

Audio Plugin Player



Audio Plugin Player

User Documentation

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Overview

Audio Plugin Player is a lightweight VST and AU instrument plugin host, that allows you to play these instruments using either your mouse, computer keyboard, or MIDI device (both hardware and software). It has a simple, one-screen interface, that will let you start making music with your favorite audio instrument plugins in seconds – just drop your plugin onto the application window, make your input and output choices, and you're ready! Audio Plugin Player also allows you to route your plugin instrument through a plugin effect (either VST or AU) as well, and in addition now lets you route audio from an audio input device (rather than a plugin instrument) through your plugin effects as well.

System Requirements

Audio Plugin Player should work fine on any Intel-based Macintosh using OS X version 10.6.6 through 10.8.x. You need to be able to access the Apple App Store to purchase Audio Plugin Player.

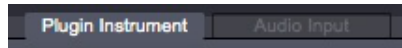
You'll of course need at least one VST or AU instrument (and if desired, effect) plugin – there are many excellent free ones available – a great resource is KVR Audio, <http://www.kvraudio.com>.

Usage

Audio Plugin Player is divided into four sections: Input, Plugin Instrument, Plugin Effect and Output.

Input

The Input section is where you choose whether you want to use a plugin instrument, or audio from an audio input device. You do this using the tab selectors at the top of the section.



Plugin Instrument Input

The Plugin Instrument tab of the Input section lets you specify what method of note input you prefer for the plugin instrument: mouse-based, using the virtual keyboard, MIDI note input from either a hardware or software MIDI-note-generating device, or by using your computer's QWERTY keyboard.

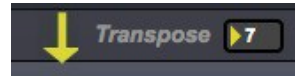
In mouse mode, just click the keys on the virtual keyboard.

In MIDI mode, you must choose the MIDI input device and MIDI input channel which you would like to use for note input. You can choose the “Any” choice for MIDI channel if you want to play notes from any incoming MIDI channel.

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When in MIDI mode, you can specify a transpose amount (range -24 to 24 semitones) that will be applied to the incoming MIDI note information.



In QWERTY mode, you have the ability to shift the notes that the computer keys map to by up or down one octave, using the left and right indicators. You can also shift octaves using the left and right arrow keys on the computer keyboard. You also will see a legend displayed on the virtual keyboard as well. *For users of non-US keyboard layouts, press as many keys on your keyboard as you can, and the appropriate letters will appear on the on-screen keyboard.*



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In QWERTY Global mode, key presses are routed to your plugin instrument **even when Audio Plugin Player is not the frontmost window**; this is useful for example when you have the plugin's custom editor window open, and you are tweaking its parameters, but still desire key presses to trigger notes in your instrument.

QWERTY Global mode requires a one-time setup step; First, be sure that QWERTY Global mode is selected on the main screen, then open the About & Setup screen, by either choosing the About Audio Plugin Player menu item, or by clicking the Audio Plugin Player icon or text at the top of the main screen:



Now select a device from the drop down menu and choose either Mode 1 or Mode 2, so that pressing the “q” and “w” keys together causes both letters to turn orange:

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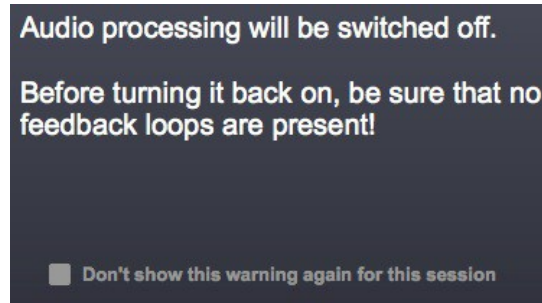
Generally, the correct device will be one that includes the word “Keyboard” in its name, but this is very variable, and is based on your computer and/or keyboard. You may have to try several Device/Mode combinations. Once you have found the combination that lights up the “q” and “w” letters at the same time, you can close the About Audio Plugin Player window by clicking the Close button at the bottom of the screen, or the Audio Plugin Player icon or text at the top of the window. Your selection will be remembered between uses of the Audio Plugin Player application.

