

Leigh Wilbraham and the Tyros5 Organ Conversion



We did it for Tyros2, 3 and 4. Now Leigh Wilbraham explains how you can convert your Tyros5 into a two-keyboard organ with bass pedals.

I'm often asked how one turns a Tyros5 keyboard into an organ. Most people seem to think that doing this is complicated and will lead to all manner of problems - but, in fact, it's quite easy to do and will bring a whole new level of musicality to your performance. In this step by step tutorial, I'll not only show you what you need to do to make Tyros5 into an organ but also explain the benefits of doing so.

What you need to begin with...

The stand

Any double keyboard stand will suffice, as long as there is room underneath the lower keyboard to place the pedals and be able to play them. The Bespeco SH100T (available from Amazon) is the perfect stand for your first organ setup. Of course there are lots of other stands available on the market but the Bespeco is one that many of the professionals use and, at £121, is one of the cheapest on the market as well.



Bespeco double stand

The lower keyboard

Once you have decided on the best stand for you you'll need a nice lower keyboard. The most popular (and by far the nicest to play) is the Yamaha NP31. The NP31 has a very similar feel to the keybed of the Tyros5.



Yamaha NP31

We want to get the keyboards as close together as possible - for that 'organ' feel - and, priced at around £229 this keyboard makes a perfect lower keyboard due to the lack of knobs and switches above the keys. There are other keyboards that will do a similar job, but having owned both M-Audio and Alessis products, I prefer the quality of the Yamaha - and the others didn't give me the same level of playing enjoyment.

MIDI bass pedals

The most expensive part of your 'organ' setup will probably be the MIDI bass pedalboard. This is likely to be a long term investment as, hopefully, the MIDI pedalboard will be with you for many years to come - so please don't rush out and buy a cheap unit.



Hammond XPK200

The pedals will need to take a lot of hard wear, so buying a low budget set isn't always the best option. At the lower end of the price range are the Studiologic MP113 Pedals (at anything around £310.00 - £400.00). Moving up you'll find the Hammond and Roland pedalboards (averaging around the £600 - £800 mark). My preferred choice is the Hammond XPK200 pedalboard - due to the fact that the expression pedal is mounted above the pedals, just as on a real organ so you get the same feel and performance as on a traditional home organ.

MIDI cables

Finally, to complete your shopping list, you'll need two MIDI cables to connect the pedals and lower keyboard to the Tyros5.

So, for as little as £650 (depending on your choice of parts) you can turn your Tyros5 keyboard into an organ that, in my view, surpasses many 'real' organs that cost in excess of £12,000! In fact, I've been so delighted with the sound from my own Tyros5 setup that I've sold my Wersi organ as it is no longer needed!

Making the connection



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How to connect the MIDI pedalboard and lower keyboard

- 1 Plug one end of one the MIDI cables into the MIDI OUT socket on the back of the pedalboard - and then plug the other end into the MIDI A IN socket located on the back of the Tyros5.

Note: DO NOT plug them into the MIDI B IN socket as this will not work correctly.

- 2 Next, plug one end of the remaining MIDI cable into the MIDI OUT socket on the back of your lower keyboard. Plug the other end into the MIDI IN B socket on the back of the Tyros5.

So, just to ensure I'm being 100% clear...

MIDI Pedals: Connect OUT from the back of the pedals to MIDI IN A on Tyros5.

MIDI Lower Keyboard: Connect OUT from the back of the keyboard to MIDI IN B on Tyros5.

- 3 For ease of use, set the MIDI pedalboard to transmit data on MIDI Chanel 1. You may need to refer to the pedalboard's handbook for instructions - but, in most cases, it's just a matter of pressing a button and then one of the pedals to set the transmit channel. Once you have done this you can move on to the next step.

- 4 On the Tyros5 press the FUNCTION button on the main panel to call up the Function Menu page (fig.1).

From here you can make changes to the keyboard's MIDI settings. To do so, press button G - MIDI to call up the MIDI page (fig.2).



- 5 Fig. 2 shows the MIDI PRESET page. The default mode - 'All Parts' must now be changed to a different setting so that the Tyros will work with the pedals.



- 6 We're going to create our own MIDI template - so press the lower part of button 8 - EDIT (circled in fig.3).



- 7 This takes you to the MIDI SYSTEM page (fig.4).



- 8 You don't need to make any changes to this page - but you will want to alter a few items on the RECEIVE page. So, use the TAB buttons to select the RECEIVE tab (fig.5).



- 9 Now highlight PORT1 CH1 using buttons A and B (fig.5).

