

Tips and Tricks

Use a small zone at the top of the fingerboard as Triggers for the rest of the fingerboard

What?? Yes, in the *FRETBOARD* Menu you can assign the 24th fret as a separate Zone, which does not issue notes. Put the fingerboard into TriggersOff/Guitar mode, Tapping style/one note per string. When you press, say, the first string at the 24th fret you will hear nothing. But, if you have a note held somewhere else on the first string, when you release the 24th fret you will hear the lower note. The notes you hear are actually played on the upstroke at the 24th fret. Sort of backwards intuitively, but easy to work up the technique and very effective at high speeds.

Use the Joystick as a Trigger for the Fingerboard

In the *Sensor* menu, set up both 'Joystick Left' and Joystick Right' as a 'Single-Key-ReTrigger' for the channel(s) assigned to the fingerboard. The Joystick can then be used with a back and forth motion as if it were a guitar pick.

Hint when in the Edit menu system

When MIDI notes are called for in a menu, simply play the fingerboard to select and enter them on the screen.

Switching sounds quickly while playing by using the Sustain Pedal

Set up the fingerboard with two voices layered on each key. Use the *Fretboard* menu to create two Zones with the same boundaries. Then, in the *Fretboard/MIDI* menu setup Zone#1 with a base volume of 127 and Zone#2 with a base volume of 0. In the *Sensor* menu, setup the Sustain pedal to send 'Volume Up" to channel #2 and "Volume Down" to channel #1. When you step on the pedal the sounds will instantly switch and when you release the pedal they'll switch back. There are many variations on this which can use multiple channels. Also the *Solo* feature can be used to quickly provide new layer combinations for your switching selections. The volume pedal or joystick may be used with this technique to create smooth crossfades instead of simple switching.

The Octave and Patch keys seem to respond inconsistently

The Ztar fingerboard is zone-based. A zone has an assigned MIDI channel. Because the fingerboard is able to play from multiple channels you need to first select a channel by pressing a key within a zone and then pressing the Octave or Patch buttons. This also holds true for the TRIG and G/POLY buttons. Either tap and sustain a note from the fingerboard in the 'triggers-on' mode or pluck and sustain a note while in the 'triggers-off' mode, and then press the 'OCT' or 'PAT' buttons. I think you'll find that the buttons respond consistently. Also, the 'pads' response curve in the utility-menu does not affect the 'OCT' or 'PAT' buttons or any of the function keys on the Ztar.

Regarding the sensitivity of the String assembly

Adjustments are made using the six trimpots located inside the guitar, which are accessible by removing the rear cover plate. Please be careful when making adjustments not to drop screwdrivers or bits of metal into the electronics. The power is on!

Several factors affect the way the strings respond. This is not a pitch-converting system; in fact the computer can interpret the resonating of the string after it's been struck as additional pick attacks. This means that the string must remain fairly dead after it has been plucked. The dampening felts along with the proper string tension should keep the string from bouncing or continuing to vibrate. If double triggering occurs, make sure the string makes only a brief, dull sound and has no buzzing. If the double triggering is very consistent try reducing the sensitivity adjustment pot for each string, available by opening the rear panel.

The overall sensitivity of the strings is governed by the settings of the individual sensitivity trimpots and the height of the strings above the pickup. Also, to a degree, the string tension plays a part because a looser string will vibrate a little more and so will provide more energy to the magnetic pickup.

Crosstalk between the strings may occur when the string tension is loose enough that one string vibrates into the magnetic field of its neighboring pickup. Also, if the sensitivity adjust pot is set too "hot", a string pickup may sense the neighboring string. Try to balance these two effects when you're setting the string tension to your touch.

Trigger Mutes

A metallic strip is provided on the back of the neck. Its purpose is to provide a consistent means for muting the strings regardless of the prevailing humidity, the moisture on your hands, your diet, type of shoes (if any), and some other factors which are found to affect this type of circuit on other instruments.

Mounting new strings:

Thread the new string through the small head-block near the neck. There is a small recess where the ball-end will rest. Pull the string over the dampening felt, over the damper felt at the tail-block and in to the proper hole. Using a blunt object (like a pencil eraser) press the string down in front of the hole as you thread it through the end of the block. This will help to feed the string straight through.

Pull the string snug with a small pliers and tighten the rear screw. Tighten the front screw to add tension to the string. When you clip the string you may wish to leave a little string length to grab on to in case you need to remove or re-tension the string.

Mounting new strings, cont. –

You can also re-use the remainder of the strings by creating your own “ball-end”. Double over the string-end and wrap it around a little post like a piece of the string itself. Stick the free end back into the hole to lock it and the string will draw up tightly.

Quick Setup adjustment for the Strings

Bear in mind that the closer the string is to the pickup polepiece the more sensitive it becomes. When you insert the string, pull it snug and tighten the clamping screw. Use the tensioning screw to both bring up the tension and bring the string down close to the polepiece.

When the strings have been installed and the string-tension has been set up, adjust the individual trimpots inside the guitar in this way to achieve the proper sensitivity:

(The trimpot labeled “STG1” adjusts the low “E” string for a right-handed player.)

- 1) Set the guitar in the Triggers-On Mode and in Guitar Mode. This will turn on the open-strings. Using a small screwdriver turn each trimpot counter-clockwise just until its open-string note sounds and then turn the screwdriver a tiny bit back in the other direction. This will set the maximum sensitivity. You may find that a ‘half-way’ adjustment gives you better dynamics. Some people will turn down the Gain almost entirely.
- 2) Now play one open string at a time with your thumb or forefinger in a downward direction. Listen for strings that are sounding, other than the one you just plucked. In particular, the adjacent string will probably sound. Go ahead and turn back the trimmers slightly for any strings, which sounded without being plucked. Pluck the rest of the strings in the same way and make the necessary adjustments.
- 3) Play the strings again but in the other direction and listen for unwanted ringing. Make any needed adjustments and you’re done.