MG SOFT ACOUSTIC GUITAR

User Guide

Thank You!

I hope you enjoy using MG Soft Acoustic Guitar. My aim was to create an easy-to-use yet in-depth instrument to offer a beautiful natural acoustic guitar sound straight out of the box. I am regularly releasing guitar-related online content exploring this instrument in-depth, so please keep in touch via my website GuitaristComposer.co.uk or any of my social links at the end of this guide.

Installation

MG Soft Acoustic Guitar requires Kontakt Player (from Kontakt 6 onwards) from Native Instruments. You can download the latest free Kontakt Player 7 here:

https://www.native-instruments.com/en/products/komplete/samplers/kontakt-7-player/

For the installation software (called Native Access) and further instructions for Kontakt instruments, please visit:

https://www.native-instruments.com/en/specials/native-access-2/

Contents

System Requirements

- Compatible with Kontakt 6.71+ (download the latest free Kontakt Player).
- Mac System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.15 or Later, Minimum Intel Quad Core i5, 4GB RAM or Higher, 32bit DAWs Not Supported, Machine must be connected to internet during install.
- PC System Requirements: Windows 10, Minimum Quad Core CPU, 4GB RAM or Higher, 32bit DAWs Not Supported, Must be connected to internet on install.
- Download Size: 2.1GB

Introduction

MG Soft Acoustic Guitar brings the beauty and warmth of a Martin J40 acoustic guitar to Kontakt, with unparalleled realism through real-time performance, straight out of the box. Here are the main essential features to acquiant with, before exploring things more in-depth in later chapters.

The Page Tabs

The instrument is divided into three page tabs (shown at the bottom of the UI) namely PERFORM, CALIBRATE and FX. Within each tab there are further pages and features as detailed below:

The PERFORM Tab

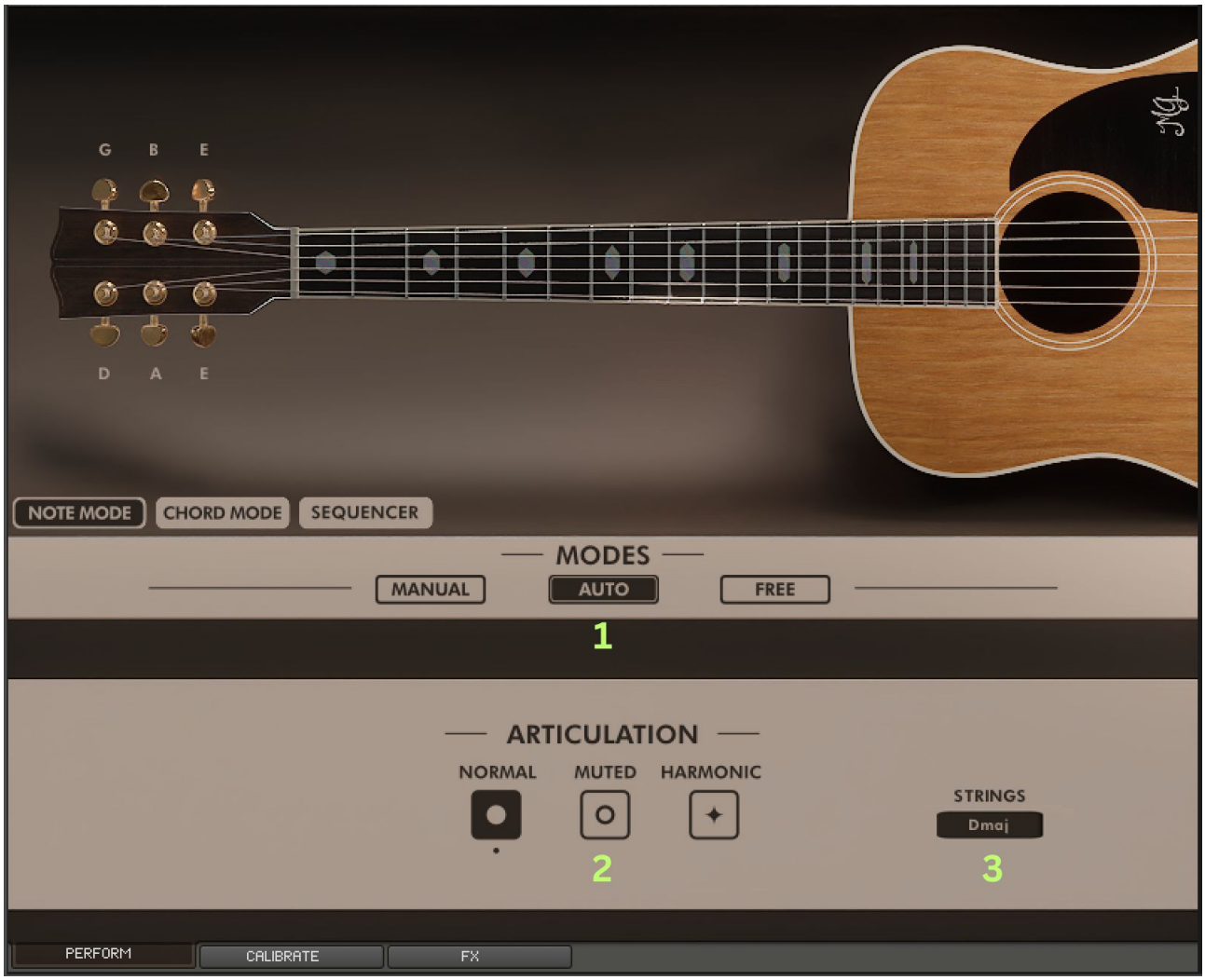
This tab contains everything related to how the guitar performs in real-time,
ie. the current playing mode.

