_MIDI CONTROL CENTER FOR MINILAB 3

ARTURIA

_The sound explorers

Special Thanks

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Thank you for choosing Arturia!

This manual covers the features and operation of Arturia's **MIDI Control Center**, the companion software for many Arturia hardware devices. For additional information about the hardware itself, please read the appropriate owner's manual.

Introduction

Dear musician,

The fact that you're reading this manual means that you have done your research and have purchased one of our products. Thank you! We like to think that you did so having recognized the power, flexibility, and sheer *fun* of the Arturia device you now own. We are certain you are about to begin a journey that will lead to the production of some amazing music.

This manual will help you make the most of your Arturia product by using the MIDI Control Center, the powerful companion software we designed to work with our hardware.

The MIDI Control Center does much more than simply give you another way to tweak the front panel controls of the device; it also provides access to parameters that are not available from the front panel.

If you are reading this manual and have not already downloaded the MIDI Control Center, you can find it here: Arturia Downloads & Manuals.

> **i** ♪: A pop-up window will let you know when a new version of the MIDI Control Center is available. You'll have the option to update at that time or wait until later.

Be sure to visit the www.arturia.com website for information about all of our great hardware and software instruments. They have proven time and again to be the go-to solutions for musicians around the world.

Musically yours,

The Arturia team

Table Of Contents

1. FIRST STEPS WITH THE MIDI CONTROL CENTER

1.1. Installation and location

After downloading the latest MIDI Control Center installer for your operating system from the Arturia website, double-click on the file to begin the install process. Then, all you have to do is follow the instructions. The process should be trouble-free.

The installer puts MIDI Control Center alongside the other Arturia applications you have. In Windows, check the Start menu. In macOS, you'll find it inside the Applications > Arturia folder.

MiniLab 3 is a class-compliant USB device, so Mac users don't need to install any drivers. Under Windows, a MIDI driver is installed during installation of Arturia's MIDI Control Center.

1.2. Connection

Connect MiniLab 3 to your computer using the included USB-C to USB-A cable, or use any USB-C to USB-C cable if your computer has USB-C. Connecting to a USB hub is also fine. MiniLab 3 will be ready to go almost immediately.

Now launch MIDI Control Center. MiniLab 3 will automatically connect, and you'll be able to see it in the list of connected devices:
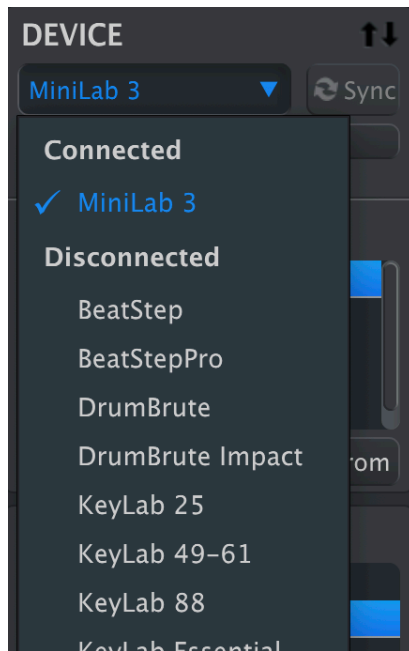
1.3. Built-in Manual

Select *Help > Open Manual* to access a built-in version of the MIDI Control Center user manual.

It's a good introduction to MIDI Control Center, describing each section of the user interface and defining important terms you will need to know while using the MIDI Control Center, such as "Working Project" and "Template."

The MIDI Control Center manual has general descriptions of features that apply to all Arturia products. Here, we will cover only the MIDI Control Center features that are specific to MiniLab 3.

1.3.1. MIDI Control Center Features

When MIDI Control Center and MiniLab 3 are connected, you are able to:

- Edit a Minilab 3 Template locally in the computer, then drag and drop the Template to one of the internal Device Memory locations
- Use the **Store To** and **Recall From** buttons to transfer a Template to or from the MiniLab 3
- Edit the Device Settings (i.e., the Global parameters)
- Perform other MIDI Control Center functions such as file management and Template creation, among other things.

2. TEMPLATES AND DEVICE MEMORIES

You will mainly work with two types of memory objects with MiniLab 3 in MIDI Control Center: Local Templates and Device Memories.

DEVICE MEMORIES
- User 1
- User 2
- User 3
- User 4
- User 5

⬆ Store To   ⬇ Recall From

LOCAL TEMPLATES
- Factory Templates
  - Default
- User Templates
  - Experimental 1
  - Studio Recording – Keys
  - Live Electronica
  - Spock's Logical Template
  - Sound Design
  - Experimental 2
  - Messing Around in Linux
  - Video and Light Control
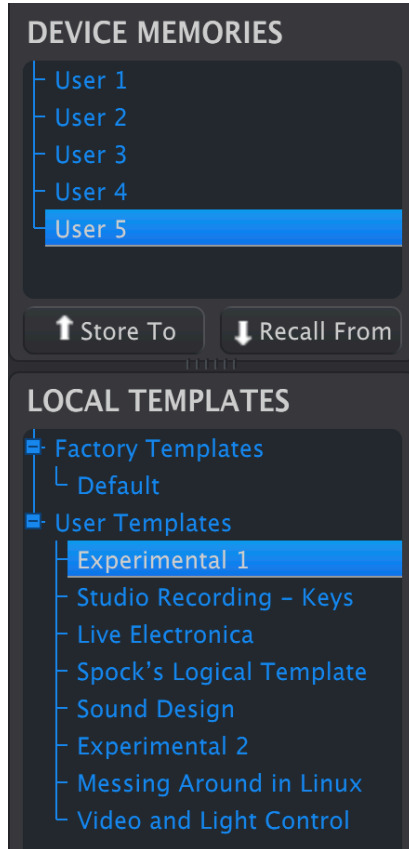
Both contain controller maps [p.10] – assignments you create by clicking on the knobs, faders, pads, and touch strips in the graphical display of MiniLab 3, then edit the parameters.

So what's the difference between a Device Memory and a Template? Simply put, Device Memories live inside the MiniLab 3 hardware and Templates live on your computer in the MIDI Control Center software.

The intended workflow is that you can create as many Templates as you like for different uses in the software, then pipe up to five different ones into MiniLab 3 as Device Memories.