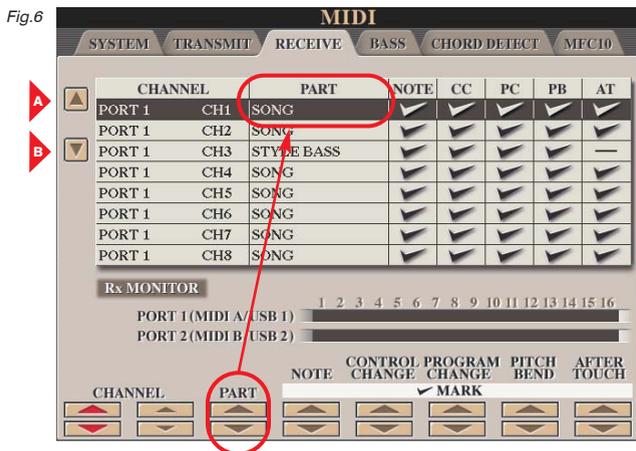
Note: You connected the MIDI pedalboard to this port / channel when you plugged the unit in and set its transmit channel to channel 1.

- Assuming that you completed the setup successfully, a little red dot will appear under '1' in the Rx Monitor whenever you press a bass pedal (fig.5a).



This means your pedals are connected and working okay.

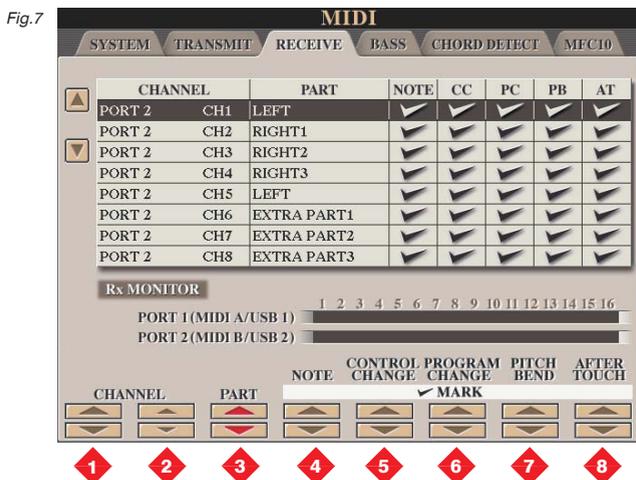
- Using the PART up and down buttons set the PART for PORT1 CH 1 to SONG (fig.6). The reason for doing this will be revealed shortly.



Congratulations! That's the pedal section set up. Next you must set up the lower keyboard.

Setting up the lower keyboard

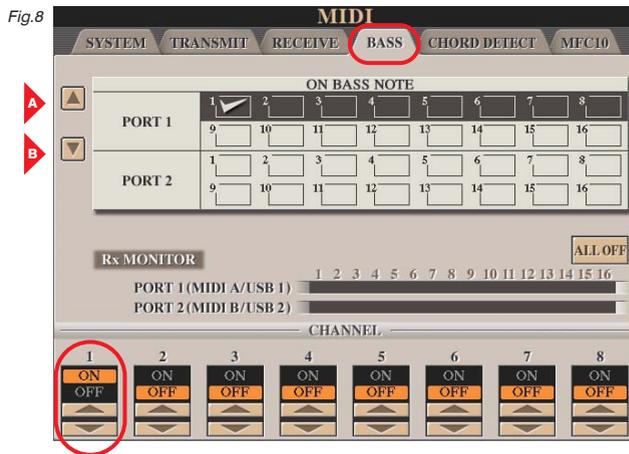
- You connected the MIDI lower keyboard to the MIDI IN B socket on the back of the Tyros5 keyboard. Using button 2 (under CHANNEL) scroll down the MIDI RECEIVE page until PORT 2 - CH1 is highlighted (fig.7).



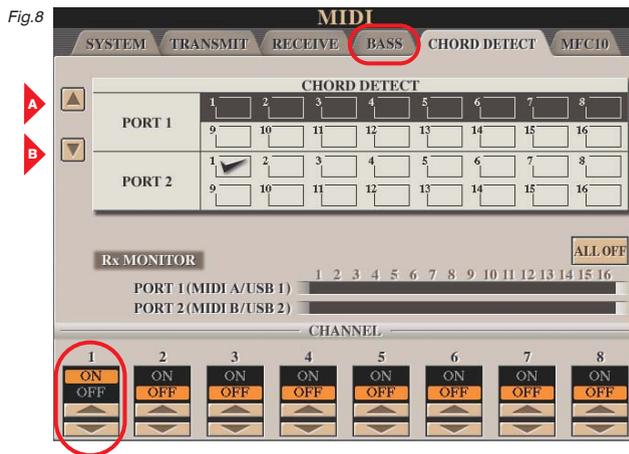
- Now use the PART button at the bottom of the page to change the part to LEFT (fig.7). By doing this you have instructed Tyros5 to play sounds from the LEFT voice part when keys are pressed on the MIDI lower keyboard.

