XPression - Tips & Tricks

- Expert Mode - Getting access to all [Edit] parameters

To make sure that you can access all needed parameters mentioned in the following Tips & Tricks you'll have to have "Expert Mode" in the [**Global**] menu switched on.

- Using the preset buttons on the remote unit

Press and hold one of the four soft key to store the current preset to this button while on the main display page. Press it shortly to recall the preset later.

The footswitches 3-6 are working the same way by default unless they are assigned to different CC messages than the default CC 106 - 109.

- Mapping a CC message that is not available from your keyboard / windcontroller

Let's assume you want to control growl (CC80) from your instrument but this CC massage cannot be sent from you controller. There are two possibilities to change MIDI controller messages within XPression.

1) Globally in [**Utility**]. This will change a specified CC message to another controller number and will stay assigned for all presets. E.g. the Casio DH-100 sends Portamento as CC 65. XPression needs CC 5 to control Portamento.

Go to [**Utility**] "Set MIDI Control Remap" and select as the source CC 65 and as a destination CC 5.

Make sure "Global MIDI Controller Remapping" is activated. See manual page 28.

2) You can map individual CC messages per preset in [**Edit**] mode. This allows several messages to be remapped while even changing the range of the controllers or reversing them. Every preset can have its own remapping.

Please check the manual page 12 for further details.

☺ *Hint: use this to reassign the functions of your footswitches / pedals for each preset individually.*

- Setting up layers of multiple instruments

There are two ways to set up layers in XPression:

1) using the keysplit function for dual sounds. These can be monophonic or polyphonic.

Please read page 17 of the owner's manual about keysplits.

2) using the Chord-Mapper. The Chord-Mapper layers are always monophonic.

When using the Chord-Mapper to create layers with more that two instruments the best way to go about it is to use an existing multi sound preset. The presets 101 – 125 of the banks 2 or 3 will give you a good starting point.

The pages 17 -19 of the owner's manual will give you more information on how to tweak the individual parameters.

You should be aware of the fact that the overall volume is only controlled by the mix setting of the Chord-Mapper and not the "Volume Settings".

To double one single instrument as a stereo version you can use the "Doubling" feature in [**Edit**] mode as described on page 14 of the manual.

- Using Program Maps

Program Maps can assign presets quickly to incoming MIDI program changes so you can reorganize the numbering without having to move presets around.

E.g. assign:

MIDI PrgCh 01 = 65 Trumpet
MIDI PrgCh 02 = 81 Trombone
MIDI PrgCh 03 = 46 Alto Sanborn
MIDI PrgCh 04 = 62 Bari Sax Dirty

So you only need to send midi PrgCh 1-4 from your keyboard or windcontroller to access your favorite patches instead of moving around all over the preset bank or having to copy them to different locations.

Program Maps assign internal preset numbers of the current bank to midi program changes being received from an external midi controller or being generated with XPression's joystick. There are 9 program maps available.

In order for the program mapping to function a program map has to be assigned to the current MIDI channel:

Go to [**Global**] and set in "Program Number Mapping" channel one to any desired user map. "no map" will turn this function off.

It is necessary to separate two different numbering systems:

1) External MIDI program changes are the numbers which are received from the external MIDI controller that you are playing. E.g. by pressing the program button "XX" on your keyboard.

*These program changes can also be created by using XPressions joystick up / down to alter the number. The display will be flashing if the number is different than the current active program number to signal that you have to confirm the program change with [**OK**]. When reselecting the active number the flashing will stop because the number is identical. Pressing [**Escape**] also returns to the active program number and the flashing will stop.*

The current MIDI program number is shown on the left side of the bottom line in the display.

2) Internal preset numbering. This is the order in which the presets are stored within a sound bank.

These presets can be selected with the dial on the right side of the remote.
Notice that the current MIDI program number is not changing while selecting different presets.
*These presets are effective immediately without having to use [**OK**] to confirm.*

Assigning internal presets to external program changes:

It is possible to assign the current internal preset – selected with the dial – to the last selected midi program change number (shown on the bottom line – left) by simply pressing the dial shortly

The next time you select this midi program change the internal preset you just assigned will be recalled.

☺ *Hint: CC 87 (program up) and CC 86 (program down) can also be used to select MIDI program changes. Connect one or two footswitch(es) to the remote unit and assign it (them) to these CC messages.*

The Program Map tables can also be edited manually by going to [**Global**] "Program Number Mapping". Press Edit twice (or once plus [**OK**]) to enter the editor.

The left parameter shows the MIDI program number. This value can also be set by an external MIDI program change without having to take the cursor there.

On the right side you see the preset currently assigned to this MIDI program change. Changing an assignment needs confirmation with [**OK**]. Otherwise the change will be ignored. Soft key 4 takes you back to the program map selection.

