

Notion 3: Its Time Is Now

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / October 14, 2009

Notion 3 has the potential to be for the PC what GarageBand is for the Mac.



After going through a company president and three marketing directors, [Notion Music](#), with the release of Notion 3, finally has a serious product with the potential for becoming to the PC what GarageBand is to the Mac.

I say this with the utmost of seriousness as [writer](#), teacher, and former marketer at the Fortune 500 level.

Notion 3 sports a well designed mixing board by which to mix your virtual scores, insert plug-ins from IK Multimedia (their Classik Studio Reverb and AmpliTube are included), an enhanced orchestral and jazz rock sound set, a lyric tool, and most impressive, the ability to insert VSTi's (virtual studio instruments) from East West (QLSO PLAY), Garritan Aria, Kontakt, and the Vienna Symphonic Libraries. The new mixing board also enables you to add effects plugins, which is good, because the Notion mixing board lacks an EQ plug-in.

Notion 3 lacks one feature to really compete with Garageband: the ability to record a vocal.

Adding this one feature would enable Notion 3 to be the basis for a beginning recording program at both the high school and collegiate level. And with a \$199 street price, Notion is a program many parents and students can afford.

In its new form, complete with mixing board, reverb and guitar amps from IK Multimedia, it's ready to be the basis of a recording training for virtual recording only. To fulfill this teaching mission, as I already

mentioned above, Notion 3 only needs an EQ plug-in and basic effects package (compressor, limiter, etc.) to complete the mix (pun intended) which IK Multimedia already has.

With this brief summation, let's get a starting look at Notion 3.

WHY NOTION 3 IS A COMPETITOR

The most compelling reason that Notion is a competitor is that Notion 3 recognizes and has setups for VSTi's (virtual studio instruments) for : EastWest QLSO PLAY, Garritan ARIA, IK Multimedia, Native Instruments Kontakt, and the Vienna Instruments. It's dual platform (Mac and PC) and is backwardly compatible to OS 10.4 on the Mac and Windows XP on the PC. So at the retail level, there are many bundling opportunities, not to mention the potential for sample developers to license Notion 3 to package their orchestral libraries with.

Second is that Notion 3 notation is a breeze to learn. It's just much faster to learn than the other notation programs on the market. I can say that as a Sibelius user and as someone who's written two books on Finale. And because of that, I always thought Notion was more fun to work with.

Third, Notion 3 has cleaned up its act in two critical areas. First, and I can't believe I'm writing this, Notion 3 *finally* has both MIDI import and export. Second, it finally has a lyric notation tool. So now, you can actually do lead sheets for copyright filings.

Fourth, Notion 3, like the new GarageBand, shows the guitar fret board, has tablature and the ability to insert guitar fingerboard positions.

All of these features, and others I'm still discovering, make Notion 3 a serious contender in the marketplace.

Let's take a look at some of these features.

IMPROVED NOTATION



This example is a demo that comes with Notion 3. It's an avant garde work and as you can see from the graphic, this is pretty serious notation! You wouldn't expect a notation element this complete in a \$199 package, but with Notion 3, it is.

THE MIXING BOARD



This is the mixing board of the same work. Each staff has its own mixer track. There are four inserts per track and four busses. Each fader has its own Peak Meter and dB calibration. Of course, there's panning, mute and solo.

INSERTS



This is one of the included plug-ins from IK Multimedia, their Classik Studio Reverb. This is a fully programmable reverb. So what you're seeing is a very complete concept. However, you're not limited to IK. You can use other audio effect VSTi plug-ins, too.

Consequently, you have a lot of options a fairly luxurious production package for a moderate sum.

FACTORY SOUND SETS

Notion 3, along with its earlier versions, has sample recordings of the London Symphony Orchestra. These have been newly programmed, and they do have a better sound. I would say if you're just using the included orchestral sound set to give you an idea of what you're doing, OK. You do get most of the sounds from the earlier Notion packs on a separate DVD.

But on the other hand, the real value (to me) is that Notion 3 works with Kontakt, VSL, Miroslav Philharmonik, and QLSO PLAY. That being the case, since the templates are already setup, then I can just use QLSO, key in my score, and I'm good to go.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

I have to explore more, but I'm really impressed. For professionals, Notion 3 isn't going to replace Logic or DP. But, if you read music, and you do scoring, I can say that because it's so quick to key in your scores, that Notion is just restful to use. With QLSO on an iLok, put Notion 3 on a laptop and go away for the weekend.

Now, my caveat emptor is that I haven't really tried to set up QLSO or other programs inside it, but I know someone who has, and he produced a really nice demo with QLSO + Notion 3 that was most impressive.

The thing about Notion 3 is that it's truly turnkey. Because VSTi implementation is so important, they should go back through the PDF manual, and redo that chapter by adding more screen shots so that every step is clearly mapped out. Make it as no-brainer as possible.

CONCLUSION

As a fellow entrepreneur, if I had the money, I'd buy the company. Notion Music is finally on the right path. They've got a great product. What they need now, is the sales marketing and licensing vision to match and take it to the moon.

For more information see www.notionmusic.com.

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