

User Guide



VIRTUAL GUITARIST®

Silk

by Peter Gorges

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Welcome to Virtual Guitarist SILK

We hope you will enjoy this powerful addition to your musical palette, and we thank you for becoming a part of the UJAM community of music creators!



About the Virtual Guitarist Series

The original Virtual Guitarist series was a best-selling virtual instrument developed by Wizoo and distributed by Steinberg. The last version, Virtual Guitarist 2, was discontinued in 2007.

Since then, people have been asking for a Virtual Guitarist 3.

In 2013, the core team behind the original Virtual Guitarist gathered again, and launched *Virtual Guitarist IRON* – specialized on Power Chords – in December 2015. After *AMBER*, which specializes in strummed acoustic guitar, and *SPARKLE*, the expert for glamorous single coil licks, *SILK* is the fourth instrument of the series, which is not just an evolution of the original, but a whole new generation of Virtual Guitarists.

With an all-new concept and technology Virtual Guitarist instruments now offer vastly expanded realism, musical and sonic capabilities with the same ease and speed of use the legacy instruments were so famous for.

You and Us

Virtual Guitarist SILK 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 SILK* too.

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

Virtual Guitarist SILK 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 SILK* conveys 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:

- Send us an email: support@virtualguitarist.com
- Visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/vrtlguitarist/>
- Catch us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/vrtlguitarist/>

Looking for Quick Help?

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

- The *Interactive Overview* is a screenshot of the user interface. Clicking on a control there takes you straight to its explanation.
- 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 SILK* 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.

Interactive Overview

Clicking on any control on the image below will take you to the reference explanation of this particular feature.



Quick Reference

Area	Parameter	Explanation
Menu Bar	PRESET	Click name to open menu for browsing and loading a new <i>Virtual Guitarist SILK</i> 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.
	Bell icon	Will illuminate for notifications such as product updates.
	Speech bubble	About Page – information about licensing status, portal to other services such as website, this manual or product support.
Style & Chord Bar	STYLE	Loads a Style (collection of 11 phrases, accessible via the Style Phrases section of the keyboard).
	KEY	Allows you to set a fixed key, limiting the selection of possible chords to that scale.
	CHORD	Displays the chord and the optional bass note currently selected by MIDI notes or by clicking a key in the Chords range and optionally in the Bass Notes key range.
Interactive Keyboard	COMMON PHRASES	Keys in this area select generically useful phrases that can be combined with Style Phrases.
	STYLE PHRASES	Keys in this area select phrases of the currently selected Style.
	BASS NOTES	Keys in this area will trigger <i>Virtual Guitarist SILK</i> to play a bass note in addition to the currently played chord.
	CHORDS	Keys in this area will tell <i>Virtual Guitarist SILK</i> what to play – featuring built-in chord detection.
Performance Section	LATCH	When active, <i>Virtual Guitarist SILK</i> will keep playing independently of keys held, until you deactivate Latch or press the Stop Key.
	SPEED	Lets you switch the playback tempo to half, normal or double time.
	SWING	Controls syncopation (often also called Shuffle). Turn to the right to syncopate off-beats.
	FEEL	Controls overall timing. Turn to the left for a “pushing” feel, to the right for a laid-back (“dragging”) feel.
	TIMING	Controls accuracy of timing. Turn to the left for machine-like constant timing, turn to the right for added random offsets and a more human feel.
	VARIANCE	Controls the dynamic variation of the performance. Turn the control left for almost robotic steady dynamics. Turn it to the right adds more and more variation in picking intensity between notes, making the performance way more natural and human.

Virtual Guitarist SILK

Area	Parameter	Explanation
Guitar & Mics	POSITION	The <i>POSITION</i> knob emulates moving the picking hand between bridge and neck. Turn left for a thinner sound with more attack. Turn right for a more full-bodied, hollow sound.
	CHARACTER	The <i>CHARACTER</i> knob adjusts the recorded signal before it enters any further sound processing inside <i>SILK</i> . It offers five distinct settings.
	MICS	Chooses a microphone or different combinations of both microphones.
	ANIMATE	A custom combination of modulating comb filters, saturation and convolution adds rich and vivid harmonics and an airy, spherical feel.
Guitar Modes	Fret Noise	Adds characteristic noises of fingers sliding on a fretboard when changing chords.
	Doubling	Creates a drastically fuller and wider sound by virtual double-tracking.
Effect Section	Delay Mix	Dials in a delay effect.
	Delay Type	Selects one of 6 guitar-optimized delay types, ordered by note resolution (delay repetition length).
	Reverb	Dials in the ambience of a guitar recording room in a professional recording studio.
	Attack	Controls the attack transient of the guitar signal. Transients become softer when the knob is turned to the left.
	Volume	Controls the master output volume.
Wheels	Pitchbend Wheel	Use the Pitch Wheel to control the picking intensity (velocity). Turn it down, and your guitarist will play softer, turn it up for extra intensity.
	Modulation Wheel	The Mod Wheel controls the Palm Muting that your guitarist applies to the performance. In the Mod Wheel's default position, no Palm Muting is applied. The further you turn it up, the shorter the notes will become.

What is Virtual Guitarist SILK?

Virtual Guitarist SILK is a software instrument doubling as a professional session guitarist, playing picked nylon string guitar on a top-notch instrument, captured by high end studio microphones, and performing exactly as you wish, while giving you full control over musical performance and mix.

Virtual Guitarist vs. a Real Guitarist

If we denied the huge differences between a software and a guitarist, you shouldn't trust us.

If you have all the money, time and patience in the world plus a recording studio and a professional guitarist available, we would always recommend: Go for it!

