

More advanced work on the Roland JV-1080

Please refer to the previous Info Sheet on the Roland JV-1080 'Using the Roland JV-1080' before you read this, to avoid extreme confusion and worry!

This Info Sheet is designed for those prepared to go further with their JV to discover more about creating and customising Performances, and taking advantage of the wealth of sounds and effects that are available on the JV-1080.

This sheet also contains information about how to use the multiple audio outputs on the back of the JV-1080, which are very useful if you wish to make multi-track recordings of work you have done on the JV, and offers some hints about how to make the most of the expansion boards.

Roland JV-2080

Roland launched the updated version of the JV-1080 in early 1997, known as the JV-2080. At the risk of annoying Roland, we would suggest that this module is not a great deal different from the 1080, despite costing quite a lot more money. For those who are interested, the 2080 allows you to have up to 8 expansion boards inside it (rather than the maximum of 4 with the 1080), and they have changed the design of the front of it.

The JV-2080 has less buttons to press, and allegedly is slightly more logical to use, but Roland didn't change one of the major drawbacks with the 1080, which is the MIDI and voice specification. It still only receives on 16 MIDI channels, still only has a single MIDI IN, OUT and THRU, and still has the same number of voices in its memory as the 1080 (voices effectively mean the number of notes it can understand at any single moment). I'm afraid that the Sibelius verdict is that, pound for pound, the JV-1080 is probably a better option.

Before we create a "Performance" on the JV

It's a good idea to find out what sounds you like and don't like inside the JV (and the expansion board(s) if you've got those as well). Making a note of all the sounds you like saves a lot of time later on, especially since a JV-1080 with 4 expansion boards inside it might have around 2,000 available sounds you can use! A bewildering range of choices. Why not first "filter out" the ones you know you'll never use?

This auditioning is best done if you have a MIDI keyboard which transmits information on MIDI Channel 1 – which they all should do. Go into PATCH mode on the JV, and simply scroll through all the User patches (128 of them), then the Preset Patches (128 in each bank A, B and C), the General MIDI bank (also called Preset D), and finally the Expansion Board sounds (if you bought this additionally). You can scroll through sounds, either by turning the big round dial, or stepping through them one by one, using the INC/DEC buttons.

If you haven't got a MIDI keyboard, load up a long piano piece in Sibelius that's simply on one or two staves, connect up the JV to your computer, and simply play the file, and change Patches whilst the file is playing.

Once you've selected the sounds you like (and some of them might not be orchestral instruments at all), you're ready to start creating your own "Performances".

What is a “Performance” on the JV-1080?

Please refer to the previous Info sheet first!

A “Performance” in Roland-speak is actually a single location which can have up to 16 sounds (parts) all playing at once. (Actually, the JV will also play 16 sounds when you go into GM Mode, but GM mode doesn’t give you the same amount of flexibility, or the same range of sounds as a Performance).

Incidentally, Patch Mode only gives you the option of hearing one sound at once - good for auditioning sounds you like, but no good as a Mode for playing back scores.

The JV has 32 available locations for customised Performances to be stored. These are to be found inside the USER/CARD section, numbered 1 to 32. (There are an additional 64 Performances in the Preset A and B sections, but you can’t alter these). If you buy an optional DATA CARD and install it in your JV, you get more available locations to store Patches and Performances - useful if you like saving all of your changes.

Setting up a “template” Performance

It is a good idea to reserve one of the User Performances as a “template” for use with Sibelius, so that every time you start a new piece, the JV is immediately ready to receive information correctly. You can even choose for your JV to “ignore” some messages from Sibelius, so that it doesn’t get confused! Please see the section below called “How to change things in a Performance”, for further information.

One small problem

First of all, though, one small problem! You may find that when using Sibelius (or indeed, any external notation package or sequencer), the JV gets confused when it receives Program Change messages (ie the information sent via MIDI which tells the sound module what sounds to play). The JV may not know whether you want to change the Performance number (since there are 32 in the bank), or whether you want to send a program change message to one of the 16 parts inside your performance.

The answer is to make a small change inside the JV to prevent this confusion arising: make sure you’re in Performance mode, and that you’re on the Performance number that you want to customise. Press the SYSTEM button. The screen should give you a display with the words CONTROL CHANNEL, and probably the number 1. Using the INC/DEC buttons, scroll this number until it is set to OFF, and press the SYSTEM button again, to exit this page. The confusion should now be avoided! (Page 66 of the official manual discusses this). Please save the change you have just made (see below for how!).

