I recommend you add a MIDI activity light to your Mainstage Layout. The light indicates when MIDI data is successfully reaching the software.

Is the MIDI activity light blinking?

YES

With volume faders up, do meters move when you play a patch?

YES

You have an audio output issue. Open preference, select Audio, then change audio output to Built-in to assess. Also, ensure that all channel strips are set to the correct output(s) on your audio interface.

NO

You have a MIDI assignment issue within Mainstage. Make sure your MIDI hardware controls are properly assigned to their virtual representations in the Layout.

Occasionally, Mainstage encounters errors resulting in moving meters but no sound output. Quitting and restarting Mainstage will typically solve this issue.
MAINSTAGE TROUBLESHOOTING FLOWCHART

NO SOUND

Is the MIDI activity light blinking?

YES (see previous page)

NO

Open Applications > Utilities > Audio MIDI Setup (Window > Show MIDI Window if necessary). Is your MIDI device listed and unfaded?

YES

Click “Rescan MIDI,” wait a moment, then click “Test Setup” and play a note on your keyboard. Do you hear a beeping sound effect from the computer?

NO

Have you installed all necessary drivers for your device?

YES

Download and install the latest device drivers from the manufacturer. Restart your Mac. If problem persists, restart the troubleshooting flowchart.

NO

Click “Rescan MIDI.” If device is still not online, is it connected through a USB hub?

YES

Connect the device directly to your Mac. Quit and re-open Audio MIDI Setup. If device registers and still no sound from Mainstage, restart the troubleshooting flowchart. (If plugging in directly fixes your problem, invest in a powered USB hub).

NO

If your device is properly installed and connected directly, you either have a loose connection, bad cable, or faulty device. Re-check your cable connections, try a different cable, and contact customer service for your device’s manufacturer.

NO

Is your keyboard connected directly through USB or through a MIDI interface?

USB

The problem likely comes down to: 1) the MIDI cable, 2) the interface, or 3) your keyboard. Try to swap out different units one at a time (try a different cable, then a different keyboard, etc.).

MIDI

I give up. Contact your keyboard manufacturer’s customer service.

YES

Quit and re-open Mainstage. Restart the troubleshooting flowchart if the problem persists.
POOR SOUND QUALITY

CLICKS & POPS
sound breaking up (CPU meter is also spiking)

Open Audio preferences and increase I/O Buffer Size. Click “Apply Changes.” Use the lowest setting that does not create clicks & pops.

PHASED SOUND

The most likely scenario is that you are using Mainstage to control external MIDI sounds, and your external sounds are being triggered twice - once locally and once through Mainstage. On your external synthesizer, locate the “Local” setting and set to Off.

DISTORTED SOUND

Check to make sure that your channel strips are not clipping (output above 0 dB, indicated by red light above the fader). Turn down any channel strips that are clipping. Insert a Limiter plug-in on the final output. If the sound is still distorted, check levels throughout your external audio chain.
UNWANTED SOUNDS

DRUM PAD PLAYS AN UNWANTED NOTE

If you use drum pads to control Mainstage functions, know that each pad transmits a MIDI note. If this becomes a problem, you can use your drum pad device’s editor to change the notes transmitted to notes outside your keyboard range (e.g. C-2). Re-assign any Mainstage functions controlled by the drum pads and set patch layers to be limited to your keyboard range.

NOTES GET STUCK

Rarely, a MIDI note may continue long after it’s been released - it is “stuck.” Assign a key or drum pad to serve as a “Panic” button. This will clear all MIDI data and turn off all notes. If this is more than a rare occurrence, you may have a faulty MIDI interface or device compatibility issue. Try a different model of interface, and see if that solves the problem.

RANDOM EXTRA NOTES

You may have a faulty MIDI interface or device compatibility issue. Try a different model of interface, and see if that solves the problem.