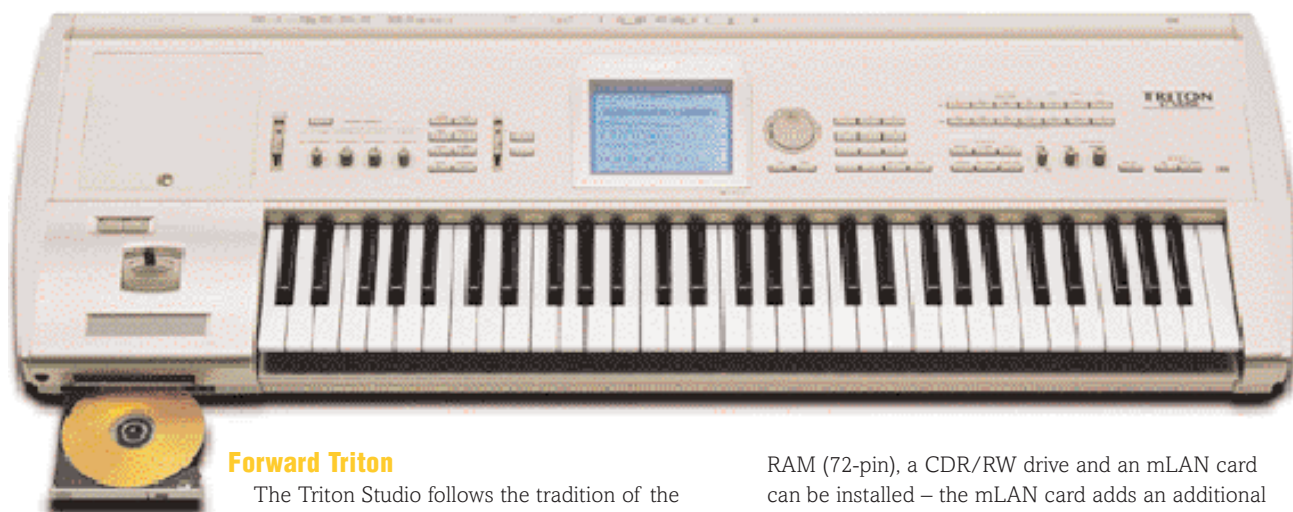


Korg Triton Studio

The Triton synth/sampling mothership lands on Brad Watts 'welcome mat'.

I say this every time it happens, but I do enjoy a synth thrown my way. Chris Holder has obviously heeded my call and has gone off to find the largest piece of synthesis hardware on the planet – this machine is a monster. Two rather weedy couriers and myself had to manhandle this thing up six flights of stairs because the lift in my building was out of action – again. (If you have to move this thing, make sure there are no physically challenged couriers in your road crew.) At 29.7kg, the Korg Triton Studio is the heaviest keyboard I've ever had to deal with. Perhaps it's the weighted keyboard – get it? Weighted keyboard? I'll get on with it. [If you have to explain 'em, don't say 'em – CH]

sequences, has a dual arpeggiator, six outputs and the provision for up to six audio inputs (with an mLAN board installed). Should you need more than the standard Triton fare you can add Adat I/O, and up to eight extra sound generation boards including a MOSS board. Adding the MOSS card augments the rig with the synthesis engine that first appeared on in the Z1. This allows PCM, analogue, VPM (Variable Phase Modulation), and physical modelling to be combined into a single instrument. 128 MOSS patches come with the card, providing a starting point for the recreation of analogue synthesis through to complex sounds such as the body resonance from violins and guitars, brass, reeds and organ textures. Up to 96MB of sampling



Forward Triton

The Triton Studio follows the tradition of the very esteemed Triton range – it is 'the mother of all Tritons'. Designed as a complete workstation/sampler, it features what Korg identify as Hyper Integrated or 'HI' synthesis system. It's basically PCM-encoded samples and tone generators combined with DSP to apparently "guarantee pristine sound". Well, I'll tell you what, I haven't felt that same 'ooooooooh' feeling from playing a synth since I took delivery of my Kurzweil K2000 about nine years ago. This thing sounds very, very nice. I'm sure I'm preaching to the converted (if any Triton users are reading this) but I truly was enamoured with the sound. Full without being too Roland-y, and clear without being too Yamaha-ish. Anyway, this being the mothership, Triton makes it the ultimate providore of production tools. It samples,