Resetting Program Maps:

To reset or copy an entire Program Map go to [**Global**] "Copy Program Map". Select a source and destination map and confirm with [**OK**]. The map "Reset" cannot be changed and initializes the destination map.

Attention (!): *Sending MIDI program changes to the MIDI input while selecting programs with the joystick can lead to unexpected behaviour! Execute "Reset" by pressing and holding the joystick for 4 seconds in such a case. In some cases you might have to edit the map manually or reset it.*

- Setting up Program Maps for Playing "Blues Chord Progressions" with the Chord-Mapper

You can use Program Maps to organize presets that need to be recalled in a certain order for a particular song. Then you only need to use the "program up" footswitch in order to step through the above mentioned presets in the exact order that they were assigned.

The Brass-Blues demo on the DynaSample website was played like this. The chords were mapped in the order that they had to be played. The "program up" footswitch (CC87 = footswitch 2) was used to step through the changes / presets. After the changes of the blues were over the tenor sax preset was set up to the next higher preset number.
When the tenor solo was over I stepped onto the first footswitch which brought me back to program number 01 - the "Rock'n'Roll I" preset.

The Rock'n'Roll I, IV, V presets (77-79) in the ["demo" user bank 1] were mapped like this:

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||: 77 | 78 | 77 |    | 78 |    | 77 |    | 79 | 78 | 77 | 79 :||
     C    F    C         F         C         G    F    C    G
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MIDI PrgCh 01 = preset 77   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 02 = preset 78   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 03 = preset 77   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 04 = preset 78   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 05 = preset 77   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 06 = preset 79   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 07 = preset 78   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 08 = preset 77   "pgm up" *(-> next program number) - footswitch 2*
MIDI PrgCh 09 = preset 79   go back to "ProgCh 01" - *footswitch 1*
(repeat ...)

                or continue to TenSax ("pgm up") – *footswitch 2*

MIDI PrgCh 10 = preset 18 ("KindaMellow-Dirty)   go back to "ProgCh 01" - *footswitch 1*
(repeat from the beginning...)

Only two footswitches are needed - the first one to set the starting preset / beginning and the second one to advance through the changes in the correct order. No searching for footswitches while playing!

In order to need only one footswitch during playing the last preset of the chain could be copied and footswitch 1 (CC 106) could be mapped to the incoming footswitch 2 (CC 107).

In this demo I even changed to the sax and the brass section back and forth while holding notes. There is no need for different recording tracks or stopping when changing instruments.

This entire procedure takes only 30 seconds to set up once you know how to do it.
When pre-assigning the changes to a different Program-Map you can select it within 5 seconds by going to [**Global**] and activating this alternative prepared map – [**OK**] – Done!

You can set up different songs to start at different preset numbers. E.g. Song_1 is starting at PgmCh 01, Song_2 is starting at PgmCh 11, etc. This way you can cram several songs into one Program Map (the number is depending on the complexity of the chord changes).

- Using footswitches to transpose the entire instrument

You can assign CC 74 to one of the footswitches either in [**Utility**] or by reassigning a CC number per patch in [**Edit**] mode. Then press and hold the footswitch and play a note relative to middle C (MIDI note 60). Release the footswitch and XPression will transpose to this interval.

Alternatively you can set the transposition in [**Global**] Transpose as described on page 24 of the manual.

- Using footswitches to change the key of the Chord-Mapper

If you are using the Chord-Mapper in octave mode you will notice that the presets are only playable in one key (usually C). If you need to play in a different key you have two options:

1) use transpose as described above. This will make the notes sound in the key that you are transposing to but you still need to finger everything in the key of C.

2) use the "Chord-Mapper Key Offset" that works the same as transpose but let's you finger the notes in the same key as you are actually playing. Use [**Global**] "Chord-Mapper Key Offset" (as described on page 24 of the manual) or use a footswitch with CC 73 assigned to it and proceed the same way as with transpose.

This key offset may cause unexpected behaviour if it is used with any other Chord-Mapper mode than "octave". Make sure it is set to "0" when using internal or single mode.

- Showing pitchbend when playing a Yamaha WX5/7/11 or Softwind Synthophone

It is possible to show pitchbend of the edit channel in the second display line when setting this up in [**Global**] „Display 2nd line content".

- Making backups before going out on a gig

Here are some safety instructions in case anything will go wrong when you are out playing a gig. It will probably never happen if you are prepared for it. However, it is just a good idea to be ready for anything. Disasters always hit you when you are not expect them.

It is strongly recommended to make backups at any time but especially before taking XPression out to play live. If you are in a stress situation like playing on stage you don't want to waste time by looking for possible errors or wrong settings. You want to fix the issue as fast as possible.