These can then be enabled as User Programs [p.23] in the Device Settings window, which lets you select them from MiniLab 3 by holding **Shift** and pressing Pad 3. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

> ℹ ! A Template does not contain the Device Settings themselves, which are global. We'll show you how to work with those in the Device Settings [p.21] section.

2.1. Templates

When working in MIDI Control Center, you are always editing a Template, never a Device Memory directly.
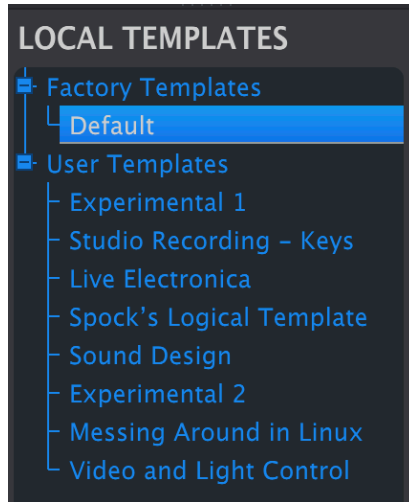
The Template Browser shows a list of all the Templates available to you inside MIDI Control Center. These are divided into two main groups of Templates: Factory and User.

2.1.1. Template Operations

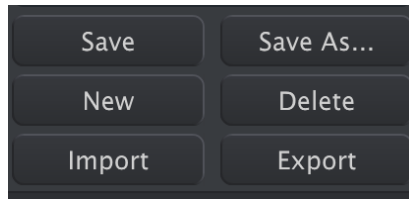The buttons at bottom left manage templates. Please remember, that all operations are done locally in the computer and don't affect user programs saved inside the MiniLab 3 as long as you don't store them in the MiniLab 3.

- **Save:** Saves any changes to the currently selected local template.
- **Save As:** Saves a copy of the currently selected Template in the User bank.
- **New:** Creates a new Template in the User bank.
- **Delete:** Deletes the current User Template.
- **Import:** Imports a Template file from your computer as a new User Template.
- **Export:** Exports the currently selected Template to your computer.

Factory Templates cannot be deleted or overwritten – copy them with a Save As operation first.

When clicking on New to create a template, you will be asked to enter its name. After doing that, confirm with Return.

♪ The Import/Export options are great for sharing Templates with other users. Template files have the extension "minilab3."

2.2. Device Memories

There are five memory locations in the Device Memories window. These correspond to the User Program memories inside MiniLab 3. Each Device Memory / User Program contains a full set of controller mappings [p.10] – custom assignments for what MiniLab 3's knobs, faders, pads, and touch-strips do. User Programs can be enabled one by one in Device Settings [p.21]. You can then call up enabled Programs by holding **Shift** and pressing Pad 3 on the MiniLab until you see the Programs you want ("User1," "User2," etc.) on the display.

2.3. Drag and Drop

You can drag and drop a Template to a Device Memory and vice-versa.

When dragging a Template into a Device Memory, you'll be able to use your custom mapping.

2.3.1. Template to Device Memory

To bring a Template into MiniLab 3, drag it onto one of the Device Memory locations, like so:
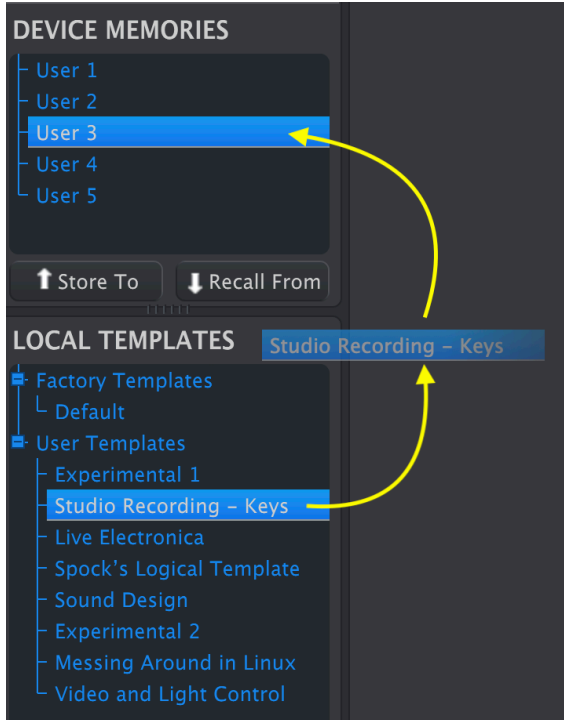
MIDI Control Center will display a progress bar as the data migrates into MiniLab 3.
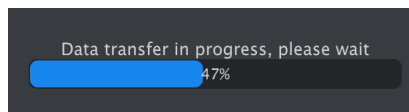
! This process overwrites the memory for one of the corresponding User Programs in MiniLab 3, so be sure the Template is exactly to your liking.

2.3.2. Device Memory to Template

You can also drag a Device Memory into the Template area in one of two ways.
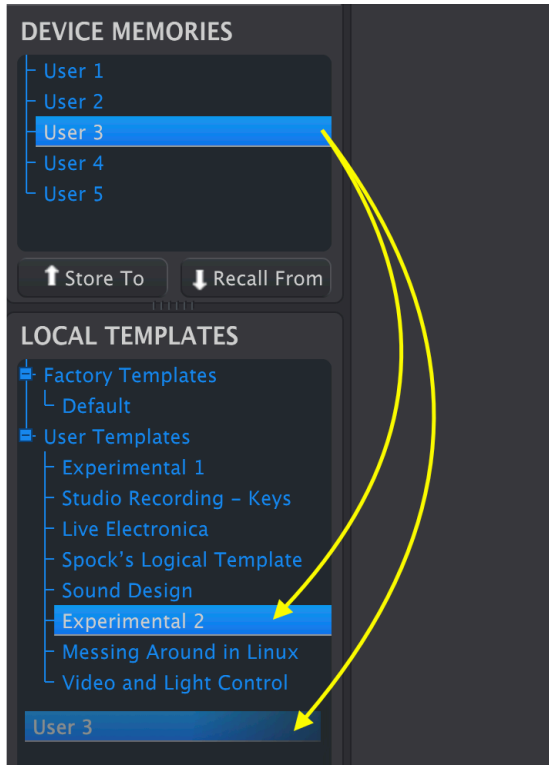
- Dragging it onto an existing Template name overwrites that Template with the contents of the Device Memory and keeps the name.
- Dragging it into the blank area creates a new User Template.

