ujam

VIRTUAL GUITARIST

AMBER 2

User Guide

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Welcome to Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2

We hope you will enjoy *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*, a powerful addition to your musical palette, and we thank you for being a part of the UJAM community of music creators!

About the New Virtual Guitarist

The original *Virtual Guitarist* was a best–selling virtual instrument series developed by Wizoo and distributed by Steinberg from 2002. The core people behind Wizoo, now in UJAM, also originated *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* – your new virtual instrument.

UJAM has revived the success of the temporarily discontinued Virtual Guitarist series with a bunch of popular VGs (as we call them): *Virtual Guitarist AMBER, SPARKLE, IRON, SILK and CARBON*.

When we launched the series of Virtual Guitarists in late 2017, it was already a total remodeling of a successful but discontinued product series – the original Virtual Guitarist that Peter Gorges, Paul Kellett and a few others from today's UJAM team co–developed with Steinberg in 2002.

The new Virtual Guitarist series – with *VG AMBER 2* – marks yet another generation change. What defines a "new generation", compared to an upgrade or update?

In this case, a new generation means a completely new technical and musical foundation under the hood – a thing we call the engine – that enables our users to do things they have been asking for for a long time that we weren't able to provide them with in the previous series.

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 is based on an engine, a musical concept and an idea of a virtual guitar that is completely re–designed from the ground up.

Just like the first series, it offers you an amazing player mode that automatically creates great guitar performances out of the press of a key.

Unlike the first series, it is based on a complete guitar model that gets "played" either by you or a Player. It is the quickest, most intuitive way of getting to realistic, inspiring guitar performances in case you don't play the guitar. Many of our users know this concept from our *Virtual Bassists*, but being that the guitar is a polyphonic instrument, we had to take it to a whole new level.

Let's look at one concept out of many so as to demonstrate what you'll no doubt enjoy: When playing a virtual guitar instrument on a keyboard, it is almost impossible to create a realistic result, because strings and keys are very different. For example, there's no concept of up– or downstrokes on a keyboard. So the first thing we set out to solve was how to make a virtual guitar realistic when played on a keyboard. A guitarist needs both hands to play – one hand controls the actual playing of the strings: strumming, picking, muting – whereas the other controls which notes get played by pressing fingers on the fretboard.

We essentially transferred that concept to the keyboard of *AMBER 2*: You can now strum, play individual strings, mute and control stroke direction with the left hand while your right hand plays notes or chords, serving as fingers on a fretboard.

Also, we added a voicing mechanism that ensures whatever notes you play, they will always be translated to the next suitable voicing of a guitar – because, here as well, keyboard and guitar are very different.

This is a long–winded way of saying that *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* allows you as a non–guitarist to play things you would have never been able to without requiring you to learn the guitar. This opens up a whole new world for you.

Of course, we added countless other improvements and additions, many of which came as suggestions from you, our user base. *AMBER 2* now has MIDI drag–n–drop functionality, a Finisher, Stomp Box effects and the microphone section has been completely re–designed to sound even better and more authentic than before!

We at UJAM did our best to create this new Virtual Guitarist with the hope that it will catch you thinking: "*Wow, I can now play guitar although I can't play guitar.*"

Welcome to the new generation that is *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*!

What's New?

The features we added and improved in *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* are a mixture of the most frequent user requests and catching up with features we introduced in other instruments. Here's a quick rundown of the new or upgraded features:

UI Facelift

Users of the original *AMBER* will find the user interface slightly extended and enhanced to reflect the new features. We made it a thing to keep the original usability as intact as possible though. Although we've added lots of functionality to the new Virtual Guitarist, using *AMBER 2* is as easy as ever thanks to a new UI design that guides the eyes and looks even cleaner.

MIDI Drag and Drop

In Player Mode, the keys of the on–screen keyboard are now horizontally divided into two sections. The top section looks like a tab.

Click onto a tab and drag into the Virtual Guitarist track of your DAW, then let go to drop the phrase into your track as a MIDI File.

Any phrases can be dragged and dropped: Common phrases and Style phrases. This opens up a slew of creative options:

- Tweak phrases to your liking by changing velocities or adding and replacing notes
- Combine phrases from multiple styles

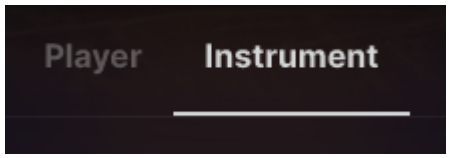
Building Songs

If you play a key or chord before or while you drag, the dropped MIDI phrase will be in that key or chord. Use this to build entire songs: Hold a chord, drag phrase, hold next chord – you get it!

Tuning

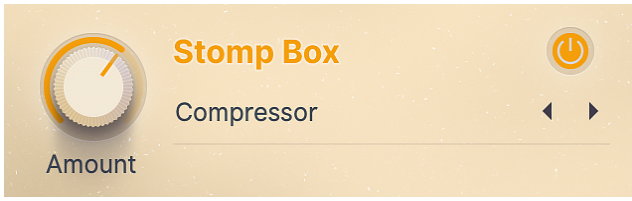
You are now able to tune your *Virtual Guitarist*! Pitch it up or down by up to 3 semitones, depending on your needs.

Instrument Mode



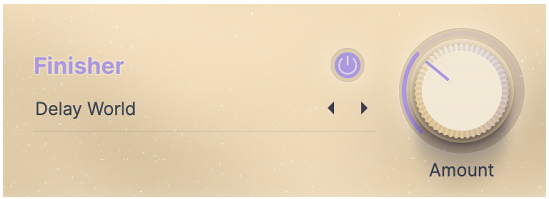
The Instrument Mode was probably the most requested feature for AMBER, as many users wish to play the built–in guitar, rather than "just" triggering phrases and chords.

Stomp Box



The brand new *Stomp Box* effect allows you to choose from 30 different effect combinations in order to create a wide selection of classic guitar sounds that we all know and love so much. It's a really amazing addition to *Virtual Guitarist*, but we didn't stop there…

Finisher



The *Finisher* is a new section that adds even more guitar–optimized effects to your *Virtual Guitarist* and offers endless sound design possibilities.

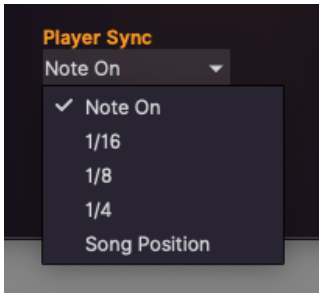
New Styles and Presets

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 comes loaded with 30 brand–new style phrases, 354 phrases overall (330 style phrases and 24 common phrases), and more than 200 additional presets! As this is *AMBER 2*, we put a special emphasis on Pop, Rock, Folk and Electronic music (and the various sub–genres within).

Resizable Interface

The user interface is now resizable to fit different sizes of screens. To resize, either click the “window” icon next to the notification bell in the top right corner, or simply drag the three stripes in the bottom right corner of the user interface.

Player Sync



You can now quantize the player to match the playback of your DAW – this setting can be found in the *Micro Timing* overlay. Quantize to the current grid, 1/4, 1/8, or 1/16 notes. This new feature keeps the *Virtual Guitarist* always in sync with the DAW timing position to make sure you have the phrase in time and on the right beat. Give it a try!

PreSonus Studio One Integration

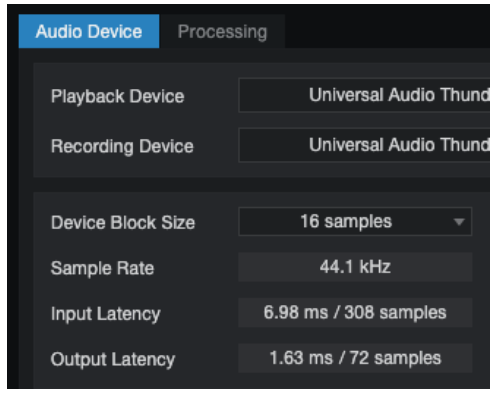
With the new *VG AMBER 2*, we provide Studio One users running on version 4.6.2 or later with an exclusive PreSonus chord track and Sound Variation feature.

Descriptions of styles and key switches are displayed on the piano roll to help you find the right styles and phrases faster and easier for your track. The Sound Variations are highlighted in red on the piano roll.

The chord track feature in Studio One automatically follows the chords and automatically changes the MIDI notes for you. Use the “Follow Chords” toggle underneath the right keyboard on the user interface. We recommend **not** setting a song key when using the feature.

Note:

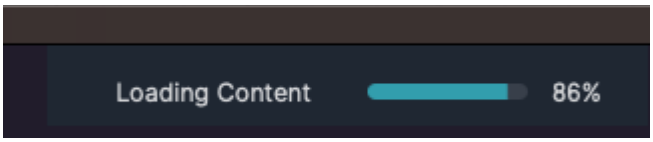
- *Changing styles or common phrases won't influence or change the chord tracks, but the rhythmic input. Not all chords that are possible in the PreSonus Chord track, are recognized in our instruments. The closest interpretation will then be used.*
- *Also the performance of this feature depends on the latency setting of Studio One – we always recommend using a low latency setting to get the best results possible.*
- *Works only with VST2.*



Studio One Audio Device Settings

Loading Indicator

We added a loading bar that displays the loading status of the sample library when opening the instrument in the DAW. If you use an external drive for the content files, loading it might take a little while, depending on the speed of your hardware.



Loading Indicator

You and Us

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 was built *by* musicians *for* musicians. We at UJAM are a pretty diverse bunch – from DJ to guitarist to weekend producer to Oscar–awarded Hollywood composer. We build every product for ourselves, and, like you, we're all users of *Virtual Guitarist* too.

That means that before we even start developing, a lot of thought and discussion goes into finding out what the user will expect from the product, what problem it solves, which controls we can remove to make the product more inviting, and which hurdles we can destroy that might get between you and a perfect track.

Every *Virtual Guitarist* is optimized for one clear, powerful purpose: to produce great–sounding guitar tracks without distracting you from the complex endeavor that producing a song is.

We hope that *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* transpires that philosophy in everything you do with it.

Naturally, we're always open to new ideas and critique, and you are always encouraged and welcome to talk to us:

- Reach out to our support: www.ujam.com/contact–us/
- Visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ujaminstruments
- Watch our Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/ujaminstruments
- Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ujaminstruments
- Like us on Instagram: www.instagram.com/ujaminstruments

Looking for Quick Help?

If you're just looking to figure out something quick, there are three ways to get there:

- The *Quick Reference* has super–short explanations for every control.
- The *Walkthrough* is a guided tour where you'll try every control on the *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* screen once – the quickest hands–on experience possible.
- If you're looking for in–depth explanations of all functions and controls, head straight for the *Reference Guide* further down.

Quick Reference

Area	Parameter	Explanation
Menu Bar	Preset	Click name to open the menu for browsing and loading a new Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 preset
	Save	When editing a user preset, click to save your preset, replacing the previous version.
	Save as…	Click to save your preset under a different name and – optionally – assign a category.
	Window Icon	Click this button to quickly resize the GUI to better fit your screen. This button toggles between the smallest and largest sizing.
	Notification Bell	Will illuminate for notifications such as product updates.
	Info Icon	Opens the About Page displaying your licensing status and links to acknowledgements, website, this manual and product support.
Mode Selector	Player/ Instrument Mode Switch	Selects whether AMBER 2 performs like a phrase player or a realistic guitar instrument that offers you much more control.
PLAYER Mode	Key	Takes away complexity and limits to playing only chords that sound good within the selected song key. A single note input generates a full chord output.
	Style	Loads a Style (collection of 11 phrases, accessible via the style phrases section of the keyboard).

