



Getting Started

Riffer 4



Quick Start

Installing Riffer 4

Double-click the installer in the main folder and follow the on-screen instructions.

Windows users: During installation, you can choose which of the available plugin formats and standalone application options to install.

Once installation is complete, Riffer 4 will appear in your DAW’s plugin list. If it does not appear immediately, refresh or rescan your DAW’s plugin list.

Activating Your License

The first time you open Riffer 4, it starts in Trial Mode, with some features disabled. You can continue exploring the trial or activate your license to access the full version.

To activate Riffer 4:

- 1. Click Unlock Riffer to open the registration tab.
- 2. Enter your license key and the email address associated with it.
- 3. Click Unlock to activate the full version.

Available as:
VST3 · AU · AAX · AUv3 · Stand Alone

Compatible with:
Windows · MacOS · iPadOS

Developed By:
Vladislav Sakov, Maximos P. Maximilianos, Gustavo Castello, Katerina Mantzari

Special Thanks to all Beta Testers!

Want to learn how to make the most out of our software?



1. Getting Started

Riffer 4 is a MIDI riff generator and performance sequencer for creating, shaping, and playing melodic patterns. Use it to find a starting idea, explore variations, or build a performance that changes as you play.

At the heart of Riffer are 6 riff lanes. Each lane holds its own melodic pattern, and the block grid lets you combine sections of those patterns into a sequence.

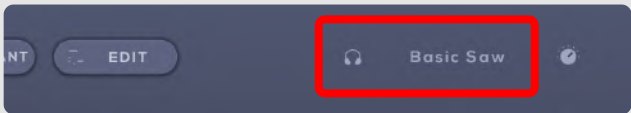


You can keep things simple with one lane at a time or layer several lanes for a richer result.

Generation is just the starting point. Once you hear something you like, you can edit the notes, adjust the rhythm, add expression, and save or export your work.

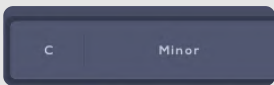
To create your first riff:

1. Enter the Plugins Tab to choose a sound. To enter it, click the name of the sound that is currently loaded:

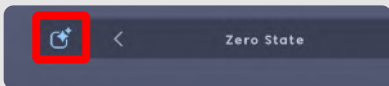


Riffer 4 includes basic waveform sounds so you can hear your ideas straight away. You can also load a third-party VST instrument to explore your riffs with a different sound.

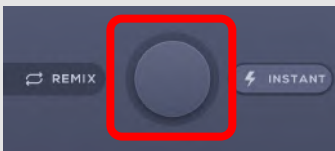
2. Set the root note and scale.



3. Click the icon button below to choose a generation engine.



Use Hybrid mode and press the main generation button at the top of the interface.



Alternatively, select blocks in the grid to combine material from the six riff lanes.

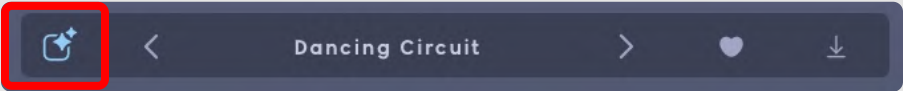
The first lane provides the main musical idea. The other lanes are generated as related variations, helping the overall sequence feel connected as it moves between them.

Tip: Try a few sounds before setting an idea aside. The same pattern can feel very different as a short bass sound, a plucked instrument, or a sustained lead.

2. Generating and Remixing Riffs

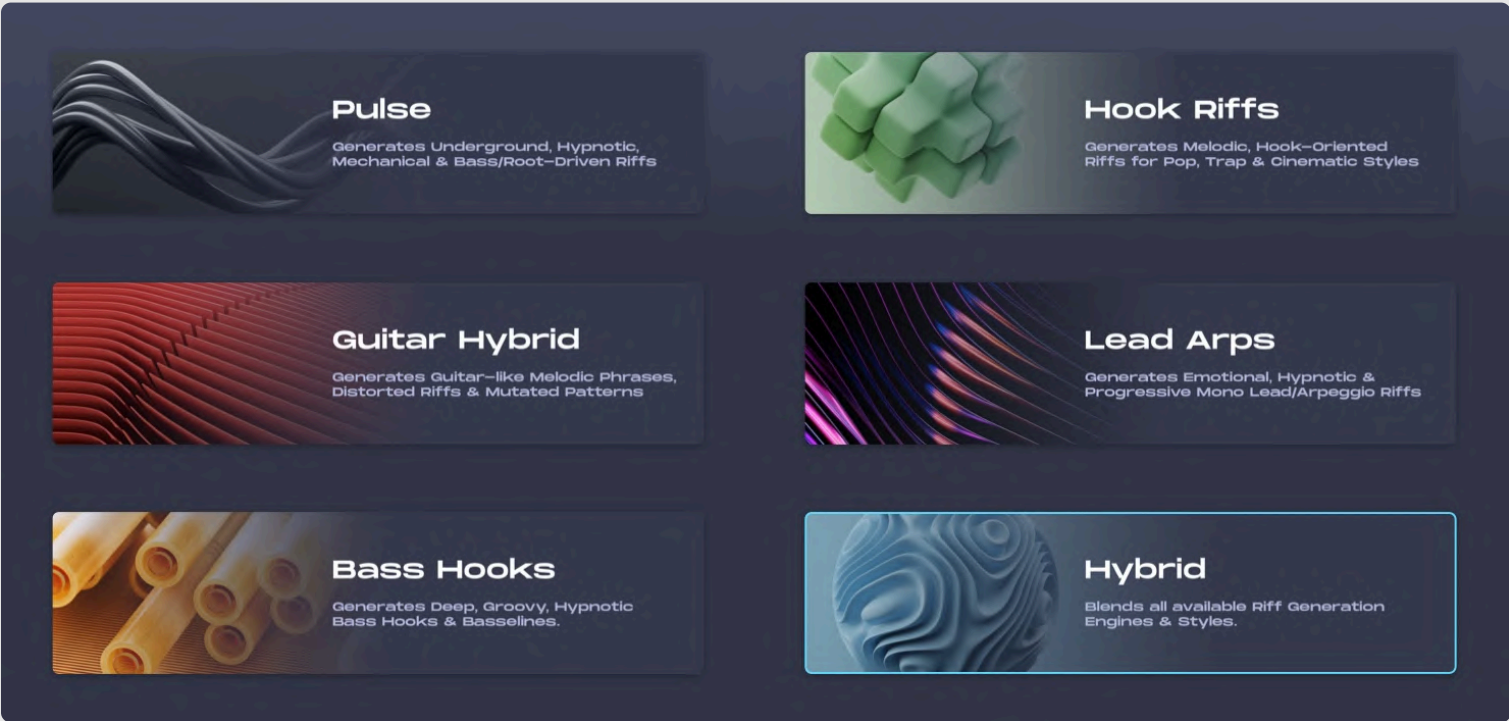
Generation Engines

Click here to enter the Styles tab:

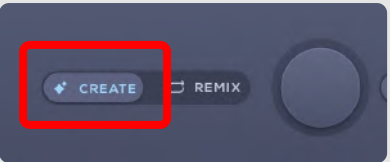


Generation engines guide the musical character of your riffs. Choose an engine suited to the type of part you want to create, such as a bass line, an arpeggio, or a guitar-inspired melody.

Important: Each engine also chooses a pitch range that suits its style. A bass engine, for example, tends toward lower notes, while an arpeggio engine may favor a higher register. To select a fixed pitch range, activate the lock (L) button for pitch range in the main screen.



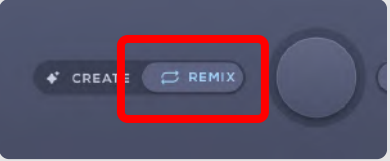
Create Mode



Use Create Mode when you want to explore new ideas.

Generating in this mode produces more substantial changes to the melodic patterns. This is a good place to begin when you have a sound or musical direction in mind but have not yet found the right riff.

Remix Mode



Use Remix to make more subtle variations of an existing idea.

When a riff already feels close, Remix lets you explore alternatives while keeping more of its character.