There are three modes which affect the working of the guitar:

- **Note Mode** – The instrument home page, and the place you would play individual notes, translated directly from keyboard to the guitar. This mode offers many articulations and features.
- **Chord Mode** – Offering a chord / strumming engine with lots of customisation choices.
- **Sequencer** – A 4-bank sequencer with upto 32 steps and an array of customisation options, plus a MIDI Drag'n Drop facility.

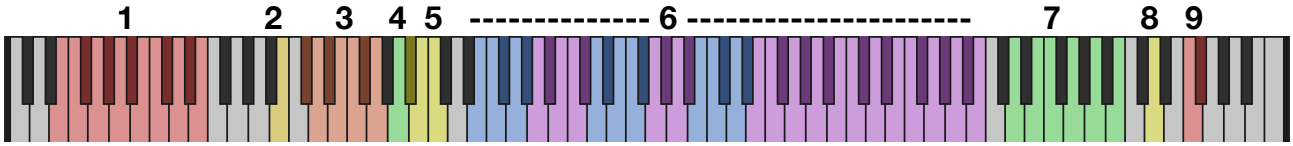
Note Mode

This is the default mode when first opening the instrument UI. As with all modes, the top half section displays the actual Martin J40 guitar from which the samples were recorded, and on the virtual fretboard any inputted (or automated) notes will be displayed.



1. **Playing Modes:** For authentic guitar lines, AUTO mode is more than sufficient, as it deals with user-inputted MIDI data to produce realistic results using certain guitar-based rules without compromising playability.
   FREE mode turns off guitar-based rules (eg. Two notes cannot play simultaneously on the same string), so this mode can be used when authentic guitar reproduction is not a high priority.
   MANUAL mode offers the most control for advanced users, allowing precise fret-hand positioning and holding all guitar-based rules and limitations to ensure authentic results.
2. **Articulation Switches:** NORMAL, MUTED and HARMONIC. There are other articulations available, but only these three are selectable through the UI.
3. **Open / Chord-Defined Strings:** quick access to the six guitar strings, either open strings or user-defined chord notes.