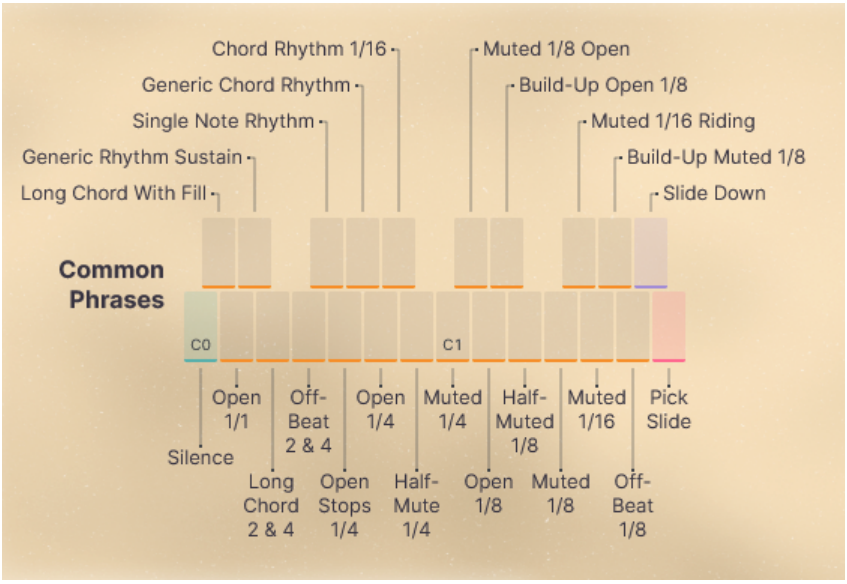
	Micro Timing	Only in Player mode, this menu opens a selection of parameters adjusting the timing of the guitar player: Player Sync: You can now quantize the AMBER 2 player to match the playback. Quantize to the current grid (Song Position), 1/4, 1/8, or 1/16 notes. This new feature keeps the instrument always in sync with the DAW timing position to make sure you have the phrase in time and on the right beat. Give it a try! Humanize: Using this knob you can gradually quantize the guitar performance. In the center position, the timing of the strumming will be exactly as the guitarist played it when recording the performance. In the leftmost position, the timing will get more loose as the subtle deviations of the guitarist's performance are increased. As you turn the slider to the right, the strumming will gradually become more quantized to the song's grid position. Speed: Lets you switch the player's relative tempo to half, normal or double time. Feel: Set to left of center for a rushed "pushing" feel and to the right for a more laid–back, "dragging" feel.

		Swing: Continuously adjusts syncopation – often also called Shuffle. Move to the right to syncopate off–beats.
Interactive Keyboard	Common Phrases	Keys in this area select “always useful” phrases that can be combined with style phrases. Keys Bb1 and B1 trigger one–shot special phrases.
	Style Phrases	Keys in this area select phrases of the currently selected Style.
	Play Range	Keys in this area will tell Virtual Guitarist AMBER what to play – featuring built–in chord detection. The detected chord will be displayed above the interactive keyboard.
	Drag’nDrop Tabs	In Player Mode, click and drag the top part of any phrase key and drop the phrase into your DAW track.
Guitar	Blend	Blends between the main recording mic and the pickup of the guitar.
	Character	Selects one of four basic characters, affecting the dynamic range as well as the sound character of the instrument.
	Open Chords	Spices up the played chords by adding additional notes, which makes the sound more interesting.
Mix	Mix	Selects one of five mix setups.
	Air	Allows you to blend in the signal of additional room microphones.
Finisher & Stomp Box	Mode Select	Select one of the FX modes using the arrows or the dropdown menu.

	Amount Knob	Adjust the effect by turning or automating this knob.
Volume	Slider and Meter	Controls and monitors the output volume of AMBER 2.
Latch		Player Mode: When active, AMBER 2 will continue to play the most recently selected key without requiring you to hold it. This will continue until you deactivate 'Latch' or press the 'Stop' key. Instrument Mode: When active, AMBER 2 will remember the notes you press on the Fretboard, allowing you to use the same hand to control the Key Switches for strumming. Try it, it's huge fun! Note: With 'Trigger Mode' set to 'On', the 'Latch' feature will also cause the notes to fully sustain despite being released.
Wheels	Pitchbend Wheel	Force (Player Mode): Realtime–controls the dynamic level of the Player's performance. Bend (Instrument Mode): Bends the overall pitch by ±2 semitones in both directions.
	Modulation Wheel	Damp: Gradually morphs towards (palm–)muting as you turn up the wheel.

Player Mode

In *Player Mode*, the rhythmical, articulation and phrasing aspect of the guitar performance are controlled by *AMBER 2*. All you need to do is select the phrases and chords you want to be played.



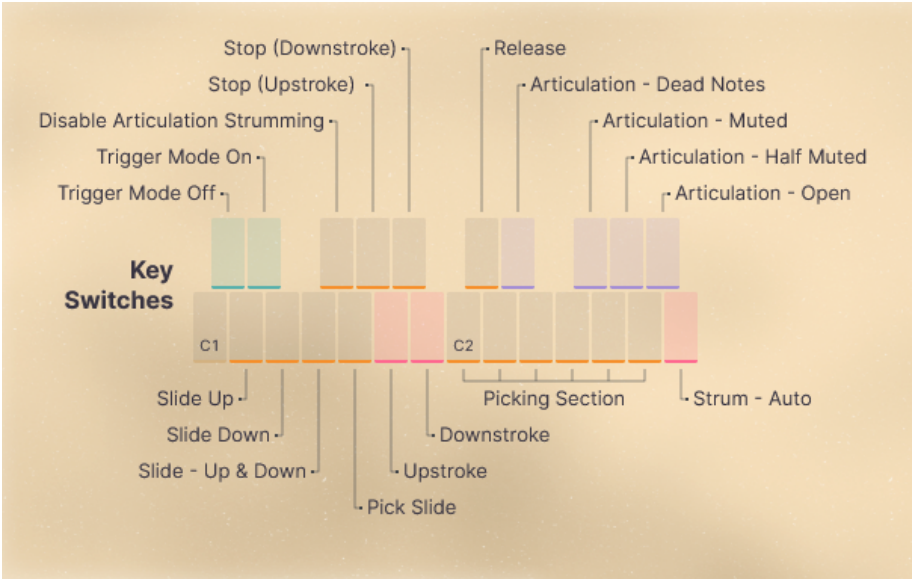
Player Mode Common phrases

Parameter	Explanation
Common Phrases	Keys in this area select “always useful” phrases that can be combined with style phrases.
Style	Loads a Style (collection of 11 phrases, accessible via the style phrases section of the keyboard).
Silence	This key will silence all phrases. If a phrase is currently playing, it will sustain the most recently played note(s).

	With LATCH enabled, this key silences the performance but doesn't stop it. You can continue by selecting any phrase key.
Style Phrases	Keys in this area select phrases of the currently selected Style. Generally, as you play the white keys upwards, the intensity of the phrases will increase. Depending on the Style, the black keys may provide useful fills.
Stop	Use this key to immediately stop the active phrase. Unlike the 'Silence' key, this key does not sustain the final notes.
Key	Set the key signature of your song and activate the "fun" mode: AMBER 2 will only output chords that will sound great in the key of your song, regardless of what notes you press! Please note that you are supposed to only trigger one key at a time.
Chord Reader	This feature will show you which chord is being played by the instrument
Chord/Note Mode	Selects between Note and Chord playback modes
Phrase Drag'n'Drop	Common and Style Phrase keys have specially marked handles at the top. You can drag phrases directly from there into a MIDI track in your DAW to edit the notes and phrasing using your DAWs editors.
Play Range	Play the notes to be triggered by the phrases. Up to four notes for a chord (a tetrad) will get recognized and interpreted.

Instrument Mode

In *Instrument Mode*, the keyboard emulates guitar playing technique. You play the *Key Switch* range with your left hand and the *Fretboard* range with your right hand to create performances.



Instrument Mode Key Switches

Why so Few Controls?

We are all musicians and we know that there's never enough time to invent and lay down that amazing idea that's in your head.

We are also UI (user interface) and UX (user experience) experts, and we know that there's a trade –off between complexity – giving you maximum flexibility at the cost of time – and ease of use – letting you focus on your music at the cost of detailed editing options.

The way we design our user interfaces is aimed at giving you the best of both worlds:

- Easy, not simple: By eliminating unnecessary controls and carefully grouping, macrofying, and labeling those that we decide to include, we strive to offer you an instrument that allows you to focus your full attention on making it sound like you. This way you don't have to waste too much of your limited time and energy on a cluttered screen that is too complex to navigate.
- Hardly any learning curve: Usually you can use any of our instruments straight out of the box, with minimal reading required.
- Fail–proof interface: No matter how you set up the controls of Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2, the result will never be musically or technically wrong, and it gives you immense freedom and flexibility to create your sound.

Most importantly (especially for those of us who don't play the guitar), you can trust in the fact that tracks produced with Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 are legitimate and professionally–recorded guitar tracks.

Trial and Authorization

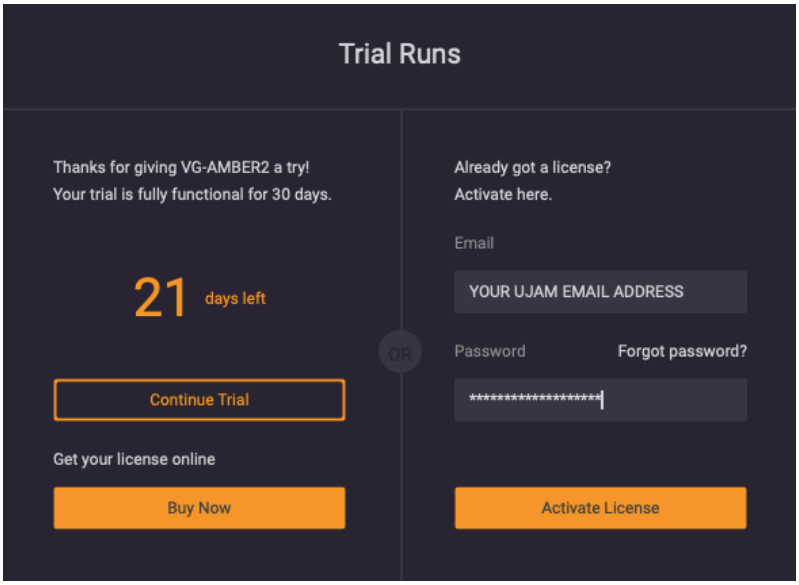
We have designed the entire process of downloading, activating and authorizing *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* with a strong focus on simplicity. It's important to us to make it as easy as possible for you to get your hands on *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* – and make it your own if you like it.

Trying, Buying, Authorizing

We only want you to spend money if you're absolutely happy with *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*. Therefore, we grant you a 30–day trial period, during which the plugin will run without any limitation.

When opening *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* during the trial period (or when clicking the *Authorize* button in the menu bar), you will see this overlay which:

- Displays information about your trial status
- Provides a link to the UJAM website where you can purchase a permanent *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* license after or during the trial period
- Allows you to enter your credentials and authorize *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* once you've purchased your copy



Trial Screen

Where to Put the Content

The actual guitar goodness of *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* – the audio content – is packed into so–called 'blob' files named 'VG–*AMBER2*_part1.blob' and 'VG–*AMBER2*_part2.blob'. Together, they are about 8 GB in size.

You can keep the blob files anywhere you'd like (e.g. on a separate content drive).

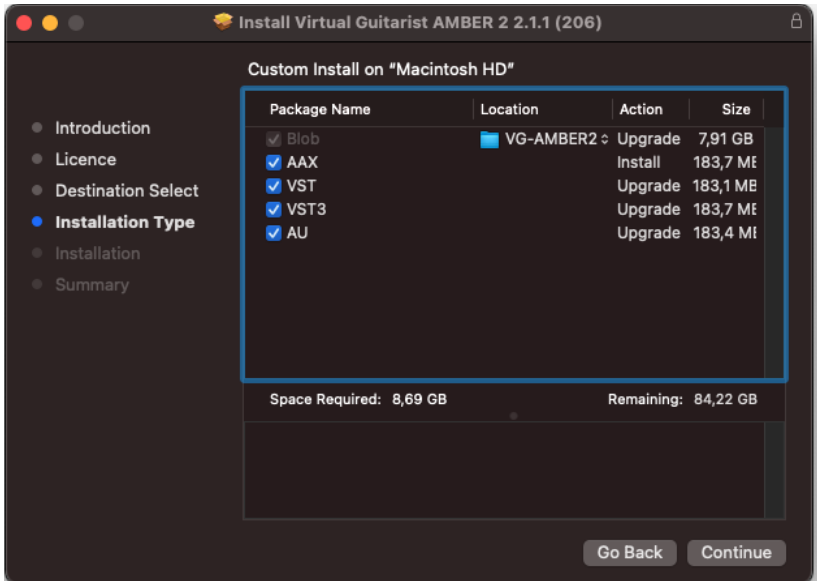
During standard installation, it will be put into the following locations on your system drive:

macOS	~/Library/Application Support/UJAM/VG–AMBER2
Windows	C:\ProgramData\UJAM\VG–AMBER2 (assuming your system drive is C)

Installing to a Different Location on macOS

If you wish to install the blob files to a custom folder on your local drive, you can set a different content installation folder in the installer.

- Open the installer and follow the procedure to step “Installation Type”
- Click the “VG AMBER2” folder next to Package Name ‘Blob’ to select it – as shown in the image below – and follow the instructions in the installer.

