

**BOLDER** *Sounds*

Presents

# Bluegrass Banjo

for the Apple EXS24



Welcome to the Bluegrass Banjo sample library for the EXS24 software sampler from Bolder Sounds!

In this library you will find a 5 string banjo owned and played by our friend and banjo wizard Chris Elliot. This instrument has the classic warm tone associated with pre-war banjos with plenty of punch to cut through a mix. Even though this library is called a *Bluegrass* sample library, you will find it to be quite flexible across many different musical genres.

### **Features of the EXS24 Bluegrass Banjo Sample Library**

- 5 round-robins for each of the 5 strings of the banjo. Each string was sampled chromatically up to the 17th fret. The first string was sampled up to the 22nd fret.
- Half step and whole step slides for each string recorded at approximately 200 bpm sampled for the 4th through 1st string.
- Hammer-Ons and Pull-Offs sampled for the 4th through 1st string.
- Major, minor and diminished chords in 3 voicings (low, mid and high) short and long articulations with 2 round-robins per chord.
- REX format banjo *rolls* (arpeggios) in 3/4 and 4/4 time using the most common banjo keys.
- EXS instruments are presented in a number of banjo *Maps* for a wide variety of tonal colors to choose from.
- Convenient keyswitching of articulations.
- A Midi Guitar Banjo EXS instrument for those using midi guitar controllers.
- Multi midi channel exs instruments for easy event list editing of articulations.
- Strummed major, minor and diminished chords as EXS instruments.
- The total EXS library size is approximately 1.5 GB.

# Installing the EXS Banjo Instruments

*Before you do anything else - please make a backup copy of the package you have downloaded onto DVD media!*

*\* The download is a 4 part .rar file - once both parts are downloaded, open part 1 **only** and part 2, 3 and 4 will self-extract. Any other procedure else will result in an error.*

The Bluegrass\_Banjo\_EXS .rar file needs to be decompressed, there are many utilities on the internet which will do this on OS X. Some are freeware and some are not. The one that I use on OS X is called RAR Expander. <http://rar-expander.en.softonic.com/mac>

Inside the **Bluegrass Banjo** folder, there is a folder called **Banjo EXS Instruments**. Copy or Move it to the **Sampler Instruments** folder used by Logic to (user/Library/ Application Support/Logic/Sampler Instruments folder).

*\* The **Bluegrass Banjo Sample folder** and the **Banjo REXd Rolls folder** may reside anywhere on your system you like. The EXS24 sampler should be able to find them the first time you load the library and keep a reference of their location for future use.*

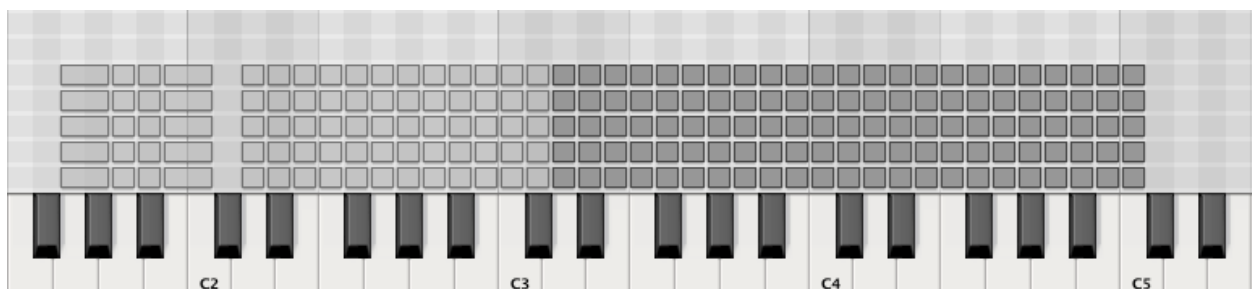
## About the Bluegrass Banjo EXS Instruments

In this folder you will find 6 subfolders -

**Banjo NO KeySwitches folder** – This folder contains 5 .exs instruments called *map* 1-5. These instruments DO NOT have keyswitches for the various articulations included in this library (slides, hammer, pull-offs etc ..). You might consider these .exs instruments to be basic no frills banjo banks. This folder will work well for quick loading without the need to use the previously mentioned articulations.

**Banjo Maps** – there are 5 Banjo Maps. Each map gives a larger selection of samples along a specific string, with the exception of Map 5, which is fairly evenly divided among the 4 main strings (strings 1, 2, 3 and 4).