The Virtual Keyboard (in Note Mode)



1. **Fret Positioning Key Switches:** These are relevant for advanced users in MANUAL mode, where each key represents a 'fret hand' position on the guitar fretboard. This allows for precise note selection and note-string relationships.
2. **Fix String Key Switch:** when held, played notes are fixed on the current string (provided notes are within the string's overall note range). Can be used effectively when combined with Slide articulations.
3. **Articulation Key Switches:** when held, a note is played as (from left to right) normal, muted, harmonic, slide-from-down, slide-from-up, slide-to and vibrato. Note: vibrato is also avaiable in Note Mode via the mod wheel (cc1).
4. **Open String Key Switch:** when held, open string notes appear as green keys, and no other notes are playable.
5. **String / Body Hits:** when a guitar 'hit' is played, all currently held notes are stopped.
6. **Playable Note Range:** The alternating blue and purple keys serve as a visual guide to the current notes avaialble on the six guitar strings. This area changes according to guitar tuning and current fret-hand position.
7. **Open / Chord-Defined String Keys:** these yellow keys represent the six individual guitar strings, either by default holding the open string notes or a user-defined chord.
8. **Chord Selection Keyswitch:** when held, the user holds down a triad and this is stored as an authentically voiced chord, from the lowest note to the highest note going from left to right.
9. **String Squeaks:** These two keys hold lots of individual fret-hand string squeaks, shifts and slide noises, selectable via velocity.

Playing Methods (in Note Mode)

- Notes can be manually held for sustain, or using the sustain pedal when performing chords or arpeggios, using the standard piano technique. Please note it is important to release the sustain pedal BEFORE the next chord / arpeggio to allow for the characteristic space where the guitarist shifts fret positions.
- For scale / melody playing it is also important to leave small gaps between notes, unless sluring notes.
- To perform a slur, play a note as normal, then play a second note overlapping the first. If within four semitones (and slur settings are enabled) a hammer-on (upwards slur) or pull-off (downwards slur) will be performed.

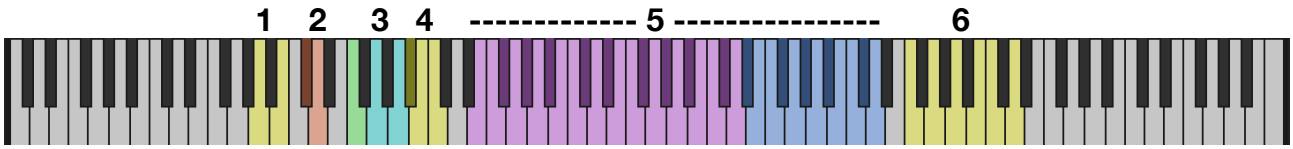
Chord Mode

Chord Mode enables the chord / strumming engine, and the UI provides many options for customising the guitar's playing style.

1. **Active Strings:** each individual guitar string is on/off switchable; when a chord strum is played, only the currently active strings will be heard.
2. **Open String Switches:** when checked, the selected string will play it's current open string note, no matter what chord is currently selected.
3. **Chord Label:** shows the currently defined chord.
4. **Strum Speed:** defines the speed of the strums. This control is accessible via the mod wheel (cc1) in Chord Mode.
5. **Humanize:** adds an element of randomness to each strum, ie. The strum becomes progressively less uniform as the knob value rises.
6. **Chord Release:** this defines what happens when the next chord is selected.
7. **Soft Strums:** for soft strums the bias can be set towards the low, mid or high string range.

8. **Voicing:** when set to AUTO, the user can play piano-orientated chords (up to four keys simultaneously) and the engine will translate into authentically voiced guitar chords. When set to MANUAL, the engine voices the chords using the same notes as inputted by the user.
9. **Shape:** when set to FLUID, the voicing shape (the note relationships between the strings) are ever-changing to simulate how a guitarist would typically relate chords to each other across the strings. When set to FIX, the voicing shape is fixed for any selected chords, simulating when a chord is shifted up and down the guitar fretboard.
10. **Sustain:** played chords can be automatically sustained, or dependent on the user holding the strum keys.