But for most people, most of the time, that's not the case:

- Maybe you have no access to a (professional) guitarist.
- Maybe you like to work out ideas totally by yourself, taking the time, playing with ideas.
- Maybe you're a guitarist but want to quickly lay down a track without the hassle of tuning your guitar and setting up a recording session.
- Maybe you want to use MIDI-controlled guitar tracks as source material for electronic manipulation.

In these and many others scenarios, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* is a great alternative to the real thing.

What is “SILK” About?

Virtual Guitarist SILK is a concert guitar accompaniment virtuoso.

From delicate, strings-only singer-/songwriter arrangements to vivid dance and pop ornaments, SILK enables a wide range of styles in your production's sonic color palette.

Virtual Guitarist SILK lets you produce professional guitar tracks in no time, with minimal effort. It combines the virtues of a professional guitarist, a precious, mint condition German concert guitar from 1967, perfectly tuned, with fresh strings, selected high-end studio microphones, and the most important sound shaping tools as used in recording studios, to design the guitar sound exactly as you need it right now.

Why so Few Controls?

We are all musicians and we know that the time for learning a user interface is better spent making music.

Therefore, the user interface of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* is designed for maximum ease of use and minimum distraction.

It is also fail-proof in that no matter how you set up the controls of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*, the result will never be musically or technically wrong – without sacrificing your creative freedom.

You can trust in the fact that tracks produced with *Virtual Guitarist SILK* are realistic, professionally produced guitar tracks.

Trial and Authorization

We have designed the entire process of downloading, activating and authorizing *Virtual Guitarist SILK* 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 SILK* – and make it your own if you like it.

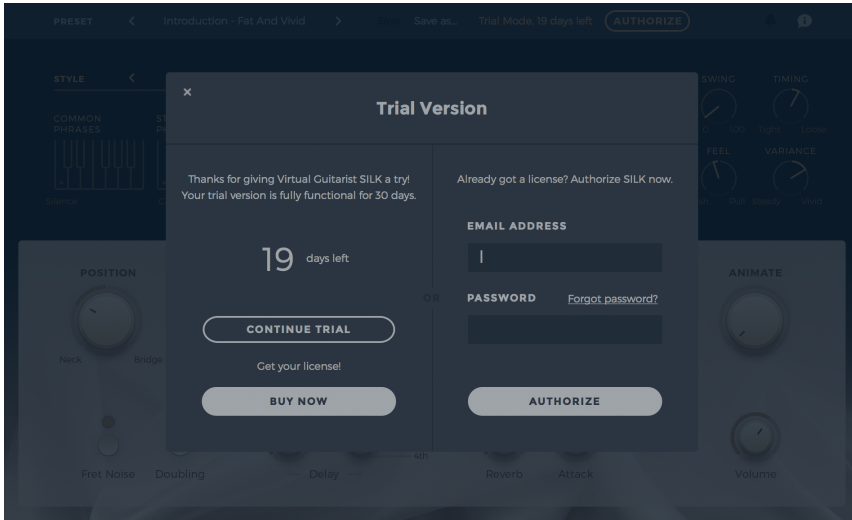
Trying, Buying, Authorizing

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

When opening *Virtual Guitarist SILK* 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 Virtual Guitarist website where you can purchase a permanent *Virtual Guitarist SILK* license after or during the trial period,
- allows you to enter your credentials and authorize *Virtual Guitarist SILK* once you've purchased it.

Virtual Guitarist SILK



Trial Screen of SILK

Where to Put the Content

The actual guitar goodness of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* – the audio content – is packed into a so-called blob file named VG-SILK.blob which is about 2.9 GB big.

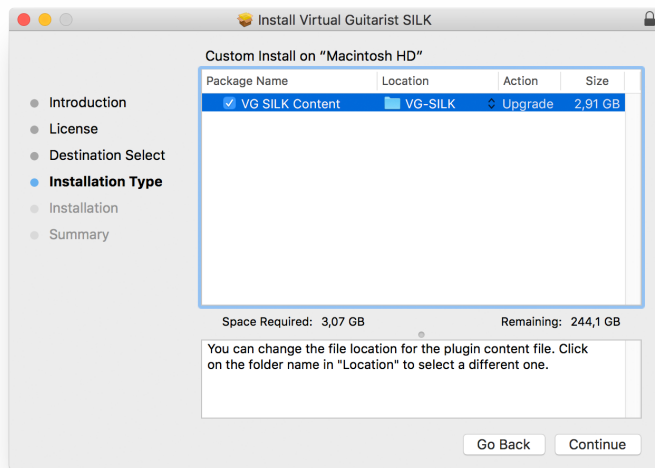
You can keep the blob file anywhere you like on your system drive:

macOS	/Library/Application Support/UJAM/VG-SILK
Windows	C:\ProgramData\UJAM\VG-SILK <i>(assuming your system drive is C)</i>

Installing to a different drive on macOS

While you're able to select a custom location on your system drive during installation, it's not possible to select a different drive at the moment. However, you can move the content after the installation is done. Please refer to the section "Changing the content location after installation".

Virtual Guitarist SILK

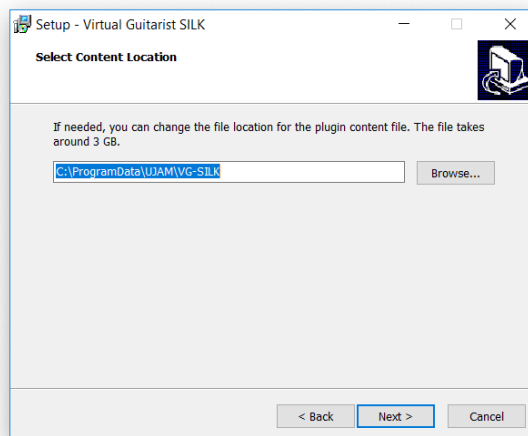


macOS Installer – Select Content Location

Installing to a different drive on Windows

The Windows installer will ask you if you want to install the content to a different directory.

