By combining TriplePlay with notation software like Progression, music teachers can quickly prepare lessons. Composers can capture, edit, and circulate their music. Progression also supports guitar tablature (“tab” for short), the alternate notion system of numbers and lines favored by many guitarists.

(Just one caution: Music notation is as much an art as a science. Sometimes notation only approximates what is to be played, and musical performances often include details that don’t appear in the score. Even under optimal conditions — say, a great player performing a composition flawlessly on a perfectly operating system — it’s usually necessary to “clean up” the notation post-performance. That means that if you’re not a music reader, chances are you can’t just play music into notation software, share the unedited results, and expect other musicians to reproduce your performance. This isn’t a reflection on anyone’s musicianship, on TriplePlay, or on your notation software —only on the quirks of traditional music notation.)

Whether you work with music, tab, or both, inputting notes via TriplePlay can be a huge timesaver. It can also dramatically improve your reading and notation skills.

So let’s fire up Progression. Open Progression from the Applications folder (Mac) or Start Menu (Windows). From the Progression menu, select Preferences. Click the Audio tab and verify that your preferred audio device is selected.

Many modern composers notate music by connecting a MIDI keyboard to their favorite music notation software. With TriplePlay, guitarists can also notate music simply by playing their instrument. TriplePlay even comes bundled with Notion Music’s Progression, a powerful notation program with lots of great features for guitarists.

Requirements
- Internet connection
- Installation of Fishman TriplePlay hardware and software
- Installation of IK Multimedia SampleTank 2.5 XT
- Installation of NI Komplete Elements

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Next, click the MIDI tab and set the input port to Fishman TriplePlay TP Guitar.

(If you don’t see this option, review the audio hardware setup procedure in TriplePlay’s online User Guide.)

Close the Preferences window. Under Start a Piece, select New Score. (You could also work from one of the included score templates, but for now let’s start from scratch.)

Drag your cursor over the instrument category names at the lower right and look at the instrument pop-ups that appear. These are the sampled sounds available in Progression — simple virtual instruments that provide audio feedback while inputting and editing your score. (Instrument sounds in italics are available from Notion Music as paid upgrades.)

When we work with Progression, we’re bypassing the TriplePlay software and relying on Progression’s built-in sounds. These compact sound libraries aren’t intended for performance. They’re simply a sonic sketchbook to help you capture and refine your ideas. (In more full-featured notation programs such as Sibelius, Finale, and Progression’s big brother, Notion, you have access to large suites of pop and orchestral sounds. Here the focus is guitars and basic rock band instrumentation.)

Hover over the Guitars/Basses category and select Electric Guitar. This creates a new score for solo electric guitar, including both standard notation and tab. Click the gear icon in the upper-right corner of the Progression interface to exit setup mode. (You can always click it again to modify your setup.)

Now you should hear Progression’s electric guitar sample while you play.

Click the red Record button at the top of the interface. Rather than recording immediately, Progression opens a window where you can set various recording parameters. Leave these at their defaults for now, and click Start Recording (or just press your spacebar).

The metronome clicks a one-bar count-off, and then you’re recording. When you’ve finished, press the spacebar again to stop.

Here’s a video demonstrating the steps so far: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LXb446CbYM
We can’t cover every aspect of Progression here — you'll need to consult Notion Music's documentation to get the most from this program. But let’s highlight a few key functions that you may find useful as you get started.

• Much of what you see onscreen is directly editable. To enter a title for your score, double-click the title area. To enter a composer name or composition date, double-click those fields. The tempo indication appears above the first bar of your score. The default tempo is 90 BPM (as heard in the video above). To set a different tempo, double-click the number and type in a new value.

• The secondary gear icon to the left of your score opens a window that lets you set preferences for current score. Here you can name your instrument, change the sound, set a transposition, and specify whether your score includes notation, tab, or both. You can even create alternate-tuning tablature by replacing the default string pitches.

• The recording options are particularly crucial for creating an accurate score. The video above used Progression’s preset guitar values, which are always available via the preset pull-down at the bottom of this screen:

But these values aren’t the best ones for every guitar performance. The Chord Loose-ness parameter helps Progression determine whether notes that overlap slightly should be reflected that way in the notation. For chordal parts, enter a high value. For single-note parts, where overlapping notes are likely to be merely incidental, enter a low value.

• Also be aware of the Min. Velocity and Min. Duration values. At low settings, Progression will record everything you play. At slightly higher settings, the program filters out the very short or very quiet notes that you might not be producing deliberately. Different types of parts benefit from different settings.

• Like TriplePlay, Progression features a virtual fretboard that mirrors your performance as you play. To display it, click the fret icon next to the gear at the upper-right of the main screen. You can also use it the virtual fretboard to enter notes into your score.

• For most editing tasks you use Progression’s tool palette, which resides at the bottom of the screen. (If it’s not displayed, click-hold on the Window menu and select Show Palette.) The tools are organized by type.
• You can alter how your score sounds on playback using Progression’s mixer. (To reveal it, click-hold the Window menu and select Show Mixer.) It works similarly to the mixers in most DAW software, allowing you to balance levels, set panning positions, and add realtime plug-in effects.

There’s even an amp simulator offering a choice of amp sounds plus gain and tone controls.

• Progression also lets you include chord diagrams in your scores. To access these tools, click the C7 symbol near the upper-right of the main window.