The Virtual Keyboard (in Chord Mode)



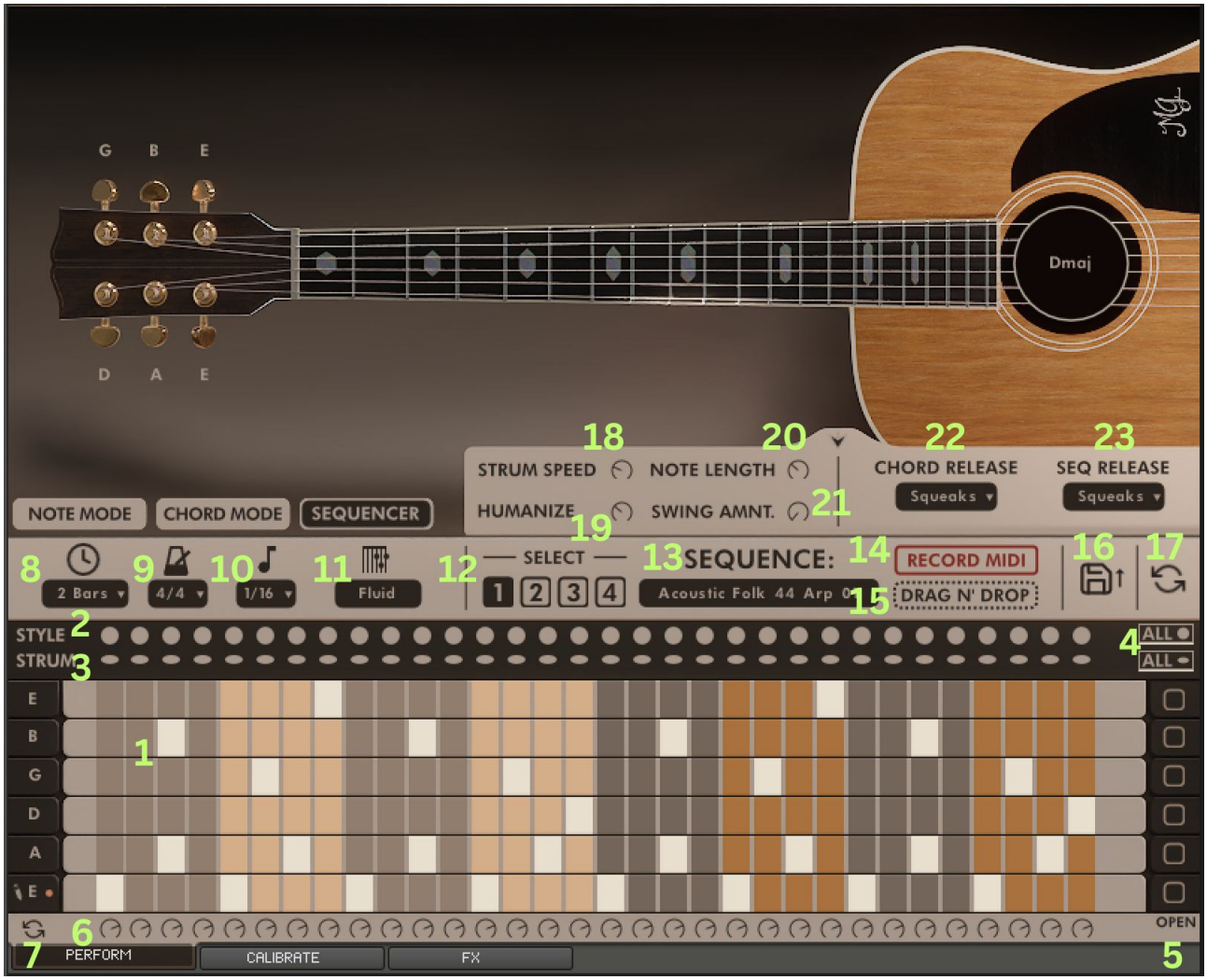
1. **AUTO / MANUAL Key Switches:** while in one mode it is possible to override with the other mode using these key switches.
2. **Articulation Key Switches:** while one articulation is set it is possible to override with the other articulation using these key switches.
3. **Open String Strum Key:** a useful strum key playing a light up-strum, suitable for playing between chord changes.
4. **Strum Down / Strum Up Key:** executes the currently selected chord.
5. **Chord Selection Key Range:** defines the currently selected chord, which is either voiced automatically or manually (user-defined). The purple key range shows the starting note (root) range.
6. **Chord-String Keys:** as in Note Mode, these keys represent the six strings of the guitar, and hold the notes of the currently selected chord.