On Windows, you can also set a different location for the plug-in, however we recommend to leave this untouched unless you have a good reason.



Windows Installer – Select Content Location

Changing the content location after installation

You can always change the content location after installation by just moving the VG-SILK.blob file:

- Move your file to the desired location (different folder or different drive)
- Launch your DAW and open *Virtual Guitarist SILK*. It will present you with a dialog asking for the file location. Simply point to the new location of the VG-SILK.blob file – done.

Controller Hardware for Virtual Guitarist SILK

Virtual Guitarist SILK requires MIDI note input for playing and recording musical performances, and optionally Pitchbend, Modulation and Sustain Pedal data for added real-time variation.

If you have a MIDI controller (keyboard), this will be the easiest and most straightforward MIDI input method and it's most fun as this way you control your guitarist in real-time.

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

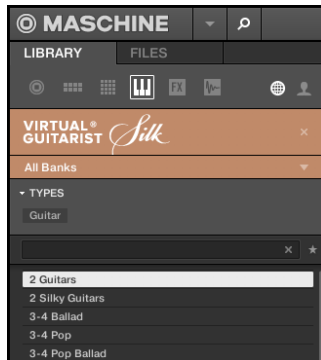
For getting to know Virtual Guitarist SILK and for testing purposes, you can also use the Interactive Keyboard in the top half of the Virtual Guitarist SILK window. This works best with the Latch function enabled.

Native Instruments KONTROL Integration

Virtual Guitarist SILK is fully NKS-compatible for superior integration with Native Instruments KONTROL technology.

This means that when using MASCHINE or any of the KONTROL-S keyboards, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* will offer additional functionality:

- Native Map: You can edit *Virtual Guitarist SILK*'s parameters using the controller knobs.
- Light Guide: On KONTROL-S keyboards, LEDs with color codes guide you to the Common Phrases and Style Phrases ranges as well as the Chords range.
- You can browse *Virtual Guitarist SILK* presets in the Native Browser, including categories.



Virtual Guitarist SILK in the MASCHINE Browser

These features are available in the KONTROL software as well as in all popular DAWs that feature KONTROL integration, such as Ableton Live, Steinberg Cubase/Nuendo and Apple Logic Pro.

Start Playing!

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

The top half of the *Virtual Guitarist SILK* window is dedicated to the guitarist's performance – in other words: *what* is played. Here, you'll find two musical core aspects you can control: Phrasing and Notes. The Interactive Keyboard is split between a Phrase Range (left), Bass Notes (middle), and a Chord Range (right).

The basic principle is simple:

- When you press keys from C4* upwards, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* will start playing a phrase with the chord determined by the notes you play. When you release the key(s), playback will stop.
- MIDI notes below C3 don't represent musical keys but switches varying the phrasing of your player in real-time. This is a powerful way of making your performance interesting and dynamic.
- By turning up the Modulation wheel, you can morph from normal to shorter to dead notes – another powerful way of varying phrases.
- Play with the Pitch Wheel to control the playing intensity – very powerful to let the guitar follow the song's arc.
- MIDI notes between C3 and B3 let you select the Bass Note to play along with the chord.

If you know these things and can switch presets, you know all you need to start producing with *Virtual Guitarist SILK*.

*C4 is one octave above middle C. The MIDI note number is 72. Some DAWs refer to it as C5.

Walkthrough

*Note: Keywords printed **italic** refer to parameter or section names you will also find elsewhere in this manual.*

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 SILK*. After this you will have a good basic understanding of the instrument and how to use it.

We assume you have Virtual Guitarist SILK opened in your DAW. Ideally you have a MIDI controller connected, otherwise use the Interactive Keyboard.

Make a Sound and Learn About Chords and Key

- Play C4 or a higher note. Your guitarist will start playing. It will display the current chord in the **CHORD** display which is part of the *Style Bar* above the *Interactive Keyboard* in the upper half of the *Virtual Guitarist SILK* window.

The Interactive Keyboard also doubles as a display for the MIDI notes Virtual Guitarist SILK is receiving. The keyboard is divided and properly labeled with the functions of the corresponding note ranges.

- By playing more than one note, you can play more complex chords. *Virtual Guitarist SILK* recognizes 2-note intervals and 3-4 note chords. Play C-G-B for example to play a Cmaj7 chord, or C-F for a Csus4. The current chord is always visible in the **CHORD** display above the keyboard.
- Set the **KEY** value in the *Style Bar* to D to force *Virtual Guitarist SILK* to play only chords in the D scale. Set different keys while playing the same notes. This will change the chords played – watch the **CHORD** display too.

Try the Presets

- At the top of the *Virtual Guitarist SILK* window you can load presets. A preset is always a complete setting of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*, i.e. it will change the performance as well as the guitar and effects. At this point, just go through different presets to get an impression of the musical and sonic palette of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*. Optionally, try different *Style Phrases* by additionally selecting keys in the C2 – B \flat 2 range.

Tell Your Player What to Play

- Activate the **LATCH** button right next to the **Style Bar**. Now *Virtual Guitarist SILK* 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 – B2. Go from C2 upwards and see how the phrasing gets more intense. These are the phrases you can exchange by loading different **Styles**. Let's do just that now:
- Load different **Styles** using the **STYLE** menu to the left-hand side of the **Style Bar**. You will notice that your guitarist masters a vast range of playing techniques and musical genres.
- Now try keys in the C #1 – 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** (C1). It 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 in Latch Off mode too 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.

