X-PONDER

MANUAL + USER GUIDE

X-Ponder

Obligatory Legal Stuff

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Thank you for purchasing this creative Max for Live MIDI effect!

License Agreement:

X-Ponder

Important Info

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This device requires Live 10 or Live 10 Suite with Max for Live installed; we strongly recommend Live 10.1.x or higher with Max 8.5.x or higher.

X-Ponder is a MIDI effect, which means it must be placed prior to instruments on MIDI tracks. However, it does not generate MIDI on its own. Once placed on a MIDI track, it must then receive MIDI played in real-time or via MIDI clips in order to store, process, and re-generate MIDI responses.

X-Ponder

Installation Instructions

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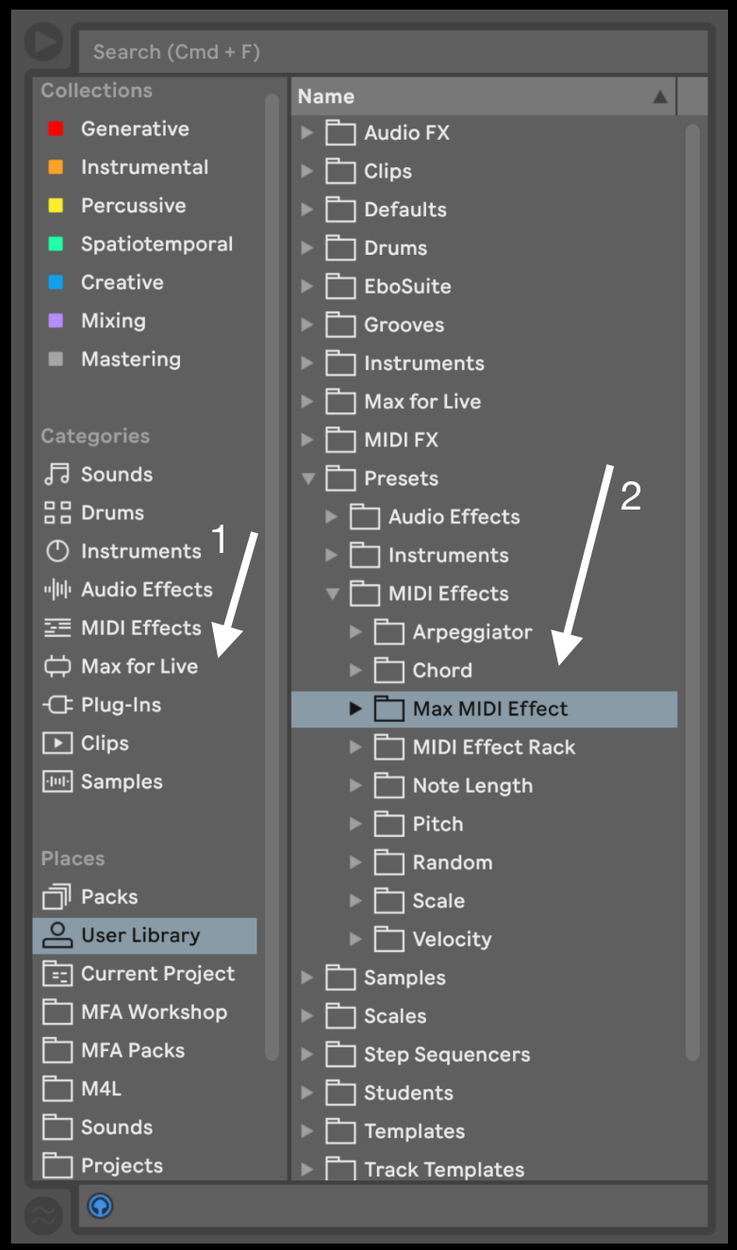

To install X-Ponder, first double-click to decompress the ZIP archive it arrived in. Presumably you've already done this, because you're reading the manual, also included in said ZIP — good job!