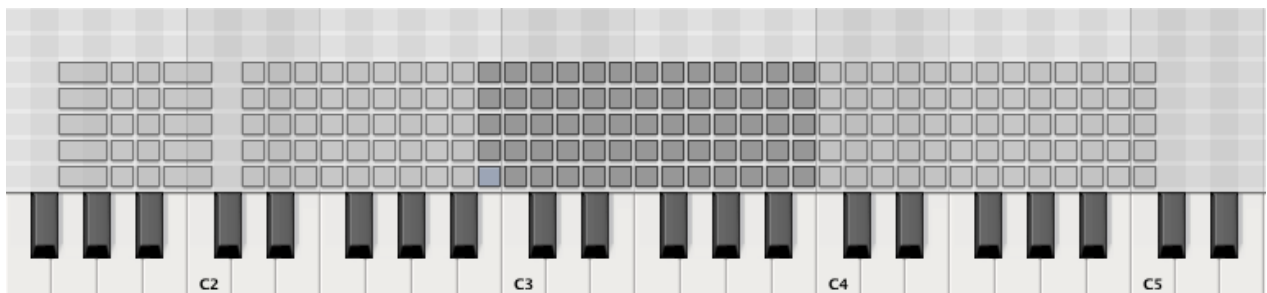
Banjo Map 1 (1st string heavy)



Notice in the above graphic – the darker blocks represent the samples from the 1st string of the banjo ranging from D3 up to C5 (the 5 columns represent the 5 round-robin samples). So Map 1 is quite 1st string heavy, which will give the user an overall brighter tone color since the first string is quite bright and there is more of it.

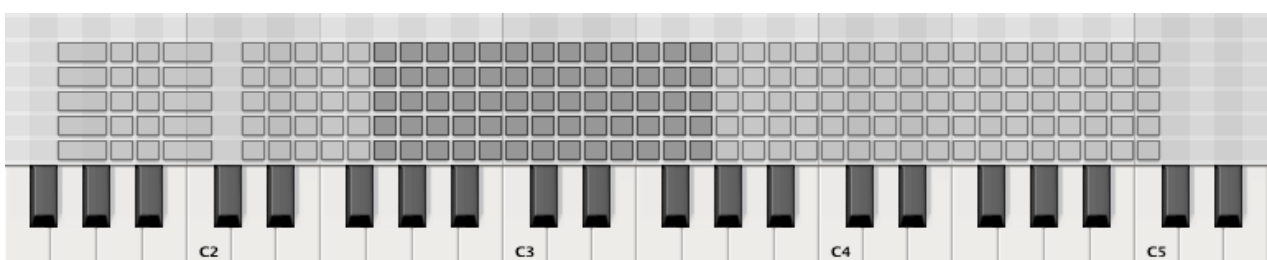
**\*\* Very important** – notice the group of notes that span from C2 down to G1. These are samples from the 5th string of the banjo. The 5th string is actually a HIGH string, NOT a low string. This is what gives the banjo it's characteristic sound. The reason it is placed off to the left is because when you play it on a banjo, the 5th string it is played with the thumb of the right hand it is treated like a bass note in regards to technique. This way you can get unison notes or small intervals ringing against each other between the 5th string and the other 4 strings which creates a wonderful resonant effect. There is a video on the Bolder website demonstrating this technique.

Banjo Map 2 (2nd string heavy)

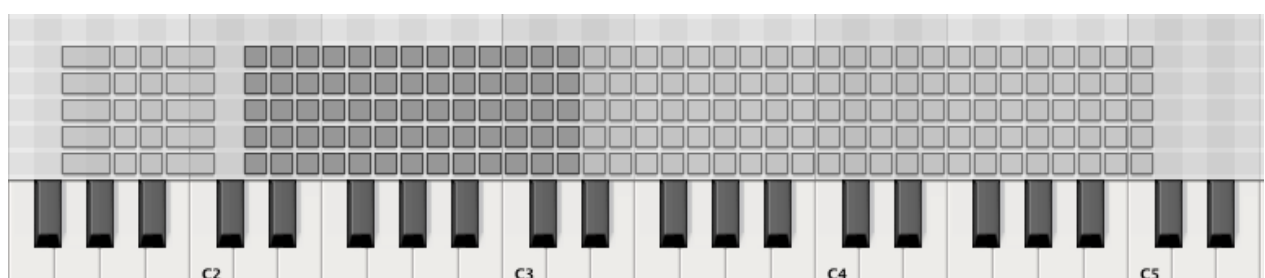


In the above graphic you can see that the 2nd string samples are now mapped from B2 – B3 (12 frets worth), and the 1st string samples do not cover as large a span as in Map 1. The whole point here is that each Map will give very different tonal results.

