

Transport Control 1.0

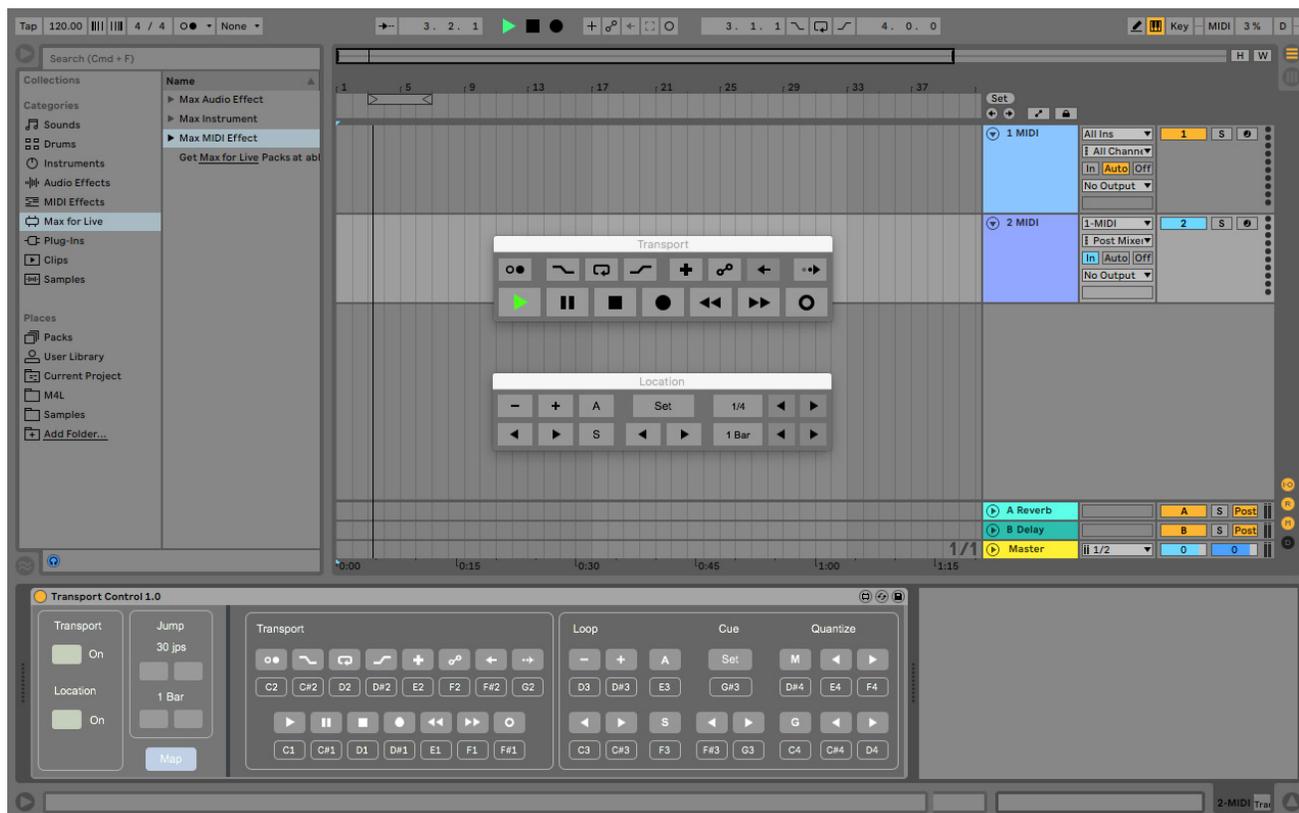
User Manual

Desert Sound Studios

Transport Control

Overview

Transport Control is a Max for Live Plugin that adds two floating toolbars to Ableton Live. These toolbars give full control over playback in Live along while adding new features like FF/RW, Pause, and Loop point punch in/out. A custom MIDI mapping system also lets you map any of the buttons to a hardware MIDI controller. This combination of floating toolbars and MIDI mapping brings a new level of customization to making music with Live.