From Finder (macOS) or Explorer (Windows), drag the X-Ponder folder to the User Library in the Places section of Live's Browser (Arrow 1 pictured left). This will copy the required files to your User Library. We recommend dragging it to the Max MIDI Effect subfolder of the User Library MIDI Effects folder (Arrow 2 pictured left).

Once installed, we might humbly suggest adding it to an appropriate Browser Collection, if applicable.

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Device Overview

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A uniquely responsive MIDI device, X-Ponder is designed to easily and intuitively produce musical accompaniment, duet, and call-and-response. You can think of it like an AI chat bot, but for music: feed it a musical prompt in the form of MIDI notes and chords, and it will reply in kind with a response based on the pitches, chords, velocities, and lengths you fed in.

Three modes allow for you to engage with X-Ponder in a variety of ways. The default Manual mode allows for arbitrary recording periods that you can manually punch out of via the Play/Rec toggle for X-Ponder to begin producing its response. Interval mode allows you to specify a fixed interval in bars where the device will switch between listening to your input and generating responses to that input; for example, with an interval of 2, you would play for two bars, then it would respond for two bars, trading back and forth like this to produce jazz-style call-and-response improvisations. Finally, Listen mode allows you to set a period of silence that X-Ponder will wait for before generating its response; in this mode, as soon as you begin playing, it automatically stops and begins capturing your input again.

In the default Short mode, X-Ponder's MIDI memory is wiped every time it switches back to listen in whichever mode it's set to; switch to Long mode to continue adding MIDI data to X-Ponder's stored history, expanding the vocabulary of notes and chords it can draw from.

Output will be generated at your specified metrical base rate, with a Density dial governing how busy or sparse the output will be. Turning up the Autonomy control allows X-Ponder to introduce an increasing amount of notes outside the currently stored note history. Output Velocity and Length can be increased or decreased, and the unique Syncopate option, which allows only offbeat rhythmic intervals to play, combines with the Swing and Humanity controls to open up a wide variety of expressive timing outputs.

Note pitch output can be transposed by semitone or octave, all constrained within the scale and key set locally, or ideally by Live 12 or the bundled Global Hub utility. Merge allows incoming MIDI to be passed to the output, while toggling to Solo effectively mutes incoming MIDI, so while that incoming MIDI is received for storage, only X-Ponder's generated notes will be output — particularly useful when generating MIDI on a different track or instrument than it's set to respond to. Polyphonic output can be switched to three different monophonic modes, with an optional Viewer to more clearly indicate the received note input and generated output.

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Visual Guide

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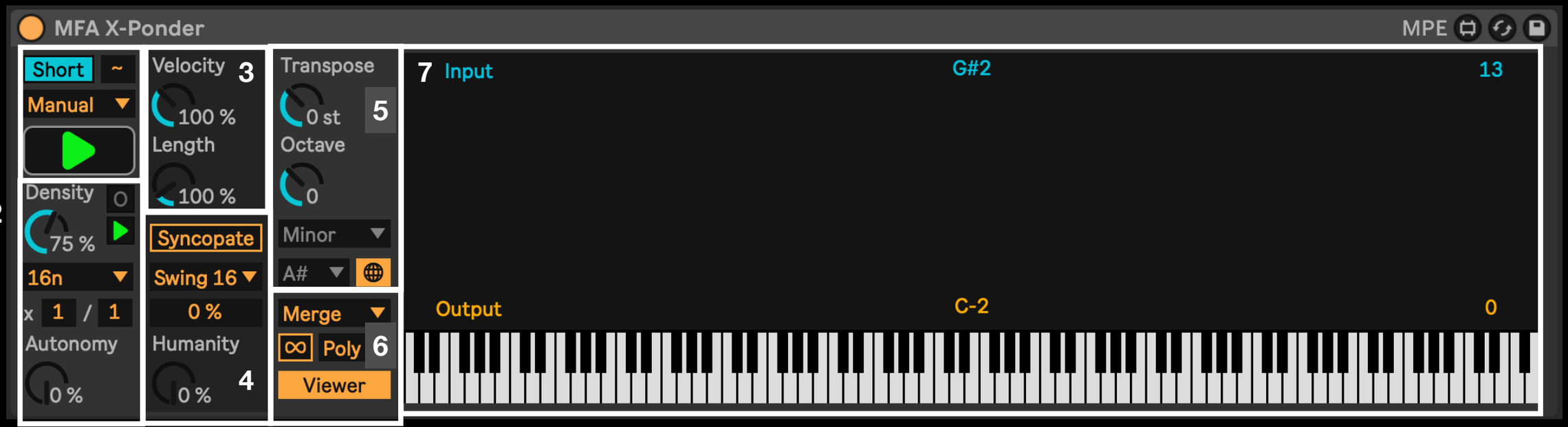

