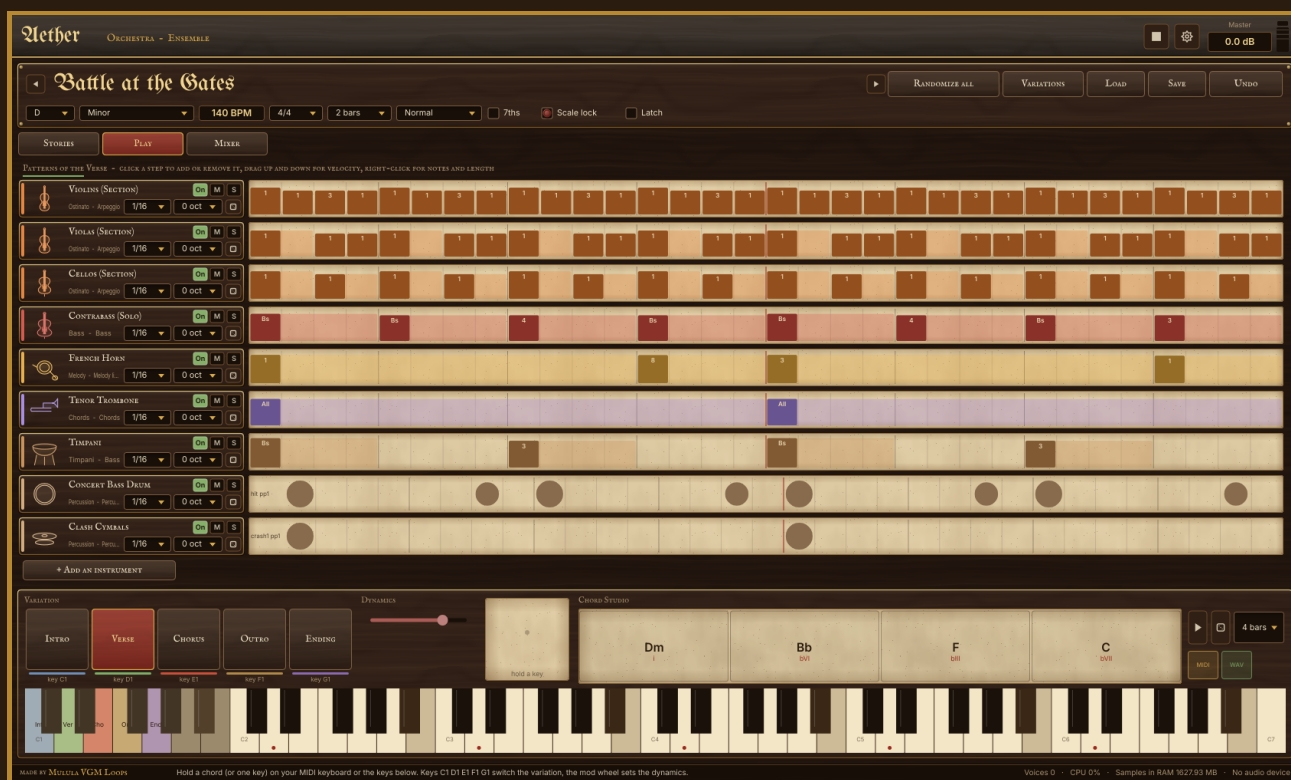


Aether Orchestra

MEDIEVAL & WORLD ENSEMBLE

USER MANUAL



Standalone app + VST3 plugin for Windows - version 1.0

MADE BY MULULA VGM LOOPS

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I. WELCOME

Aether Orchestra is an ensemble instrument. You choose a story (a small band of up to ten instruments, each with its own part), hold a chord or a single key, and every instrument plays its pattern on that chord, in the story's key and scale, in time. It ships with 209 stories in 19 styles, from battle scenes and Celtic dances to lullabies, lounge and horror, played by 53 sampled instruments.

It runs as a standalone app or as a VST3 instrument in your DAW, and works fully offline after a one-time activation.