Requirements

Time Display requires Live 10 with the Max for Live add-on installed. Max for Live is included in the Live 10 Suite edition and can be purchased separately for the Live 10 Standard edition.

Installation

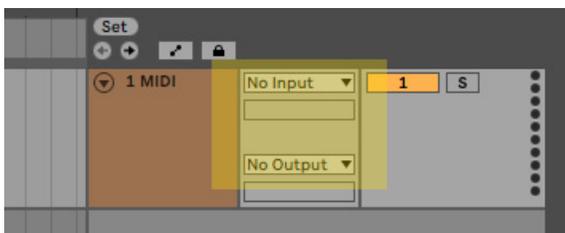
After downloading the .zip file, unzip and drag the .amxd file into the area in Live's Browser where you store Max for Live devices. Time Display is now ready for use in your project.

Setup

To load Transport Control into a project, drag the .amxd file from Live's browser into an empty MIDI track. Since this MIDI track will be used solely for Transport Control, you will need to set it up differently than MIDI tracks used for recording. If you plan on using just the floating tool bars, the track will be set to not receive any incoming MIDI data. If using external MIDI hardware with Transport Control, the track will need to be set to receive but not record MIDI data from the external MIDI hardware. Details on these two setups are explained further in the sections below.

Using the Floating Tool bars without a MIDI controller

If you don't plan on using an external MIDI controller with Transport Control, you will need to set both the MIDI input and MIDI output of the MIDI track that Transport Control is on to "No Input". The image below shows this setup.

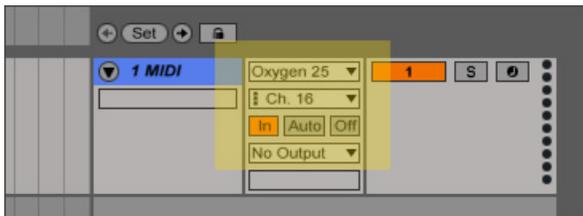


Using a MIDI Controller dedicated for Transport Control

A common setup involves using a MIDI controller specifically for triggering Transport Control alongside other MIDI controllers used for normal recording. The first thing to do in this scenario is to set the monitoring mode of Transport Control's MIDI track to "In". Next, set the MIDI input port and MIDI input channel to match the port and channel of the MIDI controller used to trigger Transport Control.

The three settings above will make sure that Transport Control only receives MIDI messages from the desired MIDI hardware, regardless of the currently selected track in Live.

Now change the MIDI output of Transport Control's MIDI track to "No Output" since Transport Control will not be sending out MIDI messages. Finally, always make sure that the record button for the track is never turned on. The image below shows the track settings.



In the setup above, Transport Control receives MIDI messages from an Oxygen 25 controller on MIDI channel 16. These MIDI messages are received at all times since the track monitoring mode is set to "In" and no MIDI is transmitted from the track since the "No Output" setting is selected at the bottom. The record enable button is also not turned on.

When using Transport Control with an external MIDI controller, no other MIDI tracks in the project should have the same MIDI port setting that the MIDI track for Transport Control is set to. Ties to this, no MIDI tracks used for recording should ever have "all ins" selected for the MIDI port setting. If they are set to "all ins", the MIDI messages used to trigger Transport Control will be recorded alongside the performance on the MIDI track and may cause Transport Control to malfunction.

Using Transport Control requires more attention to be paid to the MIDI port/channel settings of all MIDI tracks in a project. Following the instructions above will ensure that Transport Control works as it should in a project.

Using the same MIDI Controller for Transport Control and Note Recording

There may be situations where a single MIDI controller is to be used for triggering Transport Control and recording MIDI notes into MIDI tracks. In a setup like this, all MIDI tracks in the project will have the same MIDI port setting since all MIDI messages will be coming from a single hardware controller. The important setting in this situation is each tracks MIDI channel and making sure that Transport Control's MIDI track is set to a different channel than all other MIDI tracks.