1 · These are the **Main Mode** controls. Memory toggles between Short-term storage, wiped with new input, or Long-term concatenated storage. The chooser allows for selection between Manual punch in/out listening, fixed Interval listening, a time-defined Listen mode that waits for a period of silence before playing back, or Import mode to manually ingest MIDI files for remix purposes. Click and drag the wave symbol to select Fluid recombination mode, or simple forward, reverse, or elliptical modes.

2 · This section contains the **Output Generation** controls. The base Rate determines the BPM-sync'd interval that output will be defined by, along with a multiplier and divider for polyrhythmic rate control; the Play/Pause toggle next to it allows you to pause playback without erasing the stored history. Density governs how often notes are played, while Autonomy allows X-Ponder to include pitches, velocities, and lengths not currently stored in its responses. The Overdub and Play/Pause switches for eligible modes are located at upper right of this section.

3 · These are the **Expression Multipliers.** Velocity increases or reduces the output note velocity. Length increases or reduces the output note lengths.

4 · Here we have the **Timing Controls.** Activate Syncopate to output only offbeat notes at the currently specified Rate. Choose a Swing interval and amount with the slider. Humanity induces increasing lengths and probabilities of slight delays in note timing.

5 · This is the **Pitch Control** section. Generated output can be Transposed in semitones and Octaves, all within the selected Scale and Key. Scale and Key will be controlled by Live 12 or an instance of Global Hub by default, but toggle to Local mode to ignore Live 12 or Global Hub and store the scale and key locally with the device.

6 · These are the **MIDI Output** settings. Merge allows incoming MIDI to be passed to the output while toggling to Solo will still receive MIDI, but only output X-Ponder's generated responses. The default output mode is Polyphonic but you can specify three monophonic output settings to exclude chords at output: Last note, Low note, or High note. Open and close the Viewer display with the toggle at the bottom.

7 · The **Viewer** display provides insight to the MIDI input received and MIDI output generated. Input is shown with blue keys on the keyboard, the blue scope in the middle, and the note data up top; generated Output is shown via yellow keys on the keyboard, the yellow scope in the middle, and the yellow output data.

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Examples

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EXAMPLE 1

X-Ponder is in Listen mode and will wait for 420 ms of silence after the last note off message has been received to begin generating output. It's set to Long term Memory mode, so new notes will be added to the data bank, which will be played in Fluid mode.

Notes will be output rather fast at a Rate of 64th notes, but with a low Density of only 49%. 23% Autonomy will allow X-Ponder to occasionally introduce new notes of its own choosing. Velocity will be intensified at 123% with note Length reduced to 55%, producing rather staccato output. 16th notes will be swung by 42% with 11% chance of Humanity introducing some subtly sloppy offset every now and again.

Pitch will be transposed down five semitones but up an octave, all through the C Minor Blues scale defined by Live 12 or Global Hub. In Solo mode only X-Ponder responses will be passed to output. This output will be polyphonic, and the Viewer is currently enabled.