Tip: Start in Create mode, then switch to Remix as soon as something catches your ear. Small changes are often enough to turn a promising idea into a part that fits your track.

Instant



Press and hold Instant to apply a temporary variation. Release Instant to return to the original pattern.

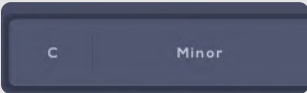
Its behavior follows the selected mode:

- Create produces a more pronounced change.
- Remix produces a subtler variation.

This mode is useful for fills and brief changes during a performance.

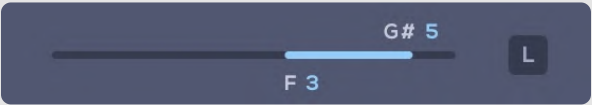
3. Key, Scale, and Pitch Range

Root Note and Scale



Set the root note and scale to guide the pitches Riffer generates. If you are working on an existing track, matching these settings to your project is a useful first step.

Pitch Range and Pitch Lock



By default, the selected engine chooses its own pitch range. Adjusting the range manually activates Pitch Lock, so future generations stay within your chosen range. To let the engine choose its range again, turn off Pitch Lock and generate a new riff. In the piano roll editor, adjusting the pitch-range zoom or the pitch octave slider also changes the generation range and activates Pitch Lock.

Octave Controls



You can shift the whole pattern up or down by octaves to place it in a different register. Individual lanes also have octave controls. Use these to separate related patterns by register or bring a lane closer to the others. The octave randomization control assigns new octave settings to the lanes. This replaces their previous manual octave selections.

4. Density, Position, and Swing

Fill



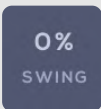
The Fill slider controls note density. Lower settings leave more space, while higher settings create busier patterns. At the maximum setting, the pattern is fully populated with notes. Enable Link link Fill to the main generation button, allowing density to change as part of each new generation.

Note Shift



Use the note shift controls to move notes left or right within the pattern. This changes their rhythmic placement and can reveal a different groove without replacing the musical idea.

Swing



Swing adds a shuffle feel to the rhythm. Start with a small amount and listen to how the riff sits against the rest of your track. Even a modest adjustment can change the feel of a repeating pattern.

5. Automatic Variation with Infinity Mode



Infinity mode generates changes automatically at a selected interval.

For the main riff generator, the interval is measured in complete passes through the pattern:

- 1 generates a change after every pass.
- 2 generates a change after every two passes.
- Higher settings allow more repetition before a change, up to 16 passes.

Use shorter intervals for continuous variation or longer intervals to give a phrase more time to establish itself.

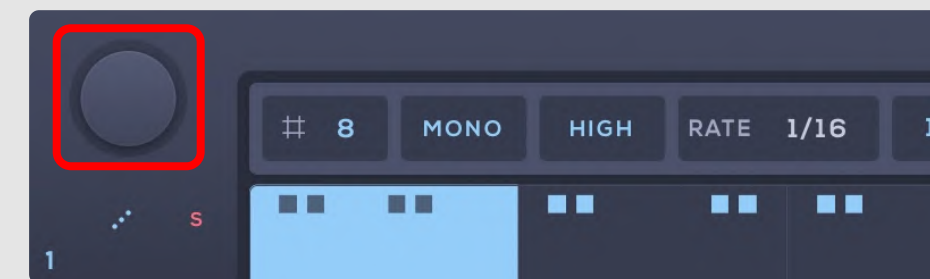
Riffer also provides separate Infinity controls for the block grid and some expression lanes. These let you introduce movement into different parts of a riff independently.

Tip: Try letting an idea repeat a few times before it changes. Repetition gives the listener something to recognize, making the next variation more noticeable.

6. The Block Grid Sequencer

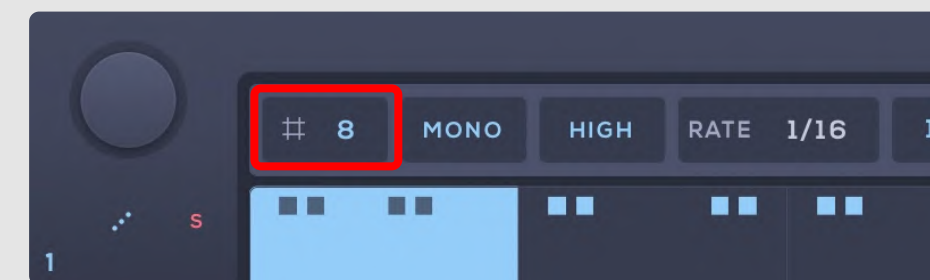
The block grid determines how material from the six riff lanes is combined during playback. Select squares in the grid to choose which lane sections are active. This gives you two ways to develop an idea: change the notes inside the lanes, or change how the grid plays those lanes.

Randomizing the Grid



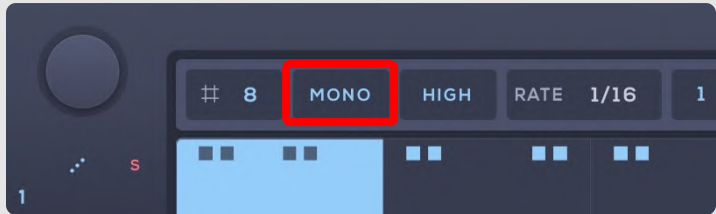
The grid's randomization button changes which blocks are active while keeping the existing notes. Use it when you like the melodic material but want to hear a different arrangement of it.

Number of Blocks



Adjust the number of blocks to change how the grid is divided. Experiment with different settings to find an arrangement that suits the phrase.

Mono and Poly



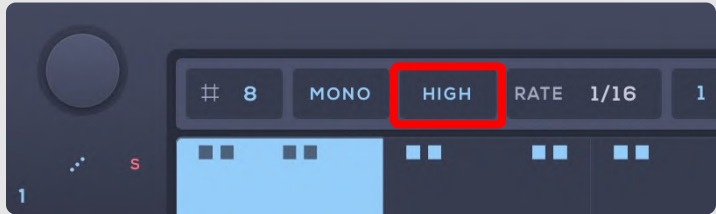
The grid offers two playback modes:

- Mono plays one lane at a time.
- Poly allows multiple lanes to play together.

Mono works well for a single melodic line that moves between variations.

Poly lets you build layered combinations from the lanes.

Complexity

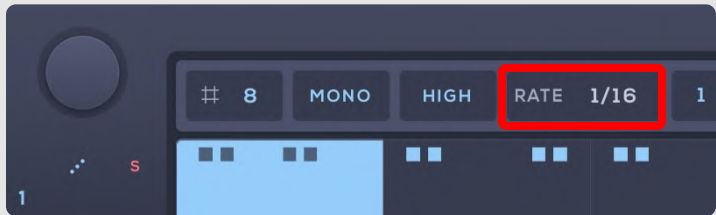


Complexity controls how much variation is introduced into the block selection.

Lower settings use fewer lanes and create simpler arrangements.

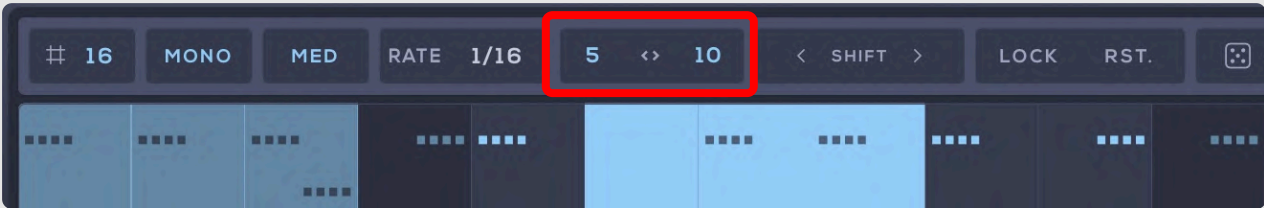
Higher settings introduce more variety between lanes.

Rate



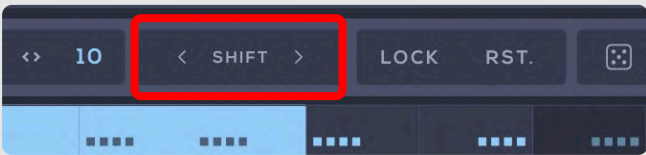
Rate controls playback speed. Faster settings can work well for energetic arpeggios and driving patterns. Slower settings give the notes more room, which can suit sustained leads or spacious melodic parts.