More Performance Tweaking Fun

- Keep *Virtual Guitarist SILK* playing and slowly turn up the **SWING** control right next to the **Interactive Keyboard**. 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.
- The **SPEED** switch lets you set *Virtual Guitarist SILK* to half time or double time.
- Now experiment with the **FEEL** slider right below the **SWING** control. It makes subtle changes to the timing, creating a rushed or relaxed feel. Play a drum loop along for better comparison.
- Change **TIMING** and **VARIANCE** controls to adjust between robot-like accuracy and human feel of the performance.

Find Your Guitar Sound

Let's look at the bottom half of the *Virtual Guitarist SILK* window. Here you set up guitar and microphones, sound character and effects.

- Set your player to **LATCH** and keep playing while you tweak controls.
- First, play with the **ANIMATE** rotary switch. Notice how it changes the character of the guitar sound, adding just what the name says.
- Now experiment with the **CHARACTER** rotary switch. It offers five settings to define the overall sound before it gets fed into processing. From *Rich* to *Sheen*, the tone changes from warm and dark to crisp and bright.
- The **POSITION** knob lets you emulate moving the picking hand between bridge and neck. Turn the knob to the right (moving the virtual hand towards the bridge) for a thinner sound

with more attack. Turn the knob to the left (moving the virtual hand towards the neck) for a more full-bodied, hollow sound.

- The *MICS* switch lets you choose between five different selections of two original microphone signals. A, B, and A+B deliver mono output. A/B and B/A split both signals into stereo.

More Sound Tweaking Fun

- Activate the *Fret Noise* button at the lower left. This adds characteristic sliding noises that are created by the player's fingers when changing chords.
- Keep playing and push the *Doubling* button. This adds a second guitar player and places both at the outer positions of the stereo image for a dramatically more vivid and powerful sound. This works particularly well in scenarios where you use a lot of high frequencies from *Virtual Guitarist SILK*.

Playing With the Built-In Effects

We strongly encourage you to use your go-to audio processing tools when perfecting your guitar tracks. However, to save you time and create a more interesting range of instantly accessible presets, we have included the three most important effects right on board: *Delay*, *Reverb* and *Attack*.

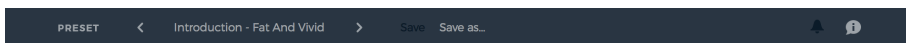
- Turn up the left *Delay* knob to dial in an echo effect. To match the delay to your song, use the right knob to select the note resolution that works best for your song's timing and feel.
- The *Reverb* adds the ambience of a studio recording room to the guitar sound. If you're not using external plug-ins, you should always dial in a little reverb, otherwise the guitar sound might be too dry and artificial.
- When turned left, *Attack* softens the attack transient of the guitar signal and accentuates the sustained portion. When turned right, it makes the attack transient more pronounced.

Reference Guide

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

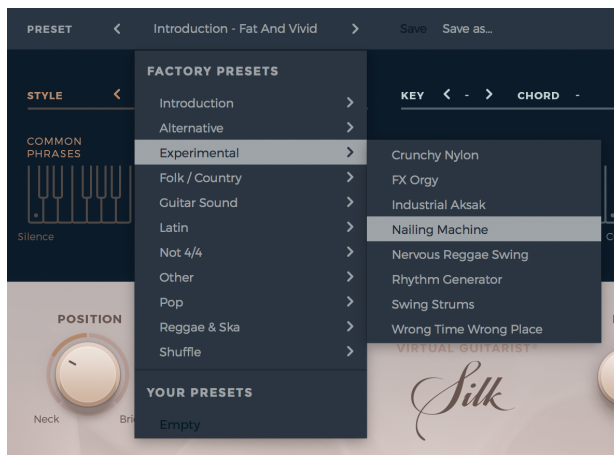
Menu Bar

The top bar of the *Virtual Guitarist SILK* 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 SILK* 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 preset by clicking one of the arrows left and 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, categorized by simple musical terms.

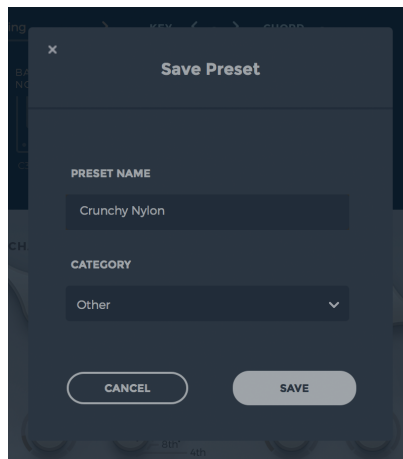
Virtual Guitarist SILK

The folder *Introduction* will give you a first impression of the sound capabilities. *Virtual Guitarist SILK* ships with over 140 *Factory Presets*. Take your time exploring them, as this is the quickest way of getting an overview of what *Virtual Guitarist SILK* can do!

If you have freshly installed Virtual Guitarist SILK, there will only be Factory Presets. User Presets will appear once you have saved your first own preset.

Save and Save as ...

You can of course save your own *Virtual Guitarist SILK* presets. You can name them and assign a category too.



“Save as ...” Dialog

The difference between the *Save* and *Save as ...* buttons:

- *Save* replaces the preset with the changes you just made.
- *Save as ...* lets you assign a name and a category, so does not replace the current preset.

Factory Presets can only be saved using Save as ..., they cannot be replaced.