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Examples

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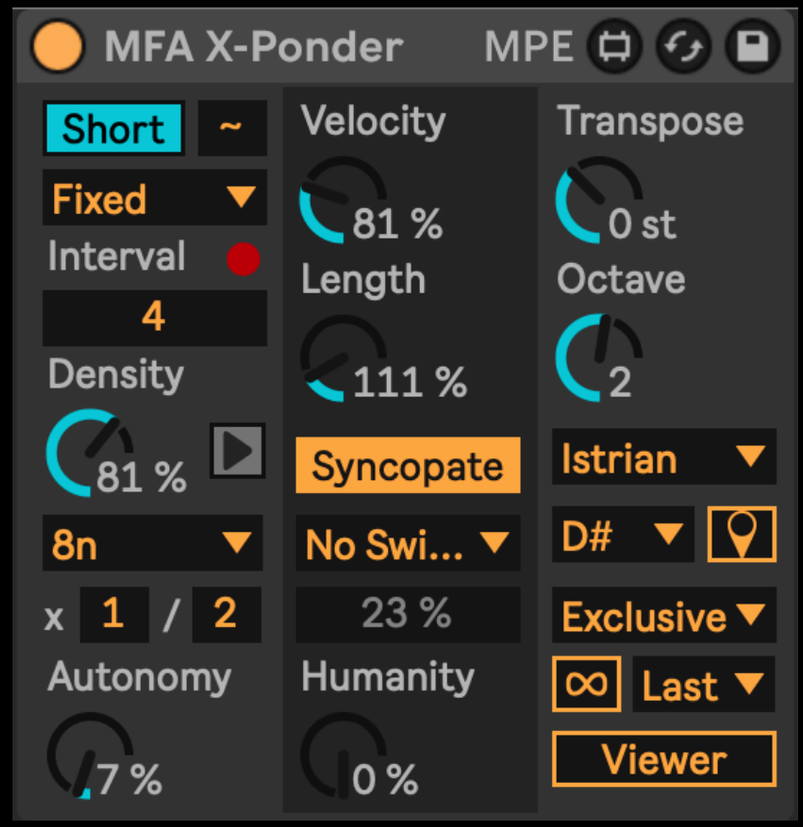
EXAMPLE 2

X-Ponder is in Fixed mode with an Interval of 4 bars, so it will wait for 4 bars of input before generating 4 bars of output. Because it is set to Short term memory, some input will have to be received during the input phase for it to generate any notes during the output phase.

16th notes will be output with a fairly high density of 81% — but with Syncopate activated, only offbeat metric intervals will be generated. 7% Autonomy will allow for very rare and subtle excursions into notes that have not been played in.

Intensity will be reduced with Velocity at 81%, and note output will be slightly elongated with Length at 111%. The Swing slider is deactivated because No Swing is selected, and with Humanity at 0%, timing will strictly adhere to the settings already described.

Note output will be transposed two octaves higher than received within the D# Istrian scale set and pinned locally. Input MIDI will only be audible during the recording phase with Exclusive mode selected, and not passed to the output along with responses, which will then be monophonically constrained to output only the most recently triggered note. The Viewer is not active.



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FAQ

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Playback stops when toggling to Short memory — why?

Toggling from Long to Short doubles as the way to wipe X-Ponder's currently stored memory. Doing so erases the currently stored databank, leaving it no information to respond with.

X-Ponder's scale and key are not stored with my Live Set or saved presets — why?

By default, X-Ponder is in Global scale and key mode, so it will inherit the scale and key from Live 12 or any instance of the included Global Hub, which will be stored with your Live Set. To ignore Global Hub or Live 12 settings or to ensure scale and key are saved independently with your presets, simply toggle from Global scale mode to pin these settings locally.

I don't want X-Ponder to conform to Live 12 or Global Hub's scale and key — is this possible?

Any device that can be impacted by Global Hub has a Global toggle; click this to pin the scale and key to Local X-Ponder settings. Toggling from Local back to Global mode will automatically and instantly force the device to inherit Global Hub or Live 12 settings.

X-Ponder looks small — how do I make it bigger?

In the Look Feel tab of Live's Preferences pane, increase the Zoom Display percentage slider to 125% or 150%.

Thank you for supporting us by purchasing this device — we hope it inspires your creativity!

For more information, video tutorials, and other devices, please visit us online at: **manifest.audio**

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