QUICK START

- Install and open Aether Orchestra, then paste your licence key and press Activate (chapter 2).
- Choose your audio output in Settings > Audio & MIDI devices if you hear nothing.
- Open the Stories page and click a story.
- Hold a chord, or just one key, on your MIDI keyboard or on the keyboard at the bottom of the window. The ensemble plays.
- Press keys C1 to G1 (or 1 to 5 on the computer keyboard) to switch between Intro, Verse, Chorus, Outro and Ending.
- Press Space to let the Chord Studio play the story's chord progression without the keyboard.
- Drag the MIDI or WAV button into your DAW to take the result with you.

Tip: with Scale lock on (the default) you cannot play a wrong note. One key plays the right chord of the scale built on that note, and keys outside the scale snap into it.

2. INSTALLATION & ACTIVATION

REQUIREMENTS

- Windows 10 or 11, 64-bit.
- About 3 GB of free disk space (the sample library is 2.9 GB).
- For the plugin: a VST3 host such as Reaper, Cubase, Studio One, FL Studio, Ableton Live or Bitwig.
- An internet connection once, to activate.

INSTALLING

Run AetherOrchestra-Setup-1.0.0.exe (keep the .bin file in the same folder). Choose one of the setup types:

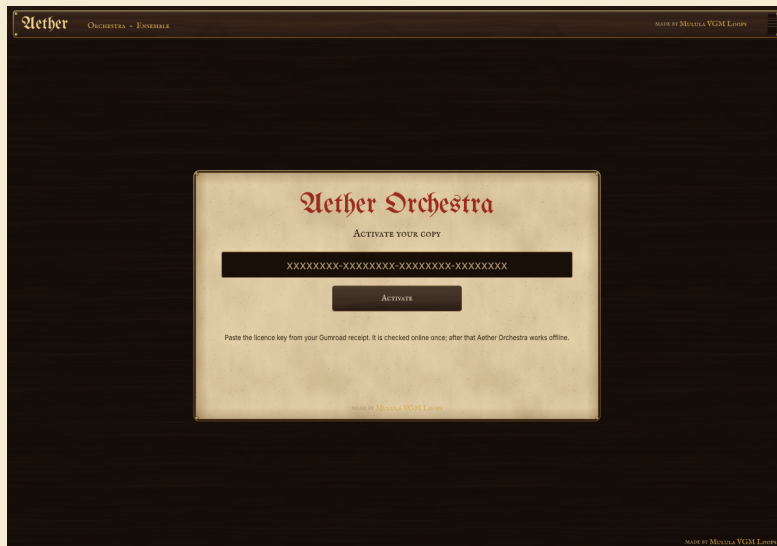
Setup type	Installs
Standalone app + VST3 plugin	Everything (recommended)
Standalone app only	The app and the sample library
VST3 plugin only	The plugin and the sample library

What	Where
Standalone app	C:\Program Files\Aether Orchestra
VST3 plugin	C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\Aether Orchestra.vst3
Sample library	C:\ProgramData\Aether Orchestra\assets
Your stories & exports	Documents\Aether Orchestra (Stories, Exports)

The installer never touches your own files in Documents\Aether Orchestra. To repair a damaged library, run the installer again and choose Repair (or reinstall).