Moving, renaming and deleting presets

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

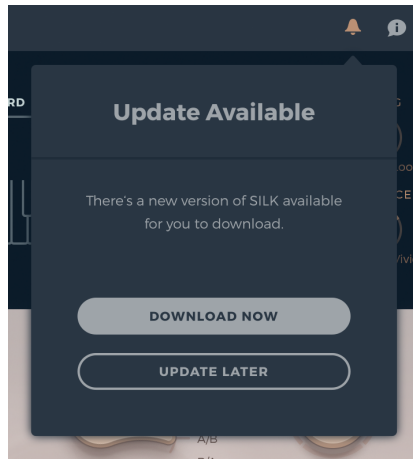
macOS	Factory Presets	/Library/Application Support/UJAM/VG-SILK/Presets
	User Presets	/Users/USERNAME/Library/Application Support/UJAM/VG-SILK/Presets
Windows	Factory Presets	C:\ProgramData\UJAM\VG-SILK\Presets
	User Presets	C:\Users\USERNAME\AppData\Roaming\UJAM\VG-SILK\Presets
	<i>(assuming your system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

Bell Icon – Notifications

When you launch *Virtual Guitarist SILK*, it will automatically check for updates. If an update is available, the bell icon will be illuminated.

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

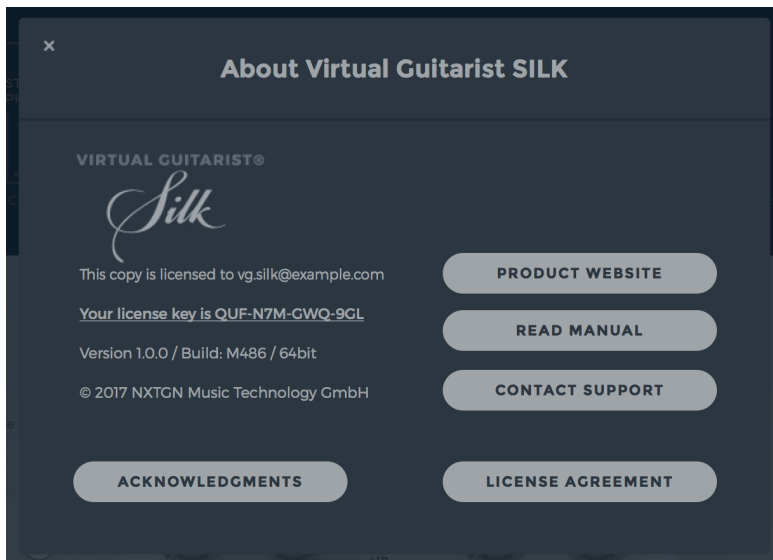
Virtual Guitarist SILK



Update Dialog

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 SILK.

Speech Bubble Icon – About Page



About Page

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

- **Product Website** takes you to www.virtualguitarist.com/silk with regularly updated news, videos, tutorials and other helpful stuff.
- **Read Manual** opens this document.
- **Contact Support** lets you report problems and ask questions.
- **Acknowledgments** – the people behind *Virtual Guitarist SILK*.
- **License Agreement** – legalese stuff for gourmets.

Style Bar

In the Style Bar, you choose a *STYLE* (selection of phrases) and a *KEY*. It also contains the *CHORD* display.

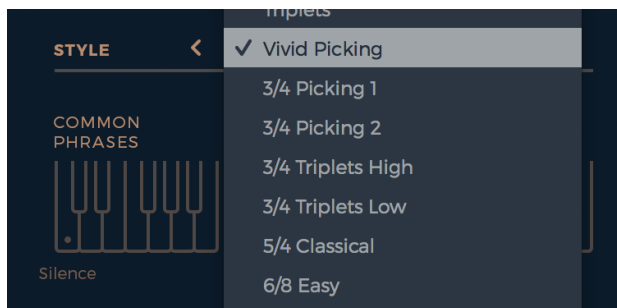


Style Bar

STYLE

A *STYLE* in *Virtual Guitarist SILK* is the counterpart to a particular phrasing style that you ask your guitarist to play. Styles are the “rhythmic vocabulary” of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*, which is why we have included 60 of them.

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

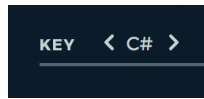


Style List

Every *Style* is a set of eleven phrases that you can access via the *Style Phrases* area of the Interactive or MIDI keyboard.

In most Styles, Phrases are ordered by intensity/density from left to right.

KEY



This parameter lets you define a Key (scale). With a pre-selected Key, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* offers a reduced chord selection consisting only of chords that work well in this key.

Key played		C #		E ♭			F #		G #		B ♭	
	C		D		E	F		G		A		B
Chord	C maj	C sus4	D min	E maj	E min	F maj	F sus4	G maj	G sus4	A min	B ♭ maj	G 7

Exemplary chord mapping for the key of C

Setting a Key is useful if you want a simplified method of playing chords or if you're controlling *Virtual Guitarist SILK* from a non-keyboard controller and have only so and so many pads or buttons assignable.

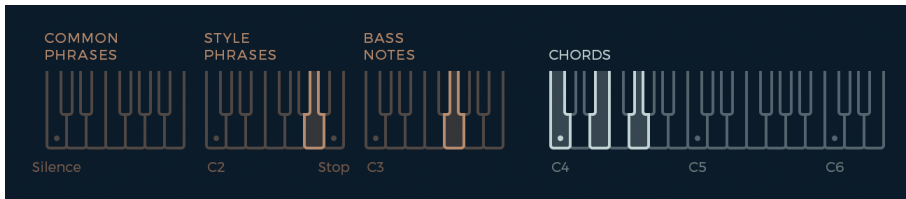
CHORD

CHORD is not a parameter but a display. It shows the chord and the optional bass note corresponding to the keys you play (see also **Fingering Scheme on page 27**).