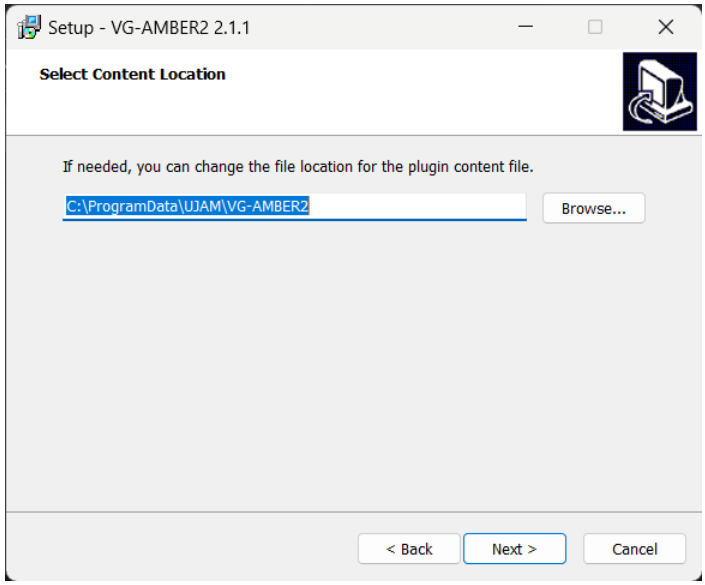


macOS Installer – Change Content Location

Installing to a Different Drive on Windows

The Windows installer will ask you if you want to install the content to a different directory (for example on your external drive).

Note: On Windows, you can set a different location for the plug–in, however we recommend leaving this untouched unless you have a good reason.

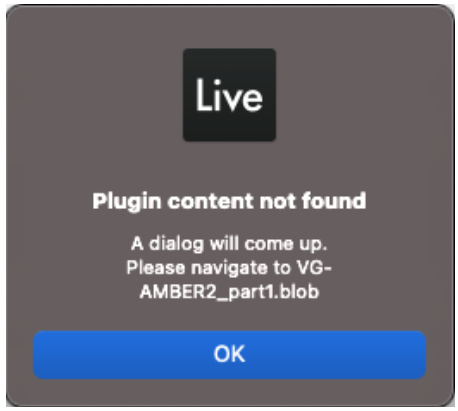


Windows Installer – Change Content Location

Changing the Content Location After Installation

You can always change the plugin content location after the installation, by relocating the VG–*AMBER2*_part1.blob and VG–*AMBER2*_part2.blob files:

- Move **both** files to the desired location (e.g. different folder / different drive). Both blob files (part1 and part2) always have to be in the same folder!
- Launch your DAW and open *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*. It will present you with a dialog asking for the blob file part1 location. Simply point to the new location of the file – and you're done.



Blob file relocation dialog

Note: If you don't select the correct blob file you will see an error message. We recommend restarting the DAW in that case.

Controller Hardware

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 requires MIDI note input for playing and recording musical performances, and optionally Pitch Bend, Modulation and Sustain Pedal data for added real–time variation.

If you have a MIDI controller (keyboard), this will be the easiest and most straight–forward MIDI input method and it's most fun as this way you control your guitar player in real–time.

Of course, you can also control Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 by using MIDI step sequencers or by entering MIDI notes manually into MIDI tracks.

To get to know Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 and for testing purposes, you can also use the interactive keyboard in the top half of the Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 window. This works best with the Latch function enabled.

Please note that whatever you play on this keyboard won't leave Virtual Guitarist and therefore won't be recorded in your DAW.

Start Playing!

Before we look at things in more depth, let's first explore how to play Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2, as that may be all you need for now.

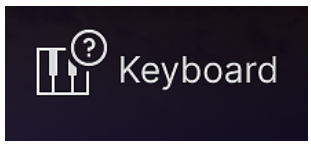
Let's go through the various playing modes and how you can use them:

- By default, Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 is set to Player Mode.
- When you press keys from C3 upwards, Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 will start playing a phrase with the notes you hold on the keyboard. When you release the key(s), playback will stop (if it doesn't, check to see if 'Latch' is enabled!).

- MIDI notes below C3 don't represent musical keys but instead select the phrases of your player in real–time. This is a powerful way of making your performance interesting and dynamic.
- Switch between 'Note' and 'Chord' mode from the dropdown and you'll see that the first is optimized for melodic riffs, while the latter interprets chords from your input.

When using a keyboard, combine left hand (phrase select) and right hand (notes) to build your performance.

- By switching to Instrument Mode, you turn Virtual Guitarist into a virtual guitar, i.e. you can play it like a real guitar, string by string. The interactive keyboard will display different options now. For demonstration purposes, please set Trigger Mode to 'On' (more on this later!).
- The left range of the keyboard (labeled 'Key Switches') lets you choose different articulations and strumming styles rather than phrasing. Play a few notes in the Play Range while the left hand selects from the black keys ranging from Bb2 to Eb2. Notice how the instrument switches between playing dead notes, muted, half–mutes and sustains (going up the keyboard respectively).
- The other "black" keys (not really black on our sleek on–screen keyboard) trigger Stops and Releases. Click on the Keyboard tooltip button for a more detailed overview of what each key controls.



If you know these things and can switch presets, you know all that you need to in order to start producing with *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*.

**C3 is middle C. The MIDI note number is 60. Some DAWs refer to it as C4.*

Walkthrough

If you're pressed for time or if you already know the basic concepts behind Virtual Guitarists, then this walkthrough may be all you need for now, and you can come back later to look up deeper explanations as you need them.

We will take a quick tour across all controls of Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2. After this, you will have a basic understanding of the instrument and how to use it.

We assume you have Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 opened in your DAW. Ideally you have a MIDI controller connected, otherwise use the interactive keyboard.

Make a Sound and Learn About Chords

- With Player Mode selected, play C3 or a higher note. Your guitarist will start playing. Play a few notes and get a feel for how it works.

Try the Presets

- At the very top of the Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 window you can load presets. A preset is always a complete setting of Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2, i.e. it will change the performance as well as the guitar and effects.

Note: the presets apply to both Player and Instrument Modes, and the Latch feature is independent of preset settings.

- At this point, you can simply go through different presets to get an impression of the musical and sonic palette of Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2.

Tell Your Player What You Want

- In Player mode, activate the Latch button on the far left above the interactive keyboard. Now Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 will keep playing even if you don't hold a note. Let it keep playing.
- Now play a note in the correspondingly labeled 'Style Phrases' range of the keyboard, C2 – A#2. Go upwards through the Style Phrases and notice how the phrasing gets more intense. These are the phrases you can replace by loading different Styles. Let's do just that now:
- Load different Styles by clicking the Style name or the arrows above the interactive keyboard. You will notice that your guitar player masters a vast range of playing techniques and musical genres.
- Now try keys in the C#0 – B1 range, labeled Common Phrases. These phrases will always be there no matter which Style you've loaded, and can be freely combined with the Style Phrases.
- Interrupt your player temporarily by holding the Silence key (C0). Playing will continue when you play another note. Now stop your player by pressing or clicking the Stop key (B2).

You can use the 'Silence' key with 'Latch' mode on to mute your phrase but keep it running. This is different from lifting the key and playing it again as that will restart the phrase.

Play It

- Switch the 'Play Mode' between 'Note' and 'Chord' and notice how 'Note' mode is optimized for individual voicings, while 'Chord' mode will automatically play up to 4–voice chords interpreted from your input.
- Try setting the 'Key' parameter to the key of your song and notice how it limits what is played to ensure that the chords work within the selected scale. This is a nice helping hand if you're not too familiar with keyboard playing or music theory.

More Performance – Tweaking Fun

- Have Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 keep playing. Open the Micro Timing menu by clicking the Micro Timing icon on the right side of the middle control bar.
- With the new Player Sync option, you can now quantize the AMBER 2 player to match the playback. Quantize to the current grid (Song Position), 1/4, 1/8, or 1/16 notes. This new feature keeps the instrument in sync with the DAW timing position to make sure you have the phrase in time and on the right beat. Give it a try!
- The Speed switch lets you set Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 to half time or double time – this is extremely handy when you like a particular style that plays half– or double–time relative to your existing arrangement.

- Now experiment with the Feel slider right next to the Speed control. It makes subtle changes to the timing, creating a rushed or relaxed feel. Maybe play a drum loop along for better comparison.
- Slowly turn up the Swing control that is next in line. As you will notice, this will delay the off–beats until the phrasing resembles a ternary feel that is common in Swing music (hence the name), often also called Shuffle or Groove depending on your DAW.
- Finally, start playing around with the Humanize slider, which is the last control in the Micro Timing menu.

Play the Guitar Yourself

If you're a prolific keyboard player, you might as well play the entire guitar yourself:

- Switch Virtual Guitarist to Instrument Mode by clicking 'Instrument' on the left side of the middle control bar (close the Micro Timing menu first if it's still open).
- Note how the interactive keyboard reflects the new mode – here, all keys from C3 upwards control the chord selection, while the Key Switch range below lets you strum chords or pick the individual notes and control the articulation of how the notes are played. Play open, half muted, muted, dead notes and stops. Experiment with your left hand while your right hand plays chord changes.
- Deactivate the Trigger Mode by pressing C#1 and notice how the Play Range changes to the Fretboard (now much more guitar–like).

- When Trigger Mode is off, you can silently change chords on the Fretboard on the right. Try using the Articulation keys with your left hand while your right hand changes the notes – pretty much like a guitarist does it with one hand stroking the strings and the other working the Fretboard.
- A not so obvious but cool feature: AMBER 2 can hold a chord in Instrument Mode. Activate Latch and the last played chord will get remembered, which allows you to use both hands for the Key Switches. This really comes in handy when playing live with a MIDI controller.

Find Your Guitar Sound

Let's look at the top half of the Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 window. Here you set up the guitar and the mix, and you can shape the sound in almost any way you like.

- Activate Player Mode with Latch on so the instrument will keep playing while you tweak the controls.
- First, play with the Character selector. Notice how each selection changes the timbre of the guitar sound in a unique way. This control offers you four of the most suitable sound characteristics for rock guitars (more details in a later section).
- Now experiment with different mix settings and the Air knob. This does a bunch of well–adjusted things inside the array, practically controlling the overall sound and the signal level of additional room microphones, which have been used during the sample recording.
- With the Blend and Focus knobs you can quickly and easily change the character of your guitar sound.

Add Some Effects!

- Some people on the UJAM team think that so far you've only seen half the fun of AMBER 2, because the other half is the effects section. It lets you mangle and twist the sound of AMBER 2 in a lot of ways – from subtle adjustments to total craziness. Let's try it:
- While AMBER 2 is playing, click through the Stomp Box and Finisher presets by using the arrow buttons next to the Amount knob, or by selecting presets from the menu that opens when you click the preset name.
- With every preset you try, turn the Amount knob up and down and listen for the alterations in the sound! A complete guide to the presets is included in the Reference section.

By now, you have a pretty good first impression of what AMBER 2 can do! Keep playing and experimenting. There's nothing to break. When you're done, just start laying down tracks or continue to the Reference Guide for more detailed information.

Reference Guide

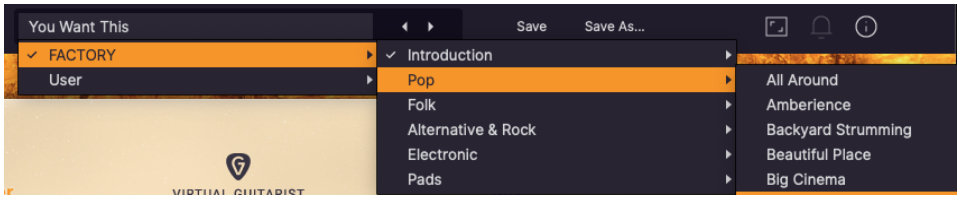
In the following part of this user guide, every feature of *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* will be explained in depth.

Menu Bar

The top bar of the *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* interface lets you load and save presets. It also contains important management functions from checking your trial status to contacting support.

Menu Bar

Loading Presets



Preset Browser

A preset in Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 is a complete setting of the entire plug–in including Style selection and all control values. Here's how you can switch presets:

- Advance to the next or previous preset by clicking one of the arrows to the right of the preset name.
- Click on the name of the current preset in the preset menu to open the Preset Browser (see image above).

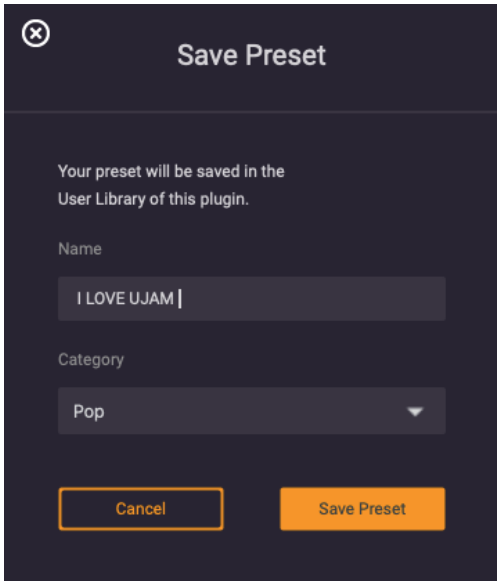
As you can see, the Preset Browser is a clean, organized list of presets that is categorized by simple musical terms.

