

ALM-PG002: 'Motto Akemie'

Operation Manual / Version 1.3.3

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I INTRODUCTION

'Motto Akemie' is a 6 Voice FM drum synth and step sequencer for your DAW.

Each voice is based on our renowned 'Akemie's Taiko' Eurorack module featuring similar controls and playful FM sounds from pure sinusoidal oscillations to mega clonks to chaotic self-feeding enveloped noise.

The built in multitrack step sequencer allows for quick polyrhythmic pattern creation with step modulation of all parameters, randomisation and Pam style scaling across storable pattern banks and presets.

Voices can also be played and controlled via MIDI with support for MTS-ESP microtuning.

I.1 Feature List

- 6 Akemie's Taiko based FM drum voices.
- Dual operator voices with the Taiko controls and wavetables.
- Mute, solo, pan and level controls per voice.
- Per voice step sequencers with variable sequence length and speed.
- Per step modulation sequencers for all voice parameters and per step delay for swung rhythms.
- Track randomize and quick clear controls.
- 16 pattern banks to quickly, copy, save and load patterns.
- Full automation and MIDI control per voice from separate MIDI channels.
- Multi channel DAW output support
- MTS-ESP support for microtuning.
- Intuitive and varied stock presets.
- MIDI drag and drop from the sequencer to .mid file.
- Multi-output mode with mix bus and individual outs.

I.2 Requirements

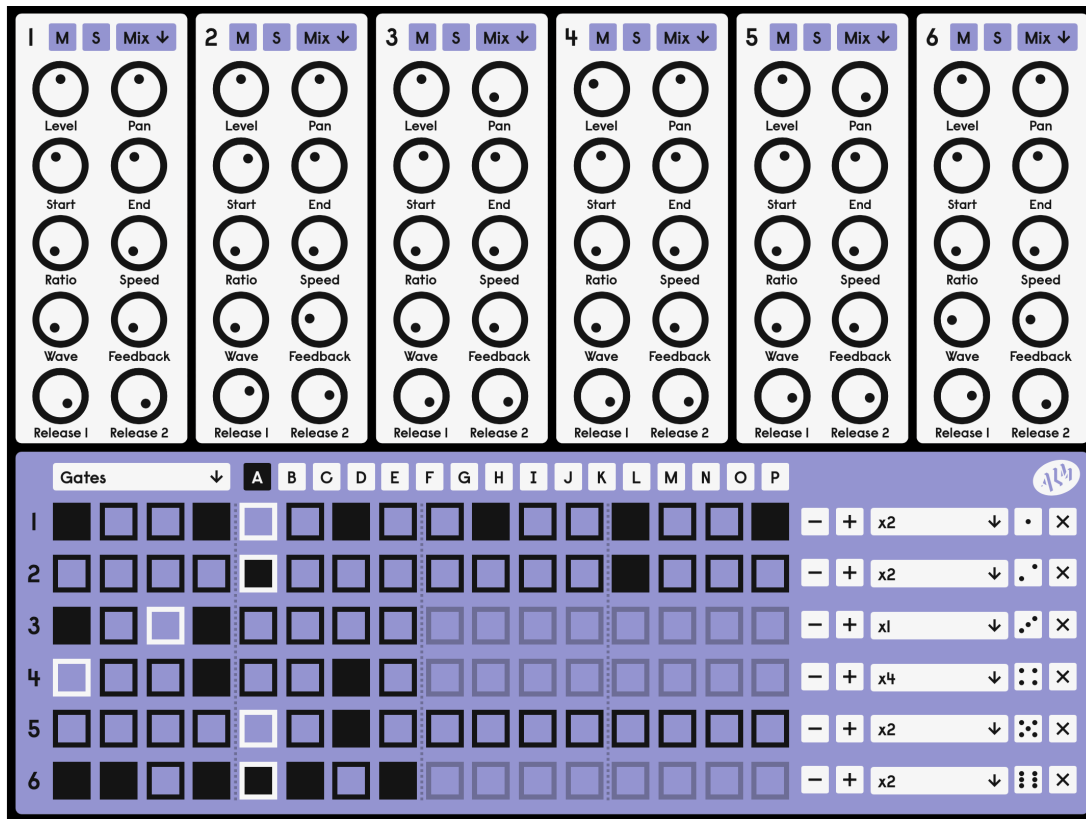
MacOS 11 'Big Sur' or later and a DAW that supports VST3 or Component(AU) format plugins.

Windows 10 or later and a DAW that supports VST3 format plug-ins.

If concerned, try the trial version first!