Interactive Keyboard

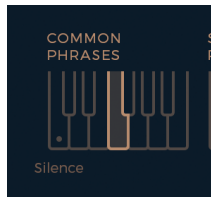
The interactive keyboard is both a display of received MIDI notes and an actually functional on-screen keyboard. The left side of the keyboard doesn't make any sound by itself. Here, you control the performance of the guitarist by switching between 22 different phrases. 11 of these phrases are set by the style, the rest are always available.

Note: The on-screen keyboard does not get recorded by your DAW. Use a MIDI keyboard or – if available – the DAW's own on-screen keyboard for this purpose.



Interactive Keyboard

Common Phrases



The lower left of the MIDI keyboard (C \sharp 1 – B1) is reserved for a collection of 11 so-called *Common Phrases*. These phrases are “hard-wired” and won’t change with the *STYLE* selection.

Common Phrases complement the *Style Phrases* by phrasings that are more generic and applicable to multiple contexts.

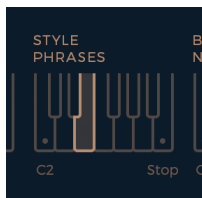
Five of the Standard Phrases are one-shot phrases that don’t loop: C \sharp 1, D1, D \sharp 1, B \flat 1, and B1.

Phrases are what you make of them. *Virtual Guitarist SILK* 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.

Reference of Common Phrases

#	Group	MIDI Note	Description	Bars
1	Chords	C #1	Arpeggiated Chord	One shot
2		D1	Chord Low	One shot
3		D #1	Chord High	One shot
4	Pickings	E1	Easy Alternate Picking	1
5		F1	3 Notes Arpeggiated	1
6		F #1	4 Notes Arpeggiated	1
7		G1	Up & Down Picking	1
8		G #1	Easy Picking with Bass	1
9		A1	Quarter Note Chords	2
10	Single Notes	B ♭1	Single Note High	One shot
11		B1	Single Note Low	One shot

Style Phrases



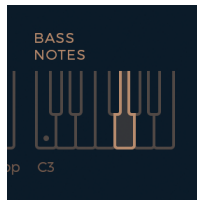
Keys in this area select phrases of the currently selected *Style*.

Phrases in the *Style* range start with the lowest density/intensity on C2 and get more agitated as you move towards B ♭2.

You could generally work your way through a song going from left (intro, verse) to right (chorus), but of course this greatly depends on the style and your song. Just know you always have 11 different rhythms plus the *Common Phrases* at your immediate disposal.

The highest key of the Style Range – B2 – is the Stop key. In Latch mode, pressing this key will stop playback (whereas the Silent key (C1) will keep playback going, just with an empty phrase).

Bass Notes

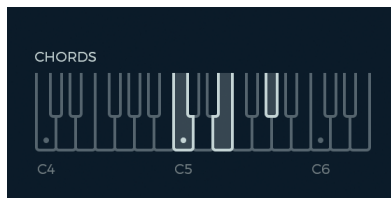


Keys in the Bass Notes section (C3 – B3) allow you to play a bass note that's different from the currently played chord.

The occurrence of played bass notes depends on the selected *Style* and *Phrase*, some combinations play bass notes very frequently, some don't at all. Bass notes are always added to the currently played chord and therefore can't be triggered solitary.

Please be aware that setting a *Key* does not affect the played *bass note*. What you press is what you get.

Chord Range



Keys in the Chord range function almost like a regular musical keyboard: You start and stop the guitarist's performance and you determine the chords played. It's like playing keyboard, except that instead of playing notes you select the chord the guitarist will perform as a phrase.

Virtual Guitarist SILK features a built-in chord recognition that makes it very easy to play even complex chord progressions. You can play major chords (or matching chords if you selected a *Key*) with just one finger and other chords using two or three. The following paragraph will tell you exactly which chords are supported and how to play them.

Fingering Scheme

The chord recognition scheme of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* is pretty straightforward and intuitive – it basically plays the chord you play, or the next possible chord if that's not available.

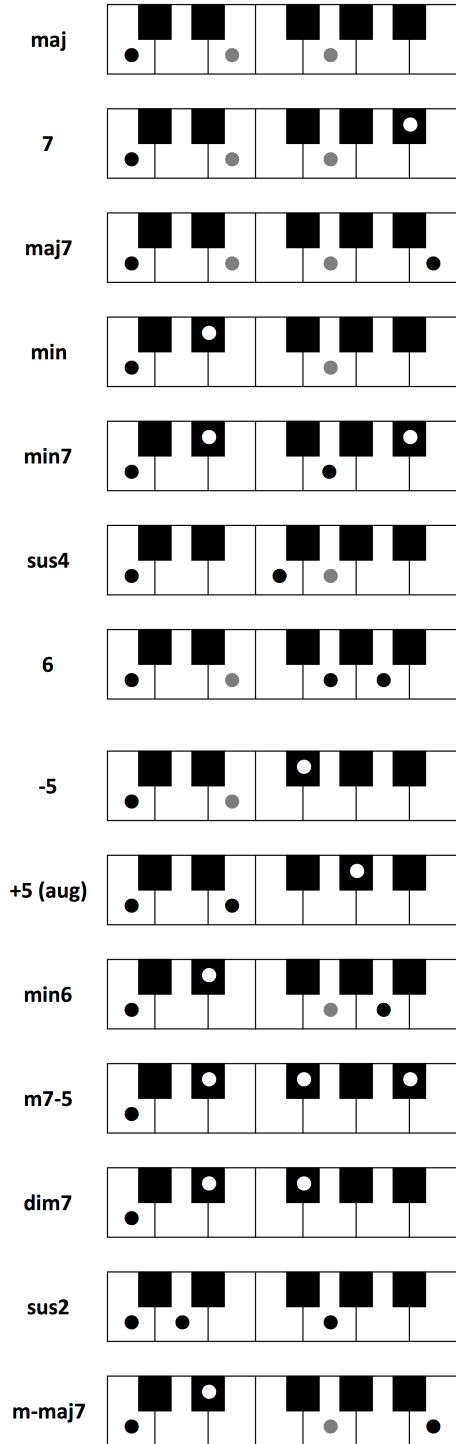
Chords

The schematic on the next page shows you which chords you can play with *Virtual Guitarist SILK*.

