

Getting Started

Creative BlasterKey™ MP3

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This product conforms to the following Council Directive:

- Directive 89/336/EEC, 92/31/EEC (EMC)

Contents

Introduction	1
System Requirements	1
Document Conventions.....	1
Setting Up BlasterKey MP3	2
Installing Hardware	2
Installing Software.....	3
Starting the Software	3
Function Buttons.....	4
The Menus.....	5
Main Menu.....	5
Instrument Menu.....	5
Rhythm Menu	6
The Control Panel.....	6
To Mix Music in Fun Mode (Loops Playback).....	8
To Learn Basic Keyboard Playing Skills.....	8
Recording Your Music as MP3 Files	9
Using BlasterKey MP3 Keyboard with Other MIDI Software	9
Additional Information.....	10
Maintenance	10
Specifications	10
Keyboard	10
Power and Voltage	10
Connectors and Jacks	10
Troubleshooting	11

Introduction

BlasterKey MP3 consists of the BlasterKey MP3 MIDI keyboard and the BlasterKey MP3 control panel software. The BlasterKey MP3 keyboard must be connected to an audio card in your computer. The audio card should be connected to your computer speakers or to a headphone. BlasterKey MP3 functions solely on the power supplied to it by its connection to your audio card.



System Requirements

Your BlasterKey MP3 requires:

- Pentium® 133MHz or faster processor
- Intel® or 100% compatible motherboard chipset
- 16MB system RAM (32 MB strongly recommended)
- Windows 95, Windows 98 or Windows NT 4.0
- Sound Blaster Live! audio card installed
- CD-ROM drive required for software installation
- Speakers or headphone

Document Conventions

This manual uses the following conventions to help you locate and identify the information that you need.

Icon	Use
	This notepad icon indicates information that is of particular importance and should be considered before continuing.
	This alarm clock icon indicates that failure to adhere to directions may result in loss of data or damage to your system.

Setting Up BlasterKey MP3

Installing Hardware

Connect the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard to the audio card in your computer and to other peripherals, if any, as shown below.

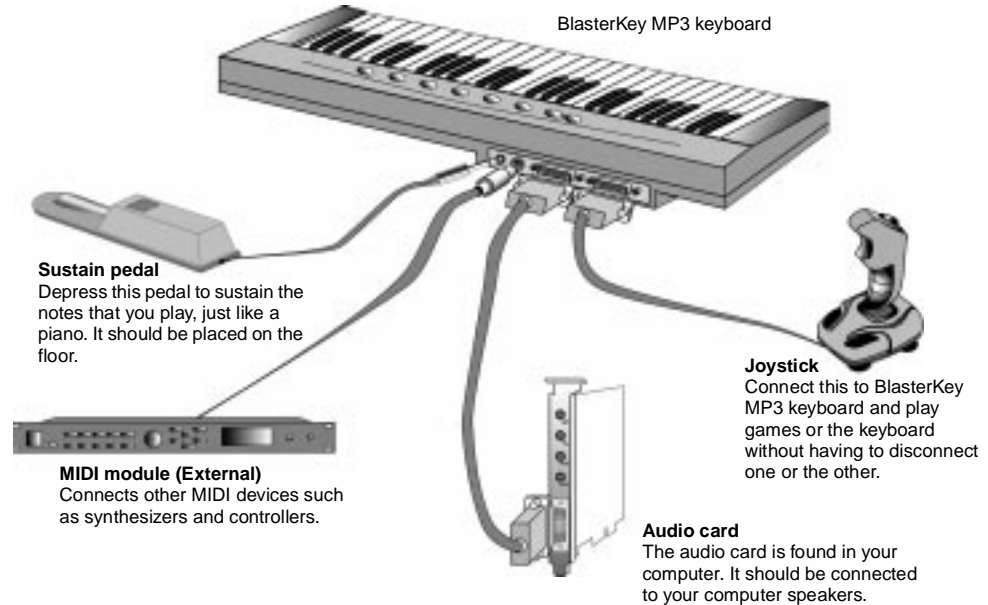


Figure 1: Connectivity diagram of BlasterKey MP3.

Once BlasterKey MP3 is connected to the computer, the Power LED on the keyboard will light up. Otherwise, refer to the section “Troubleshooting” on page 11.

Installing Software

1. Put the BlasterKey MP3 CD-ROM into your CD-ROM Drive. An installation program will appear on screen.
If no installation program appears, start Windows Explorer, right-click on the **CD-ROM drive** icon, and then select **AutoPlay**.
2. Follow the instructions on screen to complete the installation.