An example of this would be using the front panel buttons of a keyboard MIDI controller to trigger Transport Control's play, pause, stop, etc. while using the keyboard keys on the controller to play and record MIDI notes. This setup will likely require setting up the MIDI controller to transmit different MIDI messages on specific channels. Specifically in this case, the MIDI channel of the front panel buttons (used to trigger Transport Control) should be set to one MIDI channel (channel 16 for example) while the keyboard keys on the controller (used for playing notes) should be set to a different MIDI channel (channel 1 for example). The user manual of your MIDI hardware should provide detailed information on how to assign different MIDI channels to the various keys, buttons, knobs, etc. on the controller.

Once the MIDI hardware is set up to transmit on the appropriate MIDI channels, go to Transport Control's MIDI track in Live and set the MIDI channel to match the hardware setup. Using the example above, this would be channel 16 tied to the buttons on the controller. Then make sure to set any other MIDI track (used for recording) in the project to the MIDI channel you set for the keyboard keys to transmit on (channel 1 in the example above). In this setup, even though the MIDI channels are different for the MIDI tracks in Live, all MIDI tracks in the project will have the same MIDI port setting since all MIDI messages are coming from a single MIDI controller.

The User Interface

Transport Control interface is made up of four parts:

Main Interface

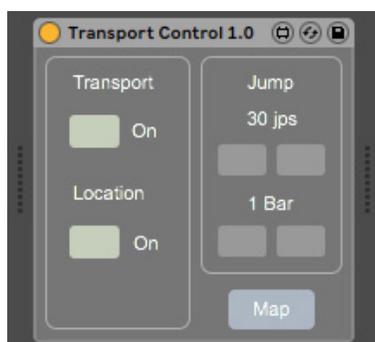
MIDI Mapping Area

Transport Toolbar

Location Toolbar

Main Interface

The Main Interface appears at the bottom of Live whenever you click on Transport Control's MIDI track. It includes buttons for activating the floating toolbars and customizing the feel of the FF/RW buttons.



Toolbar Buttons

The two buttons to the left-hand side labeled "On" activate the two on-screen floating toolbars.

Jump Settings

The jump settings allow you to set the responsiveness of the Fast Forward and Rewind buttons found in the Transport toolbar. The two settings are Jumps Per Second (jps) and Jump length (beats/bars). The feel of the FF/RW can be changed drastically so experiment to find the best combination.

Map Button

Pressing the Map button in the lower right corner opens up the MIDI Mapping area to the right of the main interface. Use these buttons to quickly map any MIDI hardware trigger to any toolbar button. The visual layout in the mapping area is the same button layout in the two toolbars.

MIDI Mapping Area

The MIDI Mapping area is one of the most powerful features of Transport Control. Use it to quickly and easily map any hardware MIDI trigger to any button in the Transport and Location toolbars. To access the MIDI Mapping area, press the “Map” button in the main interface.



The MIDI Mapping area is divided into two areas, one for each toolbar. On the left you can assign MIDI triggers to the Transport toolbar’s buttons while on the area on the right maps the buttons of the Location toolbar. The on-screen button layout in the MIDI Mapping area mirrors the button layouts of the floating toolbars.

To assign a MIDI trigger, click on one of the empty rectangles under the button icon you wish to map. From there, press any key or button on the hardware MIDI controller. You will see the MIDI note (C4, etc.) or controller number (115, etc.) appear inside the empty rectangle you pressed once the controller is assigned. To assign a different MIDI message to a Toolbar button, repeat the above procedure. To clear the assignment, click and hold on the rectangle for one second.

Important Note on MIDI hardware button settings:

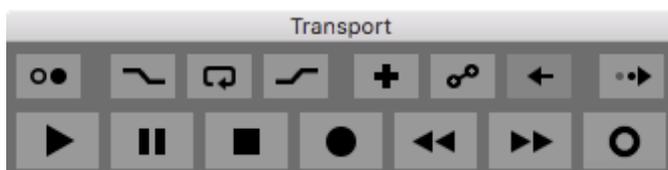
Any MIDI hardware buttons mapped to Transport Control must be set to “button” mode and not “toggle” from the MIDI controller settings. When a MIDI button is set to “button” mode, pressing and releasing that button sends a MIDI message while both pressing and releasing the button. The sent value is usually 127 on press and 0 on release. When in “toggle” mode, a button only sends a MIDI message when pressed and nothing on release. If any button on your MIDI controller is set to Toggle mode, the MIDI mapping system inside Transport Control will not work properly. Refer to the user manual of your MIDI controller for information on how to set button trigger modes.