RAM (72-pin), a CDR/RW drive and an mLAN card can be installed – the mLAN card adds an additional two audio inputs. Should you start adding PCM wave cards you can cram 112MB of data in there. The cards include collections such as 'Studio Essentials', 'Vintage Archives', 'Loop Construction', 'Dance Extreme', 'Orchestral', 'Piano and Classic Keyboards' and the forthcoming 'Trance Attack'. Loop Construction is actually a collection of ReCycle-ed loops, all ready to mix and match at any tempo or pitch. There's already 48MB of waveform data in there even before you start adding extra cards. Polyphony is a maximum of 120 notes but that note density depends on which waveforms you're using. At worst, the polyphony quotient drops to 60 voices. Each oscillator has multiple filter types plus two Midi-syncable LFOs, each offering 21 waveforms. In addition, the modulation matrix gives

you 42 sources and 55 destinations! Controlling parameters comes via four knobs, two switches, a data entry slider, ribbon controller and the typical joystick. The effects section is quite special, with up to five stereo insert effects and two master (mono in/stereo out) effects along with a master three band EQ. All effects can be used at once and can be freely routed to any input or output. Modulation sources from the synth engine can quite happily modulate effect parameters. Those mod sources include Midi clock information and the internal sequencer and arpeggio devices.

Sample City

Sampling functions are capped at 16-bit/48k. In its factory configuration there's 16MB in there but up to 80 minutes can be recorded to the internal 5GB hard drive. However, samples must be loaded into RAM to be played from the actual keyboard. Samples can be loaded from Akai S1/3000 format and exported as either WAV or AIFF formats. Sampling outside sources can be patched via the five insert effects as they're recorded. Plus, any sound source from the internal sequencer, arpeggios or the internal CD can be snatched to form playable waveforms. Once sampled, waveforms can be time-stretched and looped with crossfading; resampled with effects; and adjusted according to BPM frequency. Up to 1,000 multisamples and 4,000 single waveforms can be stored in memory. Mic and line inputs can be introduced via the analogue inputs which have their own input adjustment – a small pot next to the input jacks. Should you want to sample 'properly' there are the S/PDIF inputs or (should you have the mLAN card installed) via FireWire.

One big improvement on the original Triton's sampling is the ability to 'resample' – an essential feature than any serious samplist. Any sample can be resampled using all eight of the on-board effects. And your keyboard performance of any on-board or sampled sound can also be resampled.

When it comes to sample editing the huge touch-screen won't leave you wanting to move waves over to a desktop computer. It's a large, clear and simple to navigate affair with Korg's touch-screen technology making the operating system far more intuitive than most computer OS's. Does Korg have the patent on this idea? Why can't other manufacturers do this?

Triton Ergonomics

Even forgetting the touchscreen's intuitive nature, the Triton machines are intuitively and ergonomically laid out. The left hand side of the unit features all the performance controllers, such as the four assignable controller knobs and ribbon controller. The right hand side is home to all Program and Combi recall, sampling, sequencing and arpeggiator functions. Three dedicated knobs control tempo and arpeggiator gate and velocity levels. Any actual editing of the makings of a patch is done via the touchscreen. The 16-track sequencer can

record in real time and step entry, with a capacity of up to 200,000 notes. These events can be shared among up to 200 songs.

A plethora of powerful sequence editing tools are available. A convenient feature for getting started is the Template Song function. Each of the 16 preset templates contains a palette of programs and effects appropriate to a particular style of music. Then 16 additional locations are available for users to store their own templates. Also included are 150 preset drum patterns depicting various musical genres. The Cue List feature allows the user to assemble a song from individual elements such as an intro, verse, chorus, and middle eight and arrange those different sections and store up to 20 variations of the song. Sequenced data can, of course, be saved in both flavours of Midi file for transferring to other file players.

The CDR/RW drive comes fitted as standard in Australia and is a lovely touch. It'll allow you to burn standard Red Book audio CDs from the Triton. Songs do have to be first sampled as a WAV file and then burnt to disk.

Should you not need a weighted keyboard then the Triton studio is available in 61- and 76-note synth action keyboards. I'm no piano man so my friend [dance music producer] Mr Paul Mac popped in to give the weighted action keyboard a tinkling and was suitably impressed. Incidentally, Paul's bass sounds usually emanate from a Korg Wavestation AD, so he's familiar with the Korg sound. The Triton Studio got a large thumbs up.

Moon Unit

The Triton Studio really is an awesome production unit. It's caused me to rethink my attitude towards the 'workstation' concept. The highly polished sounds combined with whatever samples you care to inject can be honed down to CD format very easily. In essence, it's even simpler than the sequencer, computer, sampler-style of production I'm used to. The expansion options are quite incredible and with a full complement of cards and with a burner as standard this could really be the last keyboard you'd ever need. Mind you, have a look at the retail and you'll see that it's probably the last keyboard you'll ever *afford*. Not cheap, but worth it.



Manufacturer Info

• Korg
Email: info@korg.com
Web: www.korg.com
See our Contact Directory for local contact details

Price Guide

• Triton Studio 88: US\$4,200; Triton Studio 76: US\$3,800;
Triton Studio 61: US\$3,400