Chord Sequencer Player

**Operation Manual**

Reason Studios

reasonstudios.com

Chord Sequencer Player

Introduction to Players

A Player is a special type of device that automatically processes, filters and generates MIDI Notes, based on input MIDI Notes, to an Instrument device in the rack. Players can also play back MIDI on their own, without any MIDI input. The Chord Sequencer Player device, described in this manual, can generate chords and chord progressions.

The Player devices can be found in the Players palette below Utilities in the Reason Browser:
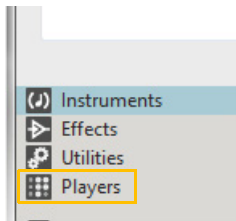
The Players palette in the Browser.

The basic idea behind Players is that you first create an Instrument device (or instrument track), then hook up one or more Player devices to the Instrument device. If the Player device is a sequencer, like the one described in this manual, you can have it play back chords automatically by just clicking Run - or by playing single notes on your MIDI Control Keyboard.

For more general information about Player devices, see the "Working with Players" chapter in the Reason Operation Manual/Help, which can be accessed from the Help menu in Reason.

What's new in Chord Sequencer Player 1.1?

For those of you who are already familiar with Chord Sequencer, here's what's new in version 1.1:

- **47 new chord sets**
  We've added a couple of new categories on the Chord Set menu too: "Folk & Acoustic" and "Latin".

- **28 new patches**

- **Chords can now be copied and pasted between chord pads in different patterns, using the Copy/Paste Chord functions**

- **Clear Chord function for removing the chord from the selected chord pad**

- **You can now view and adjust the velocity offset of chords in the built-in sequencer**
  This offset matches what you get when playing with "MIDI to Velocity" on, with 100 = original velocity. (In the Velocity editing mode, you cannot move or resize notes.)

- **In Edit mode, "Learn" is now a separate function**
  Turning this off allows you to create and edit notes on the keyboard display and audition them using your keyboard or pad controller, without having to leave Edit mode.

- **Chords can now be transposed in Edit mode**

- **Velocity of individual chord notes can be viewed and adjusted in Edit mode**

- **Clicking in the keyboard display in Edit mode will now output the corresponding MIDI note**

- **When you play MIDI notes to trigger chords, the played note is indicated above the keyboard display**

- **When you add chords to the "Empty" chord set, it is now shown as "Custom"**

- **The keyboard display now indicates the actual chords, including changes made by the Remove Bass, Add Root and Octave settings**

- **The Root Note CV output on the rear panel now has an octave switch**

- **Select Chord CV Output added on back. By connecting this to the Select Chord CV Input on another Chord Sequencer, you can synchronize chord changes for multiple devices**

Overview

The Chord Sequencer Player is a chord progression sequencer device designed to provide interesting chords in various styles and genres. Chord Sequencer Player is the perfect device if you find yourself in writer's block and need some inspiration.

You can play back chords manually from the pads or by pressing single keys on your MIDI keyboard. There is also a built-in chord step sequencer which allows you to record and play back your chord progressions to your taste.

The Chord Sequencer Player has the following basic features:

- **Create chord progressions by mixing and matching the built-in chords**
- **Edit and tweak individual chords**
- **Eight Patterns with individual chord sequences and Chord Sets, which can be automated in the main sequencer**
- **CV inputs and outputs to connect to other devices in the Reason rack**
- **Comes with 100+ different Chord Sets with 16 chords each**

Playing and using Chord Sequencer

Loading and saving patches
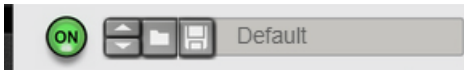
Loading and saving patches is done in the same way as with any other internal Reason device. See the "Sounds and Patches" chapter in the Reason Operation Manual/Help for details.

A Chord Sequencer patch contains all the settings for all eight Pattern slots.

Selecting Patterns

Each of the eight Patterns can contain their individual chord sequence, as well as individual Chord Set.