Playback Range



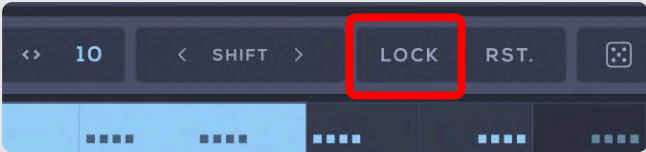
Adjust the playback range to focus on a particular section of the sequence.

Block Shift



Use the grid's shift controls to move the blocks left or right. This changes the position of the block arrangement without editing the notes inside the lanes.

Lock



Lock preserves selected blocks during randomization.

Enable Lock, then select the blocks you want to keep unchanged during the next randomization. Use Reset to unlock all blocks at once.

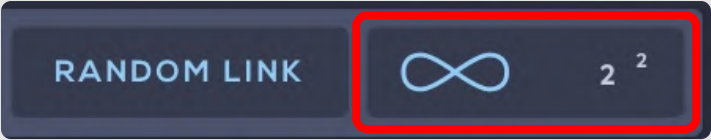
Random Link



Random Link connects grid randomization to the main riff generation button.

- With the link enabled, main generation changes both the notes and the active block selection.
- With the link disabled, main generation changes the notes while preserving the block arrangement.

Grid Infinity

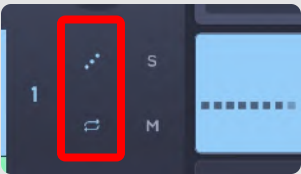


The grid has its own Infinity mode, which automatically changes block selections while keeping the melodic material. It also offers shorter intervals, including half-note and quarter-note settings, for more frequent changes. Drag the Infinity slider down to use shorter intervals.

7. Working with Individual Lanes

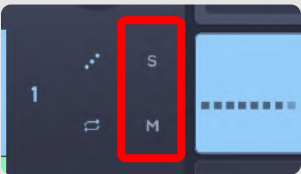
Each riff lane can be adjusted independently.

Generate and Remix



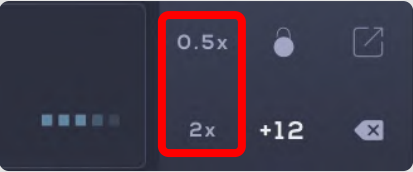
Use a lane’s generation and remix controls to change that lane on its own. This is useful when most of your sequence is working well and you want to develop just one variation.

Solo and Mute



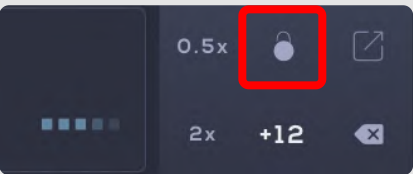
Use Solo to listen to a lane in isolation. Use Mute to remove it from playback while you work on the others.

Compress and Expand



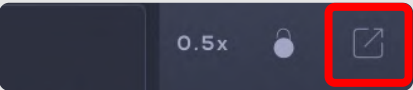
The **Compress** and **Expand** controls change the timing of a lane’s riff while keeping its note pitches. Try these controls when you like the notes but want the phrase to feel tighter or more spread out.

Lane Locks and Generation Exclusion

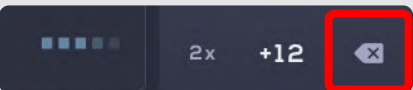


Lock a lane to preserve its notes and block selection. You can also exclude lanes from new generation, giving you control over which parts continue to change.

Export MIDI



Clear lane



Swapping Lanes

Drag one lane onto another to swap their MIDI note content.

Tip: Keep a favorite lane locked as an anchor, then generate new ideas around it. This gives you a consistent reference as you explore.

8. Keyboard Performance and Snapshots

The keyboard section provides triggers for playing lanes, creating variations, and recalling saved states.

Lane Triggers



The first trigger octave plays an entire lane.
The second trigger octave plays only the active blocks belonging to that lane.
These offer different ways to bring a lane into your performance: play its complete riff, or use its current grid selection.

Hold

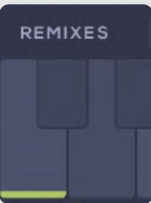


Enable Hold to keep a triggered selection active without continuously holding the key. This frees your hands to adjust other controls while you perform.

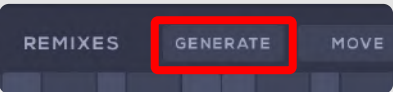
Remix Triggers and Snapshots

The next trigger octaves can be used to generate remixes or recall Snapshots.
Snapshots store the plugin state, including the root note and scale. This allows you to prepare related variations and move between them during a performance.
For example, you can save versions of a riff with different roots or scales, then recall them to follow harmonic changes in your track.

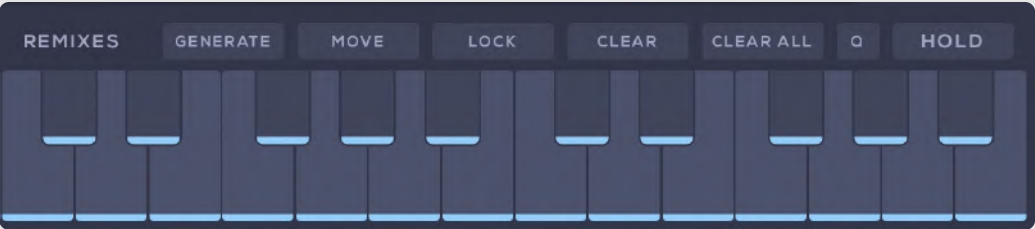
Click any of the empty keys to store a sequence. The key will be highlighted with yellow color:



Generate

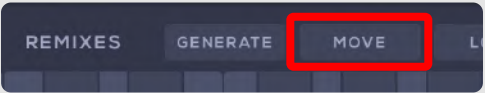


Generate can automatically generate up to 24 different remixes of your current riff. These automatically generated remixes will be highlighted with blue color:



Remixes can be loaded by pressing any of the Remixes octaves' keys.

Move

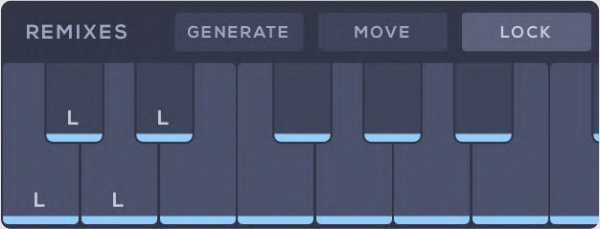


With Move enabled, drag any key in the Remixes octaves to change its position.

Lock

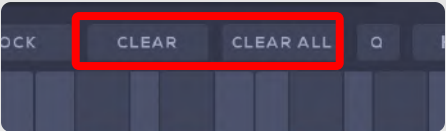


The Lock button allows you to lock any of the keys, so each time you randomize your riff, the locked keys will not be affected. Click Lock to enable it and then, click any of the keys to be locked. The locked keys will have a “L” icon as shown below:



To unlock a key, enable the Lock button and click any of the locked keys.

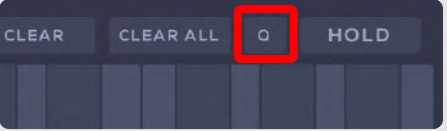
Clear and Clear All



Clear deletes any of the saved remixes. Activate it and then click any of the keys to be cleared. Click Clear again to deactivate it and exit the Clear mode.

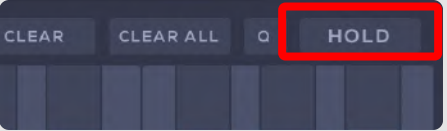
Click 'Clear All' to clear all the remixes at once.

Quantize



When enabled, triggering a key waits until the playhead reaches the next step before loading and playing the remix.

Hold



Same with the other octaves, click Hold to allow your Remixes continue playing after a key is released.