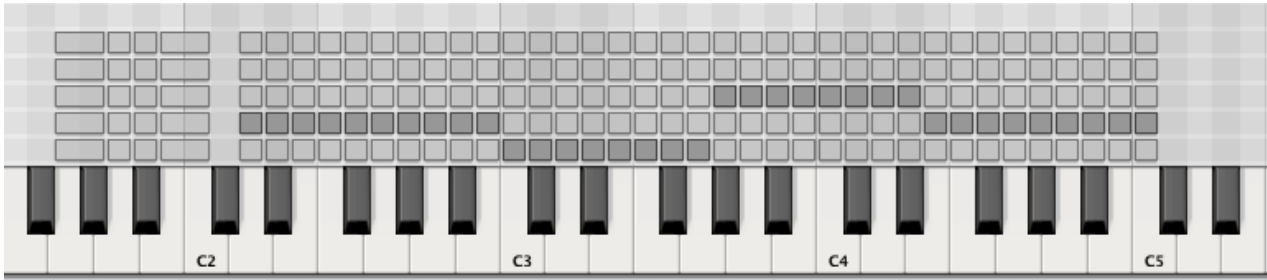
Banjo Map 3 (3rd string heavy)



Banjo Map 4 (4th string heavy)



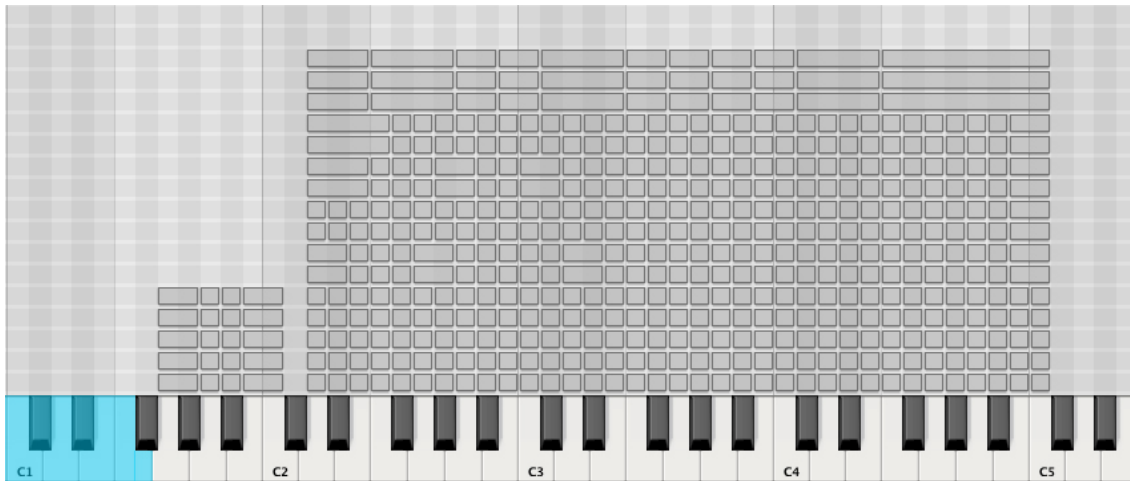
## Banjo Map 5 (even mapping)



Notice in the above graphic of Map 5, the samples are more evenly distributed among the 4 strings. This map should in theory represent the sound of the banjo being played on the lower frets with strings 4, 3, and 2 resulting in a brighter sound when using those string samples.

### Bluegrass Banjo KeySwitches folder

This folder contains the previously mentioned 5 Banjo Maps, yet it ALSO includes keyswitch assignments for the extra articulations included in this library. And for the most part, each articulation is mapped correctly to the corresponding string and fret. For example – if you trigger a sample that was taken from the 3rd string 10th fret, and then you trigger a keyswitch to create a slide, you will then hear the slide sample taken from the 3rd string 10th fret. This keeps the tone color of each Map consistent.



Notice the keys highlighted in blue above. These are keyswitches and are assigned to the following keys -

C1- standard pluck with 5 round-robins

C#1 – “hammer-ons” (otherwise known as ascending slurs to the rest of the music world) with 2 round-robins.

D1 – “pull-offs” (otherwise known as descending slurs) with 2 round-robins.

D#1 – half step slides recorded at 200 bpm with 2 round-robins.