Saving your changes

Be aware that you should save permanently some of the changes we suggest below, since you are customising Performances to your own specification. To save the changes you have made, press the UTILITY button. The JV now asks you to select WHERE you want to save your change (ie on top of what you’ve currently got, or into another Performance location). Press the ENTER button if you’re happy to write your change in the place where you currently are, or choose one of the other 31 Performance locations, and then press ENTER.

All the things you can change in a JV "Performance"

There are many things you can alter in Performance mode. Some of them you won't need to change very often or at all, some things you can alter from Sibelius, without getting too involved with the JV, and some things you may find useful to change in the JV Performance. Here is a list of the main things you can do:

1. Choose & Select which SOUNDS you want to use in the Performance. There are 16 you can use in each Performance, and these are called PARTS. In practice, you can have 15 normal parts and one drum part in every Performance.
2. Choose & Select which MIDI channel each Part is set to (and whether each part will actually RECEIVE any information at all). Each Part can be set to any MIDI channel between 1 and 16 (but channel 10 is reserved exclusively for Drum kits - and not, incidentally, tuned percussion, which behaves like a normal instrument). You can set more than one Part to the SAME MIDI channel - if you want two or more sounds to play the same notes at once. You can also effectively "turn off" some Parts if you don't want them to receive any MIDI information at all. We strongly recommend that you set EACH PART in your customised performance to a SEPARATE MIDI CHANNEL.
3. Choose whether each Part receives NON-NOTE INFORMATION from Sibelius, like Program Change, Volume, Pitch Bend or Sustain Pedal data. You might assume that you want every Part to receive this information, but there are occasions when you might want to turn this function off. (The JV usually leaves all these features turned on, so you can normally simply ignore this function).
4. Choose & Select the overall maximum VOLUME each Part can have. Sibelius, of course, controls the dynamics written on each of your staves, and can also control the volume levels of the instruments, so you may not need to fiddle with this in the JV. You can choose to override Sibelius, and control the individual volume levels of the Parts inside the JV instead, thus creating a JV "Mix" of your piece, if required. You may particularly need this if you find that some instruments tend to get "lost" - the answer is to turn everything else down - without having to alter things on your Sibelius score.
5. Choose & Select what octave or PITCH each Part will play at, including minor tuning changes as well as increments of semitones. This is particularly useful if the sound you have chosen in the JV is an octave too high or low, for example. Instead of transposing the notes on the screen, simply transpose the Part inside the JV!
6. Choose & Select where you want to hear each Part to be PANNED in the stereo spectrum. Sibelius, of course, will allow you to do this, but you can also set this up in your JV if you wish. Every Part inside your Performance can be in a range from hard left (64L) to hard right (63R) - with every increment in between!
7. Choose whether each Part inside the JV will be able to play notes right across the piano keyboard, or only be able to play within a limited range of notes. This is usually called the KEY WINDOW. Once again, you can probably ignore this function - but be warned - some of the factory "Performances" inside the JV do make use of this facility. Ideally, it is best to check that all of your Parts physically play right across the keyboard - from a C-1 note, right up to G9 (unfeasibly high!).
8. Choose & Select which audio OUTPUT at the back of the JV that you want each Part to come out of. They will normally come out of the MIX Left/Right (or out of the Headphones output), but you can alter this if you are using a mixing desk, external effects units or multi-track recorder - basically, any time you might want to separate one sound completely from another. There are actually 3 sets of stereo audio outputs at the back of the JV; if you had a lot of Parts all playing at once, and you wanted to separate them out, choose this option to send individual Parts via OUTPUTS 1 or 2. You can also use this function along with panning, so that if you had 2 instruments that you were sending out of the OUTPUT 1 jacks, for example, you could make one come out of the LEFT side, and the other, out of the RIGHT side, by creative use of panning.

9. Choose whether you want each Part to have specific EFFECTS (like reverb, chorus, delay etc) added to it! This is an extensive (and quite confusing function) inside the JV, and takes a bit of explaining. Please call us if you want to know more! Basically, every Performance in the JV has 3 possible effects that can be applied - chorus, reverb, and one other effect that you choose. There is a huge range available, and they are very impressive, particularly if you are writing film-music ideas. Each Part within the Performance can have a varying amount of effects applied to it - but they can't each have an independent effect of their own! I hope that's as clear as possible.
10. Choose how many VOICES each Part uses. This is slightly more confusing to understand, and is probably best left unaltered! What it means is that the JV has 64 "voices", which it divides between 16 Parts (ie an average of 4 voices for each Part). You can interfere with this in exceptional circumstances, if you have a Part that is playing a lot of notes, and sounds like it has run out of voices! In this instance, you effectively "steal" some voices from another Part that you might not be using.