9. Editing Notes in the Piano Roll

Select Edit to open the piano roll and work directly with the notes:



Choose a riff lane from the selector at the top left. The lanes are color-coded to help you keep track of the material you are editing:



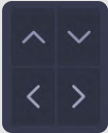
Adding and Removing Notes

- Left-click to add a note.
- Right-click to delete a note.

Notes are added or deleted only in the selected riff.

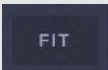
The editor also includes generation, remix, and Infinity controls, so you can combine manual editing with generated variations.

Moving Notes



Use the shift controls to move notes left or right in time, or up and down in pitch.

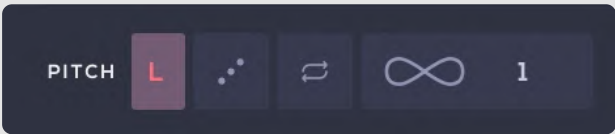
Fit to Scale



The **Fit** button moves notes to the nearest pitch in the selected scale. Use it after pitch edits or a scale change when you want to bring the notes into line with the current scale.

***Tip:** Once a generated riff is close to what you want, try editing only one or two notes. A small manual change can give the phrase a more deliberate direction.*

Pitch



- Use “L” to lock the generated pitch range. When unlocked, the randomization algorithms choose a new range with each generation.
- Use the Randomization button to randomize Pitch, Duration, Velocity, and Bend for the selected or linked riff.
- Use the Instant Remix button to generate a remix variation.
- You can also toggle Infinity mode on or off for Pitch.

10. Volume, Bend, and Stutter

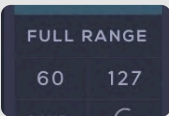
The three lanes beneath the piano roll add dynamics, pitch movement, and repeated-note effects.

Volume

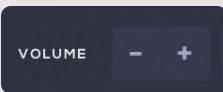


The **Volume** lane shapes the dynamics of the riff. With the lane enabled, you can randomize its values using the lane’s randomization button. New riff generations can also generate new volume values.

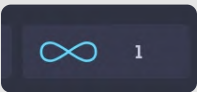
- You can:
- Set a range for randomization, or use full range:



- Use the +/- buttons to shift the values up or down:

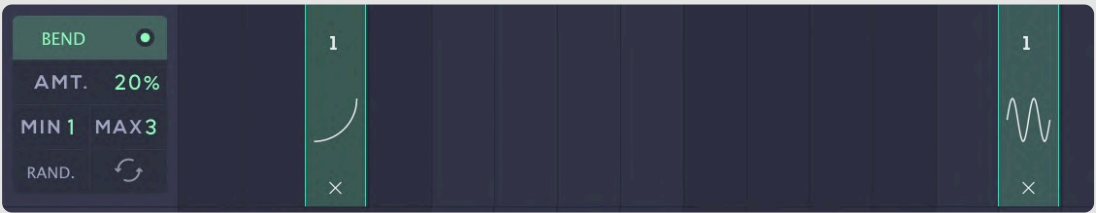


- Enable Infinity to generate new values after a selected number of pattern repetitions.



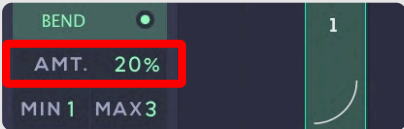
Tip: Start with a narrow randomization range for gentle dynamic variation. A wider range creates stronger accents and a more pronounced rhythmic feel.

Bend



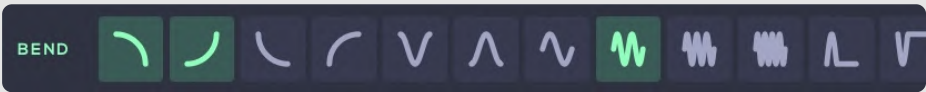
The Bend lane adds pitch bends to the riff.

First, increase Amount to introduce bends.

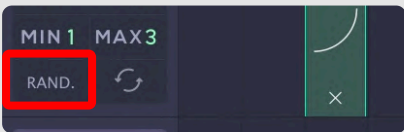


For manual editing, drag a bend shape from the available shapes into the lane, then adjust its length and how far it moves the pitch up or down.

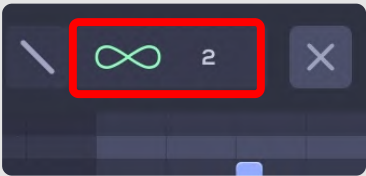
To generate bends, select the shapes you want to use from the Bend menu on top:



Then, press the lane’s randomization button. Riffer creates variations using those shapes.

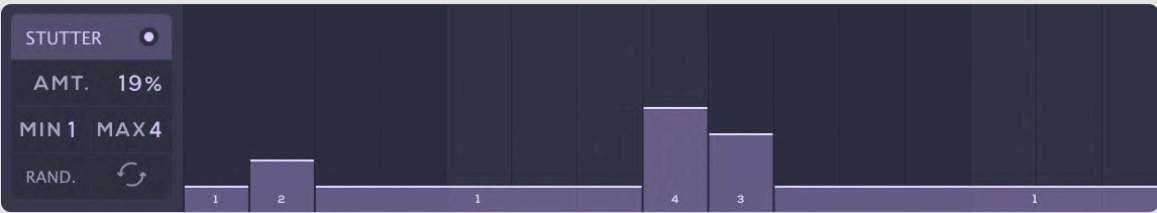


Bend also supports Infinity mode for automatic changes.



Stutter

The three lanes beneath the piano roll add dynamics, pitch movement, and repeated-note effects.



The Stutter lane adds repeated-note effects to the riff. Draw stutters manually with the mouse, or generate them using Amount and the minimum and maximum settings. Adjust the available length and range controls to shape the repetitions.

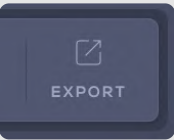
Tip: *A few stutters can add interest to an otherwise steady phrase. Begin with a low amount, then increase it if you want a busier effect.*

Combining Effects

Volume, Bend, and Stutter can be used together. Bypass a lane when you want to hear its contribution or compare the riff with and without that effect. These controls are also worth exploring with percussion sounds. Combining pitch movement and stutters can produce unusual rhythmic textures that you can record and reuse in your music.

11. Exporting MIDI

Use the **MIDI export** control to export a pattern you want to keep.



Exporting lets you continue working with the MIDI in your music software, where you can arrange the part and make further edits.

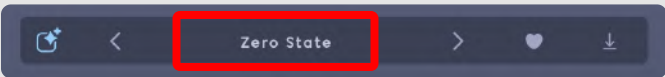
Click the Export button to save the MIDI file to a location of your choice, or drag it to your music software or a folder on your computer.

Tip: *Export promising variations as you go. Two versions of the same idea may turn out to be useful for different sections of a track.*

12. Presets Manager

The Presets Manager allows you to load your presets, categorize them based on their style, create your custom presets & packs, import, or share them across devices with one click.

Click the name of the loaded preset on the top to enter the Presets Manager.



Presets are organized in folders (left column). The content of the selected folder will be displayed in the middle column.



ALL: Includes all presets

Factory Presets: Riffer comes with a wide collection of built in presets. All factory presets will be stored in this folder.

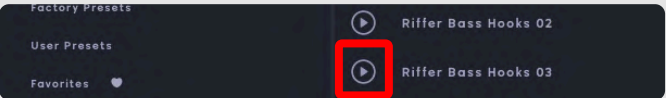
User Presets: All user presets will be stored in this folder.

Favorites: Your "favorite" Presets will be stored there.

Genre/Style: Add genre or style tags when creating a preset, then use this drop-down menu to find presets with matching tags.

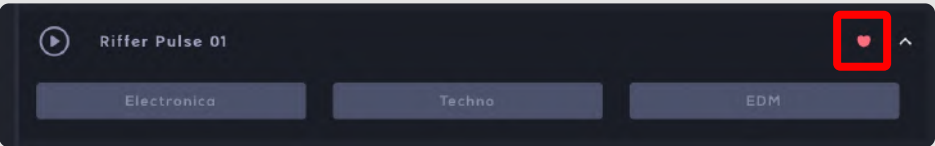
Search: Type a preset name in the search bar to quickly find it.