E1 – whole step slides recorded at 200 bpm with 2 round-robins.

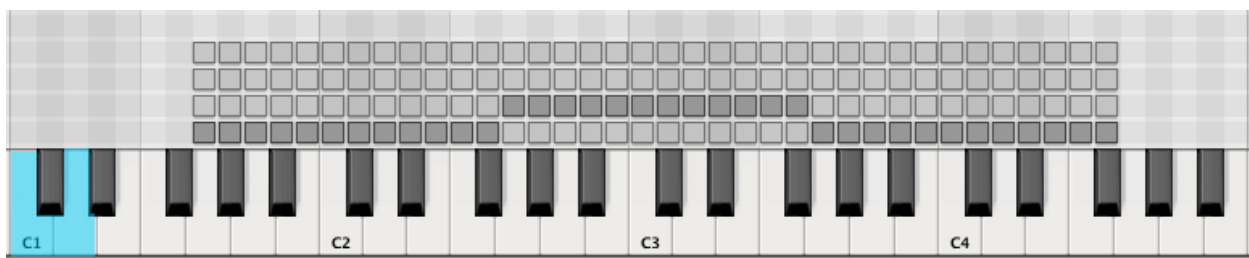
F1 – banjo harmonics with 3 round-robins.

The pull-off and hammer-on samples may sound a bit odd in isolation. But when incorporated with the standard style of plucking the string in a scale passage for example – they can soften the edges of the phrase, and give it a very natural quality of lyricism.

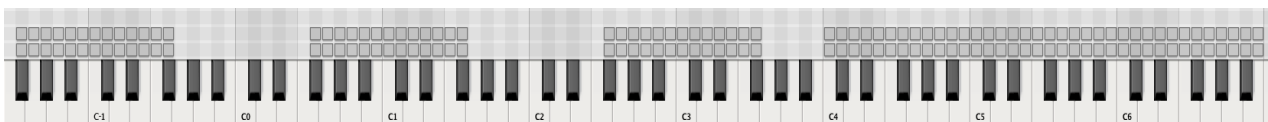
*\* Be aware that the speed of the slides cannot be changed since the EXS24 does not have a time stretching algorithm (at least at this point in time). NI Kontakt is capable of this and it is utilized in the Kontakt version of this library.*

### Banjo Chords folder

In this folder you will find single strums of chords which are intended to be used for punctuation in phrases, **THEY ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE USED TO EMULATE THE STRUMMING OF A BANJO**. If you need a simple isolated banjo strum to end a phrase – here is where to look.



The *Banjo MAJOR chords KeySw C1 D1.exs* instrument pictured above has a keyswitch assigned to C1 for long chords and D1 for short strums. The darkened in zones represent the low, mid and high voicings. Each chord has 2 round-robin samples. The same mapping scheme is used on the *Banjo MINOR chords KeySw C1 D1.exs* instrument as well.



The *Banjo DIM(ished) chord Long Short.exs* instrument above is mapped differently without keyswitches. Here we have a choice of long and short articulations. The long articulations range from F#-1 to F#3, with short articulations from C4 to B6.

## **Banjo EXS Components folder**

This folder is included for those more adventurous souls who wish to build their own EXS24 instruments. Included are all the components of the multisampled Bluegrass Banjo, including harmonics, individual string samples, hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides all including round-robin samples.

## **Midi Guitar Banjo folder**

This folder is intended for those using a midi guitar controller. The *Midi Guitar Banjo.exs* instrument strings samples are assigned to a separate midi channel. String 1 is assigned to channel 1, String 2 to channel 2 etc... In the midi guitar world this is known as Polyphonic mode. So when you play up a particular string, the actual samples from that string are triggered in the correct position of the neck of the banjo. This can make for an extremely realistic emulation of the banjo.

*\* Typically the pitch bend for range midi guitar to an external synth or sampler is set to +12 and -12 for tracking of vibrato and slides. However I was not able to find this setting to be acceptable in terms of how the EXS24 responded, it was quite glitchy. So I have left the pitch bend settings to +0 and -0 (inactive). Feel free to change it, it may respond better from a different midi guitar controller than the Roland VG-99 that I was using.*

## **Banjo REXd Rolls folder**

Also offered in this library are banjo *rolls* in Propellerhead REX format in both 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures. *Rolls* are banjo-speak for arpeggio patterns which are very characteristic to the banjo sound. Keys represented are the most common banjo keys – A major/minor, G major/minor, D major/minor, C major, E minor and an assortment of diminished rolls.