Playing Methods (in Chord Mode)

- When VOICING is set to Auto, chords can be defined using keyboard triads, plus for extended chords (such as 7^{th} chords) and extra note can be held after the triad (not in any inversion). Available chords are:
  Major, Minor, Maj6, Min6, Maj7, Min7, Min/maj7, Sus2, Sus4. Any other chord type would require VOICING to be set to Manual.
- When changing chords, set the next chord a moment before the first strum of the new chord, to simulate the characteristic space a guitarist would leave between the chords – options for utilising this space can be set using the CHORD RELEASE option.
- Using a combination of strum keys and individual chord-string keys can produce interesting authentic results.

Sequencer Mode

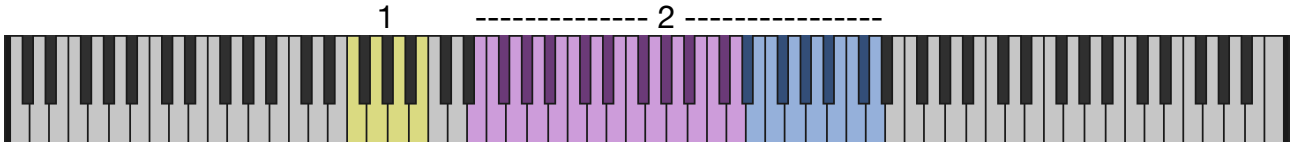
Sequencer Mode features a fully customisable 4-bank 32-step (max) sequencer. Users can load and edit preset sequences, or create their own from scratch and save it. Each step of the sequence can be edited to alter the played string(s), articulation, pick/strum direction and volume. A very useful additional feature is the ability to record MIDI information and drag/drop the recording to DAW.



1. **Active Steps:** for each step the active string note(s) are shown in white. These are editable providing the pencil symbol is selected at the very left of the UI.
2. **Style Switches:** each switch selects the articulation for that step.
3. **Strum Switches:** each switch selects the strum style for that step, ie. If multiple notes are active in a single step, they will either be played simultaneously (picked), from low to high (up arrow) or from high to low (down arrow). If a strum style is selected, the speed of each chord is determined by the Strum Speed knob.
4. **Global Style / Strum Switches:** these set the selected articulation or strum style to all the steps at once.
5. **Open String Switches:** when checked, the given string will play it's current open string note, no matter what chord is currently selected.