In either case, you can now edit that Template in MIDI Control Center.

> ℹ️ ! When an edit is made an asterisk will appear next to the name of the source Template. This means you need to *Save* or *Save As* to preserve your new data.

2.4. Store To and Recall From
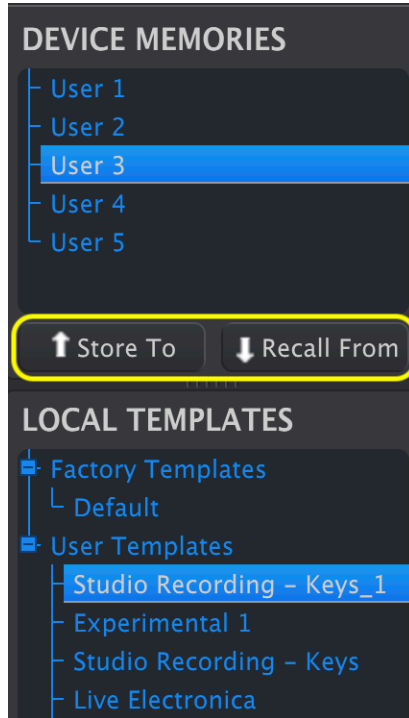
The **Store To** and **Recall From** buttons mirror the drag-and-drop operations.

- To move a Template into MiniLab 3, select the Template and the destination Device Memory and click **Store To**.
- To save a Device Memory as a User Template, select the Device Memory and click **Recall From**.

Unlike drag-and-drop, **Recall From** always creates a new User Template; it does not overwrite existing ones.

3. EDITING TEMPLATES
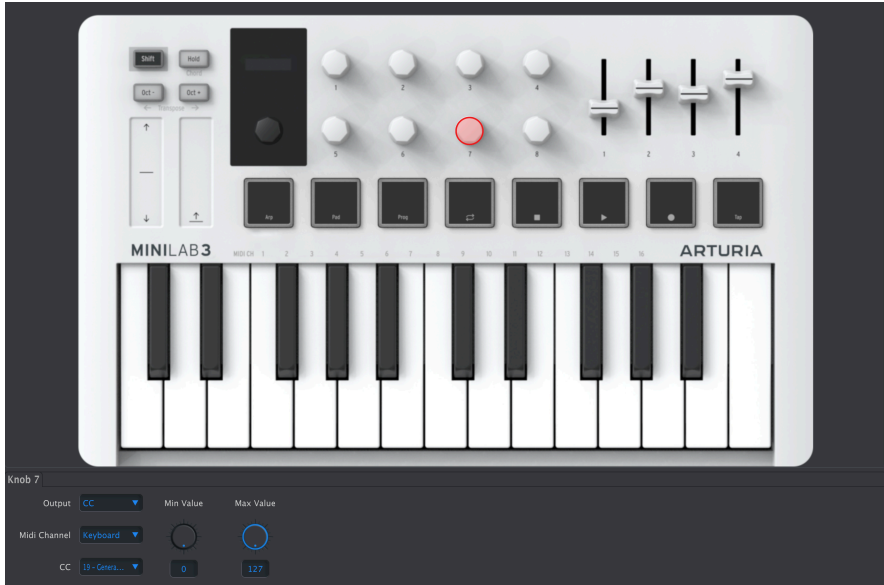
Now we get to the fun stuff: creating Templates in the **Controller Map** tab of MIDI Control Center's main window. Click on any eligible control onscreen. The control will be highlighted in red and a group of parameters will appear below.

Remember that you are editing the currently selected template, and an asterisk will appear after its name to remind you to save your changes.

There are generally three different ways you'll enter parameter values in MIDI Control Center: clicking something and moving it, selecting an option from a pop-up menu, or typing a number into a field.
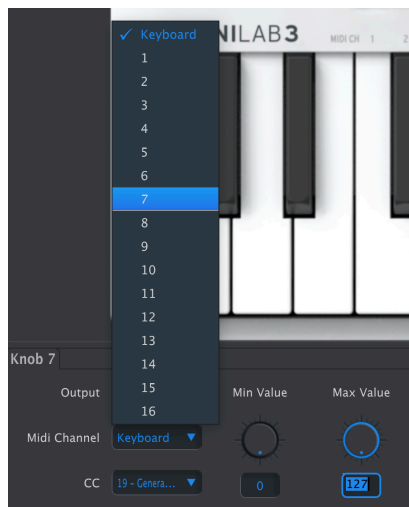
3.1. MIDI Channels

Every editable control on MiniLab 3 includes a MIDI Channel parameter. In all cases, the menu looks like this:
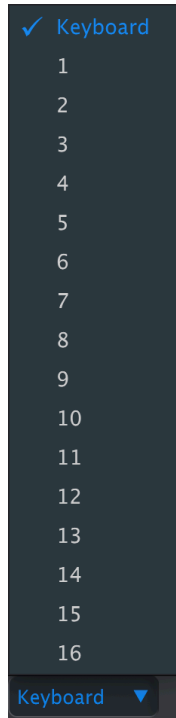
You can specify the channel on which the control transmits, or select *Keyboard* to use the same MIDI channel as MiniLab 3's keys, which is set as the Default Keyboard Channel [p.22] in the Device Settings.

> ♪ The keyboard is preferable if you want to control whatever virtual instrument has the focus in your host software. Locking different controls to send on different channels is useful if you need real-time control over parameters in multiple instruments at once – for example, the filter cutoffs in several different soft synths on different instrument tracks.

3.2. Pitch Strip
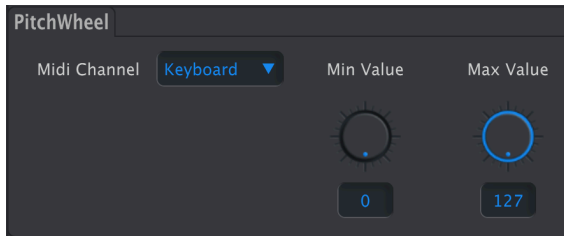
- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the strip transmits.
- **Min Value:** Sets the minimum value the strip can send when pressed downward.
- **Max Value:** Sets the maximum value the strip can send when pressed upward.

