played, and musical performances often include details that don't appear in the score. Even under optimal conditions — say, a great player performing a composition flawlessly on a perfectly operating system — it's usually necessary to "clean up" the notation post-performance. That means that if you're not a music reader, chances are you can't just play music into notation software, share the unedited results, and expect other musicians to reproduce your performance. This isn't a reflection on anyone's musicianship, on TriplePlay, or on your notation software —only on the quirks of traditional music notation.)

Whether you work with music, tab, or both, inputting notes via TriplePlay can be a huge timesaver. It can also dramatically improve your reading and notation skills.

So let's fire up Progression. Open Progression from the Applications folder (Mac) or Start Menu (Windows). From the Progression menu, select Preferences. Click the Audio tab and verify that your preferred audio device is selected.

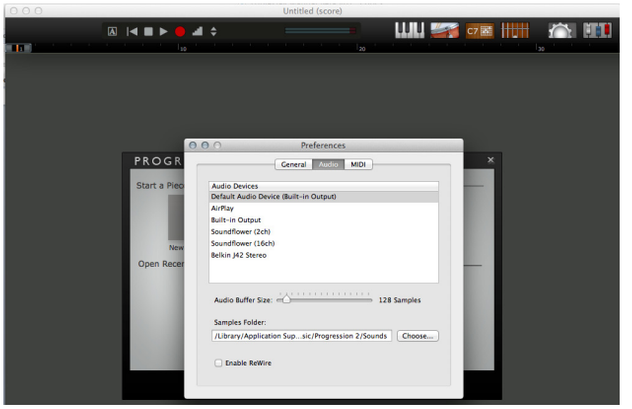


figure 62

You can also set the audio buffer size for less latency (as explained in Tutorial Module #7 when we set the buffer for Studio One 2).

Next, click the MIDI tab and set the input port to Fishman TriplePlay TP Guitar.

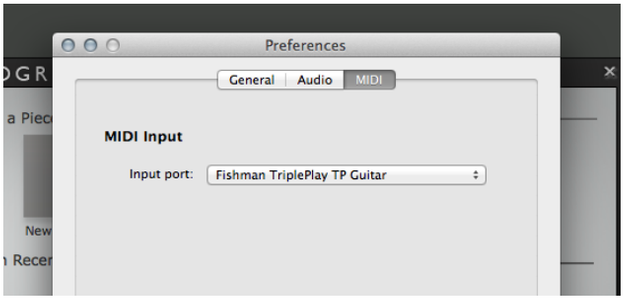


figure 63

(If you don't see this option, review the audio hardware setup procedure in TriplePlay's online User Guide.)

Close the Preferences window. Under Start a Piece, select New Score. (You could also work from one of the included score templates, but for now let's start from scratch.)

Drag your cursor over the instrument category names at the lower right and look at the instrument pop-ups that appear. These are the sampled sounds available in Progression — simple virtual instruments that provide audio feedback while inputting and editing your score. (Instrument sounds in italics are available from Notion Music as paid upgrades.)

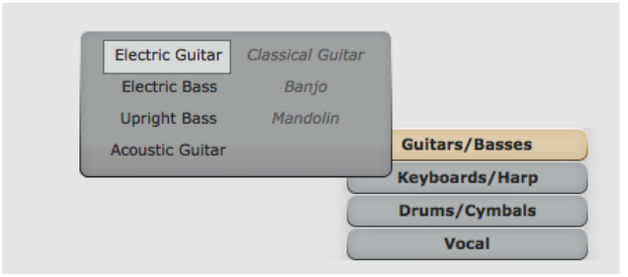


figure 64

When we work with Progression, we're bypassing the TriplePlay software and relying on Progression's built-in sounds. These compact sound libraries aren't intended for performance. They're simply a sonic sketchbook to help you capture and refine your ideas. (In more full-featured notation programs such as Sibelius, Finale, and Progression's big brother, Notion, you have access to large suites of pop and orchestral sounds. Here the focus is guitars and basic rock band instrumentation.)

Hover over the Guitars/Basses category and select Electric Guitar. This creates a new score for solo electric guitar, including both standard notation and tab. Click the gear icon in the upper-right corner of the Progression interface to exit setup mode. (You can always click it again to modify your setup.)

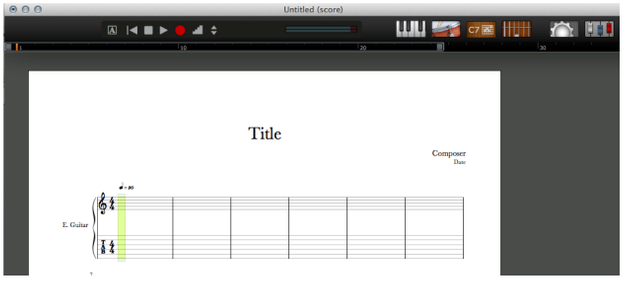


figure 65

Now you should hear Progression's electric guitar sample while you play.

Click the red Record button at the top of the interface. Rather than recording immediately, Progression opens a window were you can set various recording parameters. Leave these at their defaults for now, and click Start Recording (or just press your spacebar).

The metronome clicks a one-bar count-off, and then you're recording. When you've finished, press the spacebar again to stop.