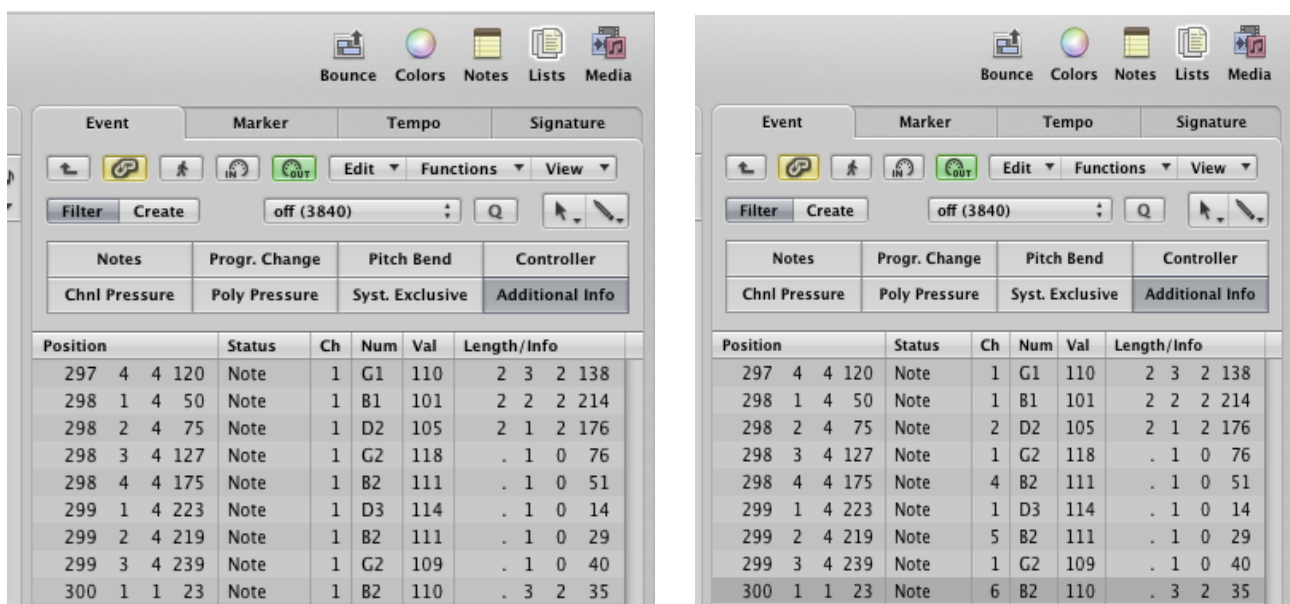
You may be wondering why are the rolls not offered in Apple Loop format since Logic runs on an Apple OS X system. The answer is simply because the REX file format sounds better with these specific loops that it does in Apple Loops format. This is due to the slow tempo at which the original loops were recorded at. The way REX format handles the playback of the loop slices or transients is far more musical and smooth. We've tested both formats and decided the REX format to be the best choice. REX format is also a cross-platform format used in many other DAWs.

REX format enables the use to transpose, quantize and follow tempo changes within Logic just as Apple Loops do.

## Banjo Multi Channel Articulation folder

This folder offers the 5 maps with each articulation assigned to a separate midi channel. The idea here is -

1. Enter your sequence data either by playing it in with one of the 5 offered maps into your DAW.
2. Go into Logics event list and change the midi channel of a chosen note-event to a midi channel other than midi channel 1 (see below for midi channel-articulation assignments).
3. The articulations are assigned as follows – **midi channel 1** - *normal string pluck*, **midi channel 2** - *hammer-ons*, **midi channel 3** - *pull-offs*, **midi channel 4** - *half step slides*, **midi channel 5** - *whole step slides* and **midi channel 6** triggers *harmonics*.



The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the Logic Pro event list. Both screenshots show a sequence of notes with their MIDI channel assignments. The left screenshot shows all notes on channel 1, while the right screenshot shows the same notes with different MIDI channels assigned to specific articulations.

