

Expressive E Touché £349

This hand expression controller goes against the grain with its unique feel and look. Dan 'JD73' Goldman checks it out

CONTACT WHO: Expressive E (Source Distribution) **WEB:** www.sourcedistribution.co.uk
KEY FEATURES Touch-sensitive wooden surface, with 4 'shifts' configurable via software. Rubberised chassis/enclosure with continuous encoder and multicolour LEDs to denote bank/preset selection. USB-powered **DIMENSIONS:** 246 x 100 x 62mm **WEIGHT:** 1.7lbs



Standard pitch and mod wheels do a solid enough job, but they seem pretty one-dimensional, particularly as these days we are very much used to touchscreens and touch devices. So enter Expressive E, the innovative French startup aiming to bring expressive touch control to the masses with their Touché controller. I've always loved Kaoss Pads and wished a company would make a standalone device that could control multiple MIDI/CV parameters across multiple instruments in a hands-on way; that's pretty much what Touché brings to the table, and more!

Touché feels like a miniaturised finger-sized version of those wobble/balance boards in kids' playgrounds! It features a wooden touch-sensitive oval-ish surface that fits your hand/fingers comfortably, which is mounted on a sprung, rubber-skirted platform. Build-wise, Touché feels very well made with a silicone-rubber coated enclosure that houses the electronics and input/outputs for MIDI (via included breakout cable), along with CV outs and USB for computer connection. The intimately sensitive surface senses four dimensions of touch/pressure (shiftings) and under the wooden touch surface there's a slider that reduces or increases lateral movement and a sensitivity dial so you can customise Touché for your own touch/expression style. Each of these four dimensions can send out its own user-assignable MIDI CC or

Touché feels like a finger-sized version of those wobble/balance boards in kids' playgrounds!

CV (tweakable in the Lié software), or you can control VST/AU software instruments over USB by hosting them within the Lié software itself (Mac only currently).

Touché's software installation process involves installing several pieces of software for configuration and sounds (UVI Falcon for Touché optimised sounds, plus firmware and Lié installations) but after some manual consultation I was set. While the Lié software/UI seems initially complex, (it's a plugin host itself and there's a lot of configurable parameters onboard), it worked reliably as a hosted plugin within Logic X and also when hosting plugins itself. I was soon assigning MIDI CCs to control my software instruments (by hosting them within the Lié software) and to control my Prophet-6 too (standalone) and it was a joy to add such hands-on and instinctive multi-faceted expression to hardware synths and software plugins which had previously relied on pitch/mod wheels or dials/sliders for expressive control. The Lié software also includes CC templates for many hardware synths/devices and for using Touché standalone, you

can save custom control presets from Lié direct to Touché, then simply unplug your computer and select your saved presets using Touché's data wheel/multicoloured LEDs.

Touché is a fresh, innovative and very enjoyable to use device which can bring any hardware and software to life. While the installation process and software could do with some refining/streamlining (and I'd love Lié as an iOS app too), Touché and Lié are seriously impressive and I'm really looking forward to seeing more similarly forward-thinking products from Expressive E. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.8

Touché is both addictive and inspiring to use and adds a new dimension of expressive control to both software and hardware devices

THE PROS & CONS



Offers a unique approach to multi-touch control

Well-built and very sensitive with customisable touch curves, assignable CCs and CVs and eight simultaneous slots for parameter assigning

Works standalone or with your computer and saves control presets natively



Software/installation takes a while to get to grips with

A screen/display would help for preset recall/naming

A hold button or sustain input would be handy for freezing the current setting