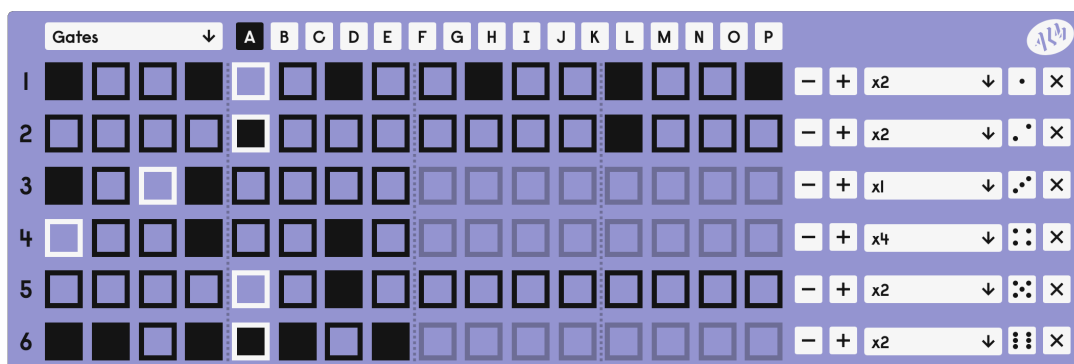
2 CORE OPERATION

2.1 Layout



The plugin is split in half. At the top is the voice section, vertically split further into 6 with all of the controls available for each voice always accessible. The parameters found on the Taiko modules can be found here, as well as Mute and Solo options for each voice.

The bottom half is the sequencer section, arranged in a grid of 6x16 boxes with 'per track' controls and an array of pattern selection buttons. By default the Gates sequencer is selected, triggering each of the voices when steps are input. Each track includes independent length and speed settings, set using the controls at the right. Along with the gate sequences, the sequencer section includes per parameter modulation tracks, selected via the top left drop-down. All sequence pages make up a pattern which can be saved into 1 of 16 banks available from the A-P buttons located at the top of the sequencer section.



2.2 Getting Started

The 'Motto Akemie' is designed for use from within a DAW. To load the plugin, create a new MIDI or software instrument track and add the 'Motto Akemie'. Enter some triggers into the gate sequencer by clicking the rows of buttons and tune up each voice with the parameter knobs. To hear what you've made, start the transport in the DAW and the sequencer section will come to life, moving the active step across as the timeline progresses. By default, the plugin will load with the MA-808 preset loaded, but loading the Blank Slate preset will clear everything. Once cleared each voice will sound the same, a short FM drum strike with fast attack, medium release and solid un-bending pitch. Make use of the stock presets to demo interesting patterns and voice patches. Each voice section or sequencer track can also be fully reset to default or copied to a clipboard and pasted to a different voice by right-clicking the voice's number in either the top-left of the box or the start of the track.

MIDI can also be used to demo voices or sequence them externally. The voices are mapped to MIDI inputs 1-6 respectively, responding to MIDI note on and pitch information. When using external MIDI to trigger a voice, its 'Start Frequency' will match that of the incoming MIDI note. All other parameters act the same as if the voices were triggered by the sequencer.

For previewing voices and generating quick ideas try randomizing trigger patterns and modulation via the per track (dice) buttons to the right of the sequencer section.

2.3 Usage

Start by programming a beat, entering steps to trigger each track from the 'Gates' page. For timing variation, adjust the controls for each track's length and speed. Begin to adjust the upper voice parameters and design sounds for each track. Using the top left sequencer drop down, select a modulation sequencer lane to add variations to the sounds using the per step offsets. Keep in mind that if a parameter step needs to go lower than the setting of the rotary knob, you must lower the knob first then adjust the modulation. Adding offsets under the 'Delay' option will force the step to be delayed, allowing the input of swung grooves or crazy unquantised sequences.

Once a pattern is created it can be copied/pasted across banks by right clicking the A-P bank buttons, making it easy to produce a variety of pattern alternatives and assemble a full track. You can also use DAW automation to switch patterns accross a song in your DAW using the 'Selected Pattern' parameter. This will disable the pattern selection buttons for switching until the parameter automation is disabled.

