Subject: OT Looking for Midi Sequencing Software Recommendation Win 7
Posted by lance on Wed, 18 Aug 2010 13:15:11 GMT
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Hey Folks,
I'm helping a new client with his home studio / synth setup.
He's on PC Windows 7 and would like to get new midi software program. I'm happy with my trusty but rusty Master Tracks pro but there is no win 7 version.

I'm also looking for an interface recommendation.
Something with a lot of outs.

Any help is greatly appreciated.
TIA,
Lance

Subject: Re: OT Looking for Sequencing Software Recommendation Win 7
Posted by kerryg on Wed, 18 Aug 2010 15:31:31 GMT
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Hey Lance - what style of music does he do? DAWs are getting pretty sophisticated in general nowadays, but I still find some better suited to some styles and workflows.

Just as a side note, to distinguish between concepts - "midi" and "sequencing" software are now getting pretty distinct from each other. Some sequencing software like Reason doesn't even output midi any more - it just takes midi input and channels it to its internal virtual instruments, but you can't send that sequence to your external synths. As you know, many people have moved away from that kind of external midi production entirely, preferring internal virtual instruments for the myriad advantages they bring. So I'll lump all of that kind of production together.

- Reason is killer for sequenced production, but I've never found it quite as killer for its overall sonics (which I've bypassed by stemming out Reason tracks and mixing them in PARIS). Some of my electronic music students have loved that "Reason sound", though - they say it's perfect for that style. It's a great sketchpad, great if you're intending to render or stem your tracks out. This can be done easily by Rewiring them to another DAW and rendering all tracks individually in one pass. It has no provision for recording audio alongside the midi without hooking it up to another DAW. As mentioned, it's not really set up to integrate external synths, but there are unbelievable amounts of sounds out there for it, and it delivers that at a ridiculously efficient hit on your processor - I was doing full productions on a beige G3.

- Ableton Live is a monster for modern loop-based production. The non-standard GUI for midi takes some getting used to but it can be worth the investment learning. The internal instruments are pretty cool, not as broad a selection as Reason but extremely good.

- Reaper is my own choice; the midi side has historically been somewhat less sophisticated than some of the other contenders, but there have been dozens of updates on the midi side recently, it's coming along quickly. There are so many other things to love about it that it quite tips the

balance. Reaper plus Reason is killer bang for the buck.

Can't speak to Nuendo or Cubase, I've used them on occasion in studios but I don't own them. I know they're very popular choices, they just don't attract me.

Subject: Re: OT Looking for Sequencing Software Recommendation Win 7
Posted by lance on Wed, 18 Aug 2010 16:16:31 GMT
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Thanks so much for the info Kerry.
The guy definitely wants to do midi sequenceing.
I've been messing around with Reaper 3.05, but I didn't see a way to control midi volume on playback.
Did miss I something?, or did they add it?
Is the evaluation copy still free?

Thanks so much for your help. Most product web pages are a lot to navigate to find a few simple features.

TTYS,
Lance

Subject: Re: OT Looking for Sequencing Software Recommendation Win 7
Posted by lance on Wed, 18 Aug 2010 16:20:34 GMT
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I see now. On the Reaper site $60 for the discounted license.
Well worth it, and the guy isn't looking for a freebie as long as it's what he needs / gets the job done.

Subject: Re: OT Looking for Sequencing Software Recommendation Win 7
Posted by kerryg on Thu, 19 Aug 2010 02:56:15 GMT
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Just in case the Reaper site didn't make it explicit, the downloadable version is the full version - there's no difference between it and the full retail version, it's not feature-crippled or save disabled.

It's non-expiring honor-system shareware with 30 days to try before you buy; if your friend takes 40 days to make up his mind rather than 30 it's not a big deal, nothing bad happens. Oddly enough this business model seems to be flourishing - or maybe it's not so very odd that people respond to honorable business practices by being honorable.

Reaper definitely has MIDI volume control via CC lanes, I've used that. If the question is whether the faders in the track window control midi volume, I think they don't directly, I think they control the audio volume of the track (ie the output of the VSTi).

In Reaper it's easy to add extra control knobs to any track - say, put a midi volume control knob on any virtual instrument track. You open the track's FX window via its FX button, click and hold on "parameters", navigate to FX Parameters>Show In Track Panel>Volume and release. A volume knob appears in your track window for volume (of course that also applies to any other parameter you want to have quick access to as well).