Note that center position (no pitch-bend) has a MIDI value of 64 – lesser values apply downward bend and greater values bend the pitch up.

You can also invert the pitch strip by setting the minimum value higher than the maximum.

3.3. Modulation Strip

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the strip transmits.
- **Output:** Selects whether the strip transmits a continuous controller (CC) message or a non-registered parameter number (NRPN).
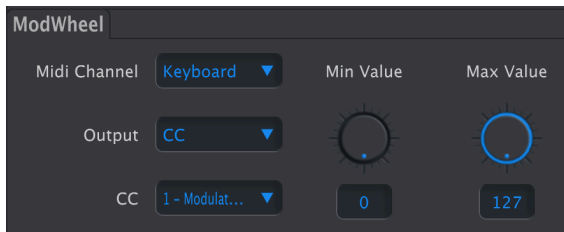
When Output is set to CC, the following parameters are available:

- **CC:** Selects the continuous controller message sent by the strip (CC 1 is the MIDI standard for modulation).
- **Min Value:** Sets the value sent at the strip's bottom touch position.
- **Max Value:** Sets the value sent at the strip's top touch position.

When Output is set to NRPN, the available parameters change.

- **Parameter MSB:** Adjusts the most significant bit in the NRPN.
- **Parameter LSB:** Adjusts the least significant bit in the NRPN.

> ♪ What is this NRPN, MSB, and LSB stuff? We don't have room for a full MIDI tutorial but in a nutshell, a non-registered parameter is a way of sending instrument-specific or manufacturer-specific commands that go beyond the core MIDI standard. Unlike a CC, an NRPN sends two values: the most and least significant bits. This allows for 16,384 possible values instead of just 127.

3.4. Main Encoder knob

Selecting the main encoder brings up for tabs to adjust its behavior in different states.

3.4.1. Main Knob
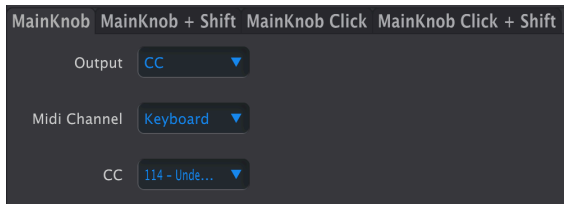
This tab determines what happens when you turn the main knob.

- **Output:** The options are CC and Off.
- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the encoder knob transmits.
- **CC:** Selects the continuous controller message sent by the encoder.

3.4.2. Main Knob + Shift
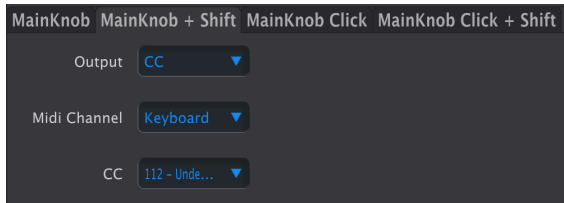
This tab determines the behavior when you hold the **Shift** button and turn the main encoder. The settings are the same as for Main Knob without shift, but can have completely different values.

3.4.3. Main Encoder Knob Click

In this tab, you decide what happens when you simply press the main encoder knob like a button.

- **Output:** The options are Off, CC, and Mackie.

With Output set to CC, further parameters are:

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which pressing the knob transmits.
- **CC:** Selects the continuous controller message sent by pressing the encoder.
- **On Value:** Sets the value sent when the knob is pressed.
- **Off Value:** Sets an alternate value for when the knob is toggled in Gate mode.
- **Type:** Determines whether pressing the encoder is momentary or latched.
  - *Gate:* On value is sent on press and off value is sent on release.
  - *Toggle:* Clicking the encoder switches between On and Off values.

With output set to Mackie, pressing the encoder knob performs a DAW transport function according to the Mackie Control Universal (MCU) protocol.
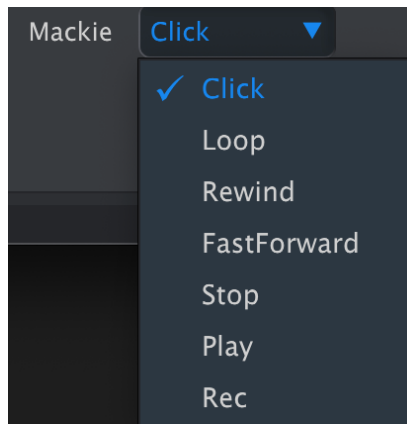
The options include turning the click (metronome) on or off, entering or exiting loop mode, rewind, fast-forward, stop, play, and record.

> Here is our suggestion: Set 'Play' on 'Click' and 'Stop' on 'Shift + Click'. You can of course explore the different options yourself.

3.4.4. Main Knob Click + Shift

Shift-pressing the main encoder can perform an entirely different task. The settings under this tab are the same as for pressing the encoder [p.14] without Shifting.

3.5. Shift Button
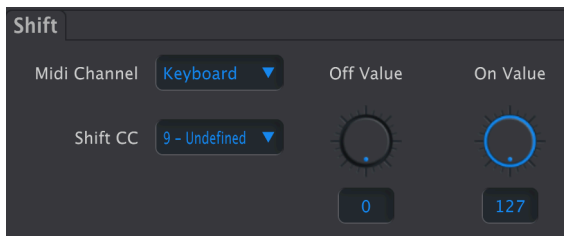
Yes, you can decide what the **Shift** button itself does! Its behavior is always momentary, meaning you have to hold it to transmit the "on" value.

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which pressing the Shift button transmits.
- **CC:** Selects the MIDI continuous controller message the Shift button sends.
- **Off Value:** Sets the CC value sent when Shift is released.
- **On Value:** Sets the CC value sent when Shift is pressed.

Making a custom mapping for **Shift** should not interfere with its default interactions with other parts of the hardware (like the main knob). But remember it only flip-flops the destination parameter between two values – it doesn't move smoothly between them like a knob.