2.4 Presets

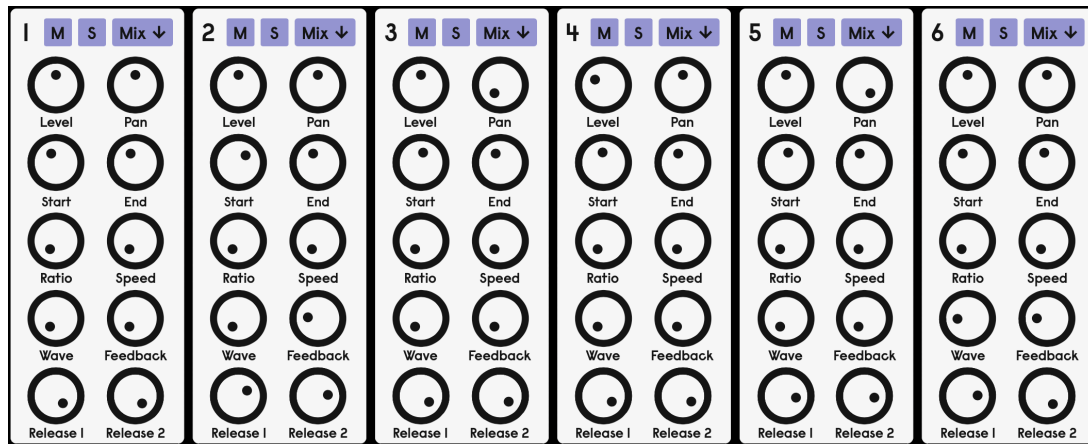
The 'Motto Akemie' comes with a set of various presets. They range across various musical styles and are a good showcase of simple demos for unique use-cases and random jams. To clear the Motto Akemie completely, load the 'Blank Slate' preset.

Most DAWs will recognise the built-in programs and automatically display the selection of presets, but failing that, the installer contains the full set as .aupresets and .vstpresets. If

you're an Ableton user specifically, the presets will not appear automatically. To use the factory presets, create a folder at Music/Ableton/User Library/Presets/ (called Motto Akemie or something similar) and place the vst and/or au presets files here.

3 VOICE PARAMETERS

Each voice has 13 parameters that are fully customisable. Each of these can also be assigned to an automation track in your DAW. It is recommended to use either the parameter automation or the step modulation from the sequencer to modulate the parameters of a track, as it can get pretty confusing otherwise!



3.1 Level

Maximum amplitude of the voice.

3.2 Pan

Stereo panning of the voice. Counter clockwise to pan left, clockwise for right. Defaults to centred.

3.3 Start

Starting frequency of the voice. When 'Speed' is set fully CCW, Start Frequency sets the base pitch of the oscillators. Varies from 20Hz to 3kHz but defaults to 150Hz.

3.4 End

End frequency of the pitch sweep. When 'Speed' is set fully CCW, End Frequency has no effect on the voice. Varies from 20Hz to 3kHz but defaults to 150Hz.

3.5 Ratio

Discrete harmonic ratio between the 2 operators.

3.6 Speed

Rate of change between start and end frequencies. The frequency sweep is retrIGGERED each time the voice is gated.

3.7 Wave

Wave selection from a collection of 8 waveshapes standard to those found on the Akemie's series of modules. This will apply to both operators.

3.8 Feedback

FM feedback of the first operator back to itself.

3.9 Release 1 / Release 2

Release time controls for each operator's release envelope respectively. Maximum release is around 2 seconds. Defaults to about 200ms.

3.10 Algorithm

FM and Mix are the selectable algorithms for each voice.

3.10.1 FM

The standard algorithm. Dual operator FM. Uses operator 1 as the FM modulator for operator 2.

3.10.2 Mix

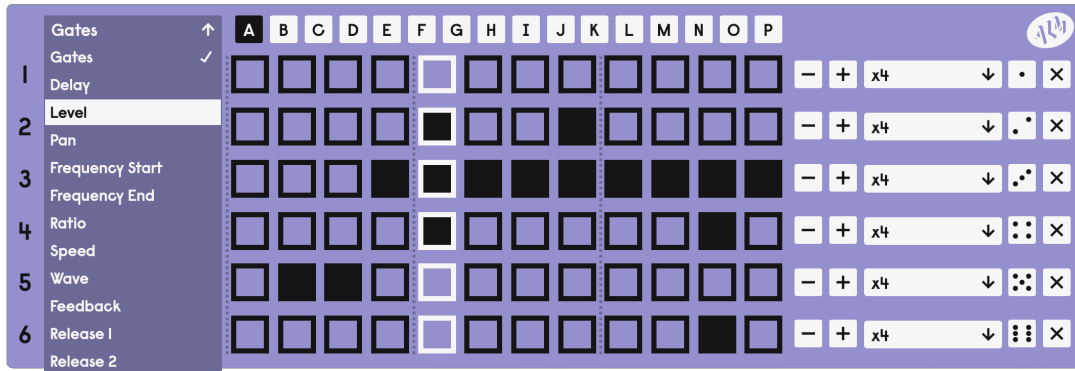
Mixes the outputs of the 2 operators.

3.11 Mute / Solo

Buttons at the top of each voice section for muting and soloing a voice respectively.

4 SEQUENCER SECTION

The length of a sequence can be adjusted per track with the Plus and Minus buttons that range from the minimum value of 1 to the maximum of 16. This always defaults to 8 steps. Likewise, the speed of each track can be changed with respect to the BPM and is adjusted with the dropdown menu. The speeds range from /2 to x12 with even and dotted rhythm divisions in between. By default this will set to x4 (which represents 4 steps every BPM count).



