APOLLO II

CINEMATIC GUITARS

USER MANUAL

vir2 INSTRUMENTS

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Instrument Introduction

Vir2 Instruments is proud to present Apollo 2: Cinematic Guitars, the highly anticipated follow-up to our best-selling virtual instrument! Apollo 2 is the new gold standard for cinematic, ambient, progressive, experimental, post-rock, and sound design productions. Coming from absolute top-of-the-line amps, guitars, and pedals, there is nearly 36GB of meticulously recorded shimmering swells, fuzzy drones, playful licks, and 63 chromatically sampled instruments!

The original Apollo brought you the Ambient Designer, allowing users to easily create beautiful and unique guitar beds. For Apollo 2, we sought to expand this idea and make it far more powerful, flexible, and inspiring! In the new Ambient Designer patch, users can combine up to 30 unique performances at a time, arrange on the fly, effortlessly change pitch, and even switch from major to minor with the simple press of a key.

We also recorded nearly every Ambient Designer sound as a chromatic instrument. If you hear a sound you love in the Ambient Designer patch, you can load up the Instrument patch version and perform your own melodies!

In addition to exponentially expanding the sample set, we have created one of our most powerful user interfaces to date! From LFOs and step sequencers to legato and keyboard customization, the creative possibilities Apollo 2 offers are endless. To harness this customization power easily, we have included over 270 presets for quick inspiration and killer sounds right out of the box.

Apollo 2 raises the bar of what you can expect from a cinematic guitar library and will help bring you inspiration...song after song!

Overview

Apollo 2 features two main patches with a similar layout, the Ambient Designer patch and the Instrument patch. Before we dive into the specifics of each patch, we will first learn how to navigate around the interface.

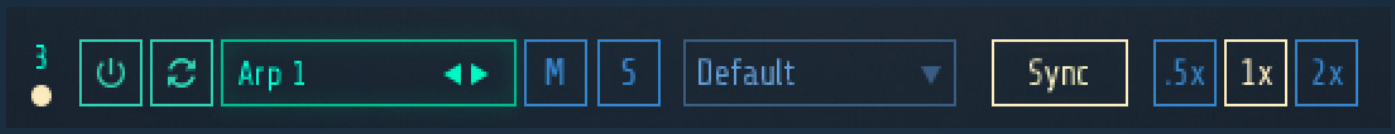
Apollo 2 features five separate engines (shown in an arc around the interface), with Engine 1 located in the bottom left and the rest following clockwise.

Located near the middle of the Ambient Designer patch are the engine parameter tabs: Edit, LFO, and Envelope. The Instrument patch also features a Performance parameter tab. These tabs will change the parameter set for each engine.

Located near the bottom of the Ambient Designer are the central page buttons: Sequence/Mix, FX, Browser, and Settings. The Instrument patch also features a Keyboard page. These pages occupy the center of the interface when selected.

Some pages, such as the Browser, require you to select an engine. To select an engine, click on the corresponding number under “Engine Select” or clicking directly on the desired engine.

Overview (Continued)



Engine Playback Indicator - This indicator light will illuminate when an engine is triggered.

Power - Turn off an engine to purge that engine's samples from memory.

Restore Engine to Default - Reset each engine-specific parameter back to its default setting.

Group/Instrument Menu - Click on the dropdown menu to see the full list of available groups/instruments. Click on the next/previous arrows to quickly select a new group/instrument.

Mute/Solo - Mute an engine to quickly silence it. Solo an engine to quickly silence all other engines.

Output - Route any engine to a separate track in your DAW

Sync (Ambient Designer Patch Only) - Sync engine to your host tempo. This is ON by default.

Playback Speed (Ambient Designer Patch Only) - Switch between half, double, and default playback speeds.

Ambient Designer - This patch allows you to layer up to thirty separate performances at once. You can trigger samples, change the key, and switch from major to minor, all on the fly from your MIDI controller. There are 148 groups of samples to choose from. Each group is a unique sound set containing up to six performances and four release samples. The Ambient Designer performances consist of phrases, plucks, swells, bowed performances (ebow and a real violin bow), pads, white noise, tonal and non-tonal guitar fx, and so much more! This patch is an incredibly inspiring tool for quickly creating interesting guitar atmospheres and performances!

Overview (Continued)

Instruments - Apollo 2 comes with 63 guitar instruments! With five engines, you can layer up to five separate instruments to create expressive and immersive sounds. There is a legato option that can be enabled per-engine for some incredible performance capabilities, and you can quickly turn any sound into a pad with a click of a button. Additionally, the keyboard is customizable so that you can map multiple layers of guitars to the same keys.