ACTIVATING

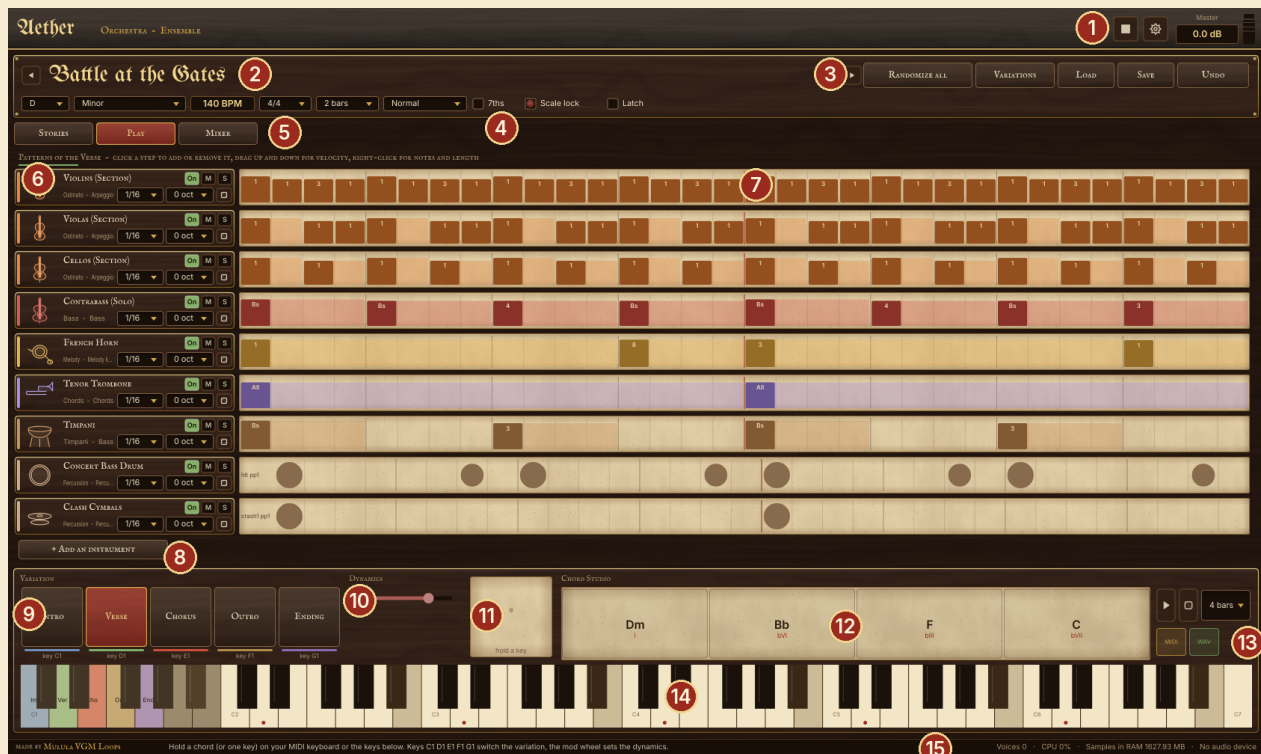
Your licence key is in your Gumroad receipt. The first time you open Aether Orchestra (app or plugin) it shows the activation page: paste the key and press Activate. The key is checked online once; after that everything works offline.



Activation page (shown until the product is activated).

- One key works on up to 5 computers. The app and the plugin share the same activation on a computer.
- When you are online, Aether Orchestra quietly re-checks the key from time to time. Being offline never deactivates it.
- Settings > Licence... shows the activation. Use Deactivate this computer there before moving to a new computer.

3. THE WINDOW AT A GLANCE

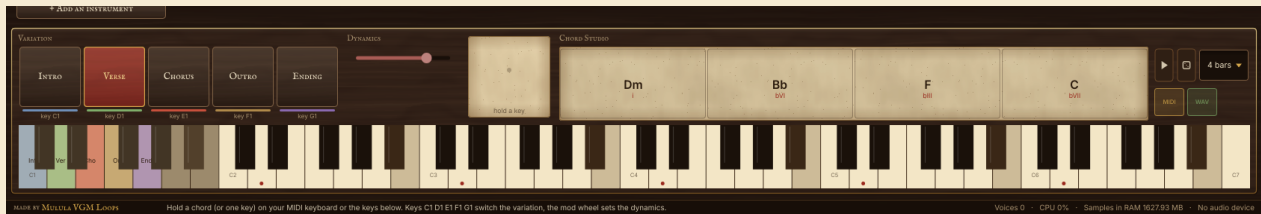


The Play page with the story Battle at the Gates.

#	Part	What it does
1	Title bar	Panic (silence everything), Settings menu, master volume and level meter.
2	Story name	The current story. The arrows step to the previous or next story.
3	Story buttons	Randomize all, Variations, Load, Save, Undo.
4	Story settings	Key, scale, tempo, meter, pattern length, feel, 7ths, Scale lock, Latch.
5	Pages	Stories (browse), Play (step sequencers), Mixer.
6	Instrument header	Instrument, role, on/off, mute, solo, step length, octave, dice.
7	Step sequencer	The instrument's pattern for the selected variation.
8	Add an instrument	Adds a new instrument to the story (up to 10).
9	Variations	Intro, Verse, Chorus, Outro, Ending.
10	Dynamics	How softly or strongly the ensemble plays (mod wheel).
11	Chord display	The chord you are holding, as the ensemble hears it.
12	Chord Studio	A 4 or 8 bar chord progression that can play by itself.
13	MIDI / WAV	Drag the progression into your DAW as MIDI or audio.
14	Keyboard	Play with the mouse; shows held keys, scale and variation keys.
15	Status bar	Hints, voices, CPU and memory, audio device.