3.6. Knobs
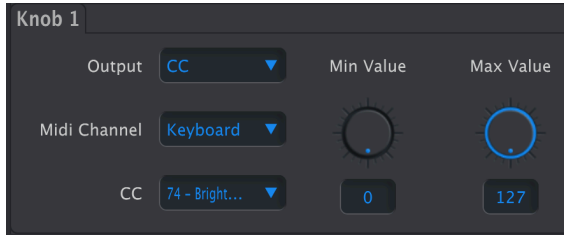
All knobs have the same options.

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the knob transmits.
- **Output:** Selects whether the knob transmits a continuous controller (CC) message or a non-registered parameter number (NRPN).

When Output is set to CC, the following parameters are available:

- **CC:** Selects the continuous controller message sent by the knob.
- **Min Value:** Sets the lower value limit when turning the knob.
- **Max Value:** Sets the upper value limit when turning the knob.

You can invert the knob's behavior (clockwise = down and counterclockwise = up) by making the minimum value greater than the maximum.

When Output is set to NRPN, the available parameters change.
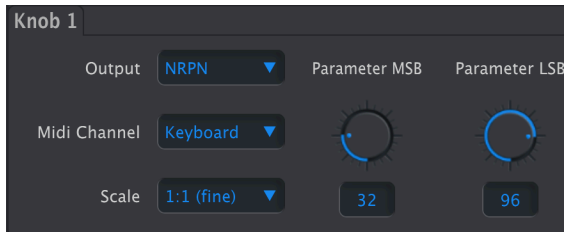
- **Scale:** Adjusts how finely or coarsely the knob moves through the range of values when turned.
- **Parameter MSB:** Adjusts the most significant bit in the NRPN.
- **Parameter LSB:** Adjusts the least significant bit in the NRPN.

> ♪ A brief explanation of NRPNs is in the Modulation Strip [p.12] section.
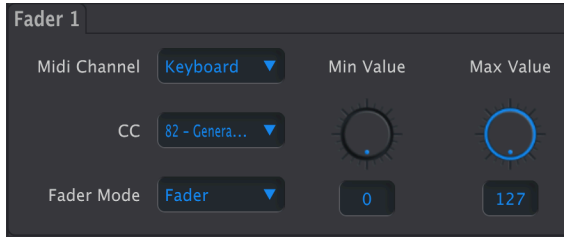
3.7. Faders

The faders are relatively simple – they send MIDI CC messages only.

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the fader transmits.
- **CC:** Selects the continuous controller message sent by the fader.
- **Min Value:** Sets the lower value limit.
- **Max Value:** Sets the upper value limit.
- **Fader Mode:**
  - *Fader*: Moving the fader upwards increases the value; downwards decreases it.
  - *Drawbar*: Moving the fader downwards *increases* the value; upwards decreases it.

> ♪ Drawbar mode does the same thing as swapping the maximum and minimum values, only with one click. This makes the fader work like an organ drawbar in instruments such as Arturia B-3 V.

3.8. Pads

The Pads can generate four kinds of information according to the **Output** setting: MIDI notes, MIDI CCs, Mackie Control transport commands, or MIDI program changes. This can be set for each pad individually, with separate settings for the same pad in banks A and B.

3.8.1. Pad Color

The **Color** setting is common to all four Output modes for the pads. Changes become visible, like all parameters, when you move the current Template into a Device Memory.

3.8.2. Pads – Notes

Pad 1 Bank A	Pad 1 Bank B		
Output	Note ▼	Type	Toggle ▼
Midi Channel	Keyboard ▼	Note	C1
Color	▮		
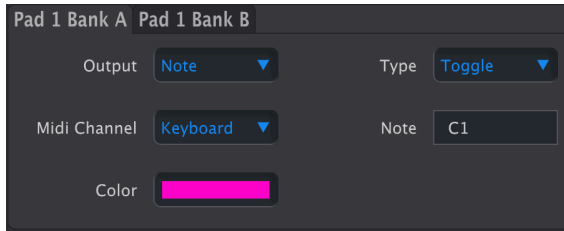
Each pad can send a MIDI note of your choosing.

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the pad transmits.
- **Type:**
    - ◦ *Gate*: The pad plays the note as long as it is held.
    - ◦ *Toggle*: Pressing the pad once plays the note, which will continue until the pad is pressed again.
- **Note:** Selects the note played from the following pop-up:

C-2	C#-2	D-2	D#-2	E-2	F-2	F#-2	G-2	G#-2	A-2	A#-2	B-2
C-1	C#-1	D-1	D#-1	E-1	F-1	F#-1	G-1	G#-1	A-1	A#-1	B-1
C0	C#0	D0	D#0	E0	F0	F#0	G0	G#0	A0	A#0	B0
C1	C#1	D1	D#1	E1	F1	F#1	G1	G#1	A1	A#1	B1
C2	C#2	D2	D#2	E2	F2	F#2	G2	G#2	A2	A#2	B2
C3	C#3	D3	D#3	E3	F3	F#3	G3	G#3	A3	A#3	B3
C4	C#4	D4	D#4	E4	F4	F#4	G4	G#4	A4	A#4	B4
C5	C#5	D5	D#5	E5	F5	F#5	G5	G#5	A5	A#5	B5
C6	C#6	D6	D#6	E6	F6	F#6	G6	G#6	A6	A#6	B6
C7	C#7	D7	D#7	E7	F7	F#7	G7	G#7	A7	A#7	B7
C8	C#8	D8	D#8	E8	F8	F#8	G8				

The black and white backgrounds correspond to black and white keys on a keyboard.

> ♪ There is no rule that pads have to send contiguous notes. One cool use here is to set the pads to play only the root notes of the chords in your song, in a bass range, and even mapped to the MIDI channel of a specific bass synth. This really expands on the two-octave range of MiniLab 3's keyboard!

3.8.3. Pads — CC
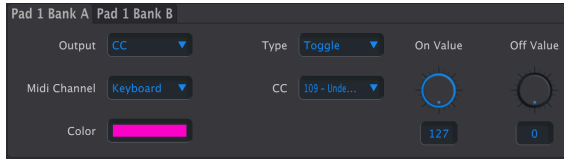
When output is set to CC, a pad can send a continuous controller message at a fixed value.

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the pad transmits.
- **CC:** Selects the continuous controller message sent by the pad.
- **On Value:** Sets the value transmitted when the pad is pressed.
- **Off Value:** Sets the value transmitted when the pad is released in gated mode or pressed again in toggle mode.
- **Type:** Chooses momentary or latched behavior.
  - *Gate:* Pad sends On Value only as long as it is held.
  - *Toggle:* Pressing the pad switches between On and Off values.