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 ships with a lot of Factory Presets. Take your time exploring them, as this is the quickest way to get an overview of what Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 can do!

If you have freshly installed Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2, there will only be 'Factory Presets'. 'User Presets' will appear once you create and save your own custom presets:

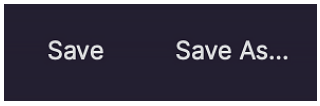
Save and Save As …

Once you've created a preset that you like, you can save it by selecting 'Save As...'. A pop–up will prompt you to name your preset and select a category for it, if desired.



"Save as…" Dialog

The difference between the 'Save' and 'Save As…' buttons is as follows:



- 'Save' replaces the active preset with the changes you just made.
- 'Save As…' lets you assign a new name and a category, so it does not replace the current preset.

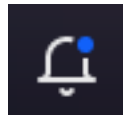
Note that you cannot overwrite Factory Presets. You can only select 'Save As…' to create a new preset with the changes that you've made.

Moving, Renaming and Deleting Presets

You can move, rename or delete Presets directly in your operating system. You will find Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 Presets in these folders (replace “USERNAME” by your actual username):

macOS	Factory Presets	~/Library/Application Support/UJAM/VG-AMBER2/Presets
	User Presets	~/Users/USERNAME/Library/Application Support/UJAM/VG-AMBER2/Presets
Windows (assuming your system drive is C)	Factory Presets	C:\ProgramData\UJAM\VG-AMBER2\Presets
	User Presets	C:\Users\USERNAME\AppData\Roaming\UJAM\VG-AMBER2\Presets

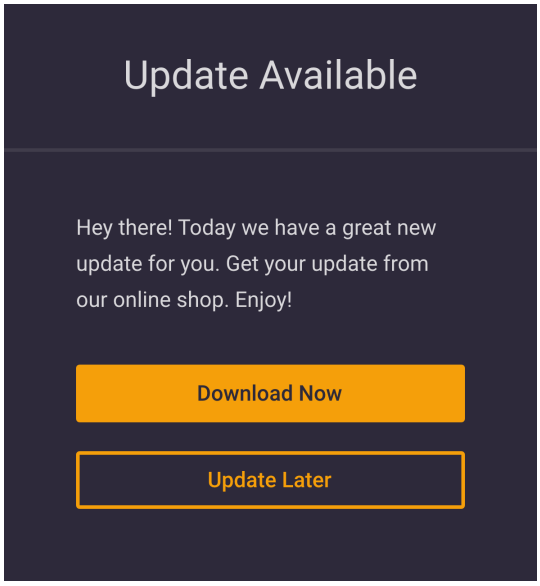
Notification Icon



Notification Icon

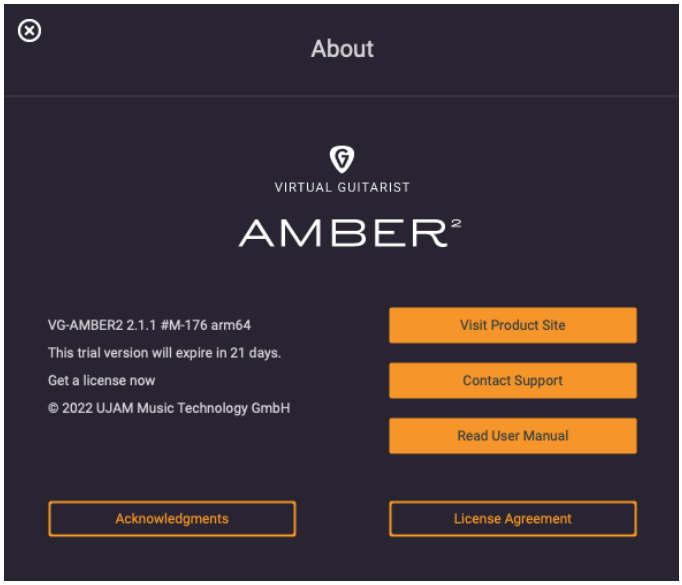
When you launch Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2, it will automatically check for updates. If an update is available, the notification icon will be activated.

Clicking it will open a dialog that lets you choose whether you want to download the update now or later:



We built this mechanism to save you the pain of manually checking for updates in order to keep up with the latest improvements of Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2.

Info Icon – About Page

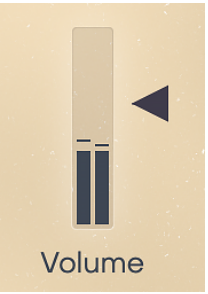


About Page

The About Page is the place for information about your version and licensing status of *Virtual Guitarist AMBER*. It is also a portal to other services:

- Visit Product Site – takes you to the UJAM website with regularly updated news, videos, tutorials and other helpful stuff.
- Contact Support – lets you report problems and ask questions.
- Read User Manual – opens this document.
- Acknowledgments – the people behind Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2.
- License Agreement – legalese for gourmets.

Volume Section



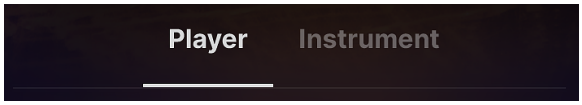
Volume Meter and Slider

Although a virtual instrument such as AMBER 2 lives inside a DAW with multiple level faders, a correct output level setting is important. If nothing else, it makes sure that subsequent audio processors, particularly dynamics or distortion, work in their optimal range.

Therefore, the Volume slider and meter on the right side of the plug–in lets you set and automate AMBER 2s output level between –inf and +12dB, and monitor the resulting level.

All components in AMBER 2 are adjusted so you won't exceed the level meters top range, but it's still ideal to watch it, particularly if you will be automating the Stomp Box and Finisher controls.

Player and Instrument Mode



Player/Instrument Switch

Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 can perform either as a guitar player or as a guitar instrument, and you can switch between those two at any time.

- In Player Mode, the rhythmical, articulation and phrasing aspect of the guitar performance are controlled by AMBER 2. All you need to do is select the phrases and notes you want to be played.
- In Instrument Mode, Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 emulates a guitar instrument that you can play on your MIDI keyboard.

Note that the Interactive Keyboard and its MIDI note assignments are very different in INSTRUMENT and PLAYER mode. Also, certain parameters such Micro Timing are only needed in PLAYER Mode and therefore hidden in INSTRUMENT mode to avoid clutter and confusion.

Which Mode for What?

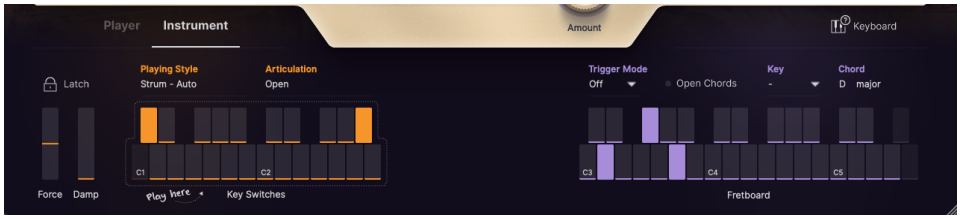
Player Mode	Use this mode when you want to enjoy the performance of a real guitar player that requires very simple input from yourself. Here, you control Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 using notes from a piano track, your MIDI keyboard, or the on–screen keyboard within the plug–in. This creates a vivid and realistic performance that can be customized by switching the phrases in the Common or Style Phrase areas of the Interactive Keyboard.
Instrument Mode	This mode is perfect if you are a prolific keyboard player and want to play the guitar live, or if you just want to throw in a riff or note here and there. Instrument Mode allows you to create your own guitar phrases, so if you are a good MIDI editor and want to have full control, you probably also wanna use this mode.

Interactive Keyboard

The Interactive Keyboard is both a display of received MIDI notes and an actual functional on–screen keyboard – with the only exception that notes you play on the Interactive Keyboard are not recorded into your DAW.

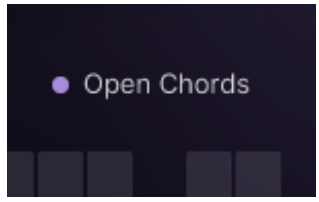
The layout and functionality of the Interactive Keyboard changes between PLAYER and INSTRUMENT modes as shown below.

Interactive Keyboard in Player Mode



Interactive Keyboard in Instrument Mode

Open Chords



Open Chords selector (in the “on” position)

This feature, when activated, lets you play open guitar chord voicings which changes the overall sound aesthetic. Chords will sound wide and spherical. Depending on the selected chord, additional chord notes like 7, 9, 11 or 13 will get added automatically, which adds tension and makes the overall sound more interesting.

Note:

- *This feature works very well together with guitar picking, try it for example with the style 'Youngsters'.*
- *Does not work for Power Chords.*

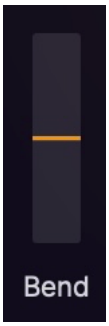
Force, Bend and Damp

The three controllers represent the standard wheels on a MIDI Keyboard. They behave a bit differently in both modes, so we'll cover them here.

Force (Player Mode only)

	The force wheel controls the dynamic level of the player's performance in real time.

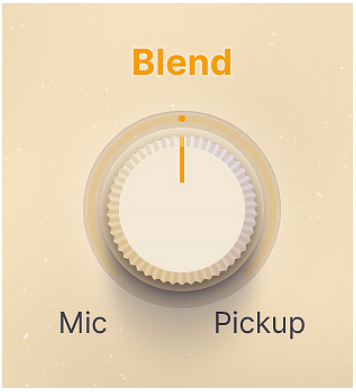
Bend (Instrument Mode only)

	The Bend Controller or Wheel allows you to bend the pitch by up to two semitones up or down.

Damp

	Allows you to seamlessly switch between the different articulation types from open to dead notes.

Blend

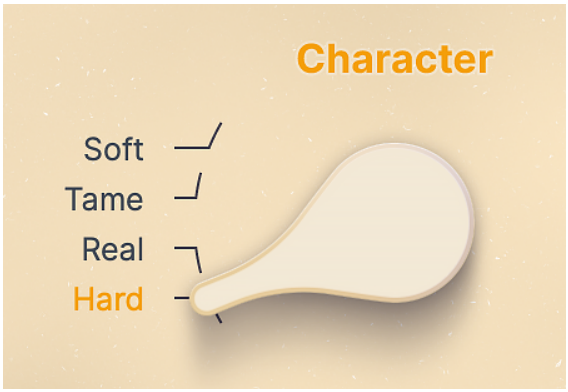


Blend allows you to blend between two distinct signal sources: the microphone mix and the piezo pickup.

The AMBER 2 acoustic guitar was recorded using multiple microphones, to capture a wide dynamic range and subtle nuances. These different mic signals are organized in mixes which you can select in the Mix section. In addition to the microphones, we also recorded the guitar's piezo pickup, which offers a different tonal character, typically more direct and focused.

If turned all the way to the left , you will only hear the full-bodied and organic sound captured by the microphones. If turned all the way to the right, you will hear the clear and direct sound of the pickup. By adjusting the *Blend* knob, you can achieve the blend between these two signals that suits your musical needs. Whether you want a natural acoustic sound, a direct plugged-in tone, or anything in between , with the *Blend* knob you are in full control.

Character



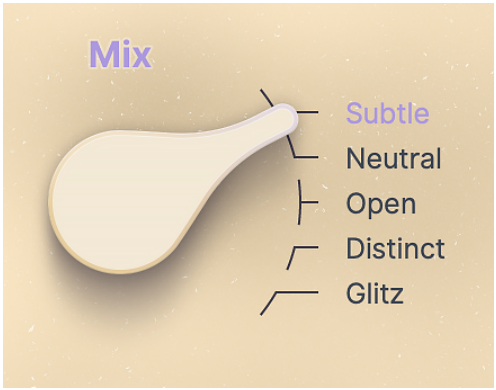
During the sampling process, we captured the acoustic guitar at different velocity levels. This allows the *Character* switch to genuinely reflect these different intensity levels, providing a highly authentic and flexible playing experience. The sound of the guitar changes accordingly with each switch position, giving you a rich palette of tones to choose from.

Note: The following descriptions provide general guidelines and technical info. We encourage you to always try out all Character positions for any given track.