Starting the Software

To play BlasterKey MP3, you first need to start the BlasterKey MP3 control panel software. Click on the BlasterKey MP3 icon in your Windows Start menu -> Programs -> Creative. You should see the BlasterKey MP3 control panel on your screen, similar to the one below.



Figure 2: BlasterKey MP3 control panel.

Function Buttons

Function buttons

The function buttons on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel and BlasterKey MP3 keyboard are similar in some ways.

You can press the function buttons on the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard or click on the corresponding buttons on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel to select an instrument or a rhythm, or to start or stop the rhythm, the fill, or the intro/end.

For example, repeatedly pressing button A (**Instrument**) on the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard while the menu is set to **Main** enables you to scroll forward through the list of instruments. You can also click on button A (**Instrument**) on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel to select an instrument. In either instance the current instrument selection is displayed in the upper left corner of the control panel.



BlasterKey MP3 control panel




BlasterKey MP3 keyboard

Figure 3: BlasterKey MP3 function buttons.

The Menus

Main Menu

- Select an instrument either by pressing button **A (Instrument)** on the keyboard repeatedly or by pressing the **Scroll** buttons until you make a choice. You can also click on button **A** on the control panel and make your selection from the box that appears.
- Select a rhythm by pressing button **B (Rhythm)** on the keyboard repeatedly or by pressing the **Scroll** buttons until you make a choice. You can also click on button **B** on the control panel and make your selection from the box that appears.
- Start or stop the playing of a rhythm by pressing button **C (Intro/End)**. When rhythm is not playing, pressing this button will engage the Intro section and it will automatically progress into the Normal section. Pressing this button when the rhythm is playing will trigger the Ending section that will later progress to a complete stop.
- Activate the **Fill** section in your rhythm by selecting button **D (Fill)**. When the rhythm is in the Normal section, button **D** will start the Fill 1 section and then advance to the Variation section. Pressing this button when the rhythm is in the Variation section will introduce Fill 2 section, which will then advance back to Normal section.
- Start or stop the rhythm by pressing button **E** .

Instrument Menu



There are 136 realistic instrument sounds, divided into 10 instrument categories, to choose from.

Click on **Instrument** in the control panel to select from the following instrument groups:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piano | <input type="checkbox"/> Bass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organ | <input type="checkbox"/> Synth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guitar | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brass/Wind | <input type="checkbox"/> Percussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orchestral | <input type="checkbox"/> Drums |

Select the variation instrument from within the particular instrument group (for example, Jazz Guitar from within the Guitar group) by clicking on **Instrument** on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel. Click on the instrument group of your choice and choose the variation instrument from the list that appears.

Rhythm Menu



The rhythm displayed on the control panel changes when you press the scroll button to scroll backward or forward.

This consists of the following five rhythm style groups:

- Ballad, displayed as BL_****
- Pop, displayed as PP_****
- Dance, displayed as DC_****
- Jazz, displayed as JZ_****
- World, displayed as WR_****

Select the variation rhythm from within the particular rhythm group (for example, Ballad 1 from within the Ballad group) by clicking on **Rhythm** on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel. Click on the rhythm group of your choice and choose the variation rhythm from the list that appears.

The Control Panel

The control panel enables you to select additional features in order to change the way you play and how BlasterKey MP3 sounds:

1. **Environments:** Click on **Environments** to select from the box the desired Environmental Audio preset available from Sound Blaster Live!
2. **Background:** Click on **Background** to select from the box the desired background sound for your music.
3. **Touch:** Click on **Touch** to select from the box the desired keyboard touch sensitivity. Use the chart as a guideline.

Sensitivity	Striking keys with the same amount of velocity will generate
Soft	Greater volume.
Medium	Average volume.
Hard	Lesser volume.
Fixed	The same volume regardless of how soft or hard the keys are hit.



You can change each of the control panel options by selecting the option and making your choice from the box that appears.