3.8.4. Pads — Mackie
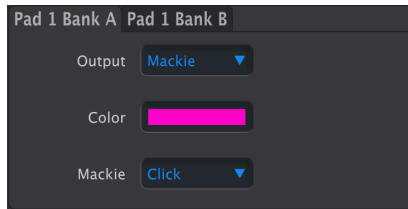
Each pad can be set to send a Mackie Control transport command. The options are:
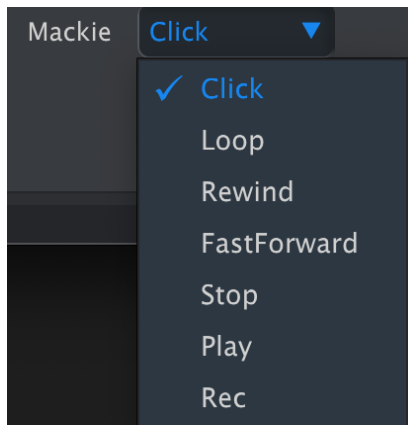
3.8.5. Pads – Program Change

Any pad can also send a MIDI program change, calling up a specific program from the instrument on its assigned MIDI channel.

- **MIDI Channel:** Selects the MIDI channel [p.11] on which the pad transmits.
- **Program Number:** Chooses from up to 128 programs within a bank.
- **Bank MSB:** Sets most significant bit for bank selection.
- **Bank LSB:** Sets least significant bit for bank selection.

> ♪ The way MSB and LSB work here relates to choosing from multiple program banks in instruments that have them. Consult the instrument's documentation for which MSBs and LSBs correspond to which banks, then set here accordingly. Between Program Number, MSB, and LSB, you should be able to pick any program out of any bank with a single tap on the pad.

4. DEVICE SETTINGS
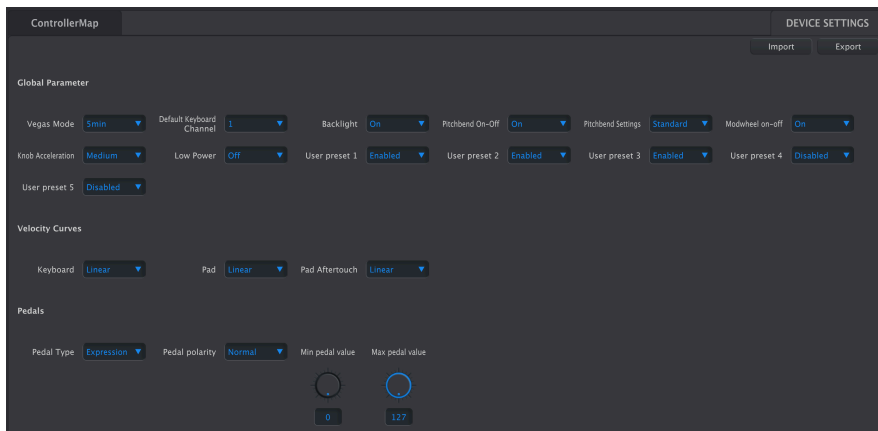
The Device Settings panel, accessed by clicking the Device Settings tab at the upper right of the MIDI Control Center window, controls the global settings of MiniLab 3.

4.1. Understanding Device Settings

You can think of Device Settings as the Preferences section in other software. There are a few key things to note in order to avoid confusion relating to Template files.

- Only one User Memory (User1 – User 5) can be active in MiniLab 3 at a given time.
- Device Settings are *not* saved as part of Template files – notice that if you change a setting, no asterisk appears next to the current Template name.
- Changing a setting in MIDI Control Center changes the setting in MiniLab 3 in real time – try the Backlight parameter to see this.
- The setting then stays that way in the hardware until you change it again.

MIDI Control Center divides them into three groups: Global Parameters, Velocity Curves, and Pedal parameters.

4.2. Global Parameters
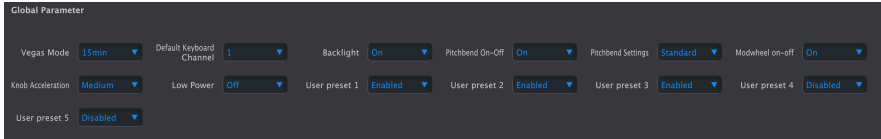
4.2.1. Vegas Mode

This sets the time delay before MiniLab 3's "screen saver" disco light show begins. The options are 5, 15, and 30 minutes — or you can turn off Vegas mode altogether. With Vegas turned off, MiniLab 3 will go into sleep mode after 5 minutes of inactivity.

4.2.2. Default Keyboard Channel

This is where the master MIDI channel for the MiniLab 3 is chosen in MIDI Control Center. Available values are 1-16. The one with the blue check mark is the current value.

The channel selected here is the channel used for any controller that has its own MIDI channel [p.11] set to *Keyboard*. When you select a channel, MiniLab 3's display momentarily flashes this:

```
MIDI channel
          Ch 01
```

Basically, this performs the same function as holding **Shift** and selecting a MIDI channel from the keyboard.

4.2.3. Backlight

This is a simple on/off selection that decides whether the pads and buttons are lit by default or not. In the off position, pads and buttons will still light if you press them or hold **Shift**.

4.2.4. Pitchbend On-Off

Another simple on/off selection. Turning Pitchbend off disables the pitch strip on MiniLab 3. This can be useful during live performance if you don't plan to use it, to avoid touching it by mistake.

4.2.5. Pitchbend Settings

This determines how the pitch strip behaves.

- **Standard:** "Spring-loaded" — pitch returns to center when you remove your finger from the strip.
- **Hold:** Pitch remains at the most recent value sent, even if you remove your finger from the strip.

4.2.6. Modwheel On-Off

Enables or disables the modulation touch strip.

4.2.7. Knob acceleration

It is possible to specify how quickly a parameter value changes in response to turning a knob at a given speed. By default, medium acceleration is selected. Three settings are available:

Knob Acceleration Medium ▼

None
✓ Medium
Fast
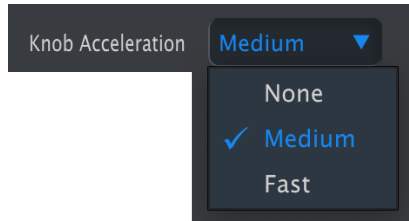
4.2.8. Low Power

Turning this mode on dims backlights on all pads and buttons and engages other internal power-saving tactics.