Preview



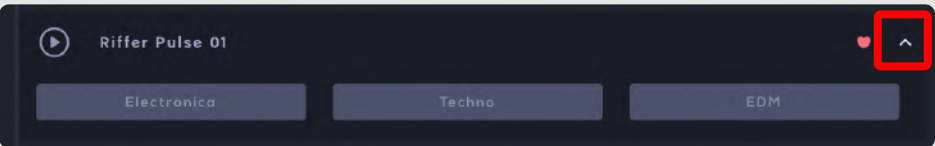
Start playback, then click a preset’s Preview button to hear it.

Favorite



Click the heart icon to the right of a preset to add it to the Favorites tab.

Tagging presets

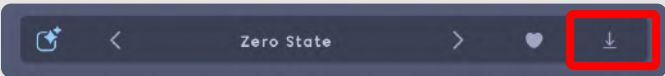


Click the arrow button to expand the preset menu and add genre or style tags. These tags help you organize presets and find them using the Genre/Style filter.

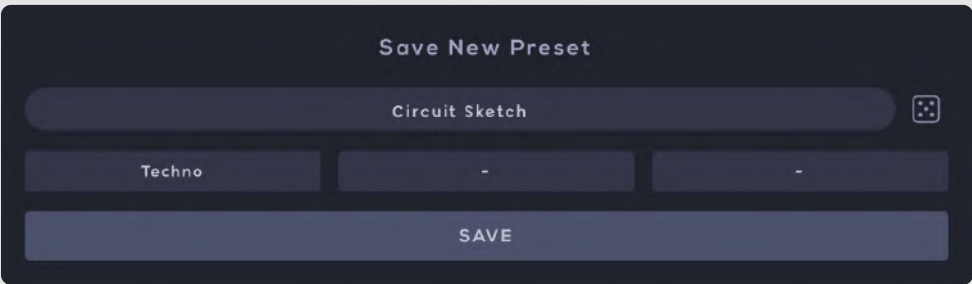
Saving a Preset

To save your work:

- Open the preset-saving controls.



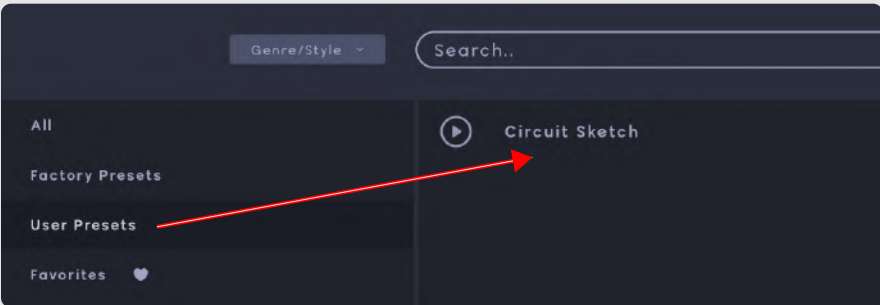
- Give the preset a name
- Add relevant tags based on the genre of your preset.
- Click Save.



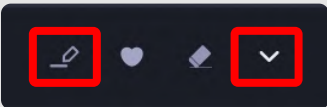
If you need inspiration for a preset name, click the dice button to the right of the name field to generate one.

Choose a name that helps you recognize the idea later. Use tags to describe its style, feel, or intended use.

After your preset is saved, you will be able to access it in the User Presets tab.



Double-click a preset to load it.



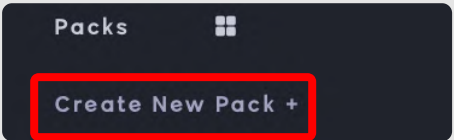
Click the pencil icon to rename a user preset, or the eraser icon to delete it.

Creating a Preset Pack

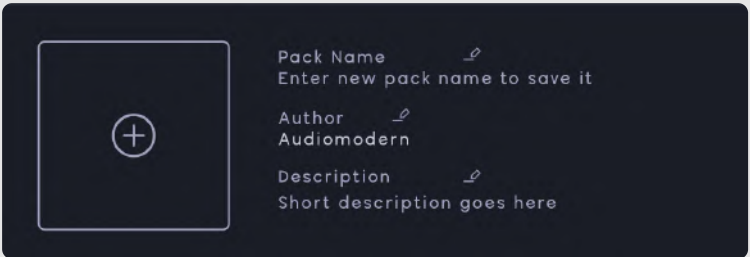
Preset packs let you organize, back up, and share collections of presets.

To create a pack:

- Open the preset manager and click **Create New Pack** in the left column:

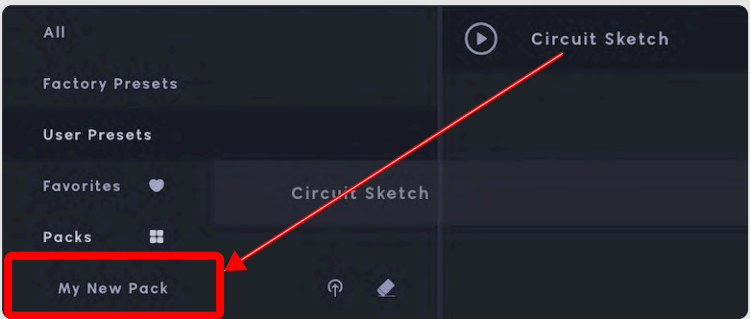


Click the pencil icons to name your pack and add an author name and description. Click the “+” icon to load a thumbnail for your pack.



Once you name your pack, it will appear in the Packs section in the left column. All your custom presets are visible in the 'User Presets' folder.

To add your presets to your pack, simply drag your presets from the middle column and drop them to your pack's name (left column).



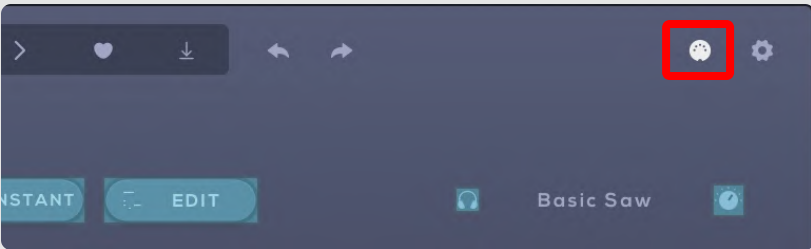
-  Export the pack when you are ready to back it up or share it. Packs are compatible with both the desktop and iPad versions of Riffer 4.
-  The eraser icon deletes the pack.

13. MIDI Learn & MIDI Mappings

MIDI Learn

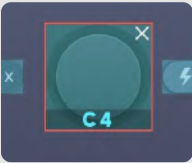
The basic process of pairing a physical control to a Riffer parameter using MIDI Learn is extremely simple.

Click the “MIDI” button in the top-right corner to open the MIDI Learn tab:

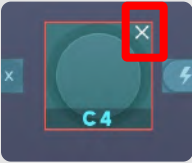


All parameters available for automation are highlighted in this tab.

Click a parameter to select it, then move a slider or knob, or press a button on your MIDI controller to assign it to that parameter. The MIDI CC number of the associated control will be visible:

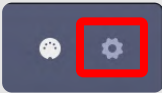


Click the 'X' on the top right corner of a parameter to remove MIDI Automation:



MIDI Mappings

The second option is to automate the parameters using the Settings > MIDI CC Mappings menu.

 Click the top-right Settings (gear) button to access the MIDI Mappings.

The MIDI Mappings list includes all parameters that can be automated and provides the option to associate a parameter to your MIDI Controller or a key on your keyboard.

MIDI Mapping		RESET
Trigger Mode		--
Trigger Hold		--
Dice Mode		--
Global Dice	CC	CC71
Infinity Mode		--
Infinity Counter		CC43
Infinity Active	KEY	D2
Mode: Pitch	CC	--
Randomize Pitch	CC	--

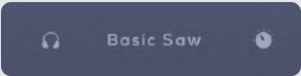
Open the menu to the right of a parameter’s name to select the MIDI CC or key you want to assign to it.

Some parameters have a CC/KEY button, allowing you to switch between MIDI CC and key assignments. Click the button to choose your preferred type, then use the menu on the right to select a specific CC or key.

Click Reset to clear all mappings.