Character	Description	Use
Soft	The Soft setting provides a gentle guitar output that leans towards the lower velocities, offering a full but softer velocity range.	This setting delivers a warm, soothing sound, making it the go-to choice for softer passages or whenever a gentle touch is needed. It's just right for crafting a relaxed musical atmosphere.
Tame	The Tame setting creates a balanced, moderate guitar sound by offering a linear velocity curve that doesn't reach the highest intensities. This setting also accentuates the brightness of the sound, delivering a distinct and well-defined tone while still maintaining a touch of subtlety.	Use the Tame setting for a mellow song where the acoustic guitar needs to provide a warm, comforting background without stealing the spotlight.
Real	The Real setting embodies a balanced choice, capturing the authentic strumming behavior of a guitarist playing at a moderate intensity. It provides a good blend of subtlety and energy.	Real is ideal for dynamic music, where the guitar needs to adapt to varying energy levels, much like a real guitarist would adjust their playing intensity.

Hard	The Hard setting cranks up the velocity to the max, offering the most intense strumming behavior and the brightest, most energetic sound.	When you need a strong, driving rhythm, this is the setting to dial in.

Mix

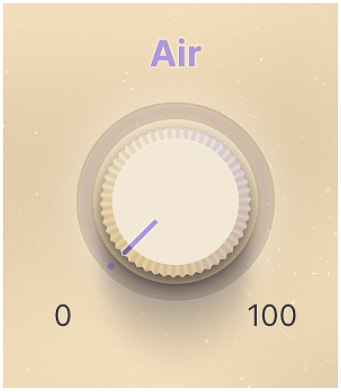


The Mix selector is a powerful tool for shaping your acoustic guitar sound. It lets you switch between different mix presets, each one offering a unique tone and character for a large range of musical styles. Each setting is a microphone setup tailored to a specific use case. Every mix is carefully crafted and includes proper signal processing like EQing and multiband compression, to create a specific sound profile.

Mix	Character	Use
Subtle	This setting provides an unassertive, smooth , and soft sound.	With reduced treble and added warmth, it's ideal for the guitar

		to subtly blend with the rest of your mix.
Neutral	This setting promotes the natural sound of the guitar with minimal processing, yielding a balanced and authentic tone.	Opt for the "Neutral" setting when recording a song where the guitar needs to sound natural and authentic, blending well with other instruments.
Open	This setting produces a strong, well-rounded sound with beautiful attack and a fine balance between mids and trebles.	Perfect for a singer-songwriter scenario, where a clear and open guitar sound is required.
Distinct	The *Distinct* setting boosts the high mids and trebles to create a clicky, assertive sound.	Ideal for something like a rock sound, where the guitar needs to cut through the mix and be clearly heard.
Glitz	The *Glitz* position is a percussive, hollow, and brilliant mix .	This is best used when you want your guitar to add a sparkling, rhythmic element to your track.

Air



The *Air* knob provides an additional layer of ambience to your guitar sound: It allows you to add a stereo signal of two room microphones on top of the Mix. This control essentially allows you to add a sense of depth and space to the sound of the guitar, simulating the natural ambiance you would get when recording an acoustic guitar in a well-treated room.

By turning up the Air knob, you can introduce more of this room sound into your mix, giving your guitar tracks a more expansive stereo feel. Conversely, if you want a more direct, centered and close-miked sound, you can turn the Air knob down.

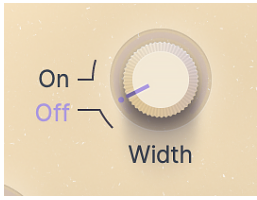
Focus

The *Focus* knob controls a morphing EQ. Across the range of the knob we have placed 4 distinct EQ settings, optimized for *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*. Instead of just switching between those settings, the *Focus* control lets you morph through them, allowing you to tweak the character of the sound before you send it to the *Finisher*.

Knob Position (o'clock)	EQ preset	Focus ...
7	Bass Boost	AMBER 2's lowest frequency range, particularly effective in the low play range. At this position, the high range is also attenuated. Use e.g. when doubling bass lines with AMBER 2.
9	Low Mid Boost	... the lower mids and low noise portion of AMBER 2's sound. Use to separate rhythmic riffs from the bass and an AMBER 2 riff with a lower octave version in a second instance

12	Neutral	No effect. The Focus knob is bypassed.
3	Hi Mid Boost	… higher mids – where the “twang” sits. When you stack AMBER 2 tracks, you can efficiently avoid masking by setting their Focus EQs to slightly different settings such as “2” and “3:30”
5	Hi Range Boost	… the high range, naturally most efficient with the higher note range and melodies rather than rhythmic figures.

Width



The *Width* control is a complex engine–in–the–engine that is capable of doubling guitar signals by using slightly different guitar samples and positioning them vertically and horizontally across the sound stage.

This means that it doesn’t merely multiply a single guitarist’s signal.This knob is the equivalent of what a sound engineer would do when having to disentangle multiple guitar tracks – all fighting for the same frequency ranges and just creating a ton of mush – in order to re–establish transparency and the ability to distinguish the various guitars from one another. The sound–engineering term for this would be “un–masking”.

As you will notice over time, *AMBER 2* is most powerful when doubled, as the *Width* control saves you the tedious work of setting up various instances with their respective mix settings.

Of course, there will be situations where you do want to use several instances – e.g. to have multiple AMBERs with different Mix settings or Finisher presets, or when you want total individual control over each guitarist's tone. But for a big coherent sound, the Width control is a super–convenient and optimized tool.

Using *Width*, you can build all kinds of guitar scenarios from subtle intro guitar to huge Walls of Sound.

Variance

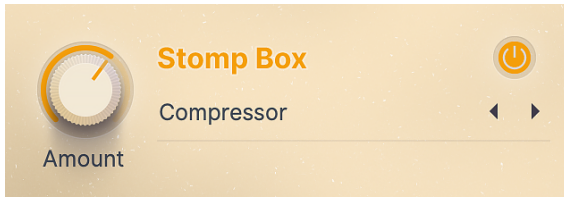
This parameter allows you further control over how realistic *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*'s behavior truly is. At higher values, the *Variance* control more realistically mimics a live guitarist's performance.

It is theoretically impossible for a guitarist to strum multiple strings at the same exact time. That's because there is a physical distance between the strings, causing them to be strummed sequentially rather than simultaneously. At higher values, the *Variance* control increases the presence of this strumming delay, while also adding additional fret noise to bring the performance to life.

Tune

This knob allows you to detune *AMBER 2* by three semitones up or down. Fine tuning is pretty useful when playing along to songs that are in an unusual tuning or slightly out of tune, which was quite common in the ancient times of tape recordings. The Tune knob up can also be used for adjusting single notes, adding a vibrato or bending single notes during a guitar part.

Stomp Box



Stomp Box Section

The brand new Stomp Box lets you choose from 30 different effect combinations in order to create a wide selection of classic guitar sounds that we all know and love so much.

You'll find the Stomp Box at the center of the screen, slightly to the left. It consists of an on/off button, an *Amount* knob, and a *Mode Selector*.

Step through the 30 modes using the arrows on the *Mode Selector*, or select one from the list by clicking on the title in the drop–down menu.

Use the *Amount* knob to adjust the effect. You're very encouraged to use the Automation feature for the *Amount* knob for dynamic transitions or modulations. The *Stomp Box* effects are selected and optimized for *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*. They cover compression, modulation, EQ and ambience – often all in one Mode. Experiment with them and enjoy!

Stomp Box Mode Reference

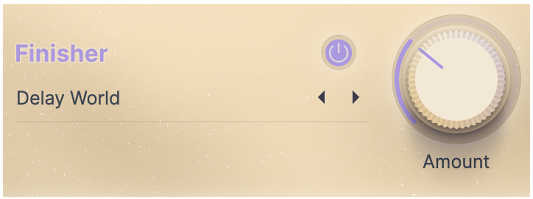
#	Mode	Description
1	Booster	A straightforward Booster pedal, pushing higher levels into the mix for a more prominent guitar sound.
2	Chorus	A smooth, modern Chorus pedal. If you're looking for a more vintage variant, we strongly recommend you try out the CEO Chorus in the Finisher section, which we stole straight from our Finisher Retro plugin.
3	Compressor	A tight, transistor style Compressor. If you're looking for a more gentle, opto style Compressor, again please try out the variant in the finisher section.
4	Delay Tape	Simulates the sound of an old-fashioned Tape Echo, with gradually decreasing presence, slowly dying low end and wobble due to tape imperfections.
5	Delay Hifi	Digital Delays like this one were invented to exactly NOT do what the above described Tape Echo does.

6	Electrifyer	Gradually make your acoustic guitar sound more like an electric one.
7	Filter Dynamic HP	An envelope controlled Highpass Filter to create funky accents. Consider it a close relative to an Autowah pedal, only adapted to be more compatible with acoustic guitars.
8	Filter Mild HP	A mild 6db Highpass Filter to smoothly remove low frequencies.
9	Filter Mild LP	A mild 6db Lowpass Filter to smoothly remove high frequencies.
10	Filter Resonant LP	A not all that mild 24db Lowpass Filter with resonance, to remove high frequencies in a more remixed sounding, synthesizer-like way.
11	Filter Sweeping BP	This automated Bandpass Filter lets you control the speed of the modulated sweeps.
12	Flanger	According to urban legend, a certain Mr. Lennon invented the Flanger pedal. However, this credit needs to go to a certain Mr. Ritsma, who invented the actual effect while Mr. Lennon “only” coined the (admittedly very catchy) name it has become known for.
13	Formant Shifter	This nicely weird effect takes only the formants - the overtones that determine a signal's character - and shifts them up or down. It sounds very artificial and that’s the point. Think of it being a Smurf or Darth Vader effect, just without changing the actual pitch of the signal.
14	LoFi	Reduces the sample rate and bit depth of the signal. Also adds a bit of jitter for appropriate Lofi-ness.
15	Octave Cloud	Summons a friendly cloud of pitch shifted octave overtones over your signal.

16	Old Phaser	Other than the more modern Phaser variants that you will find further down this list, this particular variant is modeled after an old 70s style pedal.
17	Old Spring	If your acoustic guitar had a pickup, and you plugged that into grandpa's old rehearsal room amp, and turned up the built-in reverb of that thing, it would probably sound very much like this.
18	Old Tape	Print your guitar on tape. The further you turn up the knob, the more the quality of the tape decreases. Use the maximum setting for the ever popular “found my old walkman recordings from the beach” character.
19	Overdrive	We know one *should* usually not run an acoustic guitar through overdrive pedals, so that is precisely the reason why we put one in here.
20	Phase and Flange	A Phaser and a Flanger that are explicitly not in sync, thereby creating less predictable, more complex modulations.
21	Phaser Sweep	A slow and expressive Phaser sweep. Nice for strumming guitars especially when you only add an ever so subtle touch of this.
22	Resonance	A Resonator effect. Adds a bit of depth and dimension when used sparingly - extreme settings will turn your acoustic guitar into dark drones. Which may be exactly the weird sound you were looking for.
23	Reversinator	Splits the signal into rhythmic chunks and reverses them. We are not sure why, but for some reason, reversing musical phrases never gets old.
24	Ringmodulator	Ringmodulators have the funny habit of sounding a bit like an ultra cool Phaser with low speeds, and like a hamster from Mars at high speeds.

25	Rotary	The actuaL namE of thiS modeL Is copyrightEd as far as we know, so let's just call it a rotating speaker that is often used to amplify certain electrical organs, which also works really nice for guitar material of all kinds.
26	Small Room	It's a small room. Thus the name.
27	Sustainer	This increases the sustain of your guitar strings. It's usually used in very small amounts, but it can also be a nice special-but-not-too-special effect when used with extreme settings.
28	Synthbasser	Turns acoustic guitars into dirty synth basses. Because it can.
29	Tremolo	This is again an effect that is recommended to be used only with electric guitars, which is again the primary reason why we put it in here.
30	Warp Delay	This crazy mode that combines Tape Delay "dive bomb" effects with internal feedback is stolen directly from Iron2. It's just too much fun to not include it.

Finisher



Finisher Section

The *Finisher* is a new section that adds even more guitar–optimized effects to your *Virtual Guitarist*. It was introduced with *Virtual Guitarist Carbon* in late 2019 and became so popular that we made it into its own product line and we will integrate it into all of our instruments over time!

Finisher is a super powerful custom effect array, with no less than 20 individual effect processors, macro–controlled by a single selector and control knob. Within the two categories *FX* and *Ambience* you will find many effects from EQs to multiband compressors to distortion, delay, chorus, phaser, flanger, and reverb to a convolution unit (providing impulse responses of cabinets and more), to more experimental stuff.

It lends the raw guitar sound all kinds of finish, from subtle character changes to standard effects such as delay, reverb or modulations to crazy grain clouds that render the original sound unrecognizable.

The Finisher section is the way to go for creative sound–design. It comes with over 60 modes, specifically created for *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*. Every preset sets up the 20 individual processors in a new way and connects them to the *Amount* knob.