1) Make a backup of your "working" global settings in [**Utility**] "Save & Load <-> USB – All Global Settings". In case that any unexpected behavior occurs (e.g. the presets do not change when entering them from the remote unit because you might have changed the edit channel by mistake) you can reload the functioning settings from your USB pen-drive relative quickly without even restarting the machine. Execute a "Reset" by pressing and holding the joystick for 4 seconds. Then reload the preset. No need to search for the error.

2) Keep the latest update file on your USB drive. In case something gets really weird and the first remedy didn't help reinstall the latest update.

3) Make a copy of your entire system drive as described in the manual on page 29. In case the internal drive would fail completely for any unexpected reason you can start normally from the external USB drive. You need to switch off the power supply from the internal drive on the rear of the unit to do so.

4) It is generally a good idea to have a backup of your preset bank(s) and global settings in case you ever need to start from an external drive that is not all the way up to date.

Keep these two USB drives always with you when you are going to do live work!

- Can the authorization file be saved to the same drive as the Global settings and the latest update?

YES! All files created from XPression and the latest update file can reside on the same FAT32 formatted drive with the only exception of the "complete internal 16 GB drive backup".

This drive can also be used for audio file transfer of backing tracks in [Play] mode. To save time when uploading files it might be a good idea to put only the new files need for transfer into the corresponding folder of the USB drive.

Keeping a second folder with a similar name and all files on the drive will save you time by simply renaming the two folders on a computer - depending on whether you want to transfer one or two audio files or the entire folder.

- The 16 GB system backup worked only when I inserted the drive before starting up XPression.

You should never do this!

Having the drive plugged in before staring up shouldn't damage anything when backing up the system for the first time. However, once the drive is copied and you start up with both drives connected the unit might mix up the internal and external drive since they are both absolutely identical.

This is the reason why there is a switch at the rear so you can turn off the internal drive when starting from the external one. *(See page 29 of the manual)*

When having both connected while starting up you might - in the worst case - make the backup copy the other way around than what you would expect.

It is safe to connect the external USB drive once you see the start up screen with the version number.

- Adjusting the attack behavior to your personal taste

There are many parameters (maybe too many?) to adjust the attack behavior on XPression per patch.
First of all make sure that your wind controller is sending dynamic velocity and not fixed velocity.
(For the Synthophone this is taken care of with the "Synthophone Note & Velocity Fix" in [Global].)

In patch edit mode you can set these parameters:

- Dynamic -> Sound Range: lower the maximum value to avoid loud and hard attacks.
  This also changes the overall brightness as the loudest volumes will be a little darker.
- Dynamic Range & Attack time will make soft attacks slower and keep loud attacks fast.
- Sample Volume Envelope: this is the general non legato attack time.
- Legato transitions: lets you change the attack time for legato notes (this needs to be coordinated with legato overlap to avoid holes or accents – *see legato behavior below*).
  With the sample start you can cut the hard noise part of the legato attack.
- Harmonic dirt produces random overtones separately for legato and non legato attacks. Turn this to 0 while working on the other parameters and add it again at the end
- Last but not least the amount of (random) breath noise for the attack.

All of these changes need to be stored to one of the user preset banks. The original will still be there in the factory banks in case something goes wrong.

- Tweaking the legato behavior to your needs

XPression has probably the best and most flexible legato of all sample based synth.
There are two [**Edit**] pages that are responsible for the legato behavior:

1) Enter [**Edit**] mode by moving the joystick on the left hand of the remote to the right twice until [**Edit**].
   Press onto the joystick for [**OK**] to actually enter [**Edit**] mode.

   Go to the left (with the joystick) about 14 times until "Harmonic Dirt Attack Settings".
   Set "legato" to "0" so you won't get any unwanted overtones during legato note changes.
   (These happen on real woodwinds (amongst other things) because of the keys slapping onto the air column.)

2) Go further to the left (about 13x) until "Legato Transitions" and experiment with the settings there (page 14 of the manual).

   - The overlap time should always be longer (usually twice as long) than the attack time.
     With the ideal timing it should sound very legato.
     Making the overlap shorter gives you a slight gap while making it longer gives you a slight accent.

   - A higher pitch time will give you more of a bamboo flute or a trombone feel. It adds a portamento (measured in ms) between the notes.

   - Setting the Sample Start to a higher value will completely eliminate the original attack transition. This makes it more legato but also a little more "synth like". Don't set it too high if you want to keep a natural sound.

You might want to go back to the "Harmonic Dirt Attack Settings" and add just a tiny bit key action there.

Experiment and you'll find out that you can tweak the legato sound exactly to the way you like it.

- Copy or Reset a single parameter value in patch [Edit] mode to other patches (presets)

When you are in [**Edit**] mode you can select a parameter and then press and hold the soft-key underneath this parameter to copy its value to other patches or to reset this parameter to its default factory value.

You will be asked whether you want to copy this parameter to another preset within this bank or if you want to reset it to its default value. Then you can choose which patches will be affected by setting "from X" "to Y".