6. **Step Volume Knobs:** each knob sets the volume of the current step relative to the velocity of the sequence key played.
7. **Volume Reset:** resets the relative volumes of all steps to the default.
8. **Bars Menu:** sets the number of bars in the selected sequence.
9. **Time Sig Menu:** sets the time signature for the selected sequence.
10. **Rate Menu:** sets the type of division for all steps.
11. **Shape:** when set to FLUID, the voicing shape (the note relationships between the strings) are ever-changing to simulate how a guitarist would typically relate chords to each other across the strings. When set to FIX, the voicing shape is fixed for any selected chords, simulating when a chord is shifted up and down the guitar fretboard. When set to FIX TOP, the top three strings are fixed but the bottom three strings change according to the chord type.
12. **Sequence Selection Switches:** selects the current sequence for playing and editing.
13. **Sequence Display:** displays the currently selected sequence.
14. **Record MIDI Button:** When pressed, any played sequence is recorded along with a given chord sequence, until the button is pressed again to stop the recording.
15. **Drag n' Drop Button:** if any MIDI has been recorded, the user can click and drag from this button into their DAW to create a MIDI track.
16. **Load Icon:** Pressing this icon opens up the browser window, from which the user can load or save a sequence pattern.
17. **Init Icon:** When pressed, the currently selected sequence is initialised, clearing the sequence pattern and resetting the controls to default settings.
18. **Strum Speed:** defines the speed of any strums present in the selected sequence. This control is accessible via the mod wheel (cc1) in Sequencer Mode.
19. **Humanize:** adds an element of randomness to the selected sequence pattern.
20. **Note Length:** sets the length of the short note articulation.
21. **Swing Amount:** sets the amount of swing for the selected sequence.
22. **Chord Release:** this defines what happens when the next chord is selected.
23. **Seq Release:** this defines what happens when the sequence key is released.

The Virtual Keyboard (in Sequencer Mode)



1. **Sequence Keys:** these keys trigger each of the four sequences.
2. **Chord Selection Key Range:** defines the currently selected chord. The purple key range shows the starting note (root) range.

Playing Methods (in Sequencer Mode)

- the velocity of the sequence is determined by the pressure of the sequence keys.
- The four available sequences can be played in any order, but only one sequence at a time.

The CALIBRATE Tab

This tab deals with the overall setup of the guitar, from choosing different string tunings to adjusting levels and behaviours.

1. **String Tuning Knobs:** the user can manually set each string's tuning.
2. **Capo Placement:** clicking in this area sets the capo to a fret position. Once the capo is set, if a note is played lower than the lowest string capo position, it will not sound.
3. **Tunings Menu:** contains a list of popular guitar tunings to choose from.

4. **Open String Bias Switch:** when set to 'on', any note played that is also an open string will be automatically played as an open string. Holding the open string key switch while playing the same note will now play a fretted note, essentially reversing the default role of the open string key switch.
5. **Dynamic Range Slider:** compresses difference in volume between the quiet and loud notes, pushing the quite notes up. Setting this slider to the highest level gives the most compression.
6. **Slur Sensitivity Slider:** determines the velocity threshold for producing a slur when two notes overlap.
7. **Volume Knob:** sets the overall volume for the guitar.
8. **Width Knob:** sets the stereo width for the guitar.
9. **String Attack Knob:** sets the note attack envelope. Can be used subtly to push the guitar back in a mix, or can be used strongly to create a pad effect.
10. **Fret Noise Knob:** sets the volume level of the fret noises (squeaks, shifts).
11. **Pedal Up Switch:** when active, fret noises are triggered when the sustain pedal is released. This can be turned off and fret noises can be manually played for more specific sound choices.

The FX Tab

This is the FX section where any combination of five different effects can be activated. The user can arrange the order of the FX modules, which execute in order from left to right.

1. **FX Modules:** clicking on a module brings the relevant set of controls into view. The user can also drag and rearrange the modules, that are executed in sequence from left to right.
2. **On/Off Switch:** turns the currently selected FX on or off.
3. **Controls Section:** shows the controls for the currently selected FX module above.

Support and Contact

Please get in touch with any questions or issues regarding the workings of the instrument, through any of my contact details here:

http://GuitaristComposer.co.uk
X (formerly Twitter): @mikegeorgiades
Youtube Handle: @ComposerMG

For any technical issues regarding installation, software issues etc, please contact Spitfire Audio's support department.

Thanks again for purchasing and all the best with your projects!

Mike Georgiades – MG Instruments
Composer, Guitarist & Samplist