For each of the input modes described above, you can also specify a tempo (in beats per minute, or BPM) that will be provided to the plugin. The allowable range is from 20-240 BPM. This feature is meant for plugins that have tempo-synchronized features. In MIDI input mode, if MIDI clock information is being received, it will set the tempo automatically.



Audio Input

If you prefer to use Audio Plugin Player as a way to route external audio through an effect plugin, and not to use a plugin instrument, you can toggle the Input pane to Audio Input mode. When you do so, you will be presented with the following feedback warning screen.



Be sure that no feedback loops are present (e.g. using microphone audio input and built in audio output), or if such feedback loops are desired, that the volume is set low to start. If you don't want to see this warning on subsequent times when switching to the Audio Input tab, check the box at the bottom of the panel. Once you are sure of your Audio Device/Channel and volume settings, you can turn audio processing back on.



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You'll also note that there is now an arrow going through the plugin instrument section, indicating that it is not being used.



Plugin Instrument

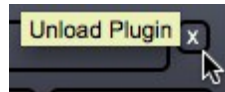
The Plugin Instrument section is where you select your VST (.vst) or AU (.component) plugin instrument. (VST3 plugins are not yet supported, nor are 64 bit VST or AU plugins). You can either drop your plugin file onto the large area in the middle of the Plugin Instrument section, or click that area and navigate to the plugin file using a standard file dialog window. Plugins are usually located at /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST/ for VST plugins, and /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/ for AU plugins. *Note that AU plugins (.component files) must be located in*

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your /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/ folder to work with Audio Plugin Player. Once your plugin is loaded, you will see its name displayed, as well as its presets (if any) displayed in the drop down menu just below:



To unload the currently selected plugin, click the X next to the plugin name.



To use a particular preset with your plugin, just select it in the drop down menu.

If you would like to select a different preset or set of presets for a VST plugin, you can do so with the “Select Preset File” button. Typically, VST plugins use .fxp files for single presets, and .fxb files for banks of presets. *“Select Preset File” currently only works with VST plugins, and not with AU plugins.* Some plugins allow for new preset file selection from within their own plugin window, and may require you to refresh the preset drop down menu within the Audio Plugin Player application. You can do so with the refresh icon to the left of the drop down menu.

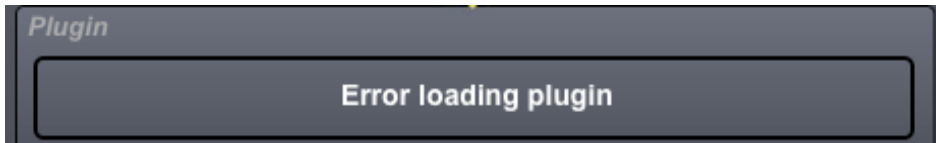


If you would like to see the plugin graphical user interface, click the “View Plugin” button.

If you choose an effect plugin (rather than an instrument plugin) by accident, you will see an error message:



Similarly, if there is a problem loading a particular plugin, you will be notified here:

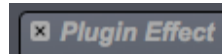


Finally, for plugins that output MIDI, you can enable plugin MIDI output by checking the checkbox. Once you do so, you will be able to specify the destination MIDI device for this information.



Plugin Effect

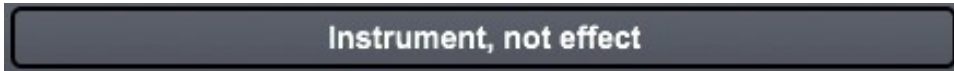
You can choose to insert a plugin effect (either VST or AU) after your plugin instrument by checking the box in the Plugin Effect section:



If you choose to not use a plugin effect, you will see an arrow through the effect section, indicating that it is not being used.



Choose your VST or AU effect just as you would an instrument. If you enable the Plugin Effect section, but do not load a plugin, no audio will pass through to the output. If you try to load an instrument instead of an effect, you will be warned:



Output

To hear the output of the plugin, be sure that audio processing is turned on:



Also be sure to select the audio driver, output device, output channels and volume that you desire:



Please note that if you are using a plugin that has more than two audio outputs, only the first two are used.

If you get a “stuck” MIDI note, clicking the “Panic” button should clear it.