To use the sequencer, choose from either Gate view for the trigger sequencer or any of the voice parameters for the step modulation controls. These views can also be accessed by right-clicking any of the parameter knobs.

The Gate sequencer view is a grid of 6x16 buttons that can sequence triggers per track. The step highlighted in white is the current step; clicking a button will toggle that step on. When the highlighted step lands on a square that is turned on, the associated voice is triggered. When in the Gate sequencer view, the randomize function (dice faces) will add a completely random trigger pattern to the selected track.

The modulation sequencers allow a scaled offset to be applied per step, per parameter. For example, with the view set to Level and the Level control set fully CCW, no sound will play from the voice. By adding offsets with the grid of sliders, each step will begin to play at a different level. The position of the parameter's rotary slider is always the minimum value on a modulation slider. When in step modulation view, the randomize function (dice faces) will randomize the value of each slider in the track.

Similar to the randomize controls, the clear track button (X) will clear the changes made in the current view, per track. For gates, this will clear any inputted triggers and for modulation, this sets the value of each slider to the minimum.

Between the Gate and Parameter options of the sequencer dropdown is 'Delay' (new in v1.1). This allows the input of per step timing offsets to build swung or unquantised rhythms. No offset (the default) means the step will play on its division, but an offset of around a half would trigger the step halfway between the actual division and the next one.

In version 1.2, the Random Skip parameter was also added to this list. A value at the minimum means the trigger will always fire, but a value higher than 0 will cause the trigger to randomly skip. Maximum value corresponds to 100% chance of skipping (it will never play).

16 patterns from A to P can be selected - one at a time. A blank pattern will have no triggers, nor step modulation and will default to x4 speed and 8 step track lengths. These can then all be changed per pattern, per track (and per step where appropriate).

Patterns can also be cleared completely. To clear a pattern, right click the pattern button (e.g. E) and select clear. To quickly build songs and add variations, patterns can be copied to the clipboard and pasted to other patterns from this same menu. When a pattern is pasted, all data from the copied pattern will overwrite anything in the destination pattern slot.

Since version 1.3, the plugin now allows drag-and-drop for the patterns created in the sequencer. By clicking and dragging either the ALM logo in the top right of the sequencer or any of the track numbers (1-6) along the left hand side, the plugin will generate a MIDI file with the current sequencer information, or the selected tracks sequencer information if done via the track numbers. Frequency start (both the voice parameter and the modulation lane) will control the pitch and the Track Speed, Track Length, Gates and Delay modulation settings control the timing. Only one playthrough of each track is exported. Please note; having the voice's speed dial set to non-zero will likely make the MIDI version sound different to the sequenced version as MIDI control transposes the Frequency End parameter. Other modulation data will also be ignored in the MIDI export and should be added via automation in the DAW.

5 SUPPORT

For the latest news, additional info, downloads and updates please visit the ALM website at <http://busycircuits.com> and follow @busycircuits on twitter and instagram.

Questions? Please visit <http://busycircuits.com/support>.

6 APPENDIX

6.1 I. Activation

Motto Akemie features a simple copy-protection system. If you have purchased the plugin reputable, you will receive a redemption key via email. To activate your plugin license, enter the email that the key was received on as well as the key itself into the dialog boxes and press Register.

If you have not yet bought the plugin and only wish to try it FULLY-FEATURED for FREE, you can activate a 7-day free trial by entering a valid email and leaving the key blank before pressing register. This 7-day trial is restricted per machine - not per email.

If your machine is not connected to the internet you will not be able to redeem a trial. You will also be unable to register a valid key with the standard method. To gain access, email help@busycircuits.com with the machine ID displayed in the bottom left of the dialog popup and your email you used to purchase the license. We can then advise further.

6.2 II. Updating

When notified of an update, simply go to <http://assets.busycircuits.com/software/motto-akemie> and install the newest package/installer/files. If the version of your plugin does not update to the version you downloaded, try deleting the plugin files and/or forcing your DAW to rescan the plugin directory before reinstalling.

6.3 III. MTS-ESP support

The Motto Akemie uses the MTS-ESP library to add microtuning support. The library allows for a single master plugin to simultaneously control the tuning of any number of connected client plugins across a DAW session connecting to plugins that offer support automatically and invisibly. For more information on using the MTS-ESP suite or mini plugins for custom tunings, see: <https://oddsound.com/>

6.4 IV. iPad Version

Motto Akemie is also available for the Apple iPad via the Apple App Store.

Its functionality mirrors the desktop version with the addition of an in built preset manager and the limitation that when used as a MIDI voice it can only respond as a single voice currently.

The app is also bundled with an AUv3 plugin that can be loaded into any iPad compatible DAW like Logic, Garageband, AUM or AudioBus and allows the Motto Akemie to be synchronized to a project or MIDI clock.