We designed the instruments of Apollo 2 to work harmoniously with the Ambient Designer patch. Nearly every Ambient Designer group has a corresponding instrument version. We have included 120 of these patches in the folder named “AD Companion Patches.” For example, if you like the performance “Arp 1 - Delay Pad 1” from the Ambient Designer and want to use it to write your own melody, find the patch titled “Arp 1 - Delay Pad 1” in the “AD Companion Patches” folder.

Engine Parameter Tabs

There are four engine parameter tabs that switch the view of available parameters for all five engines. The tabs include Edit, LFO, and Envelope. The Instrument patch has an added Performance tab.

Edit

Volume - Controls the overall volume of the engine.

Pitch - Controls the overall pitch of the engine.

Pan - Controls the right/left placement in your mix.

Lo/Hi Cut - Controls the low/high-frequency range of each engine. Click and drag the center icon to shift the frequency range.

LFO

Amount - Controls how much of the LFO is mixed in.

Speed - Control the speed of the LFO in either note divisions or Hz.

Phase - Adjusts the position within a cycle at which the LFO will start its waveform when triggered.

Fade In - Set the amount of time the LFO takes to fade in smoothly.

Cutoff - Adjusts the frequency center. Only available for HP, LP, BP, and MBP.

LFO Parameter - Select the effect you want modulated: Volume, Pitch, Pan, Low-pass, Hi-pass, Bandpass, Multi Bandpass, LoFi, or Distortion.

LFO Shape - Choose from a menu of standard LFO shapes, including: Triangle, Sawtooth, Rectangle, Sine, and Random.

Tempo Sync - Locks the LFO tempo to the host tempo, switching the Speed knob from Hz to note divisions.

Engine Parameter Tabs (Continued)

Envelope

Attack - Adjust the initial time it will take the envelope to reach its maximum level after it has been triggered.

Hold - Adjust the time the envelope will stay at its maximum level after it has completed the Attack phase and before it enters the Decay phase.

Decay - Controls the amount of time it takes the envelope to fall from its maximum volume to the level set by the Sustain control.

Sustain - Adjust the level at which the envelope will stay as long as the key is being held after it has completed its Attack, Hold, and Decay phases.

Release - Adjust the time it will take the envelope to fall from its Sustain level back to zero after the key has been released.

Pad - AHDSR preset with swell and sustain.

Natural (Instrument Patch Only) - AHDSR preset with attack and natural decay.

Swell (Instrument Patch Only) - AHDSR preset with swell and natural decay.

Performance (Instrument Patch Only)

Control Dynamics - Control dynamics with either the mod wheel or by velocity sensitivity (how hard you press the keys on your keyboard).

Velocity Curve - Users can set the velocity curve of the instrument to fit their play styles. Put simply, concave weights your playing towards softer velocities, and convex weights your playing towards louder ones.

Dynamics - Users will be able to select the velocity range of their multi-sampled instrument. Options include Full (Layers 1-3), Layer 1, Layer 2, or Layer 3. For example, with Layer 2 selected, the second velocity layer will be the only layer triggered.

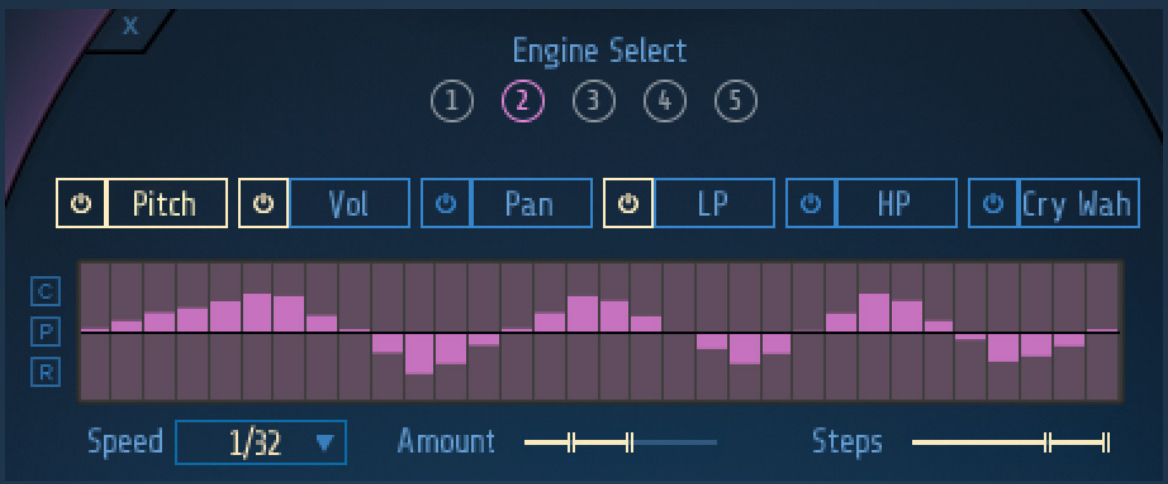
Engine Parameter Tabs (Continued)