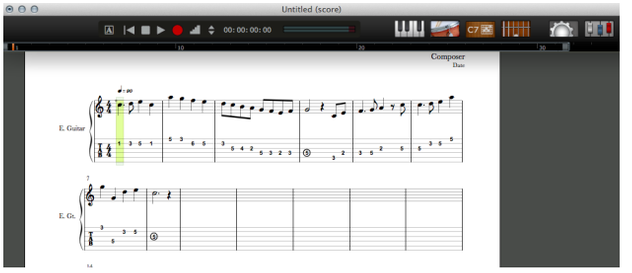


figure 66

Here's a video demonstrating the steps so far:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LXb446CbYM

We can't cover every aspect of Progression here — you'll need to consult Notion Music's documentation to get the most from this program. But let's highlight a few key functions that you may find useful as you get started.

- Much of what you see onscreen is directly editable. To enter a title for your score, double-click the title area. To enter a composer name or composition date, double-clock those fields. The tempo indication appears above the first bar of your score. The default tempo is 90 BPM (as heard in the video above). To set a different tempo, double-click the number and type in a new value.

- The secondary gear icon to the left of your score opens a window that lets you set preferences for current score. Here you can name your instrument, change the sound, set a transposition, and specify whether your score includes notation, tab, or both. You can even create alternate-tuning tablature by replacing the default string pitches.

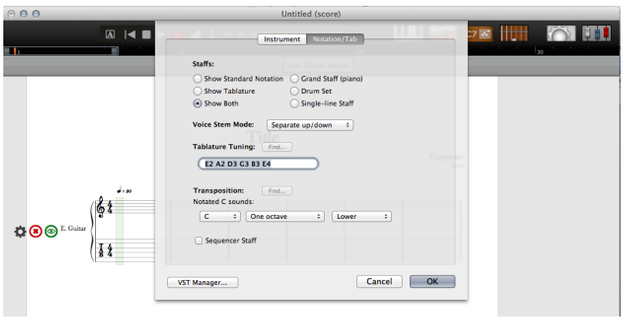


figure 67

- The recording options are particularly crucial for creating an accurate score. The video above used Progression's preset guitar values, which are always available via the preset pull-down at the bottom of this screen:

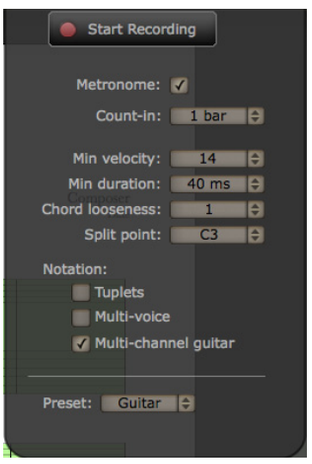


figure 68

But these values aren't the best ones for every guitar performance. The Chord Looseness parameter helps Progression determine whether notes that overlap slightly should be reflected that way in the notation. For chordal parts, enter a high value. For single-note parts, where overlapping notes are likely to be merely incidental, enter a low value.

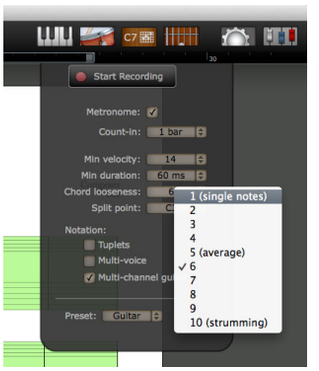


figure 69

- Also be aware of the Min. Velocity and Min. Duration values. At low settings, Progression will record everything you play. At slightly higher settings, the program filters out the very short or very quiet notes that you might not be producing deliberately. Different types of parts benefit from different settings.

- Like TriplePlay, Progression features a virtual fretboard that mirrors your performance as you play. To display it, click the fret icon next to the gear at the upper-right of the main screen. You can also use it the virtual fretboard to enter notes into your score.

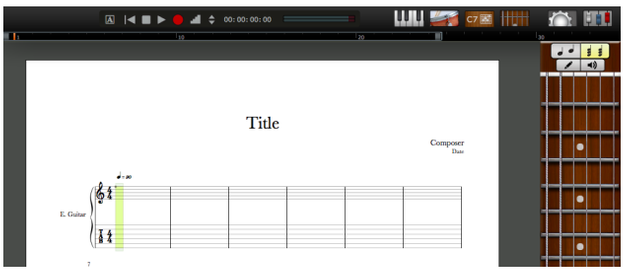


figure 70

- For most editing tasks you use Progression's tool palette, which resides at the bottom of the screen. (If it's not displayed, click-hold on the Window menu and select Show Palette.) The tools are organized by type.
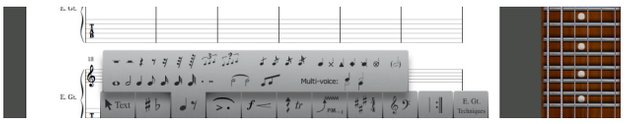


figure 71

- You can alter how your score sounds on playback using Progression's mixer. (To reveal it, click-hold the Window menu and select Show Mixer.) It works similarly to the mixers in most DAW software, allowing you to balance levels, set panning positions, and add realtime plug-in effects.



figure 72

There's even an amp simulator offering a choice of amp sounds plus gain and tone controls.



figure 73

- Progression also lets you include chord diagrams in your scores. To access these tools, click the C7 symbol near the upper-right of the main window.

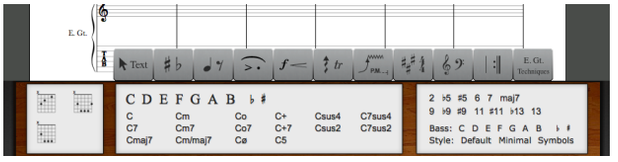


figure 74