Position	Status	Ch	Num	Val	Length/Info
297 4 4 120	Note	1	G1	110	2 3 2 138
298 1 4 50	Note	1	B1	101	2 2 2 214
298 2 4 75	Note	1	D2	105	2 1 2 176
298 3 4 127	Note	1	G2	118	. 1 0 76
298 4 4 175	Note	1	B2	111	. 1 0 51
299 1 4 223	Note	1	D3	114	. 1 0 14
299 2 4 219	Note	1	B2	111	. 1 0 29
299 3 4 239	Note	1	G2	109	. 1 0 40
300 1 1 23	Note	1	B2	110	. 3 2 35

Position	Status	Ch	Num	Val	Length/Info
297 4 4 120	Note	1	G1	110	2 3 2 138
298 1 4 50	Note	1	B1	101	2 2 2 214
298 2 4 75	Note	2	D2	105	2 1 2 176
298 3 4 127	Note	1	G2	118	. 1 0 76
298 4 4 175	Note	4	B2	111	. 1 0 51
299 1 4 223	Note	1	D3	114	. 1 0 14
299 2 4 219	Note	5	B2	111	. 1 0 29
299 3 4 239	Note	1	G2	109	. 1 0 40
300 1 1 23	Note	6	B2	110	. 3 2 35

Above you see two event lists. The list on the left is the result of playing a simple sequence all on channel 1 using the *Banjo Map 1 MULTI.exs* instrument.

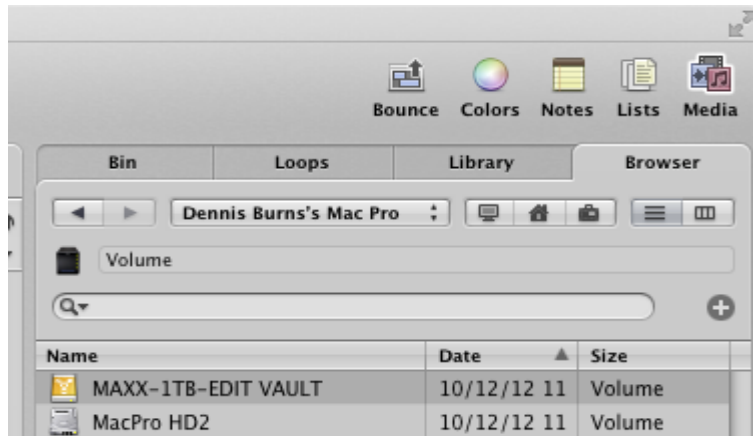
Notice the event list on the right – In the “Ch” column, I have changed the midi channel assignments with a simply select and drag of my mouse thus creating different articulations for those particular notes.

There is also a video demo showing how this is done on both the Bolder website as well as on youtube.