14. Loading Plug-ins

Click the current sound’s name to open the Plug-ins tab.



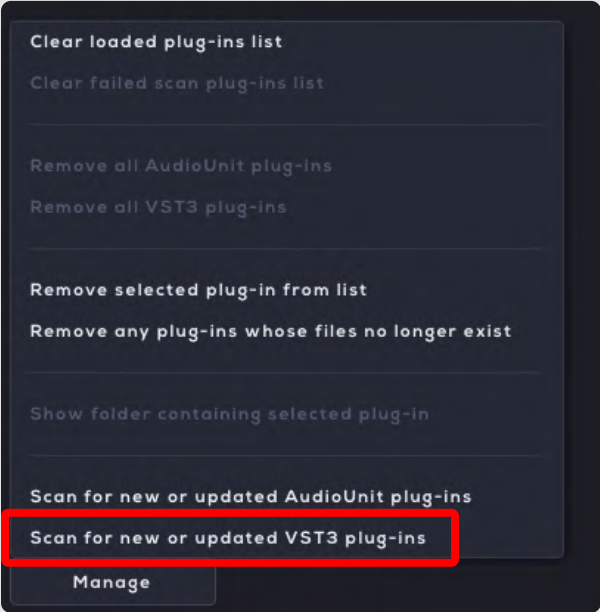
In this tab, you can load one of Riffer’s basic built-in sounds or a software plug-in.

You can also drive plug-ins with Riffer directly through your DAW, but hosting them in Riffer offers more flexibility and saves time by handling MIDI routing for you.

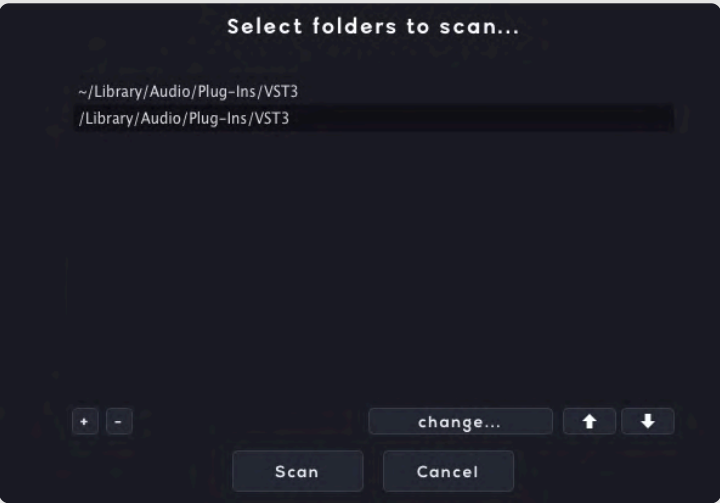
The first time you open the Plug-ins tab, scan your plug-ins to make them available in Riffer.

1. Click the Manage button in the bottom-left corner of the Plug-ins tab.

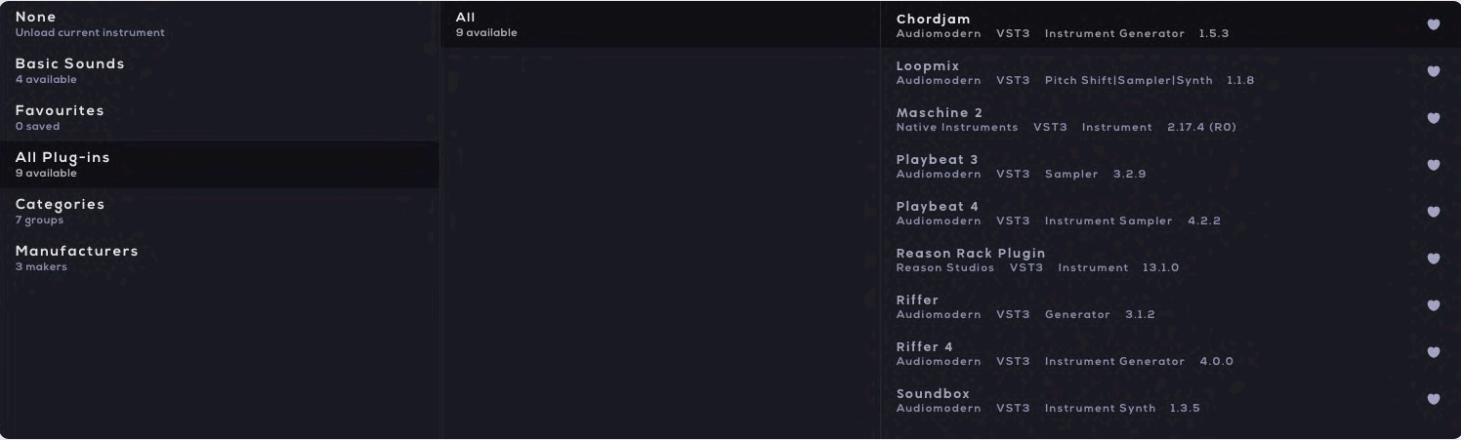
2. In this drop-down menu, you can manage your list of plug-ins. Click Scan for new or updated VST3, AudioUnit or AAX plug-ins. In the example below, we scan VST3 plug-ins.



3. Select your plug-ins folder from the list, then click **Scan**. If you’re unsure which folder to choose, double-click a path to open it and check its contents. If your plug-ins are stored in a custom folder, click “Change” and select that folder.



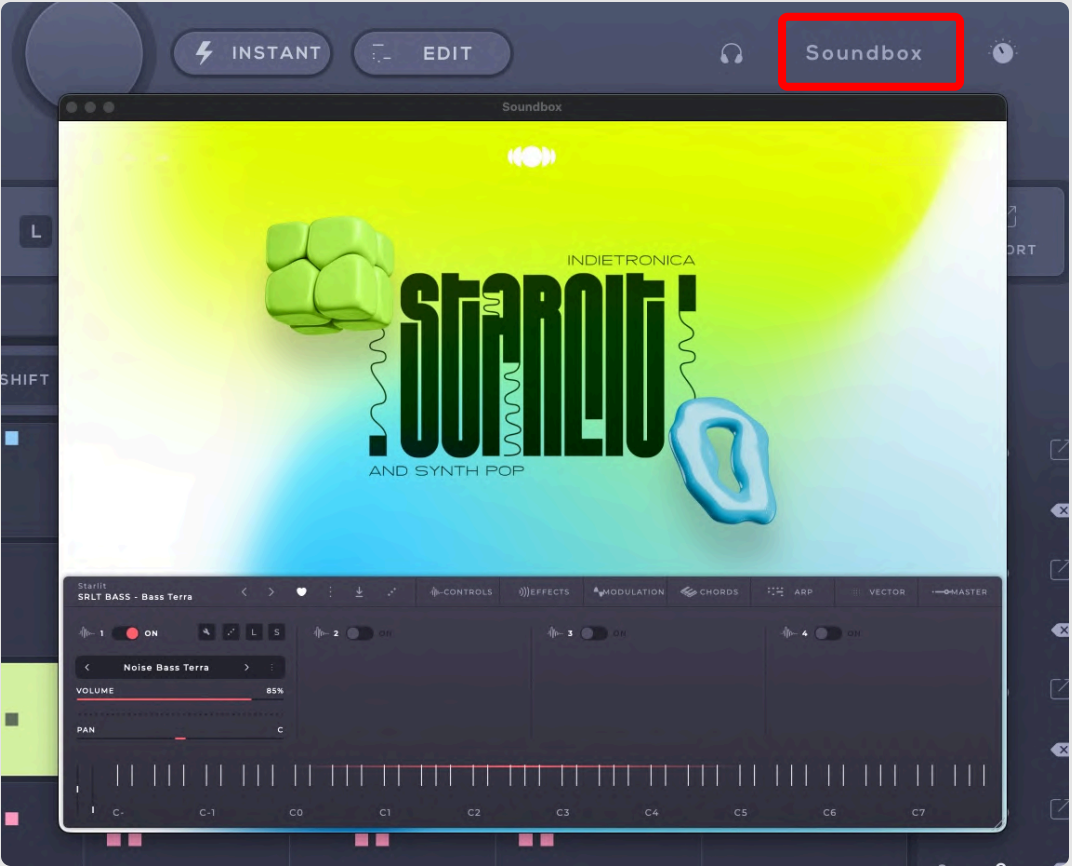
Wait for the scan to complete. During scanning, your can abort, skip a plugin scan, or stop the process. Your installed plug-ins will then be visible in the All Plug-ins tab.