How to change things in a Performance: the PARAMETER Button

So you see...there are a great deal of things you can change - and many of them you won't often need! Sibelius has cleverly side-stepped the need for you to alter things, by offering many of the same functions inside Sibelius 7.

All of the 9 things mentioned above are changed in basically the same way - and you need to press the buttons on the JV in the right order to prevent confusion!

The important rule to remember concerns a button not yet mentioned, labeled PARAMETER (in the bottom left hand corner). If you press this when you're on the Performance you want to start amending, it gives you access to all the Edit functions we've described above. All of a sudden, the BLUE letters below the Display screen come into operation. If you now press one of these (like the LEVEL button), the screen should give you the actual volume level of one of the Parts (probably Part 1). You can use the data slider or INC/DEC buttons to change this value. Now comes the DIFFICULT bit, which is unfortunately CRUCIAL to remember: if you now want to alter the levels of OTHER Parts, you'll need to press the PARAMETER Button again (which should make its light go out). You'll now STILL be in the process of editing the levels of the Parts, but you can now press ANY of the 8 buttons underneath the screen, each of which corresponds to a different Part (ie Parts 1 to 8). If you want to alter the levels of Parts 9-16, you'll need to press ANOTHER button, to the left of the main screen, with the numbers 9-16 on it. This should now give you access to the remaining 8 Parts, by press the 8 buttons and making changes in the same way as before.

Multiple Edit Screens

If you have mastered the section above, there are two other things to give advice about:

1. What if the edit screen you get to has TWO or MORE different values, all of which you might need to change?

This is where you'll need to use the two ARROWS pointing left and right that you get below the Data Slider. These allow you to move the blinking CURSOR from underneath one value to a new position. (You can only change a value when the cursor is already blinking underneath it).

2. What if the Edit screen has an arrow on it that points up or down?

This indicates that there are more pages within this particular edit screen beyond simply the one that is being displayed. You can reach these by using the ARROWS pointing up and down that you get below the Data Slider. Once again, use the cursor as advised before. You'll find there are multiple screens, giving you many choices!

When you've finished Editing

If you've assembled all the sounds you want in your Performance, and set all the MIDI, Panning, Effects, Level and Output parameters, you've done EXTREMELY WELL! Give yourself a round of applause - but don't forget to save your changes. If you need to exit out of editing at any stage, press the PERFORMANCE button again; you'll just get the normal display screen, probably with an asterisk, indicating that you've done something to change the Performance. Ignore this if you don't need to save any changes.

Try out what you've created with a Sibelius score - but make sure that Sibelius isn't sending strange information to the JV; we guarantee that you will have some problems at first!! One way of avoiding such confusion is to "lock" your Performance, making the JV oblivious to Sibelius 7's Program Change information. Please call us if you need further help. Keep persisting, and you'll soon get the hang of it!

Important advice about MIDI Channels

Sibelius is very clever - as I'm sure you already know! There's one thing that it does that can quite easily confuse the JV. This is on the subject of MIDI channels. Sibelius gives a different MIDI channel to every new stave you create (except untuned percussion which is always on Channel 10). It starts with Channel 1 for stave one, and so on. The problem comes with stave 17! Sibelius starts again, and gives that stave MIDI channel 1 again (even though there's already another stave / instrument using that channel).

Sibelius then tries to "juggle" two sounds on the same MIDI channel (by sending messages telling MIDI channel 1 to "swap" between the two instruments, often in a split second, so that you probably won't notice anything clever going on! Fine!

However, this CAN occasionally cause confusion with ANY sound module - not just the JV. Here's some advice worth following, if you are using more than 16 staves:

Carry out a little MIDI channel "audit". If you've got two or more staves all reserved for the SAME instrument (ie Violins 1 and II), there's no reason why they can't be on the same MIDI channel. Alter this in your Sibelius score, so that eventually, you should be using less MIDI channels. If you do this, there is much less chance that your sound module will get confused, and suddenly start playing the wrong sounds.

Obviously, be careful with your choice of MIDI channels for any new staves you create whilst you're in the middle of a large score.

Conclusion

Despite being a more "advanced" guide, the information above barely scrapes the surface of all the edit features inside each JV Performance. Just remember that you should save the changes you like, but ignore the ones you don't like (the easiest way to do that is by EXITING, and then simply changing to another Performance number, and back again to the Performance you were working on. The JV will have "forgotten" your changes unless you saved them.).