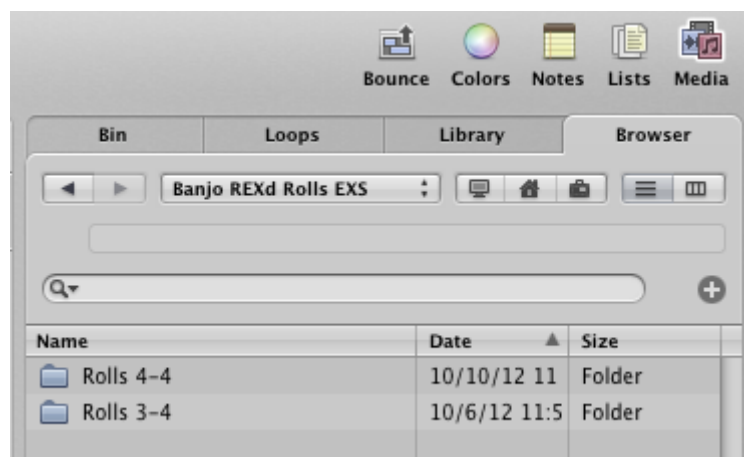


## How to make the REX Banjo Rolls accessible in Logic

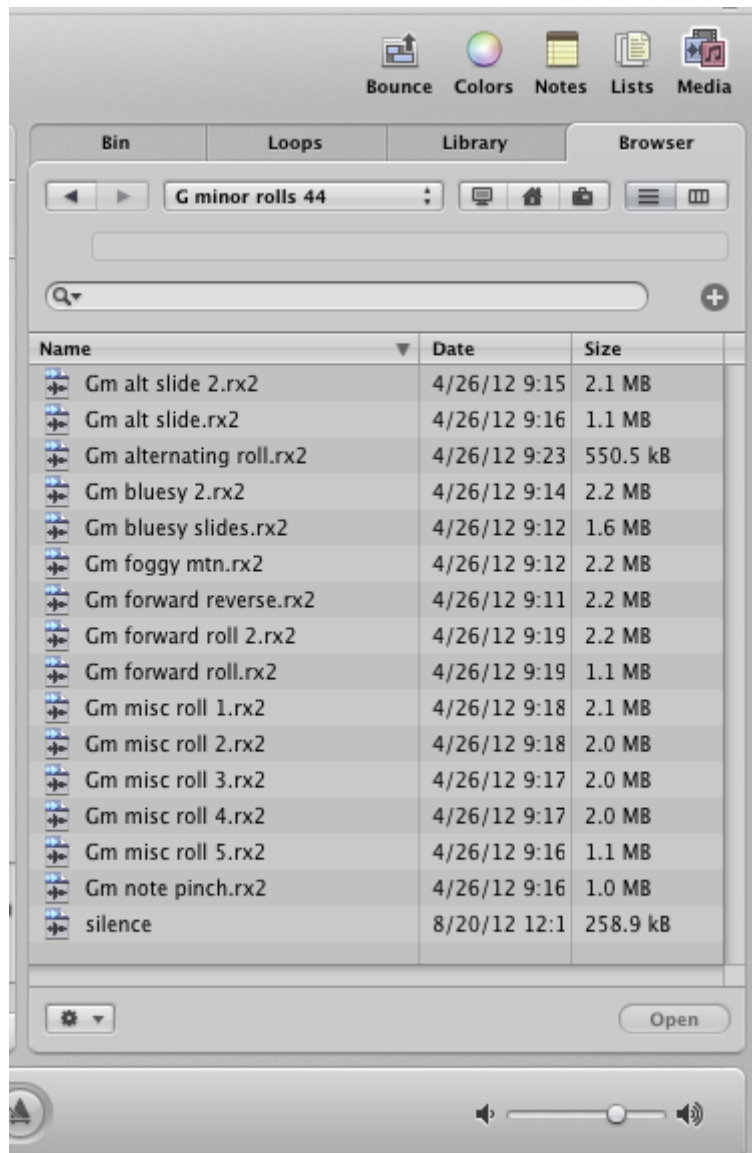
The REXd banjo rolls may reside anywhere on your system you choose. Below is an illustration of how to get the REX rolls to show up in your Media Browser in Logic for easy navigation and insertion into the Arrange Window.



Click on the *Media* icon in the upper right hand corner of Logic, then click on the *Browser* tab. In the drop down menu choose the location where the REXd banjo loops reside. In the above example I have *Dennis Burns's Mac Pro* selected (my entire system). After doing that you will see a list of hard drives available. Double click on the hard drive where you have the banjo REXd loops, and the traditional director of folders will appear until you have navigated to the Banjo REXd Rolls folder. Open that folder and you will see the below directory.



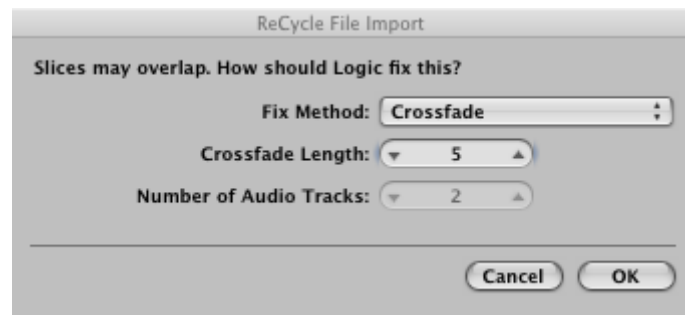
Choose either the Rolls time signature of your choice (3/4 or 4/4) folder and you will see the below. I have chosen the G minor 4/4 rolls folder. To audition a roll. Simply select the roll in the list and press you space bar. You can adjust the volume of the auditioned roll with a volume slider at the bottom right hand corner of Logic



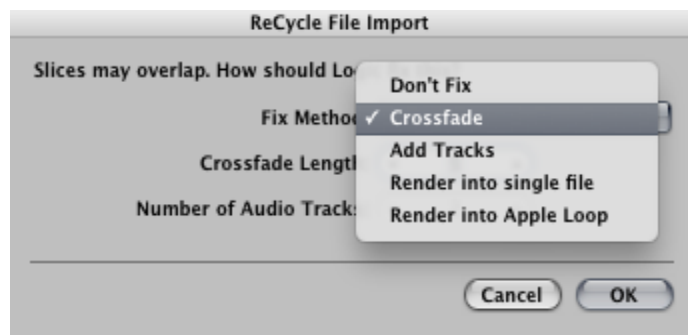
From here you can easily drag your chosen loop(s) into Logics Arrange Window. After doing this Logic will present you with the following dialogue box.