4. **Chord Mode:** This sets the chord recognition method used by BlasterKey MP3. The default chord recognition zone consists of keys that fall below middle C. The range can be changed in the configuration dialog box, launched by clicking on **Configuration** on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel. The five chord modes are:
 - Single-finger** chord mode: In this mode, a major chord can be played by pressing a single key. A minor chord is played by pressing the root key and an additional note two semi-tones above it. A 7th chord is played by pressing the root and an additional note one semi-tone above it. For additional information on single-fingered chord mode, refer to BlasterKey MP3 Online Help.
 - Fingered** chord mode: Chords are played by standard keyboard fingering.
 - Intelligent (happy)** chord mode: When you play a key in the chord recognition zone, BlasterKey MP3 will analyze the melody notes played and generate suitable major chords. In this mode you do not have to play any chords, leaving you free to concentrate on your melody.
 - Intelligent (sad)** chord mode: BlasterKey MP3 will analyze the melody notes played and generate suitable minor chords.
 - Intelligent (neutral)** chord mode: BlasterKey MP3 will analyze the melody notes played and will generate suitable major and minor chords. When you keep the same key in the chord recognition zone pressed for several measures, BlasterKey MP3 will automatically change the chord generated.
5. **Transpose:** Change the pitch by as much as one octave higher or one octave lower in increments of one semi-tone by clicking on **Transpose** on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel and choosing the pitch from the list that appears.

To Mix Music in Fun Mode (Loops Playback)



You can only trigger music loops when the mix is not playing.

(Only available with Sound Blaster Live! series of audio cards)

1. In the BlasterKey MP3 control panel, click the **Menu** button, and then select **Fun**.
2. Click the **Mix** button and then select either **Demo1, Demo2, Mix1, Mix2** or **Mix3**.
3. Click the **Demo/Stop** button to start or stop the selected demo or mix.
4. Generate different music loops by pressing keys on the BlasterKey MP3. The color-coded chart on the control panel indicates the types of sounds associated with the keys.
5. Once you've created your mix, record it as an MP3 file. See "Recording your music as MP3 files" on the following page.

To Learn Basic Keyboard Playing Skills



The blinking icon, visible in the upper left corner of the BlasterKey MP3 control panel in Tutor mode, points to additional information for each of the five lessons.

1. In the BlasterKey MP3 control panel, click the **Menu** button, and then select **Tutor**.
2. Click on **Song** and then select the song you want to learn.
3. Click on **Lesson** and then select the lesson you want to learn. You can either click on the lesson on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel or use the **Scroll** buttons to select it.
4. Click on **Speed** and then select the speed at which you want the lesson to be played: slowest, slow, normal, fast or fastest.
5. Click on **Start/Stop** to start or stop the lesson.

Recording Your Music as MP3 Files

To record your music as an MP3 file, click on the **Record** button on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel and begin playing your music. When you are finished with your performance, click the **Stop** button on the BlasterKey MP3 control panel. You can then either review your music by clicking on the **Play** button or save your music as an MP3 file by clicking on the **Save** button.

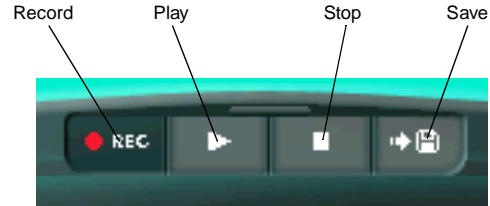


Figure 4: BlasterKey MP3 Record panel

Using BlasterKey MP3 Keyboard with Other MIDI Software



The function buttons and features in BlasterKey MP3 will not be available when it is used with other MIDI software.

To use the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard with other MIDI software:

1. Start the MIDI software.
2. In the MIDI software settings, for MIDI input port, select your audio card's MIDI In device. Refer to your MIDI software's documentation for details.

Additional Information

For more information on the BlasterKey MP3 chord mode and **Troubleshooting** tips, refer to the online **Help** file.

- From the Windows start menu, select Creative → Creative BlasterKey MP3 → Creative BlasterKey MP3 Help File.

Maintenance



Disconnect the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard from the audio card before cleaning.

Clean only the exterior of your BlasterKey MP3.
Use a damp cloth. Do not use liquid or aerosol cleaners.

Specifications

Keyboard

- 49 touch-sensitive full-sized keys
- 8 function buttons

Power and Voltage

- Voltage of DC 5V, supplied via audio card MIDI/joystick port
- Power consumption of less than 0.5W

Connectors and Jacks

- Sustain Pedal jack
- 5-pin MIDI Out connector
- 15-pin MIDI port connector
- 15-pin Game port connector

Troubleshooting

On the BlasterKey MP3, the Power LED does not light up when it is connected to the soundcard.

Cause The BlasterKey MP3 keyboard is not connected properly.

Solution Check the connection from the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard to the soundcard.

No sound is heard from the computer speakers when I play on the BlasterKey MP3 keyboard.

Cause The MIDI device in your computer may be muted.

Solution Check to ensure that the MIDI device in the computer is not muted.

Cause The SoundFont bank is not loaded.

Solution Check to ensure that the SoundFont bank is loaded.

Refer to your audio card's documentation for details on loading the SoundFont bank.