Legato - Legato can be enabled for each engine individually. Legato mode allows for seamless transitions from one note to another. This setting is useful for playing solos and leads.

Legato Speed - The speed of the legato transition (the time it takes to go from one note to another) can be used to create fast or slow slides up or down.

Sequence/Mix Page

The Sequence/Mix page not only allows you to individually mix each sample within a group, but also allows you to add a step sequencer to each engine independently.



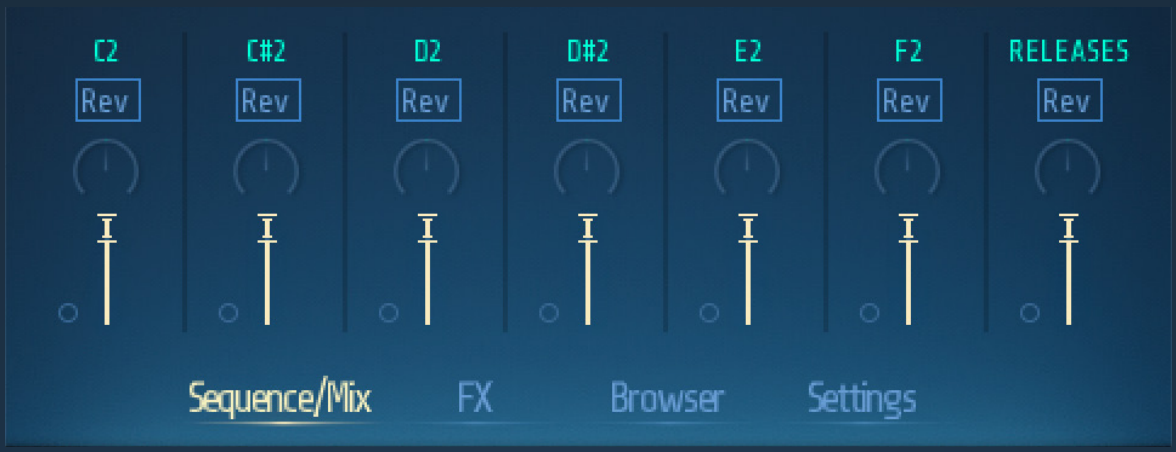
Engine Select - Click on an engine number or click directly on the desired engine to select it for editing. Once selected, that engine's step sequencers and samples will be displayed below.

Step Sequencer - This is an engine-specific step sequencer with six different effects: pitch, volume, pan, low-pass, high-pass, and cry wah. Each effect is its own step sequencer, and any combination of sequenced effects can be enabled at once. To enable a sequenced effect, simply click on the power button next to the effect you desire. To edit an effect's parameters, click on the effect name. You can adjust the Speed, Amount (blending how much the step sequencer is mixed into the signal), and number of Steps (2-32 steps).

Copy/Paste - Copy any sequence by clicking the "C" button and paste it to any other step sequencer by clicking the "P" button.

Randomize - Randomize the sequence pattern by clicking the "R" button.

Sequence/Mix Page (Continued)



Sample Mixers (Ambient Designer Patch Only)

Each engine will have up to six performance samples and up to four release samples. Each performance sample has its own mixer. All releases are grouped under the "Releases" mixer.

Rev - Enable to reverse the playback of any sample.

Pan - Control the left/right balance of each sample.

Volume - Control the volume of each sample.

Light Indicator - The light indicator next to each fader illuminates when a sample is active. This helps you keep track of which samples are active when you have several playing at once.

FX Page

The FX page includes options for applying FX to engines individually or to all engines at once.

Engine FX - Effects can be applied to each engine individually. Click on the engine number under “Engine Select” or click directly on the desired engine to select it and then turn on the desired FX below.

Both Delay and Reverb are send effects which means the effect parameters (except for the Send level) are shared by all five engines and are not engine-specific.

Master - Effects can also be applied globally to all engines at once. Click on “Master” under “Engine Select” to apply effects globally.