Documentation & Help

Audio Plugin Player can launch its full documentation (this document) from within the application itself; just go to the Documentation menu, and choose “Audio Plugin Player Documentation”. This will launch a PDF viewing application in which to view the documentation.

About & Setup Menu

The About Audio Plugin Player menu item (in the Audio Plugin Player menu) will replace the main screen with the About & Setup screen. You can also display the About & Setup screen by clicking on the Audio Plugin Player icon or text at the top of the main screen. The About & Setup screen (see below) shows setup information for the QWERTY Global mode, and version information about the application, copyright and legal information, acknowledgments, and a direct link to the Audio Plugin Player home and support pages. Click the Close button, or the Audio Plugin Player icon or text at the top of the window, to return to the main application screen.

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Setup: QWERTY Global Device

Select QWERTY Global mode on main screen, then select from list of devices and modes below (device usually includes 'Keyboard'). You're looking for the device / mode combination that lights both 'q' and 'w' together, when 'q' and 'w' pressed on keyboard.

Apple Internal Keyboard / Trackpad 4 ▾ Mode 1 Mode 2

q w

About

Audio Plugin Player
Version 1.3
(c) 2013 Dan Nigrin, Defective Records Software

Please see documentation for acknowledgements.

Audio Plugin Player Home Audio Plugin Player Support

VST Plugin Interface Technology by Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH.
Audio Units Technology by Apple, Inc.

Acknowledgments and Thanks

Audio Plugin Player was created using Cycling '74's Max (<http://www.cycling74.com>) software.

I'd like to thank Oli Larkin and James Howard Young for their help in figuring out the various issues involved in getting a Max application up on the Apple App Store. Also thanks to everyone at Cycling '74 and on the Cycling '74 forums (<http://www.cycling74.com/forums>) for their invaluable help with Max issues.

Finally I'd like to thank my wife and kids for putting up with my absences while I was busy writing the software!

Contact & Support

Product Page

<http://defectiverecords.com/audiopluginplayer>

Support Forum

<http://defectiverecords.com/forum/index.php?p=/categories/audio-plugin-player>

Dan Nigrin

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Copyright

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VST is a trademark of Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH. VST PlugIn Interface Technology by Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH.



Audio Units Technolgy by Apple, Inc.

Version History

Version 1.3 (March 6, 2013)

- Submitted to App Store
- New ability to route external audio input through effect plugin, rather than output of plugin instrument
- New transpose ability when in MIDI input mode
- New ability to send MIDI output generated from plugin instrument
- New ability to unload a plugin without loading a new one
- New ability to refresh patch names for plugins
- New ability to close preferences window by clicking logo on top, as well as by Close button
- Fixed bug in QWERTY Global input mode, should now be more reliable on various systems
- Updated app to comply with Mac App Store sandbox restrictions

Version 1.2 (April 2, 2012)

- Submitted to App Store
- MIDI Clock now routed from incoming MIDI to plugin when in MIDI mode
- New Plugin Effect slot
- New Qwerty Global mode, transmits key presses to plugin even when plugin custom GUI window is frontmost
- Input mode, Volume, BPM, MIDI device and channel, QWERTY Global device now remembered between sessions
- Built with Max version 6.04 (52278)

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Version 1.1 (January 29 , 2012)

- Submitted to App Store
- New ability to send tempo information for tempo sync'd plugins
- New ability to shift octaves in QWERTY mode using left & right arrow keys
- Expanded QWERTY key-mapping, allows for 2-1/2 octave control at a time
- Built with Max version 6.0.3 (51824)
- Went live on App Store on January 31, 2012

Version 1.0.1 (January 24, 2012)

- Submitted to App Store
- New Octave Shift user interface
- New Omni mode to allow input from any MIDI channel
- Fixed bug where plugins were sent MIDI data one channel too high
- Fixed bug where audio not on upon first app start up
- Implemented support for non-US computer keyboards layouts
- Built with Max version 6.0.3 (51824)
- Went live on App Store on January 25, 2012

Version 1.0 (December 14, 2011)

- Submitted to App Store
- Built with Max version 6.0.3 (51824)
- Went live on App Store on January 17, 2012

Version 1.0 Alphas and Betas (November – December, 2011)

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- First versions for internal testing.