This is especially useful if you are powering MiniLab 3 from a device that is itself running on battery power and/or and where USB output power is much under 500 mA (like Apple's iPad). Use low power mode in conjunction with turning the backlight off to minimize power usage.

4.2.9. User Programs

User preset 1 Enabled ▼
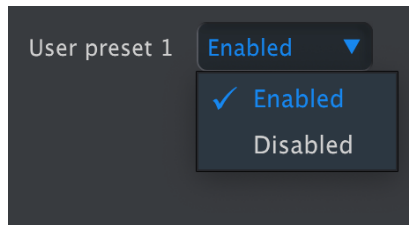
✓ Enabled
Disabled

Each of these five slots can be independently enabled or disabled. They correspond to the five Device Memories [p.6] that can hold control-mapping Templates you've created.

When you hold **Shift** and tap Pad 3, any enabled User Program will come up alongside the ARTURIA and DAWs programs – just hit the pad repeatedly to scroll through them. Of course, we don't want you to have to scroll through all five slots if you're not using them, which is why you can disable them. For example, with only User Programs 1 and 2 enabled, tapping the pad will cycle through ARTURIA - DAW - USER 1 - USER 2 then back to the beginning. When you store a local template into a user memory, this memory will be automatically enabled.

4.3. Velocity Curves

You can personalize the response of MiniLab 3's keyboard and pads to your playing force. For the pads, aftertouch is also adjustable.
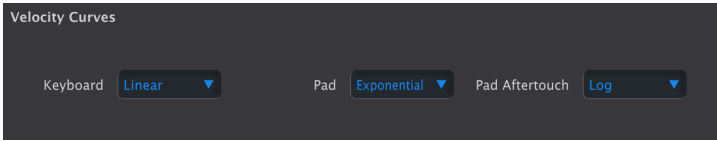
4.3.1. Keyboard
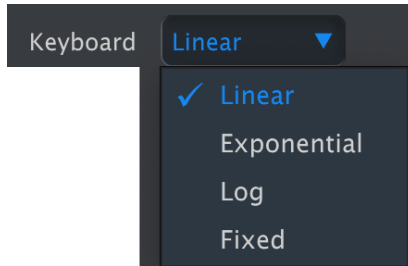
You get four curve options here: Linear, Exponential, Logarithmic, and Fixed.

Each relates your physical velocity to how readily the keyboard transmits MIDI velocity values. A Linear curve is a one-to-one relationship:
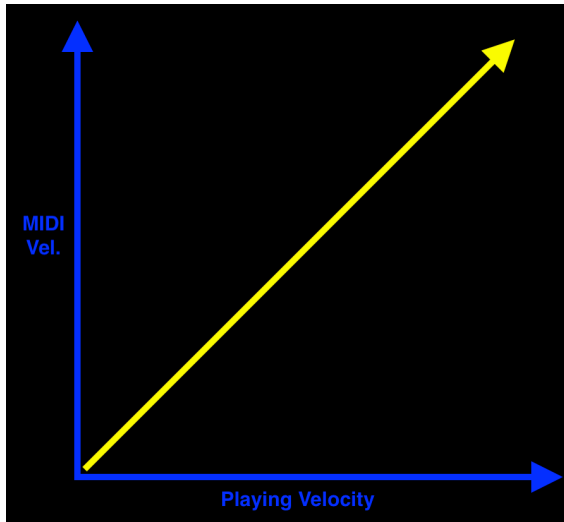
Linear velocity curve

An exponential curve has a "dip" that makes you work a little harder in the middle range:
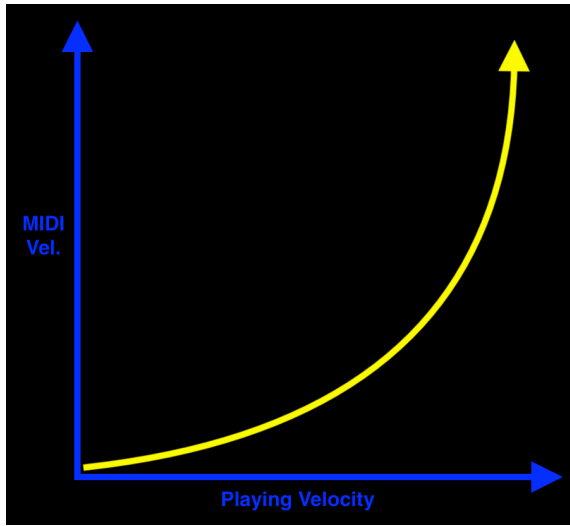
Exponential velocity curve

A logarithmic curve has a "hump" in the middle, corresponding to a lighter keyboard action:
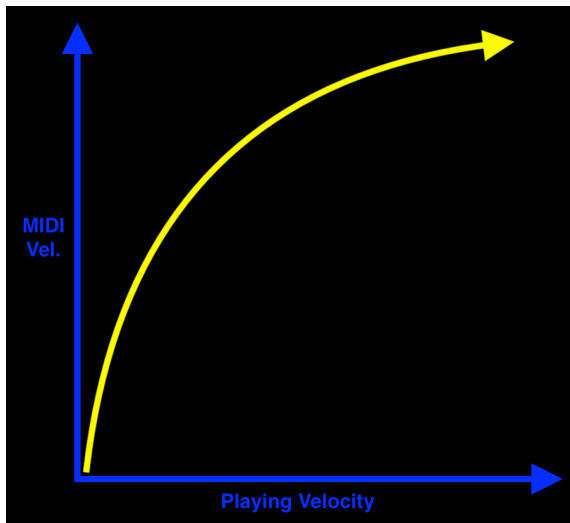
Logarithmic velocity curve

Finally, the Fixed setting sends an adjustable MIDI velocity value no matter how hard or soft you play:

Velocity Curves

Keyboard [Fixed ▼]   Fixed Velocity

106

4.3.2. Pad

The Velocity value for the pads is common to all pads (in both banks) globally. They are exactly the same as for the keyboard.