Best of all: the *Finisher* is optimized to be played live. Using the *Finisher* knob you can create amazing morphing sounds. And it couldn't be simpler.

Finisher Drop–Down Menu

Drop–down Menu

To select a Finisher mode preset:

- Click on the preset name to open the full list, or
- Click the arrows next to the knob to step through the list

FX Mode Reference

#	Mode	Description
1	Acoustic Pop	A selection of typical Pop mixing treatments for acoustic guitars. Apply very gently if your surname is Rubin, turn up all the way if your surname is Martin.
2	Adaptive Remixer	A cutting-and-resequencing glitch effect that is triggered by envelopes - that is to say, its behavior changes depending on how hard the guitar is hit.
3	ADT	This emulates the artificial double tracking effect of the 60s. Turn to the middle position for a historically accurate variant, or turn all the way up for an updated current day interpretation that introduces more differences between original and artificial doubling. Of course, you can double your guitars for real with the Width knob, but maybe sometimes you will want to use this as a pop cultural reference, or as further enhancement.
4	Bass Impact	This mode makes the low frequency impact of strumming guitars more aggressive. No idea how else to describe this.
5	Campfirerer	Puts the studio recorded hifi guitar on which this plugin is based next to a campfire, thereby becoming a Campfirerer.
6	CEO Chorus	This is the vintage Chorus effect that we stole from Ujams Finisher Retro that we mentioned above.
7	Compressor	In contrast to the punchy Compressor Stompbox, this is a smoother variant with a more opto-style behavior (that is to say, it sounds a bit darker and slower).

8	Cutting Mids	There's a certain type of mids in acoustic guitars that are often elevated in a dense pop mix to make the guitar "cut through the mix". This mode raises these frequencies and adds a bit of parallel split band compression in that same range to give you a nicely sophisticated variant of this mixing technique.
9	Delay World	It's a whole world of Delays. Thus the name.
10	Dual Rotary Chorus	This is technically not a Chorus pedal at all, but it simulates a similar, yet very complex and super wide effect by running the signal through two rotating speakers that are panned hard left and right.
11	Fifth Offsets	Summons a friendly cloud of fifths above your signal, which runs through a delay that syncs to your daws tempo setting. Turning the knob further up will add some feedback to the signal chain, resulting in the popular "Pitch Shift Staircase" effect, because the Pitch Shifter receives the pitched signals again and shifts them up again ad infinitum (almost).
12	Indirectness	It makes the signal more indirect. Thus the name.
13	Mic Reposition	If you think to yourself "if only the recording engineer had pointed the microphone a bit more towards the neck", this is the finisher mode for you. The middle position is neutral, turning the knob to the left will move the microphone closer to the sound hole, turning the knob to the right will move it more towards the neck.
14	Modulator	A rather basic modulation effect. Perfect for just a touch of enhancement, but of course you can also turn the knob all the way up if that's not what you're after.
15	Monster Bass	Consider this the evil twin of the "Synthbasser" Stompbox mode. Is it an appropriate effect for

		acoustic guitars? No. Do we love it for exactly that? Yes.
16	Multiband Compressor	Multiband Compression works really well for acoustic guitars. If you feel like you're having trouble integrating your acoustic guitar into your mix, this is the mode to try.
17	Percussive Sequence	As the famous quote goes: and now for something completely different.
18	Phaser and Delay	Combining a Phaser and a Delay isn't exactly rocket science, but it's just a very musical and popular combo.
19	Radio	Yes, it's a "Radio effect". Good for intros. Actually, if you listen to the last 30 years of contemporary music, good for pretty much anything really.
20	Resonance Remover	If you remove too many resonances, sampled guitars begin to sound a bit like they're coming from a 90s workstation keyboard (not in a good way), so the source samples of this plugin do contain a healthy amount of natural resonances. However, if you still want to clean those up, try this surgical eq mode that zeroes in on the guitar's resonances and removes them.
21	Reduced Bits	We added another Bit and Sample Rate Reducer in this point in the signal chain, because such Lofi effects sometimes become especially funny if you use some crazy Stompbox settings in combination with them.
22	Remix Reverb	It's a Remix Reverb in that it does not so much remix the instrument per se, but the Reverb that's being added. To put it another way, this adds glitchy and remixed sounding Reverb chunks to your signal.
23	Reverb and Delay	Reverb and a touch of Delay. Such a sweet combination.

24	Shimmer	This reproduces the “Shimmer” knob effect of Amber version 1.
25	Space Reverb	Imagine you added a Reverb to your guitar, and then put a whole lot of different additional effects on that Reverb. That’s exactly what this mode does.
26	Stepped Filter	This is an interesting hybrid between a stepped Filter (=switches to different filter settings according to your daws tempo setting) and an envelope controlled Filter (=modulates the filter settings depending on the level of signal input). It’s essentially a Step Filter that reacts in a more musical way in that it kind of interacts with the guitar's strumming pattern.
27	Synth Clouds	If you thought that the “Percussive Sequence” mode still sounded too much like an acoustic guitar, try this mode.
28	Tech Sequence	Or this one.
29	Timing Randomizer	Based on Ujam Drums’ “Syncopator” Effect, this mode takes syncopated chunks of the input and repositions them in constantly changing ways, thereby essentially randomizing the strumming pattern of the guitar. Works really well as a subtle extra “Humanizer”, but of course can also be abused for remixing effects when turned all the way up.
30	Wandering Filters	Sends the guitar to several parallel busses that all run through different Filters that slowly move up and down in different ways, and are then processed with warm Modulation, Reverb and Echo effects. We love this mode. Please try it on almost anything.
31	Warholizer	This mode drastically changes the guitar recording aesthetic to the garage-like naiveté, if you will, of many famous 70s recordings.

32	Warm Octave Cloud	It's a dark, slightly saturated Upwards Octaver from Iron2 that we just could not let go.

Ambience Mode Reference

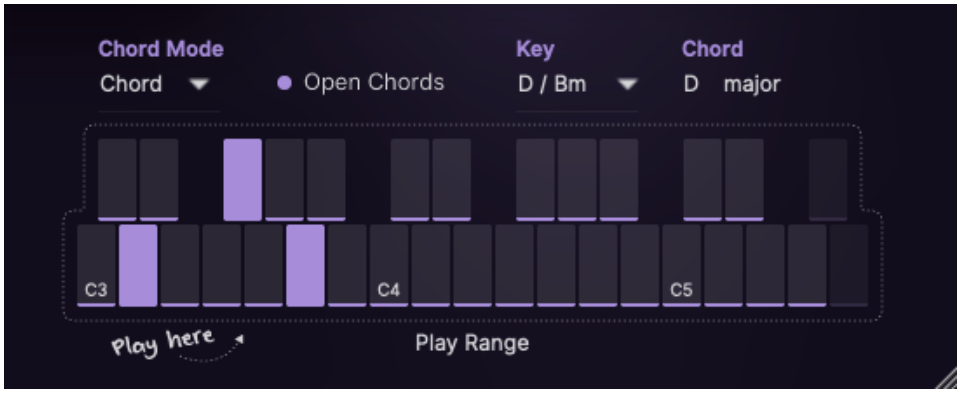
#	Mode	Description
1	Cathedral Reverb	A long, warm cathedral ambience.
2	Concert Room	A slightly shorter concert room.
3	Dark Desert	In reality, a desert would probably not produce any Reverb at all regardless of daytime, however we prefer to go with what one would imagine a dark desert to sound like.
4	Delay 1/16	Delay set to a 16th note value.
5	Delay 1/4	Delay set to a 4th note value.
6	Delay 1/4 T	Delay set to a 4th triplet value.
7	Delay 1/8	Delay set to an 8th note value.
8	Delay 1/8 Dot	Delay set to a dotted 8th note value.
9	Delay Manual	If you want an unsynced Delay with a very specific timing (i.e. a slightly untight, laid back variant), use this mode that allows you to set an unsynced time by hand.
10	Dirty Wave	"Wave" not as in "an actual wave", but as in "Wave Music". That genre often used a very particular style of processed Delay, which is recreated in this mode.
11	Echo Farm	Combines an old Tape Echo with an old Spring Reverb.

12	Freeze Pad	Melts your guitar into a neverending cloud of sound.
13	Formant Reverb High	This is a parallel Reverb that has its formants shifted upwards. It sounded surprisingly close to a Sitar, so we made sure that the last third of the knob turn gradually adds a little bit of appropriate phasing.
14	Formant Reverb Low	This is a parallel Reverb that has its formants shifted downwards. This again results in a nice, dronelike sound, but so as to not repeat ourselves, this time the last third of the knob turn gradually adds a little bit of flanging.
15	Ice Cave	Very much like the Dark Desert Effect, an actual ice cave would probably not sound like this, but we still prefer to imagine it would sound as “icy” as this glassy ambience effect does.
16	Large Room	It’s a large room. In case you were looking for a small room, there’s one in the stompbox menu.
17	Medium Room	It’s a medium room. In case you were looking for a small room, there’s one in the stompbox menu. In case you were looking for a large room, look up.
18	Modulated Reverb	This is very much the classic 80s type of Reverb treatment.
19	Mystic Delays	“What makes these Delays more mystic than others”, you ask? To be frank, they just run through a couple of detuned impulse responses, filters and some resonators - but it makes them nicely indirect while feeling more dry than a Delay that runs into a Reverb (like in one of the modes above). It’s a nice way to

		add ambience without really adding ambience.
20	Niceness Reverb	This Reverb is particularly nice. Thus the name.
21	PingPong 1/4	A Stereo Pingpong Delay set to a 4th note value.
22	PingPong 1/4 T	A Stereo Pingpong Delay set to a 4th triplet value.
23	PingPong 1/8	A Stereo Pingpong Delay set to an 8th note value.
24	PingPong 1/8 Dot	A Stereo Pingpong Delay set to a dotted 8th note value.
25	Pitch Reverb High	A Reverb that is pitched up an Octave, thus being weirdly yet nicely “disconnected” from the guitar.
26	Pitch Reverb Low	A Reverb that is pitched down an Octave, thus also being weirdly yet nicely “disconnected” from the guitar. As is common with any type of downwards pitch shifting, this works especially well with single notes.
27	Resonator	This Resonator mode is more complex than the one in the Stompbox menu, adding dark early reflections and an Impulse Response from the resonances of the interior of a grand piano. In essence, it very much sounds as if you had put your guitar into a grand piano and were still able to play it.
28	Reverb and Phaser	Reverb and a touch of Phaser. Such a sweet combination.
29	Reverse Delays	This does not reverse the signal itself (for that, use the “Reversinator” Stompbox), but only the delays that are being added. If you want an especially weird combination, use the

		Reversinator Stompbox to reverse the main signal, and then this mode to have the delays of the reverse signal play forward again :-)
30	Rotary Reverb	This combination of Reverb and Rotary speaker was very popular in the 60s and 70s.
31	Rotary Room	Very similar to the mode above, just with a much shorter ambience.
32	Slap Back Delay	No effect collection would be complete without the good old Rockabilly Slapback effect. Originally intended for voices and guitars mostly, we find that this works surprisingly well on acoustic guitars too.
33	Spring Reverb	A vintage Spring Reverb.
34	Warm Reverb	A particularly warm Reverb. Thus the name.
35	Warm Taps	These Delay taps run through a cheeky early reflection sequence that makes them “ring” in a somewhat unusual way.

Chord Recognition



The chord recognition with its artificial intelligence is basically the brain of *VG AMBER 2*. Without having a song key selected, you are able to input your own chords. *AMBER 2* will then interpret those chords and choose a proper acoustic guitar voicing for you, so that you don't have to worry about the right order of the notes. As there are many possibilities of how a chord can be played on a guitar, this is really what makes the unique *AMBER* acoustic guitarist character of this plugin.

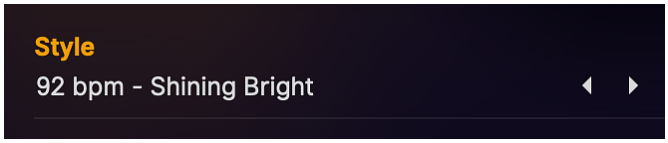
VG AMBER 2 can recognize up to four notes at a time:

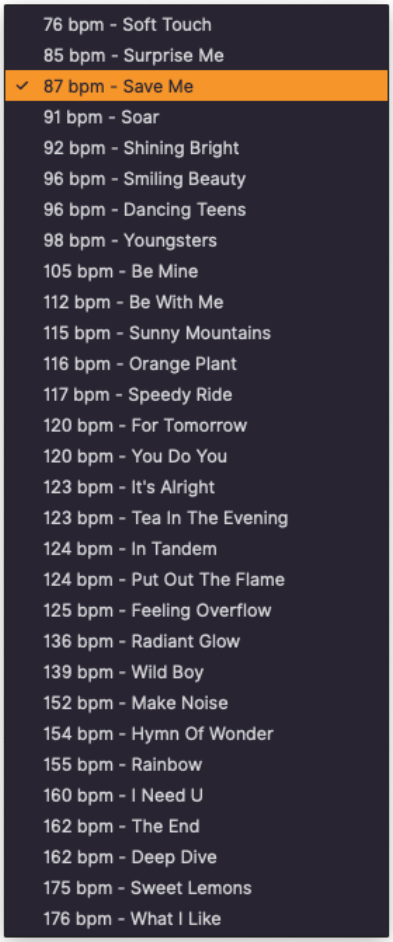
# of Notes Played Simultaneously	Chord Interpretation
1	Power chords (root, fifth, octave)
2	Intervals (+min2 up to +maj14)
3	Three-note guitar chords (Triads)
4	Four-note guitar chords (Tetrads)

Player Mode

Style Selector

Here you choose a Style – the selection of phrases accessible via the Style Phrases range on the keyboard.