4. PLAYING THE ENSEMBLE

Hold a chord or a single key and the whole story plays it. Let go and it stops (unless Latch is on). You can play from a MIDI keyboard, from the keyboard in the window with the mouse, or let the Chord Studio play (chapter 8).



Variations, dynamics, chord display, Chord Studio and keyboard.

KEYS AND CHORDS

- Scale lock (on by default): one key plays the scale's chord on that note, for example D in D minor plays D minor and B flat plays B flat major. Keys outside the scale snap to the nearest scale note.
- Chords: hold several keys and the ensemble plays exactly the chord you hold.
- 7ths: single keys play seventh chords instead of triads.
- Latch: the ensemble keeps playing after you let go; the next chord replaces it. The sustain pedal does the same while held.
- Chords are played from C2 upwards. The coloured keys at the bottom left (C1, D1, E1, F1, G1) choose the variation instead of playing notes.
- On the keyboard, keys in the current scale are lighter, and the notes of the current chord are tinted gold.

DYNAMICS

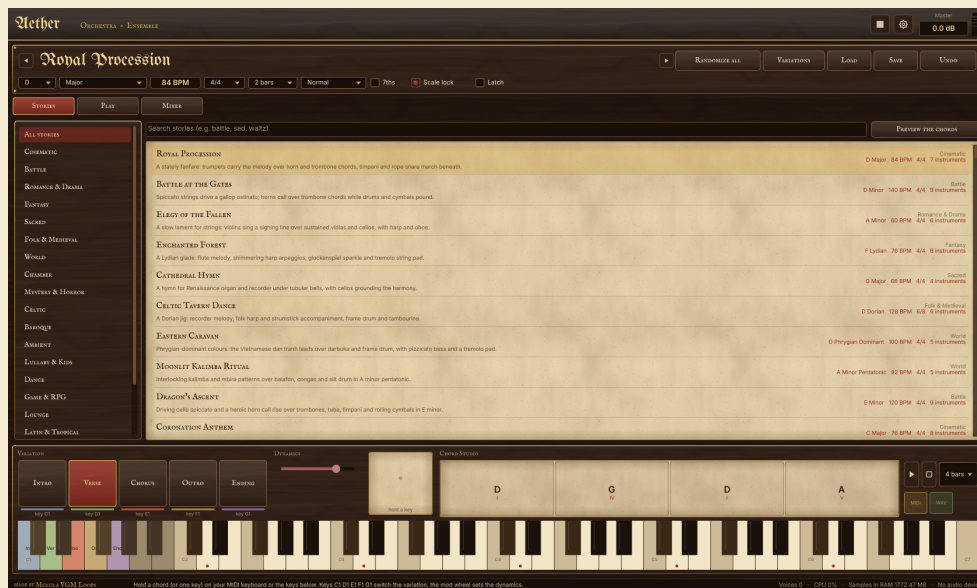
The Dynamics slider (MIDI mod wheel, CC1) sets how softly or strongly the ensemble plays. How far each instrument follows it is set with its Dynamics range in the Mixer.

VARIATIONS

Every story has five sections: Intro, Verse, Chorus, Outro and Ending. Each instrument has its own pattern in each section, and can be switched on or off per section. Change sections with the buttons, the keys C1 D1 E1 F1 G1 (MIDI notes 24, 26, 28, 29, 31) or the computer keys 1 to 5.

Tip: build a whole arrangement live: start on Intro, play your verse chords on Verse, jump to Chorus for the big moment and finish with Ending.

5. STORIES



The Stories page.

A story is a complete ensemble: its instruments, their patterns for all five variations, the mix, the key and scale, the tempo and feel, and a chord progression for the Chord Studio.