NOTE: Any engine that has effects applied will be illuminated under “Engine Select” so you can easily keep track of the engines that have FX enabled. For example, Engine 2 is yellow because distortion for Engine 2 has been enabled.

Browser Page

The browser page allows you to easily browse through the large catalog of Apollo 2 sounds and assign new groups/instruments to an engine. Start by choosing an engine under “Engine Select” or clicking directly on the desired engine.

Folders - All sounds are categorized into folders. Simply click on a folder and the sounds within that folder will appear in the “Groups” window to the right.

Groups (Ambient Designer Only) - Each group is a unique set of tonal and non-tonal performances. Single-click any group to load it into the selected engine.

Instruments (Instrument Patch Only) - Single click on any instrument in the instruments window to load it into the selected engine.

Randomize Engine - To randomly select new sounds, click on the randomization die. Specific engines can be omitted from the randomization process by deselecting the numbers to the right of the die.

Settings Page (Ambient Designer)

The Settings page features four parameters that control important instrument-wide functionality.

MIDI Select (Ambient Designer Patch Only) - When engaged, users will be able to select an engine by pressing any of that engine's corresponding keys on the keyboard.

Latch (Ambient Designer Patch Only) - When engaged, triggered keys on the keyboard will latch and loop without having to be held down. Triggering the key again will stop playback of that performance.

Pitch Wheel Control - Deselect any engine to have it be unaffected by the pitch wheel. This is useful if you want to perform a slight vibrato to only a select set of engines.

Pitch Wheel Range - Control the pitch range of your keyboard's pitch wheel, setting it from +/- 1 half step to +/- 12 half steps.

Playback Mode (Ambient Designer Patch Only) - Choose between Poly and Mono playback modes. In Poly mode, you can trigger multiple performances within an engine's group of samples at once. In Mono mode, you can only trigger one performance within an engine's group of samples at once. While in Mono mode, you can control the crossfade time between the first and second performances.

Keyboard Page (Instrument Patch Only)

The Keyboard page allows users to customize the keyboard layout of each engine.

Low Key - This value determines the lowest note of the engine's playable range.

High Key - This value determines the highest note of the engine's playable range.

Keyboard Icon - Clicking on this button will allow you to set the low key (first) and the high key (second) by selecting the notes directly on your keyboard. Simply click the keyboard button, then play your new desired range. The key color of any overlapping engines will turn blue.

Velocity - You can adjust the velocity range in which the engine will be triggered. The velocity range goes from 1 to 127. For example, if you have Engine 1's velocity range set to 120-127 then Engine 1 won't be triggered unless you play a note hard enough to be in that range.

Transpose - Shift an engine's pitch up or down by octaves. This doesn't change the instrument's playable range on the keyboard.

Keyboard Layout

Finally, we will look at the keyboard of the Ambient Designer patch and the Instrument patch. For the Ambient Designer patch, we will cover the keyboard from left to right.

Ambient Designer Patch

Each octave of the keyboard corresponds to an engine. For example, the yellow and dark blue keys from C0 to A0 correspond to Engine 1. Each engine has a section of performance samples, which always begin on C, and release samples which always begin on F#. The performance sample's key color matches the corresponding engine. Release keys are always dark blue.

Engine 1 (Yellow) - C0 to A0

Engine 2 (Purple) - C1 to A1

Engine 3 (Cyan) - C2 to A2

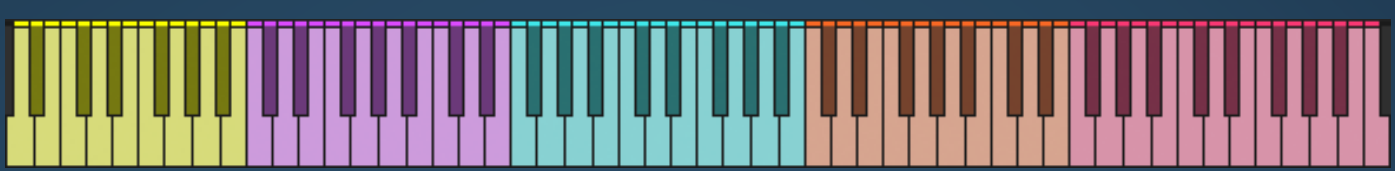
Engine 4 (Orange) - C3 to A3

Engine 5 (Red) - C4 to A4

Major/Minor Toggle (Black C5/White C#5) - Change your performance from Major to Minor with the press of a keyswitch.