Style-Dropdown-List

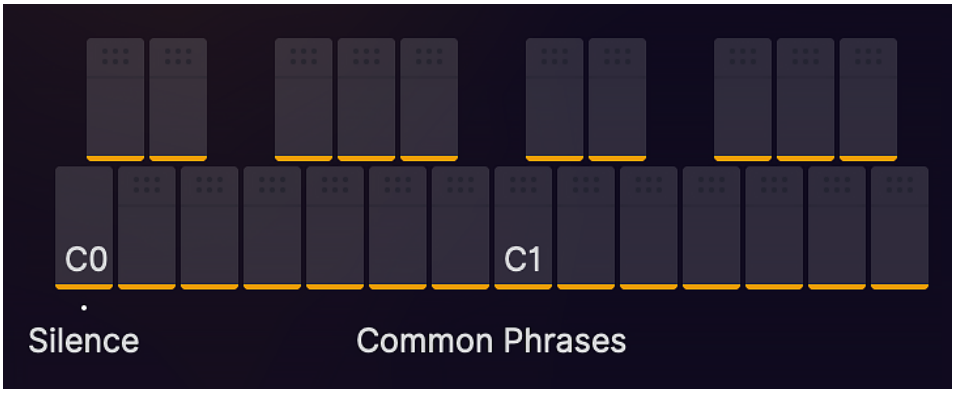
A *Style* in *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* is a collection of phrases that you "ask" your guitar player to play. Styles are the "rhythmic vocabulary" of *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2*, which is why we have included over 30 of them.

You can select styles by either clicking the arrows of the *Style Selector* to skip to the previous/next style, or by clicking the name of the current *Style* to bring up the full list.

Every *Style* is a set of eleven phrases. You can select them from the *Style* Phrases area of the Interactive or MIDI keyboard.

In many *Styles*, Phrases are ordered by intensity from left to right (low to high). Start at C2 and work your way up to hear for yourself!

Common Phrases



Common Phrases

The lower left of the MIDI keyboard (C0 – B1) is reserved for a collection of so–called *Common Phrases*. These phrases are "hard–wired" and won't change regardless of the Style you select. *Common Phrases* are more generic and versatile, so they can be applied in conjunction with various *Style Phrases* and it will always sound good!

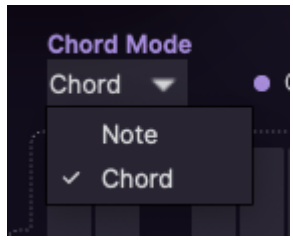
Note: Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 lets you switch phrases in real–time without interrupting the performance. That's a great way to create dynamic and interesting phrasings of your own by quickly switching phrase keys.

Special Keys

Within the Common Phrase range, certain keys have special functions:

- The lowest key of the Common Phrase range (C0) is the Silence key – it will keep playback running, but with an empty phrase. Use it to create temporary gaps without having to restart phrases.
- The Bb1 key plays a Slide Down effect, while the B1 key plays a Pick Slide effect. Both of these serve as great ways to start the guitarist's performance! Note that these keys still act as Phrases – once selected, you must then press a key from the Play Range area in order to hear the effect.

Play Mode

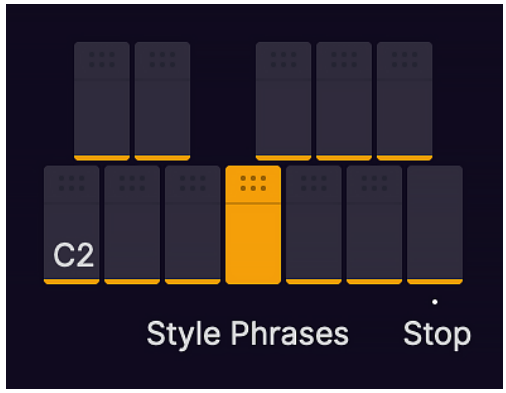


Play Mode: Chord	This is the easiest mode. Use this mode if you want *AMBER 2* to automatically interpret chords from your input and play them back to you in different styles and phrases.
Play Mode: Note	Use this mode if you want *AMBER 2* to strum phrases for you while you voice it and select the notes on your own.

Reference of Common Phrases

Key	Description
B1	Pick Slide
A#1 | Bb1	Slide Down
A1	Off–Beat 1/8
G#1 | Ab1	Build–Up Muted 1/8
G1	Muted 1/16
F#1 | Gb1	Muted 1/16 Riding
F1	Muted 1/8
E1	Half–Muted 1/8
D#1 | Eb2	Build–Up Open 1/8
D1	Open 1/8
C#1 | Db1	Muted 1/8 Open
C1	Muted 1/4
B0	Half–Mute 1/4
A#0 | Bb0	Chord Rhythm 1/16
A0	Open 1/4
G#0 | Ab0	Generic Chord Rhythm
G0	Open Stops 1/4
F#0 | Gb0	Single Note Rhythm
F0	Off–Beat 2 & 4
E0	Long Chord 2 & 4
D#0 | Eb0	Generic Rhythm Sustain
D0	Open 1/1
C#0 | Db0	Long Chord With Fill
C0	Silence

Style Phrases



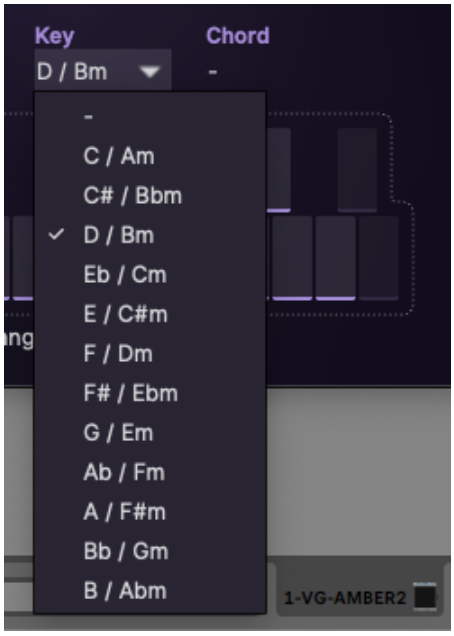
Style Phrases

Keys in the C2 – Bb2 range play phrases of the currently selected *Style*. There are 11 phrases in each of the 30 Styles, which you can freely combine with the Common Phrases.

Stop

The highest key of the Style Range – B2 – is the *Stop* key. In Latch mode, pressing this key will stop playback.

Key Selector

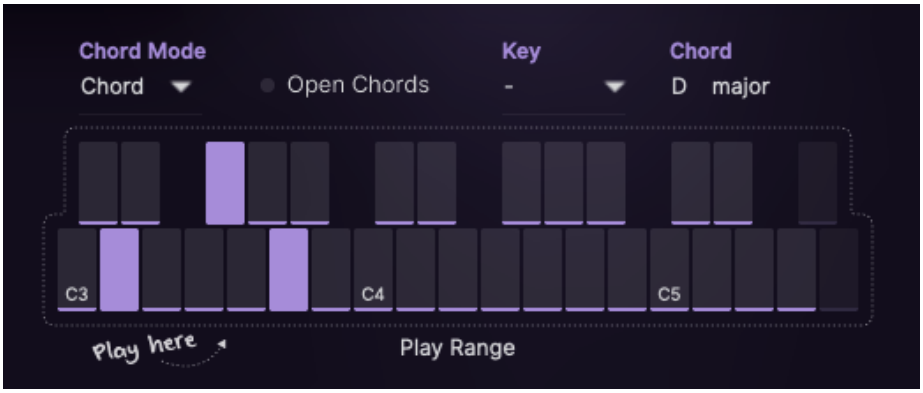


Key Selector Dropdown Menu

Select the key that your song is in from the *Key Selector* dropdown and *AMBER 2* will limit your input so it only outputs chords that will sound good in the context of your song, regardless of what notes you press!

Please note that you are supposed to input only a single note in order to output a full chord. In this mode you don't have the flexibility of building your own chords note–by–note. Having this limitation can be helpful, but if you wish to use the full potential of *VG AMBER 2*, you don't need to limit yourself with this feature.

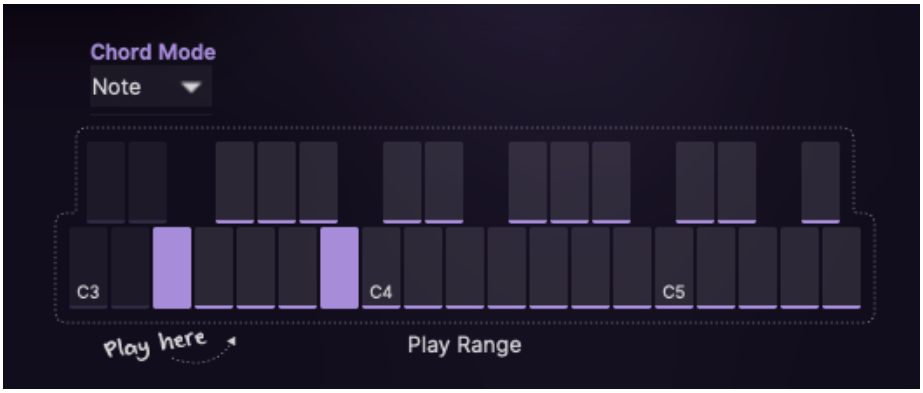
Play Range



Play Range on the Interactive Keyboard

The right section of the keyboard is the one that actually starts and stops the guitar performance and determines the notes or melodies your guitar player will play.

Play Mode: Note



In *Player Mode* there's a new feature called *Note* mode. This mode allows you to select individual notes so you can build your own chords.

Let the Phrases play the rhythm while you play a single note, an interval or even full guitar chords with both hands. Keep in mind that on a real guitar each string can only play one note at a time. So if your input is not physically playable on a guitar, the plug–in may decide to omit certain notes so it sounds more realistic!

Transposing Phrases

When you transpose recorded or dropped MIDI notes from *AMBER 2* in your DAW, make sure you transport only the notes in the *Play Range* section of the keyboard. Do not simply transpose the entire track altogether! Doing so will cause you to transpose the articulation and phrase selection notes, resulting in completely different playback.

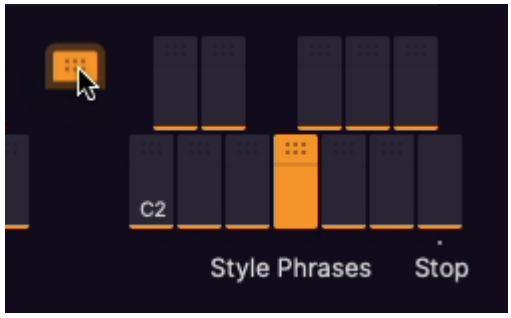
MIDI Drag'n'Drop (Player Mode only)

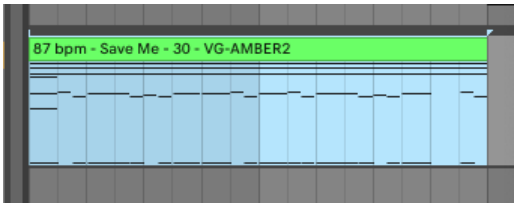
The easiest and fastest ways to create your own phrases are by using Player or Instrument Mode to record them into your DAW.

What will usually end up in your instrument track is the MIDI notes that represent the actual notes, along with the phrase keys to go with them.

Sometimes you may really like a Style in Player Mode but want to detail–edit the notes, velocities or timing. This is where Phrase Drag'n'Drop will help.

You may have noticed that the keys in the Common Phrases and Style Phrases range of the interactive keyboard show little handles with six dots at the top. By clicking this handle and dragging it onto an instrument track in your DAW, you will create a MIDI copy of that particular phrase, pitch taken from the last notes you played in the Play Range.