Double-click a plug-in to load it.

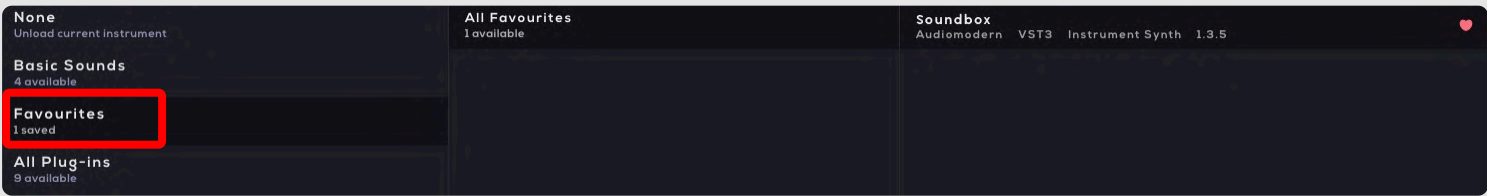
Riffer automatically routes MIDI to the plug-in, so it’s ready to play without any additional routing in your DAW.

The loaded plug-in's name appears on Riffer's main screen. In this example, Soundbox is loaded.

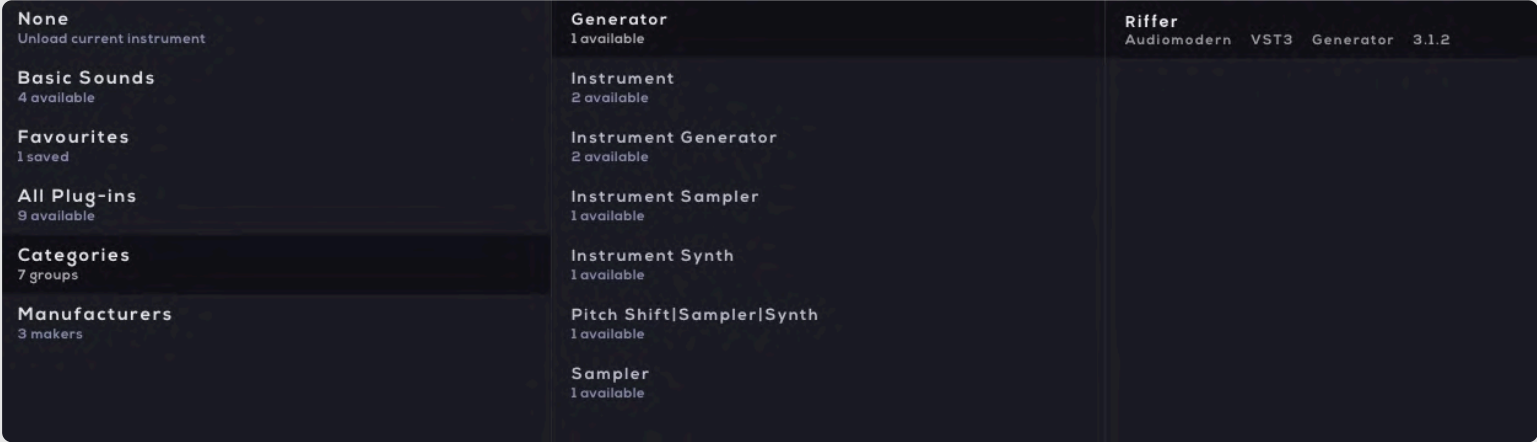


Click the headphones icon to reopen the loaded plug-in's window or bring it to the front. Use the knob on the right to adjust the plug-in's volume.

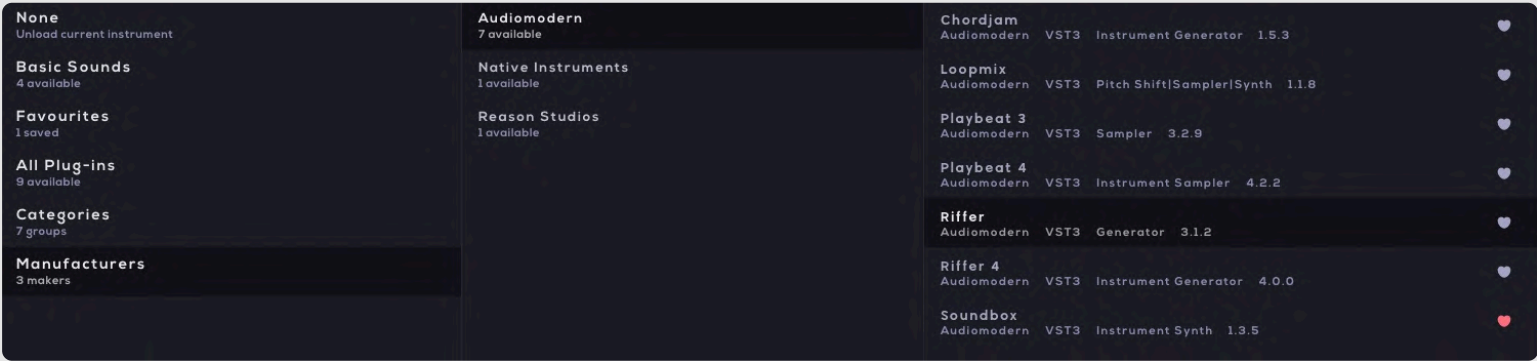
In the Plug-ins tab, mark plug-ins as favorites for quick access. They will appear in the Favorites tab.



Use the Categories tab to browse your installed plug-ins by category.

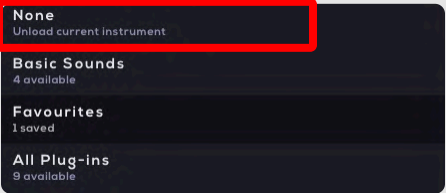
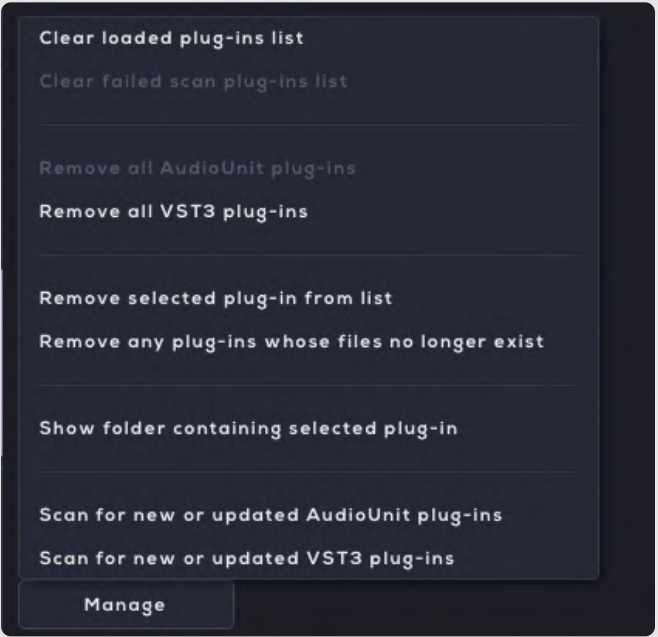


Use the Manufacturers tab to browse your installed plug-ins by manufacturer.



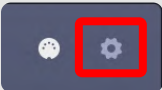
Open the Manage menu to clear the loaded plug-ins list, remove all plug-ins from the list, scan for new plug-ins, or open your plug-ins folder.

To remove a specific plug-in from the list, click it to select it, then choose “Remove Selected Plug-in from List.”



Click **None** to unload the currently loaded instrument.