BROWSING

- Pick a style on the left: All stories, the 19 styles, or My stories (stories you saved).
- Type in the search box to find stories by name, description or style, for example battle, sad, waltz, kalimba.
- Click a story to load it. Each row shows its key, scale, tempo, meter and number of instruments.
- Preview the chords plays the story's chord progression so you can audition stories without a keyboard.
- The arrows next to the story name load the previous or next story.

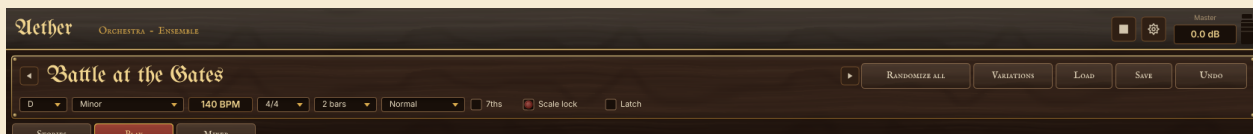
THE 19 STYLES

World (15), Cinematic (14), Battle (13), Fantasy (13), Sacred (13), Folk & Medieval (13), Chamber (12), Mystery & Horror (11), Game & RPG (11), Romance & Drama (10), Celtic (10), Baroque (10), Ambient (10), Lullaby & Kids (10), Dance (10), Pastoral (10), Lounge (8), Latin & Tropical (8), Comedy & Playful (8).

SAVING AND LOADING

- Save asks for a name and saves the story to My stories (Documents\Aether Orchestra\Stories, as a .aetherstory file).
- Load opens a story file or shows the stories folder.
- The app remembers the last story and reopens it at the next start. In the plugin, the story is saved with your DAW project.

6. KEY, SCALE, TEMPO & FEEL



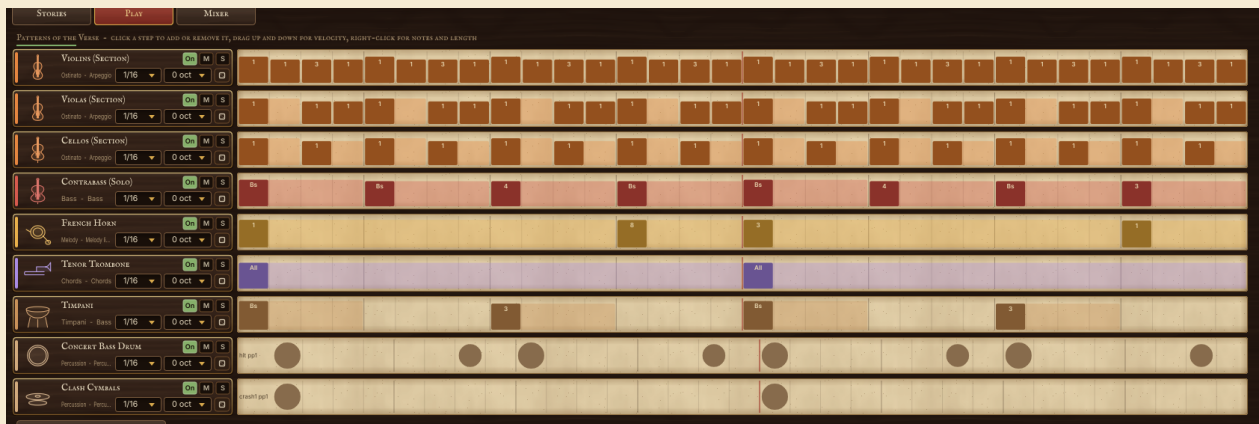
The story bar.

Control	What it does
Key	The tonic: C, C#, D, Eb, E, F, F#, G, Ab, A, Bb, B.
Scale	Major, Minor, Harmonic Minor, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Phrygian Dominant, Minor Pentatonic, Major Pentatonic.
Tempo	30 to 260 BPM. Drag up or down, or double-click to type. In the plugin the DAW's tempo is used while it plays.
Meter	4/4, 3/4, 6/8, 2/4, 5/8, 7/8. Changing it re-lays the patterns and chords for the new bar.
Length	Pattern length: 1, 2 or 4 bars.
Feel	Half time, Normal or Double time.
7ths / Scale lock / Latch	See chapter 4.