Step	Image	Description
1		Click and hold the tiny handle on top of the phrase (looks like a tab)
2		Now drag the phrase

3		Keep dragging the phrase to the Instrument Track
4		Drop the MIDI phrase onto your Instrument Track (at the correct position)
5		Done. You created an exported MIDI file of the phrase.

Note: This is an advanced and not necessarily easy–to–use feature. We recommend you only use it if you're ready and willing to do manual editing in your DAW! Micro Timing settings do affect the dragged MIDI note output, which can result in MIDI notes exceeding the regular ending of a bar.

Mixing Instrument and Player Mode

A dropped MIDI phrase will resemble what you would have recorded if you'd played this phrase in Instrument mode.

In fact, under the hood, AMBER 2 plays back these phrases in Instrument Mode while you can remain in Player Mode and even mix both modes in one track.

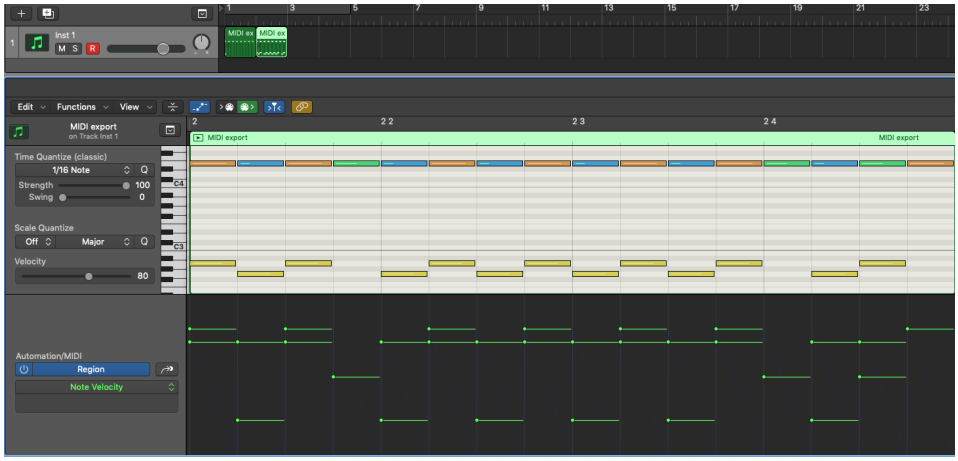
The way AMBER 2 identifies dropped phrases is by the note C–2, which you will see inserted in all your dropped phrases. Make sure not to delete these note events, as that may mess up the result.

What to Do With Dropped Phrases

Here's what you can do by dragging and dropping phrases into Instrument tracks:

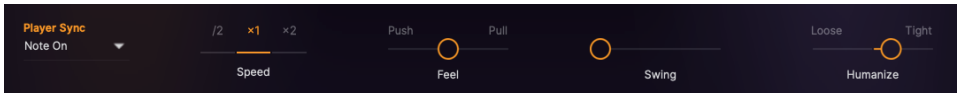
- Build a song structure by dropping multiple different phrases one after the other
- Create a melodic or harmonic structure by editing the note pitches from C3 upwards
- Change the articulations of notes by editing the black keys between Eb2 and Bb2
- Change the timing of notes by editing note positions
- Change the velocities of notes – e.g. lower them in intros, increase in verses. Velocities of the keys that are outside of the Play Range (e.g. Articulation keys) make no difference
- Use the phrase as a toolkit for building an entirely new phrase
- Use MIDI transformation in your DAW (double speed, half speed)

IMPORTANT: When you transpose notes, always make sure to not drag the corresponding select keys below C3, otherwise articulations might get messed up!



A typical MIDI export (here shown in Logic Pro X), with the MIDI region at the top, the note editor below showing both the notes and the select keys, as well as their velocity levels.

Micro Timing Parameters



Micro Timing Menu

- Only in Player Mode, you will find a button called *Micro Timing* on the right hand side of the middle control panel.
- Click this button to open a selection of timing parameters that you can use to adjust your *Virtual Guitarist's* performance to better suit your song.

Speed

The Speed switch lets you halve (0.5x) or double (2x) Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2's tempo relative to the song tempo.

Feel

You can tweak the feel of your guitar player's performance either towards relaxed or rushed using this control:

- As you move the slider to the left, the player will play off–beats slightly earlier, leading to a rushed or 'pushed' feel
- In the opposite direction, off–beats will be slightly delayed, creating a relaxed or 'pulled' feel

Feel has a stronger effect when listened to against other tracks. If you're not sure what it does, try playing a drum loop along with Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 and tweak the control. You will notice that the off–beats will play earlier or later than the off–beat drums (usually hi–hats or snares) as you turn the control.

Swing

This function, also called "Shuffle", delays the off–beats. Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 will automatically switch the Swing resolution to 8^{th} or 16^{th} note depending on the selected Style

Use this control to match the timing of Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 to a shuffled or triplet–based song. At maximum position, the off–beat will have the same timing as the last note of a triplet.

Note: Not all phrases contain 8^{th} or 16^{th} note off–beats. In these cases, the Swing control has no effect.

Humanize

Like a real human, your session player in *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* plays ever so slightly around the quantized note grid. You can vary how "human" you want those phrases to be played:

- In the center position of the slider, phrases are played with average timing.
- Towards the right or "tight" position, the phrases will get more and more quantized, until they match the grid exactly. Use this setting for example when using *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* along with drum machines or generally in sequenced, electronic music.
- Moving the slider towards the left or "Loose" position intensifies the timing variations – the guitar performance sounds intentionally off grid.
- The slider setting will be saved into a preset.

Latch (Player Mode)

Latch Button

When Latch is activated, once you press a key in the Play Range, Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 will keep playing until you press the Stop key.

When Latch is off, Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 only plays for however long you hold the keys in the Play Range. Latch is convenient when testing or setting up sounds, and is more practical if you build a track by manually entering notes into your MIDI track.

You can use an optional Sustain Pedal as a temporary Latch. Lifting the sustain pedal unlatches any notes that are no longer held, even if the Latch switch is still on.

Note: Latch behaves differently in Instrument Mode. Please read on!

Instrument Mode

If you are a skilled player and know how to play the typical phrasings and riffs of a guitar, then Instrument Mode might be for you, as it allows you to control rhythm, chords, play individual notes and use different articulations.

Actually, Instrument Mode is active in Player Mode too – it is the guitar model that gets played by the Player.

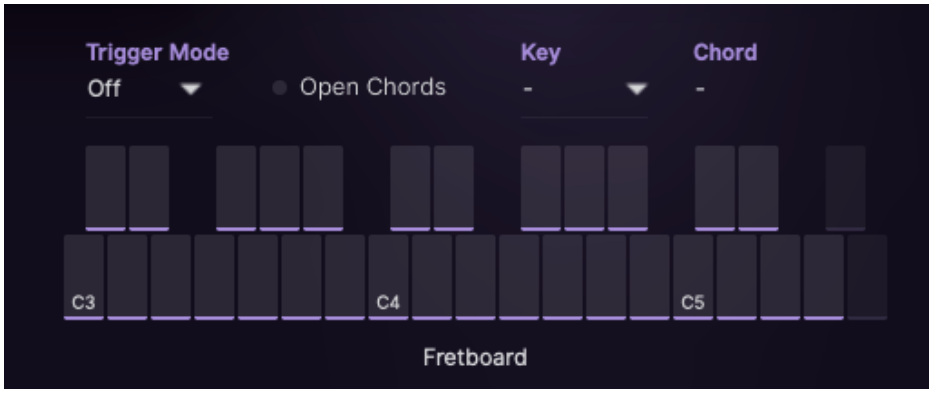
We wouldn't be surprised if playing Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 in INSTRUMENT mode felt like your keyboard were hooked up to a mechanism playing the physical guitar.

This is because a Virtual Guitarist is not just a multisample, but a real model that emulates the behaviors of a physical guitar. While there's a slight amount of wanted "unrealism" in Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2, unwanted "unrealism" of a conventional sampled guitar won't be found in Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 – such as machine–gun effect when repeating notes, synthesized note–offs or pitching/transposition artifacts.

Playing tip: Unlike many other instruments, realistic, grooving guitar performances rely not only on the correct onset of notes, but also on their ends! A succession of long guitar notes with no pause in between is easy to play on strings, but hard on a MIDI keyboard. In these cases, try recording your guitar performance at half the original tempo – chances are this will still sound more realistic than note–length editing.

Play Range and Articulations

The first thing that is helpful to know is that you'll be using your right hand to play notes in the *Play Range* – which defines which notes you play and when – and your left hand to play notes in the *Key Switches* range to control the *Articulations*, which define how these notes get played (i.e. as dead, muted, half–muted, or sustained notes).



Play Range in Instrument Mode

The *Play Range* of the Interactive Keyboard is inspired by a regular six string guitar – it ranges from C3 to F5 on the virtual keyboard, but actually represents the note range D2 to F4.

The Play Range is where you play the guitar like any MIDI instrument, up to four–note polyphonic and velocity–sensitive.

Articulation

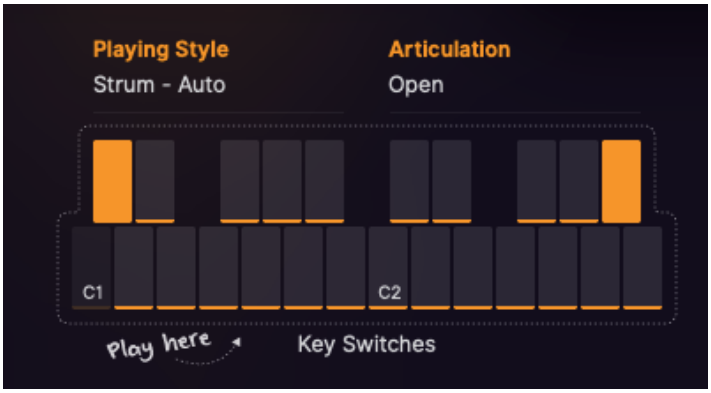
Use the black keys from Eb2 to Bb2 to select the articulation of the guitar.

One of the most important techniques used to create rhythmic patterns is damping the strings with the thumb–ball of the right hand, varying length and harmonic content of the note.

AMBER 2 offers four different articulations plus velocity sensitivity for a large expressive range:

Note	Term	Description
Eb2	Dead Notes	Unpitched, extremely short notes, usually used as rhythmic fillers and stops
F#2	Muted	Short but pitched notes
G#2	Half Muted	Slightly longer pitched notes
Bb2	Open	Undamped long sustained notes

Key Switches



Key	Articulation
B2	Strum – Auto
A#2 | Bb2	Strum – Open
A2	Picking
G#2 | Ab2	Strum – Half Mute
G2	Picking
F#2 | Gb2	Strum – Mute
F2	Picking
E2	Picking
D#2 | Eb2	Strum – Dead
D2	Picking
C#2 | Db2	Release
C2	Picking

B1	Downstroke
A#1 | Bb1	Stop – Downstroke
A1	Upstroke
G#1 | Ab1	Stop – Upstroke
G1	Pick Slide
F#1 | Gb1	Disable Articulation Strumming
F1	Slide – Up & Down
E1	Slide – Down
D#1 | Eb1	Trigger Mode: On
D1	Slide – Up
C#1 | Db1	Trigger Mode: Off
C1	–

This is how you use Key Switches:

- In Instrument Mode, activate Latch. This makes it easier to play the guitar, as the plugin will now remember the last Fretboard input (until you input another note or chord)
- Play any chord in the Play Range (Fretboard)
- While playing chords, play with the keys in the Articulation Range to trigger the respective events

Trigger Mode

Trigger Mode: ON	Play your own rhythm phrasing while instantly triggering chords in the Play Range on the right and use the Key Switches on the left to control strumming, chord note picking and articulation.
Trigger Mode: OFF	This mode allows you to select notes on the Fretboard on the right without instantly triggering a sound. Hold a chord and use the Key Switches on the left to control strumming, chord note picking and articulation.

MIDI Learn

Using *MIDI Learn*, you can assign any *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* control to hardware controls of MIDI keyboards or other controllers.

To assign a control, simply right–click or ctrl + click a control in *Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2* to open the 'MIDI Learn' context menu of your DAW.

MIDI Learn

Automation

Almost all controls in Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 can be automated. In combination with the phrase select keys this is a very powerful way of creating more dynamic performances. For example, automate Finisher, Stomp Box or the Air control with faders to create dynamic transitions, or switch–automate Mix and Character to drastically change the sound throughout your song.

For instructions on how to activate Virtual Guitarist AMBER 2 parameters for automation, please refer to your DAW's user guide.

I Have Questions! Where Can I Send Them?

Always feel free to submit a request to our support team! Don't hesitate, we're eager to help you out and learn about your opinions and suggestions. Many improvements and products have been influenced by our user community.

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