Click OK.



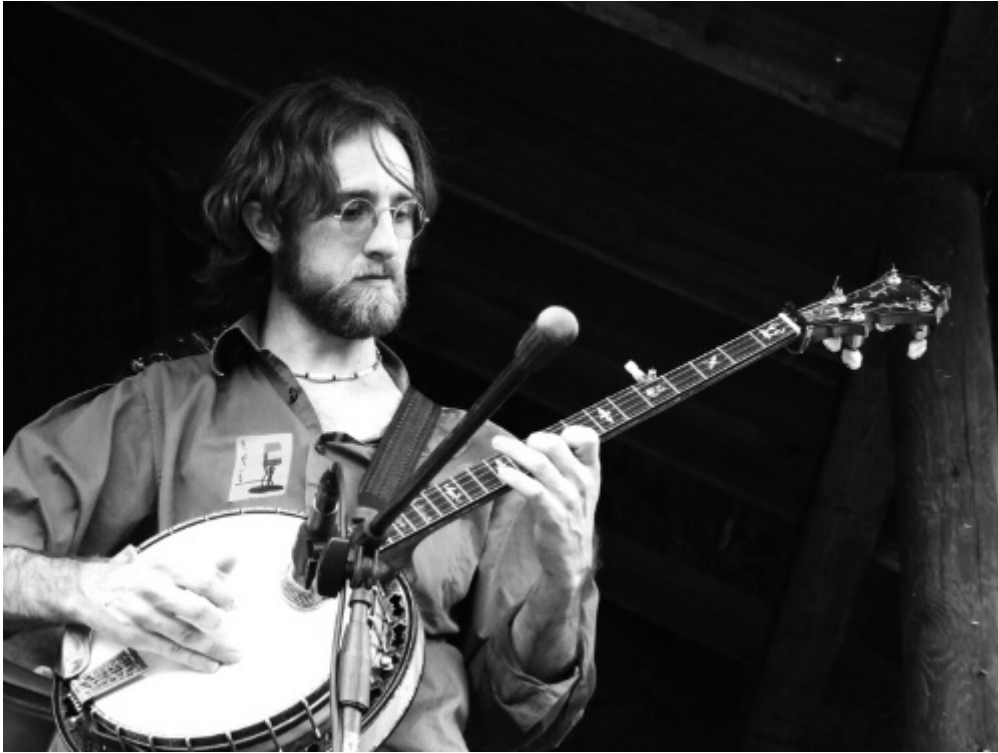
Next - you have a few options in the drop down menu. Here you may also increase or decrease the Crossfade Length.



For starters, choose *Crossfade*. The above steps are the disadvantage of using REX loops in Logic, it is not the most streamlined process to say the least. But you will find the sound quality of these banjo loops REXd to be far superior to Apple Loop format especially at faster tempos.

	Gm misc roll 5.rx2	4/26/12 9:16	1.1 MB
	Gm note pinch.rx2	4/26/12 9:16	1.0 MB
	silence	8/20/12 12:1	258.9 kB

Also – you will find in each folder a small file titled *silence*. These files are sometimes necessary to use in Logic's Arrange Window when a REX loop phrase ends and you hear an audible click. All these REX loops do have a small fade to a zero-crossing in the loop file. However I have found from time to time that Logic still creates an audible click on the last loop of a track, although this seems to be somewhat inconsistent. This small silence file is a work-around. Simply place it at the end of a track or pause in a track if necessary.



Chris "C-Bob" Elliott is a professional banjo instructor and performer in Lyons, Colorado. He is the banjo player, vocalist and songwriter with Spring Creek on Rebel Records and the Blue Canyon Boys. He has had the privilege of playing on stage with many of his bluegrass heroes including Tony Trischka, Pete Wernick, Alan Munde, Sally Van Meter, Matt Flinner, Gene Libbea, Brad Lee Folk, Michael Cleveland, and others. Chris is the 2007 RockyGrass Banjo Champion.

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*My sincere appreciation to Chris Elliot for his contribution on this project.*

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Enjoy the Bluegrass Banjo library!

Dennis Burns - Bolder Sounds - October 2012

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### **Customer Support**

For any questions, technical issues inquiries etc .... Please contact Bolder Sounds via email at [sales@boldersounds.net](mailto:sales@boldersounds.net).

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Thank You for your consideration! Dennis Burns – [boldersounds.com](http://boldersounds.com)



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