Every change can be undone with Undo (Ctrl+Z).

7. THE STEP SEQUENCERS

The Play page shows one row per instrument. The pattern you see belongs to the selected variation.



Step sequencers of a nine-instrument story.

THE INSTRUMENT HEADER

- Click the name or icon to choose another instrument (sorted by family: Strings, Brass, Woodwinds, Percussion, World, Textures & FX).
- The line under the name shows its articulation and its role: Melody, Counter-melody, Chords, Pad, Bass, Arpeggio, Ostinato, Timpani or Percussion.
- On: the instrument plays in this variation. M mutes it, S solos it.
- Step length: 1/4, 1/8, 1/8 T, 1/16, 1/16 T or 1/32 (T = triplets). Octave: -2 to +2.
- Dice: a new pattern for this instrument (all variations).
- Right-click the header for more: Change instrument, Play as (role), Chord voices (1 to 6), Register an octave lower or higher, Duplicate, Remove.

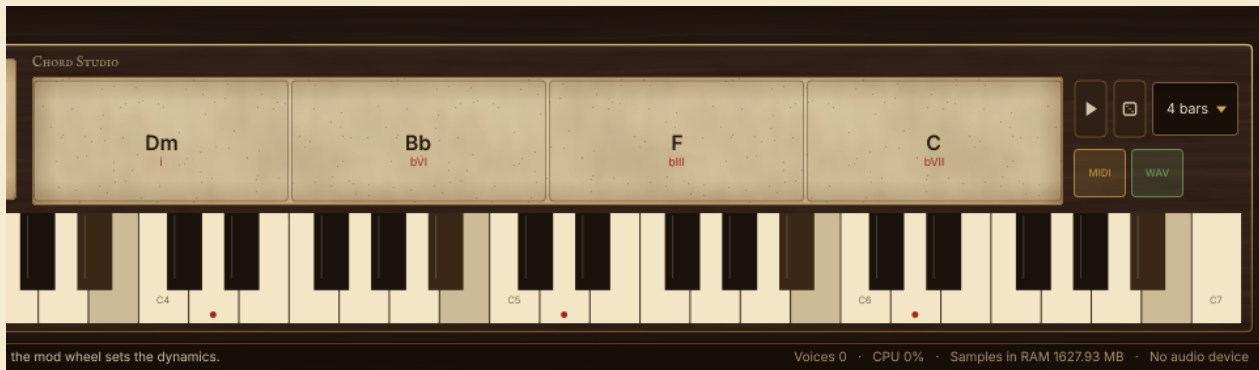
EDITING STEPS

- Click an empty step to add a note, click a note to remove it.
- Drag up or down on a note to change its velocity.
- Drag sideways when adding a step to make a longer note.
- Right-click a step for its Note (whole chord, top note, bass root, inner voices, or a specific chord tone; melodic instruments use scale steps), Length (1 to 16 steps) and Velocity (Soft, Medium, Strong, Accent), plus pattern tools: Clear this pattern, Fill every beat, Shift left, Shift right, Copy this pattern to every variation and New pattern (dice).

The label on a step shows what it plays (1, 3, 5: chord tones; Bs: bass root; All: the whole chord). Notes always follow the chord you hold, so a pattern works on every chord.

+ Add an instrument adds a new instrument, up to ten per story.

8. THE CHORD STUDIO & EXPORT



Chord Studio with Play, Stop, Dice, length and the MIDI / WAV buttons.

The Chord Studio holds a chord progression of 4 or 8 bars. Press Play (or Space) and the ensemble plays it on its own, looping. Use it to audition stories, to arrange, or to export a finished idea.

- Click a chord to change it: pick any chord of the scale, change its Colour (Major, Minor, Diminished, Augmented, sus2, sus4, Major 7th, Minor 7th, Dominant 7th), choose Any chord outside the scale, Split in two, Merge with the next chord or roll a New chord sequence.
- Dice: a new progression that suits the story.
- 4 bars / 8 bars: the length of the progression.
- Variations, dynamics and every edit are heard immediately while it plays.