Here's how to read it:

- A black dot on the stylized keyboard means “required”,
- a grey dot means “optional” – for example, if you use the MIDI file of a synth pad to control *Virtual Guitarist SILK*, MIDI chords including these additional keys will still play the right chord.

Virtual Guitarist SILK



Fretboard Position

Playing notes and chords using keys on the lower part of the Chord Range will have the guitarist play in lower fretboard positions. Playing notes and chords on higher keys will make the guitarist play in higher fretboard positions if possible.

Performance Controls

Performance controls let you adjust the musical performance of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* to your song's feel and tempo.



Performance Controls

LATCH

When *Latch* is activated, once you press a key in the Chord range, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* will keep playing until you press the *Stop key*.

When *Latch* is off, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* only plays as long as you hold at least one key in the Chord 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.

SPEED

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

This way you can extend the style range to 4th- or 32nd-note-based, or have *Virtual Guitarist SILK* styles play at normal grooves even if you use extremely low or high song tempi.

SWING

This function, often also called “Shuffle”, delays the off-beats. *Virtual Guitarist SILK* will automatically switch the *Swing* resolution to 8th or 16th note depending on the selected *Style*.

At maximum position, the off-beat will have the same timing as the last note of a triplet.

Use this control to match the timing of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* to a shuffled or triplet-based song.

Not all phrases contain 8th or 16th note off-beats. In these cases, the Swing control has no effect.

FEEL

You can tweak the feel of your guitarist’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 driving feel.
- In the opposite direction, off-beats will be slightly delayed, creating a laid-back or relaxed 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 SILK* 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.*

*To create advanced doubling, create two instances of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*, pan both extremely left and right, apply different *CHARACTER* settings and set the *FEEL* slightly differently.*

TIMING

While *FEEL* defines a constant offset from the beat, *TIMING* lets you add realistic timing variations.

This knob controls the timing accuracy of the virtual player. Turning it to the left will lead to a more machine-like precision, turning it to the right will add more and more human feel by bringing in small random timing offsets.

VARIANCE

VARIANCE is a powerful way to tweak the performance’s *authenticity*.

It lets you control the dynamic variation of the performance. Turn it left, and your guitarist will play with almost robotic steady dynamics – this is often preferred in electronic music. Turn the

control to the right adds more and more variation in picking intensity between notes, making the performance way more natural and human.

Guitar & Mics Section



Guitar & Mics Section

This area is where you tweak the sound of your guitar. *Virtual Guitarist SILK* offers a large range of sounds from warm, soft and round to brilliant and sparkling.

POSITION



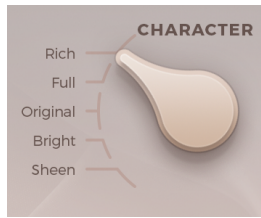
The Position knob emulates moving the picking hand between bridge and neck.

The center position represents the recording position - the fingers picking over the sound hole - and is therefore neutral.

Turn the knob to the left (moving the virtual hand towards the neck) for a more full-bodied, hollow sound.

Turn the knob to the right (moving the virtual hand towards the bridge) for a thinner sound with more attack.

CHARACTER

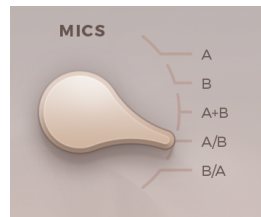


The CHARACTER knob adjusts the recorded signal before it gets fed into sound processors inside *Virtual Guitarist SILK*. It offers five distinct settings:

Knob position	Character	Use...
Rich	Accentuated root note, slightly boosted low and high ends.	...if you want the guitar to be one of the dominant instruments in your mix or to have it support your chord progression.
Full	Slightly boosted low and high ends.	...for a modern, warm sound that fits most arrangements.
Original	Untreated signal, straight from the microphone(s).	...for a straight acoustic guitar character, or if you plan to do all sonic treatment in the mixer or using studio processors.
Bright	Pronounced high mids.	...for a guitar track that blends well with other harmonic/chord tracks, especially in bigger arrangements. Allows you to bring down the level and still keep the picking “recognizable”.
Sheen	Boosted and slightly compressed treble.	...to add high end animation to any mix, often as a complement or replacement for HiHat or percussion, without interfering with other chord sounds. Works particularly well with doubling activated.

Those descriptions provide just guidelines and technical info. We encourage you to always try out all switch positions for any given track.

MICS



The source material of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* has been recorded using two different high-end small-diaphragm condenser microphones. The MICS selector lets you choose between five different selections of those two signals:

Knob position	Character
A	This is the mono output of Microphone A, which has a nice neutral sound, slightly on the crisp side.
B	Microphone B provides a somewhat fatter sound than microphone A. Select this option to get pure B played in mono.
A+B	This option mixes A and B into a mono signal.
A/B	This is one of two stereo output options: Mic A on the left channel and B on the right. You can use this to route and treat each signal individually in your DAW's mixer, or to create a stereo effect without using <i>Doubling</i> or a second instance of <i>Virtual Guitarist SILK</i> .
B/A	Same as A/B but with channels swapped. Try both options in a mix to find out which one sits better in the stereo image.