- Next, use the TAB button to the right of the screen to tab to the BASS page (fig.8).

To tell Tyros which MIDI channel will play the bass, highlight PORT 1 numbers 1-8 and mark Channel 1 with a tick by switching '1' ON.



- Having done this, select the CHORD DETECT tab (fig.9). Then switch on PORT 2 - Channel 1 so that the Tyros5 knows that the automatic backing styles will be triggered from the new lower keyboard.



Save your work

Having input all the MIDI settings required to make the system work it's *essential* to save this information before going any further.

- Press EXIT once to return to the MIDI USER page (fig.9).

If any MIDI setups have been saved previously the page may already contain the MIDI template files (as in my illustration). Otherwise it will be blank

At the bottom of the screen use the lower part of button 6 to select SAVE.

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- 2 This calls up the familiar text box where you can enter a name for the MIDI template (fig 10). Choose something that will remind you when this setup should be used.

As you can see, I labelled mine 'Organ'... and, having entered the name press the top part of button 8 - OK (circled) to confirm.



- 3 The MIDI data is now saved and a template file bearing the label 'Organ' is added to the USER page (fig.11).

Select the file using the adjacent button (button C in the illustration) and you're almost ready to begin playing your Tyros5 as an organ.



There are just a few minor last details to complete in order to make the system work perfectly.

Setting the split point

To give your Tyros5 organ system a full range upper keyboard you'll need to change the SPLIT POINT. When you play Tyros in the normal way (as a single keyboard) the split point probably looks something like the illustration in fig.12.



Let's change this now...

- 1 From whichever page is currently displayed on your keyboard, press DIRECT ACCESS followed by EXIT to return to the instrument's Main page (fig.13).



- 2 Now press the FUNCTION button on the panel to call up the UTILITY page we saw earlier in fig.1. This time we select button C - labelled STYLE SETTING / SPLIT POINT / CHORD FINGERING - before choosing the SPLIT POINT tab to show the page illustrated above in fig.12.

Note: You will only see the split point when the ACMP button is switched on in the STYLE CONTROL area of the panel.

- 3 Because you now have a full lower keyboard, you can use the entire upper keyboard for the melody - so set the split point for the STYLE + LEFT to E0 and the split point for the RIGHT3 voice to F0. The SPLIT POINT page should now look like the illustration in fig. 14.



- 4 Once you've made these changes, press DIRECT ACCESS followed by EXIT to return to the main screen.

Pedal Voices

You've now completed all the technical configuration and you can start to play your new Tyros5 organ. Tyros5, being a 'single keyboard', however, doesn't have any voices that are specifically designed to be played by organ pedals. The MegaVoice bass voices that are usually featured in the accompaniment styles are of no use in 'live' play - and the keyboard generally doesn't have any normal bass voices with built in sustain.

If you're experienced with Tyros' voice editing software you can create and customise your own bass pedal sounds - but by far the easiest way is to use the pretty comprehensive set of ready-made pedal voices contained on the Yamaha Club's Regi-Stick. If you've previously had the Tyros4's Regi-Stick (RS4) you can upgrade to the RS4-1 quite cheaply. If you're starting from scratch you'll need the full product. Still, it only costs about £30 (UK) and contains all the pedal voices, registrations and MIDI templates you need to achieve a quick and easy conversion of your Tyros5 from keyboard to organ.

The bass voices are loaded via the SONG area of the keyboard and the SONG controls are then used to control the volume of the bass.

It may sound a little confusing at first but this is a simple way to pick a pedal sound for your Tyros. Put simply, each pedal voice is created as a single SONG file. It doesn't work in the conventional sense by playing music - but it does set up the sound required (i.e. a bass voice with sustain).

Of course we mustn't forget that Tyros wasn't/isn't ever designed to be an 'organ' - and this little system is just a 'work around' that has been produced to give those who prefer to play an organ (and who also love the Tyros sound), an option to do just that. If you're prepared to accept the necessary compromises it works very well in my opinion.

If you have any questions feel free to drop a line to me, care of Glyn at the club office (glyn@yamaha-club.co.uk), and I'll be more than happy to answer them in the next edition.

Until then... happy playing.

Leigh Wilbraham

Yorkshire Brass Band

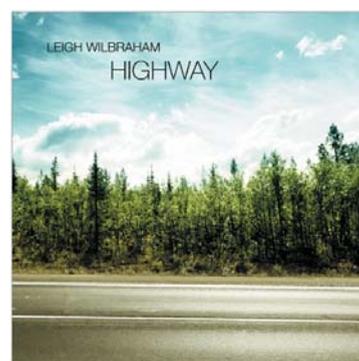
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