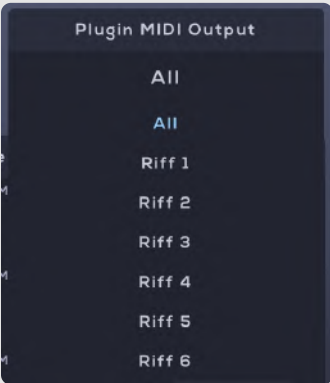
15. Settings



Click the top-right Settings (gear) button to access the Settings tab.



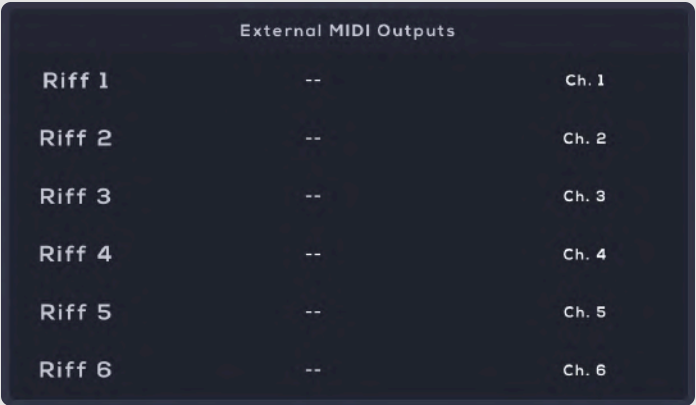
Use the MIDI CC Channel drop-down menu to select a MIDI channel, or choose OMNI to receive messages on all channels.



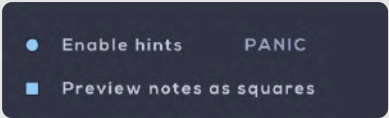
Use the Plugin MIDI Output drop-down menu to select which riff sends MIDI output.
Choose All to send MIDI output from all riffs.



In Performance Keyboard area, you can adjust each of the keyboard's four octaves. It allows you to select your preferred MIDI Channel that each of the four octaves will be associated to and select the Root Note of each of the four octaves.



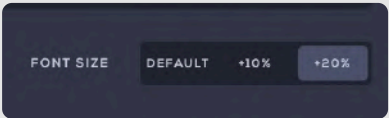
In the External MIDI Outputs area, you can select the MIDI Outputs and the MIDI CC channel for each track.



Turn Enable Hints on to show tooltips, or off to hide them.

Click “Panic” to reset MIDI if you experience issues such as hanging notes.

Choose whether notes appear as squares or dots in the main sequencer.



Increase the font size by up to 20%.

16. Riffer in DAW

Riffer can send MIDI notes to other software instruments or hardware.

When you load a plug-in directly within Riffer, MIDI routing is handled automatically.

The following sections explain how to route Riffer’s MIDI output in various DAWs and record the generated MIDI.

Ableton Live

- 1. Create a MIDI track and load Riffer onto it.
- 2. Load your favorite soft synth onto another MIDI track and set its input to Riffer.
- 3. Hit play. This will trigger the new MIDI track with Riffer’s MIDI output.



Bitwig

- 1. Create a new Instrument Track. Load Riffer and another Software after it.
- 2. Click "Record".



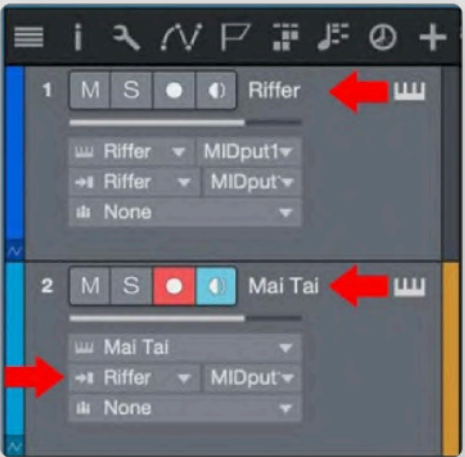
Logic Pro

- 1. Load the MIDI FX version of Riffer in an instrument track. It can be found in the MIDI fx slot.
- 2. Load another software into the same track by using the 'Instrument' slot.



Studio One

- 1. Create two instrument tracks, the first with Riffer, and the second with any of your synths/sampler.
- 2. In the routing settings of your synth, choose 'Riffer' as MIDI Input source:



Cubase

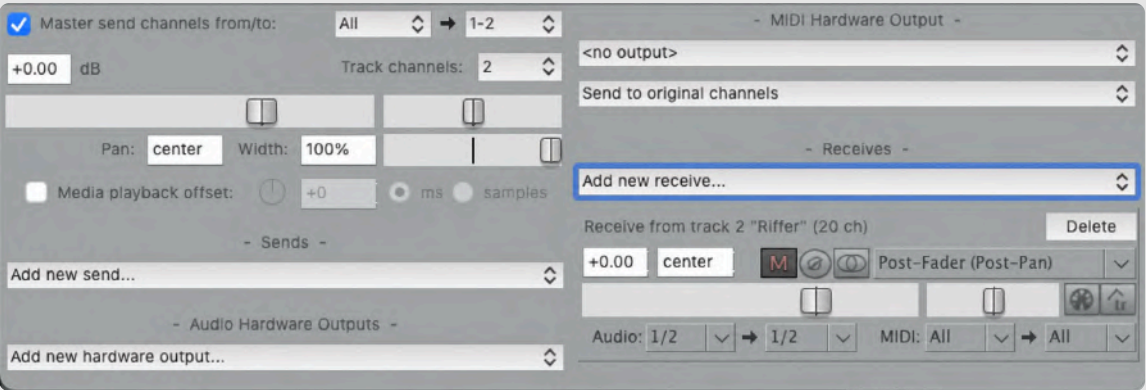
- 1. Create two instrument tracks.
- 2. Load Riffer in the first track and use the second track to load another software:



Reaper

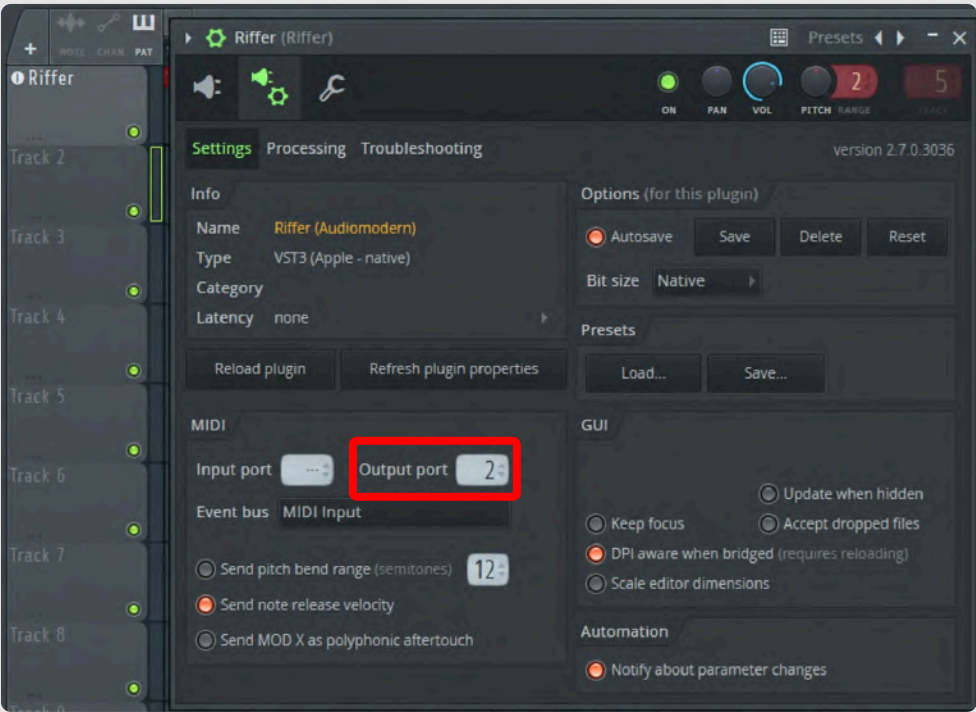
Create two instrument tracks, the first with Riffer, and the second with any of your synths/sampler.

In the routing settings of your software, choose 'Riffer' as MIDI Input source:



FL Studio

1. Load Riffer and set its MIDI Output port to e.g. "2".



2. Load another software and set its MIDI Input port to the same number.