ANIMATE

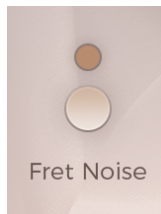


Animate is a multi-effect specially designed for *Virtual Guitarist SILK*. A custom combination of modulating comb filters, saturation and convolution adds rich and vivid harmonics and an airy, spherical feel.

Try to apply DAW automation to Animate and intensify your song's progression, especially in parts of rising tension.

Guitar Modes

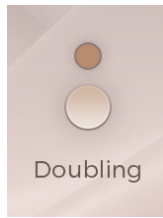
Fret Noise



When changing from one chord to another, the fingers sliding on the fretboard create characteristic noises that are essential for the authentic character of an acoustic guitar.

Virtual Guitarist SILK has an algorithm that produces these noises dynamically exactly where they would occur on a real guitar. Sometimes you may want a totally clean signal – for example in electronic music – in this case you can deactivate any Fret Noise with this button.

Doubling



Activating this button has the same effect as double-tracking your guitar.

Technically, *Doubling* adds a second guitarist and places both at the outer positions of the stereo spectrum.

We recommend to use Doubling with care – it’s great to give more weight to tracks that are a key foundation of your song. On the other hand, a mix gets mushy pretty quick if you have two or three doubled guitar tracks playing at the same time. If it’s just about creating a stereo image, you can use the stereo mic settings without doubling the performance.

Two handy tips:

- To create the impression of two guitarists playing even more differently, instead of using *Doubling* try setting up two instances of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* with different settings of *ANIMATE*, *CHARACTER*, *FEEL* and *POSITION*, put them at the ends of the panoramic spectrum and pick different phrases for both.
- Add a second instance with a sharper sound to a doubled full-bodied setting and place it in the middle, and you have a very effective way of controlling the presence of that guitar track in the mix by adjusting the single track against the doubled one.

Effect Section



Effect Section

Virtual Guitarist SILK features three guitar-typical on-board effects. They provide for a greater sonic palette and allow you to create presets that sound perfect “out of the box” – because often you need that little reverb or delay for a particular sound.

The onboard effects are not meant to replace dedicated plug-in or outboard effect processors, and we encourage you to route Virtual Guitarist SILK into external plugins or outboard gear if you need more advanced tweaking options.

Delay

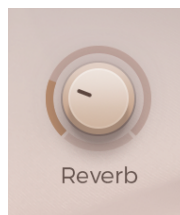


Delay Section

The Delay effect in *Virtual Guitarist SILK* offers five different, guitar-optimized stereo delay presets from 32nd to 4th note resolution, as well as a mix control (left knob).

From Slapback echoes (32th setting) to rhythmic duplication using the longer resolutions – subtle delay adds width and ambience to Virtual Guitarist SILK without adding too much wash to the mix.

Reverb



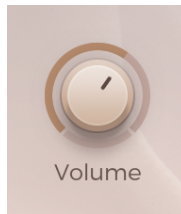
Adds the ambience of a studio recording room to the guitar sound. If you're not using external effects, you should always consider dialing in a little reverb to avoid the guitar sounding dry and artificial.

Attack



When turned left, this control softens the attack transient of the guitar signal and accentuates the sustained portion. When turned right, it makes the attack transient more pronounced.

Master Volume



The Volume knob adjusts the master output volume of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*. Levels inside *Virtual Guitarist SILK* are usually auto-adjusted, so you will never have to level-compensate for *Doubling* or adding *ANIMATE*, but you may want to use this control to adjust the gain of *Virtual Guitarist SILK* before sending it into subsequent audio processors or effect devices.

MIDI Learn

Using MIDI Learn, you can assign *Virtual Guitarist SILK* controls to controls on your hardware keyboard that send MIDI controller data. To assign a control, you usually right-click or ctrl-click a control in *Virtual Guitarist SILK* to open the MIDI Learn context menu of your DAW.

Virtual Guitarist SILK



MIDI Learn context menu

Automation

All controls in *Virtual Guitarist SILK* can be automated. In combination with the phrase select keys this is actually a very powerful way of creating more dynamic performances. For example, automate *POSITION* and *ANIMATE* with faders to create dynamic transitions, or switch-automate *CHARACTER*, *SPEED*, or *Doubling* to drastically change the sound between song parts.

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

MIDI Controllers

Unless you add more using MIDI Learn, *Virtual Guitarist SILK* supports the following MIDI controllers:

Pitchbend

Use the Pitch Wheel to control the picking intensity (velocity).

Turn it down, and your guitarist will play softer, turn it up for extra intensity. Using the Pitch Wheel is a very simple way of greatly enhancing the musical performance across the song's arc, so we highly recommend to use it.

Modulation

Palm Muting is a powerful method for live-controlling the phrasing of *Virtual Guitarist SILK*.

The Mod Wheel controls the Palm Muting that your guitarist applies to the performance.

In the Mod Wheel's default position, no Palm Muting is applied. The further you turn it up, the shorter the notes will become. The maximum position of the Mod Wheel produces entirely "tone-less" muted strums.

You can add Palm Muting after the fact by adding a lane to your Virtual Guitarist SILK track and recording a Mod Wheel performance on top of your notes. Experiment with multiple tracks with different Mod Wheel performances for greatly enhanced live feel and two-player impressions.

Sustain Pedal

The sustain pedal replicates the *Latch* control, so you can use it as an additional way of varying phrases in real-time. Pressing the sustain pedal activates latching of chord notes. Releasing the sustain pedal releases any latched chord notes even if the *Latch* button is on.

FAQ

Where can I get help?

We keep a help desk with a knowledgebase and known issues here: <https://ujam.zendesk.com/>

I still have questions! Where can I send them?

Please send your questions to support@virtualguitarist.com. We will help you out quickly!