**ParamDrum 0.4 initial public release**

The ParamDrum is a highly efficient three-sequence drum machine with independent pattern lengths for each sequencer slot, semi-random features and parameter locks. I find it's very inspiring to work with, and interesting, evolving beats just seem to fall out out it.

To get the most out of it, you need a MIDI control surface and keyboard. Sequence steps are entered and deleted from the MIDI keyboard, the parameter "write" action is activated from the keyboard, and the parameter knobs are mapped to MIDI controllers.

First, here's how to enter and delete sequence steps. The bottom drum sequence, the kick, uses the group of three black keys starting with F# 1. Run the sequencer, turn on the built in metronome if you want, and hit the F# 1 note to enter a step. Velocity is recorded as the height of the step. To delete a step, hit G# 1 as the cursor moves across the position you want to delete. Holding down the A# 1 (or Bb 1 if you prefer) deletes steps as the cursor moves across the sequence.
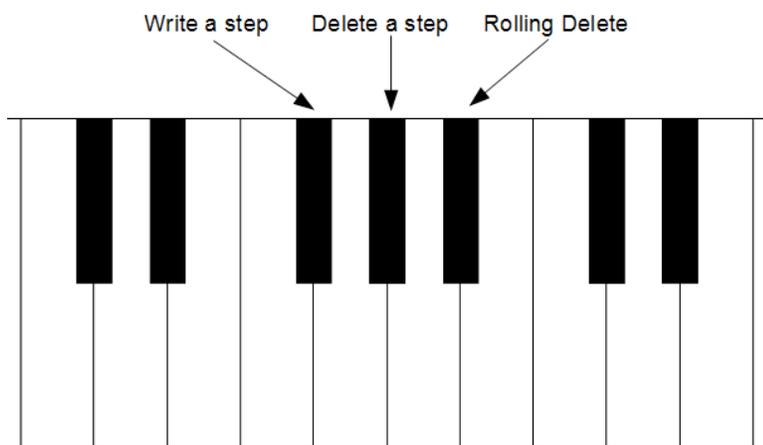
Similarly, the F# 2, G# 2 and A# 2 keys control the middle sequence, which I usually load with snare and tom type sounds. The top sequence, which I use for cymbal and high hat type sounds, uses the F# 3, G# 3 and A# 3 keys to enter and remove steps.

So why am I using the black keys for this? I want to keep them separate from the record functions of the parameters, which go on the white keys.
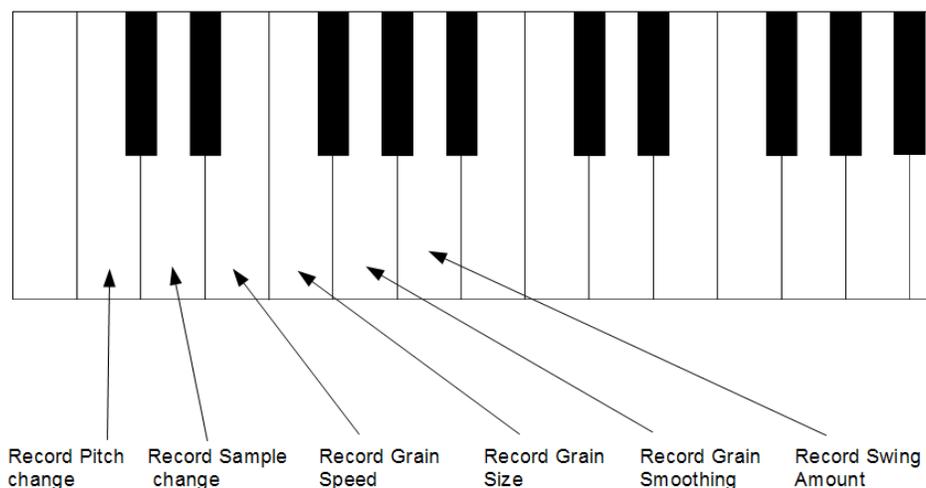
When you hold down the C key of the relevant octave / sequence – for example, C1 for the kick drum – motions of the pitch knob are recorded and played back per sequence step. Similarly, holding down D1 records the twiddling of the sample change knob.

There are two ways to record the knob motions. Number one, you can hold down the relevant MIDI keyboard key while you move the knob with your mouse; number two, and more fun, you can hold down the record key while you turn a knob with its MIDI CC mapped to the relevant knob on the Reaktor GUI.

The way things are arranged currently, I use MIDI CC 76 for all three pitch knobs, CC 77 for all three sample select knobs, and so on. Remember, controllers are only recorded for the knob whose record button is depressed at the moment. If you wish to use different assignments, use standard MIDI learn functionality or change the CC numbers in the properties for the knobs.
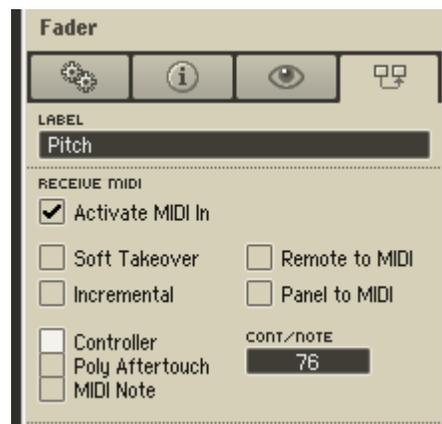
If there is sufficient interest I'll release a Koresound with the Kore controls mapped to the record buttons and knobs.

Most other controls should be self-explanatory. You can set the volume of each sampler, and mute or activate it. A host / standalone button optimizes the clock for use in a host or standalone. Tempo, swing type and pattern length are selectable per sequence. Try using different lengths for the kick, snare and cymbal sequencers to create variation. Remember that velocity = probability a step will trigger. To make a step trigger every time, set its velocity to maximum (full height in the table).

Creating rolls – by changing the grain size and speed, you can create a purring, stuttering roll on a drum. Low speed and small size yields a characteristic granular sound. Lower the smoothness for extra glitch.

A word about sample maps: if you have sixteen samples in your kick map, set the Min control to zero and the Max to 16. You can set these differently to make the Sample Select knob work on a different range of samples. Samples should start at zero. For a fast technique to create sample maps, see the Reaktor Tips blog here.

Thanks for buying the ParamDrum and supporting further development!

Peter Dines   May 14, 2009
peterdines@gmail.com