EXPORTING TO YOUR DAW

- MIDI: every instrument playing the progression, one MIDI track each.
- WAV: the whole ensemble playing the progression, rendered to audio.
- Drag the button into your DAW, or click it to save the file to Documents\Aether Orchestra\Exports.

Tip: the MIDI export is a great starting point for your own orchestration: load the tracks on your favourite libraries and edit the notes.

9. THE MIXER



The Mixer page: one strip per instrument and the master.

Control	What it does
Pan	Left / right position.
Reverb	How much of the instrument goes to the hall reverb.
Fader	Instrument volume, -48 to +12 dB, with a level meter.
Dyn	Dynamics range: the volume at the bottom and top of the Dynamics slider. Drag the lower handle above the upper one to invert it.
M / S	Mute / solo.
Master	Master volume and Hall size (the size of the reverb room).

The mix is part of the story and is saved with it.

10. RANDOMIZE & VARIATIONS

RANDOMIZE ALL

Randomize all builds a brand-new story in one click: style, instruments, key, scale, tempo, meter, feel, patterns, mix and chords. Press it again for another one, and Undo to go back.

VARIATIONS BUTTON

Variations makes a new version of the current story while keeping its character:

- Similar variation (new notes, same feel)
- More complex
- Simpler
- More rhythmic
- More melodic
- Darker
- Brighter
- New instruments (same notes)
- Make a batch of variations: 5, 10 or 20 new versions saved straight to My stories.

Tip: found a story you love? Make a batch of 10 variations and browse them in My stories. Save the best ones under your own names.

II. USING THE VST₃ PLUGIN



The plugin window.

- Load Aether Orchestra as an instrument on a MIDI track (VST3 folder: C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3). If your DAW does not list it, rescan the VST3 folder.
- Play or record MIDI on the track. Everything in this manual works the same way in the plugin.
- While the DAW plays, the ensemble follows the DAW's tempo and bars, so patterns stay in time with your song.
- Your story is saved inside the DAW project.
- Variation keys C1 to G1 and the mod wheel can be recorded and edited like any MIDI notes and CC1 data.
- Automatable parameters: Variation, Dynamics and Volume.
- The plugin uses the same activation as the app on this computer.

12. SETTINGS, SHORTCUTS & FILES

SETTINGS MENU (GEAR ICON)

Item	What it does
Audio & MIDI devices...	Choose the audio output, sample rate, buffer size and MIDI inputs (app). All MIDI inputs are enabled at start.
Interface scale	80% to 150%.
Verify sample library	Checks every sample (SHA-256) and lists any damaged files.
Open my Aether Orchestra folder	Your stories and exports.
Open sample library folder	The installed samples.
Licence...	Activation details and Deactivate this computer.
Keyboard shortcuts	A short reminder of the keys below.
About	Version, licences and sample sources.

KEYBOARD & MIDI

Key	Action
Chord or one key (C2 and up)	The ensemble plays it
C1 D1 E1 F1 G1 (MIDI 24 26 28 29 31)	Intro, Verse, Chorus, Outro, Ending
Mod wheel (CC1)	Dynamics
Sustain pedal	Hold the chord
1 - 5	Variation
Space	Play / stop the Chord Studio
Ctrl+Z	Undo

TROUBLESHOOTING

- No sound (app): check Settings > Audio & MIDI devices, the master volume, and that a key or Chord Studio Play is active. Press Panic to reset.
- A story is silent for a moment after loading: its instruments are loading into memory; this takes a second or two the first time.
- Missing or damaged samples: run Verify sample library, then run the installer again and choose Repair.
- The plugin is not in my DAW: make sure the VST3 component was installed and rescan C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3.
- Activation fails: check the internet connection and copy the key exactly from the Gumroad receipt. If you have used it on 5 computers, deactivate one, or contact me through Gumroad.

CREDITS

Samples: 53 instruments, 3,220 samples from CC0 (public domain) libraries: VCSL (Versilian Community Sample Library), VSCO-2 Community Edition and Meta open sound. Interface fonts: UnifrakturMaguntia, IM Fell English SC, Cinzel, Cormorant Garamond and Inter (SIL Open Font License 1.1). Full notices: Settings > About.

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