4.3.3. Pad Aftertouch

Aftertouch is a method of adding modulation by pressing the pad(s) harder after they have been pressed. Initial keyboard touch sends out a velocity value (higher if you play harder), and pressing the keys harder after you've played them sends another value that can be used for modulation. Typical uses include adding vibrato or opening up the filter of a synthesizer.
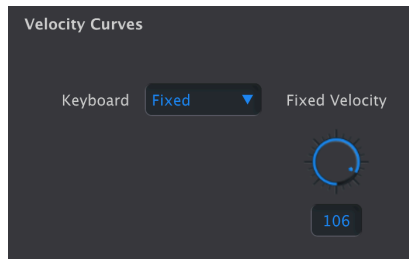
The most common type of aftertouch is Channel Aftertouch – pressing only one pad harder sends out one combined aftertouch value for all the pads. The pads on MiniLab 3 can all send out *separate* aftertouch values, even if many pads are played at the same time. This feature is called Polyphonic Aftertouch.

For the pads, you can also choose (globally) a Linear, Exponential, or Logarithmic curve for the aftertouch of all pads. There is no Fixed option.

Aftertouch is most expressive when you can gradually increase finger pressure to bring in more vibrato, vary the filter cutoff, or affect any other instrument parameter. So, experiment with the three curves to decide which feels best.

4.4. Pedals

MiniLab 3's single 1/4-inch TRS pedal input can accept a switch or continuous pedal. Four options for the **Pedal Type** parameter let you tailor this to your needs.

> **Note:** A connected pedal transmits MIDI on the Default Keyboard Channel [p.22].

4.4.1. Sustain
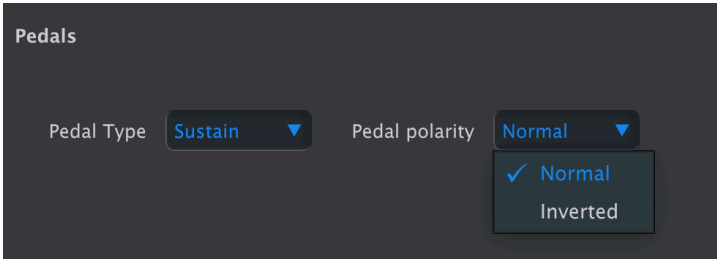
For use with a switch type pedal, this is a shortcut that fixes the pedal CC at 64, which is the common CC for sustain in the MIDI standard.

- **Pedal Polarity:** Normal or inverted.

> ♪ Not all sustain pedals are made alike. If notes are sustaining when you don't press the pedal and cut off when you do, change this parameter.

4.4.2. Footswitch
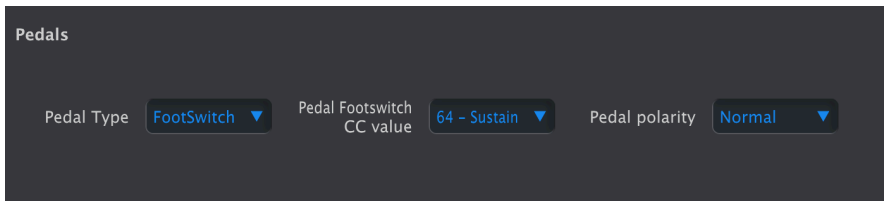
Also for use with a switch type pedal, the main difference from Sustain mode is that you can select from the full range of MIDI CCs in the **CC Value** menu.

4.4.3. Expression
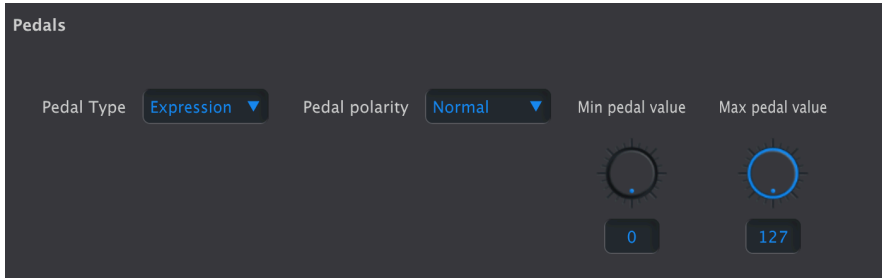
This is another shortcut. It assumes you have a continuous (a.k.a. sweep) pedal plugged in, and sends values on the MIDI standard of CC 11.

- **Pedal Polarity:** Normal or inverted.
- **Min Pedal Value:** Sets the value when the pedal is at its minimum (heel) position.
- **Max Pedal Value:** Sets the value when the pedal is at its maximum (toe) position.

> ♪ Inverting the polarity will cause your pedal to send lower values as you "give it more gas," or correct pedals that are working backwards.

4.4.4. Control
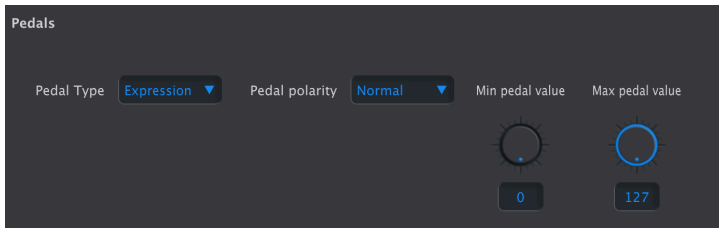
Also for a continuous/sweep pedal, control gives you the full range of MIDI CC options via the **CC Value** menu. The other parameters are as for Expression mode.

> ♪ Use Control mode to set up "half-dampening" on a piano instrument with a sustain pedal that supports it. Set the CC to 64 (sustain) and tweak the maximum pedal value until the dampening performs as desired. Raising the minimum pedal value above zero will cause some sustain to be heard all the time.

4.5. Import and Export Device Settings
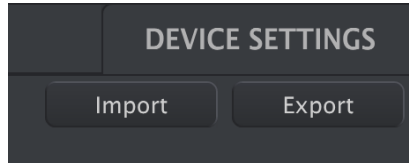
The **Import** and **Export** buttons at the upper right of the Device Settings window manage files containing *only* the Device Settings. Either will bring up an OS-level navigation box on your computer, prompting you for where to retrieve or save the file.

Device Settings files carry the extension **minilab3_ds**. You can swap these files with other users or build a library of configurations for various use cases.

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