Floating Toolbars

Transport Control includes two floating toolbars. The Transport toolbar includes buttons for playback and recording while the Location toolbar provides controls for Looping, Cue Points, and Quantize.

Transport Bar

The Transport Bar includes several familiar controls while also adding new buttons for Pause, Fast Forward, and Rewind.



The Pause button in Transport Control works like the pause buttons found in many other DAWs. Press it once to stop playback and press it a second time to resume playback from the current position.

Beyond just pressing Pause, the Play, Pause, and Stop buttons interact with each other intuitively to let you find the best workflow. The following is a breakdown of what each button does in different situations.

While Playing:

Play Button: Return to the start position and play from there

Pause Button: Stops playback at the current location

Stop Button: Stops playback at the current location

While Paused:

Play Button: Plays from the current location

Pause Button: Plays from the current location

Stop Button: Returns to the start position

While Stopped:

Play Button: Starts playback from the current location

Pause Button: Switches into Pause mode (Pause button lights up)

Stop Button: Returns to the start position

Transport Control also adds Fast Forward and Rewind buttons. These buttons work similarly to those found in other DAWs. Unlike other software however, instead of scrubbing through the audio, the FF/RW buttons use the jump feature in Live to skip through the timeline by bars and beats at a rate you can set. Use the options in the Main Interface to set how many jumps occur per second and how long each jump is.

Location Bar

The Location toolbar lets you control the Looping, Cue Points, and Quantize features of Live.



Looping

The six buttons on the left of the Location toolbar control Live's looping functions. To change the loop length, use the "+" and "-" buttons. To move the loop back and forth along the timeline, use the two buttons. The distance the loop moves with each press is tied to the current loop length. The "A" and "S" buttons let you punch the loop start and end points on-the-fly in various ways.

The two buttons labeled "A" and "S" work together to provide the Loop punch feature. The "A" (Auto) button selects the Loop punch mode while the "S" (Start) button punches in the loop start point on-the-fly. The behavior of the "S" button in the two modes is as follows:

Auto Mode: [Off]

Pressing the "S" button sets the loop start point to the current playback position while pressing "S" a second time sets the loop end point. In this mode the "A" button will be grey.

Auto Mode: [On]

Pressing the "S" button sets the loop start point to the current playback position while keeping the loop size unchanged. When Auto Mode is on, the "A" button will be lit up blue.

In both modes above, the loop points automatically snap to the nearest bar on the timeline.

Cue Points

Controls for Cue Points are located towards the middle of the Location toolbar. Use the "Set" button to add or delete cue points. To add a cue point, press the "Set" button at any time. To delete a cue point, first stop playback and then jump to a specific cue. Once on the cue, press the "Set" button to delete that cue point. The two arrow buttons in this section jump forward and backward between cue points. Setting and jumping between cue points ties in with the Global Quantize setting.

Quantize

The farthest right section of the Location bar is where you will find buttons for Global and MIDI Quantize. The three buttons on the top row controls the MIDI Quantize while the bottom three controls Global Quantize. Use the larger buttons to the left (with the current quantize value inside them) to turn Global and MIDI quantize on and off. The arrow buttons to the right adjust the quantize values. The arrow buttons are only active when quantize (Global or MIDI) is turned on.

License

Transport Control can be used for personal or commercial music/sound production/performance. It may not be re-distributed in whole or in part in any form without the written permission of Desert Sound Studios. Transport Control or any derivative of it may also not be offered or installed as a part of any personal or commercial service. All code and interface design is copyrighted 2020 by Desert Sound Studios.

Version 1.03

August 2020

© 2020 Desert Sound Studios