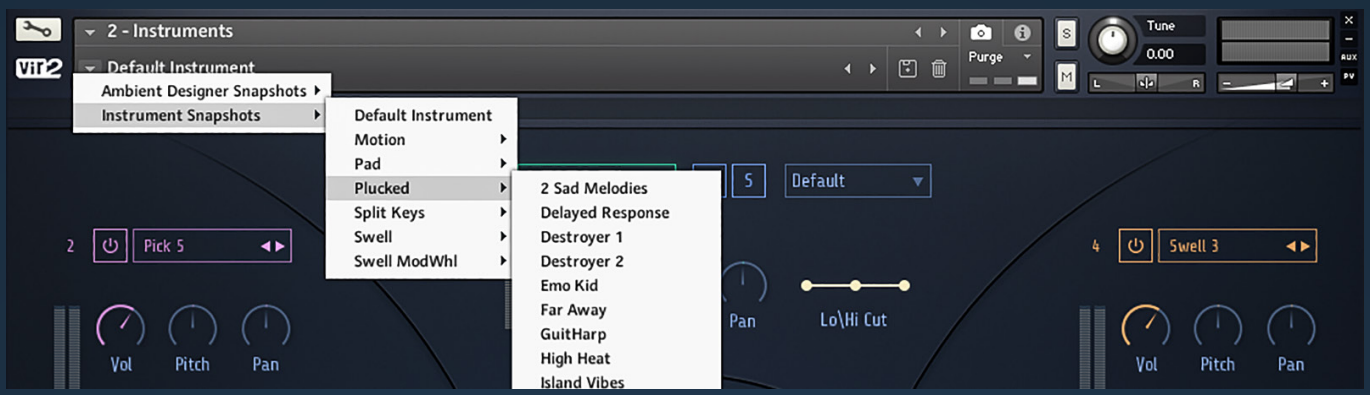
Stop/Start All Latched Performances (Red D5) - Press this key to stop all latched performances. Press again to restart all previously latched performances. This key is only available while Latch is enabled (see Page 13).

Instrument Patch



The instrument patch's keyboard is totally customizable. You can map any of the five engines to any range of keys. The keys will be colored the same as their corresponding engine. Where two or more engines' keys overlap, the keys will turn blue. As shown in the example above, engines 3 and 4 are overlapping (see Page 14).

Snapshots (Presets)



We have created over 270 snapshots to serve as inspirational starting points or as quick grab-and-go sounds to speed your productions along. To load a snapshot, click on the arrow next to the default snapshot name and then choose from one of the many available snapshots/presets. We included the default patch settings as a preset, so if you ever want to reset your patch to the initial factory default, you can load the preset titled “Default Instrument” or “Default Ambient Designer.”

There are separate snapshots for the Instrument patch and the Ambient Designer patch. The snapshots for each are organized into helpful categories, as follows:

Ambient Designer Snapshots:

Discover - Each of these snapshots offers a bank of similar sounds without any FX applied. These are helpful for quickly browsing the wide variety of sound categories that Apollo 2 has to offer.

Designed - These are banks of different group types that work well together and have a very designed sound. They utilize reverse samples, step sequencers, and LFOs in a way that maintains guitar qualities but clearly have a sound design element.

Hybrid - These snapshots are easy song starters with a balanced assortment of complimentary groups. They can blend a wide range of sounds, such as pads and drones with melodic elements and effect banks.

Sound Design - These snapshots push the limits of the Ambient Designer guitars to create otherworldly sounds. These are useful for learning some of the more complex features of Apollo 2.

Snapshots (Continued)

Instrument Snapshots:

Motion - Heavily featuring rhythmic motion created by Apollo 2's LFOs, delays, and step sequencers.

Pad - Layered sounds with a pad quality using AHDSR, LFO, sequencer, and FX.

Plucked - Realistic sounding melodic instruments using AHDSR for natural decay.

Split Keys - The keyboard is split between low-end sounds on the left hand and high-end melodic lead sounds on the right.

Swell - Gentle and ambient swelling sounds.

Swell ModWhl - These are duplicates of the Swell snapshots where the swell timing is controlled manually via the mod wheel.

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Before getting in touch with Vir2 Instruments regarding problems with the product, make sure you are running the latest versions of Apollo 2, Kontakt Player, and Native Access. We are continuously updating and improving the product, so it is possible that there are more recent updates available that were released after the instillation of your product copy.

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Guitarist/Recording Engineer . . . . . Wil Pearce, Bob Hartry

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Kontakt Scripting . . . . . Toby Sherriff

GUI Design . . . . . Voger Design

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