→ **Click the desired Pattern button to select which pattern you want to play back or work with:**
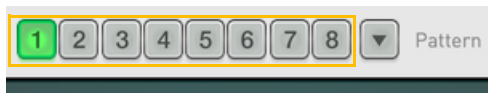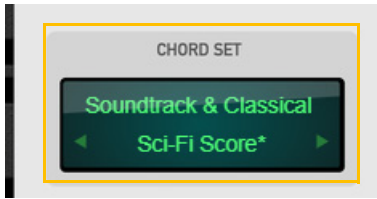

Chord Sets and Pads

Unlike the Scales & Chords Player, where chords are generated programmatically, the Chord Sequencer plays back stored chords, created by different musicians. This means that voicings and styles can vary a lot between Chord Sets. It also means that chords in a set don't necessarily belong to a single scale (or even key).

Selecting a Chord Set

→ **Click the Chord Set display and select genre and Chord Set from the pop-up menu.**

→ **Click the left/right triangle to load the previous/next Chord Set in the selected genre.**
   This fills the 16 chord pads with different chords:

! **Note that you can select different Chord Sets for the eight different Patterns (see "Pattern management").**

Playing back a Chord Set

When you click a chord pad it is played back and the chord notes are shown on the keyboard display. The pad is selected, and all other chord pads light up in different shades of green. This indicates how "suitable" they are as a next chord: bright green means a typical progression, while darker shades mean less obvious choices.

• **The suitability colors were chosen by the creator of the chord set**
  They may not always conform to standard music theory rules - style and genre affect the settings as does the chord voicings and the personal taste of the musician who played the chords.

• **You can of course choose any chord as a next one, regardless of the color hints**
  Listen and experiment!

Playing back a Chord Set from a MIDI keyboard

1. **Activate the MIDI button in the top right corner to be able to trigger the chords from incoming MIDI notes as well.**

**2. Trigger the chords from the following keys on your MIDI keyboard:**
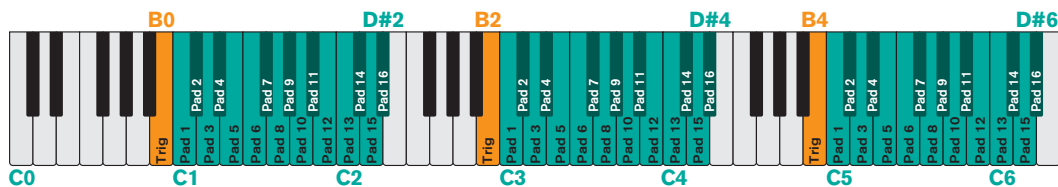
The 16 chords are triggered from C1-D#2 and are then repeated from C3-D#4 and C5-D#6 for convenience.

When you trigger chords from a MIDI keyboard a red indicator above the grey notes in the keyboard display shows which note you are currently playing. The grey keys indicate the C1-D#2/C3-D#4/C5-D#6 ranges:


→ **Play MIDI Note B0/B2/B4 to retrigger the currently selected chord.**
See "Playing back chords rhythmically using the B0/B2/B4 keys" for more details.

→ **If you want to trigger the selected chord only from MIDI Note B0/B2/B4 - and not have the actual chord triggered when you select it with the other MIDI Notes - click the Ext button:**
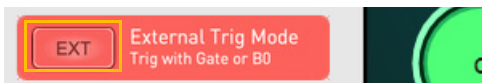
• **Switching off the MIDI button will instead pass on incoming MIDI notes straight to the attached instrument, which is useful when you're running the built-in chord sequencer and want to manually play on top of the chords.**

Transposing Chord Sets
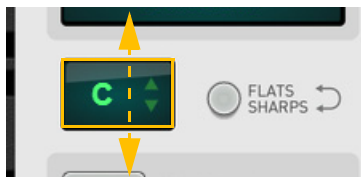
• **Transpose all the chords in a Chord Set by changing the Chord Set Root setting.**
This can be viewed as the "home key" for the Chord Set, and can be major or minor, depending on the Chord Set.

→ **Click the Flats/Sharp button to change whether the chords and roots are shown with flats (b) or sharps (#).**

! **The Flats/Sharp setting only affects the chord names on the pads - not the actual notes in the chord.**

Copying chords

→ **Hold down [Option](Mac) or [Alt](Win) and drag a chord from one pad and drop on another.**
This creates a copy of the chord, which can then be edited if you want to create variations (see "Editing chords").

- **You can also copy chords from one Pattern and paste into another Pattern.**
 See "The Chord Functions" for details.

Editing chords

→ **Click the Edit Chord button to enter Edit mode, where you can change the notes in the currently selected chord.**

→ **Click the desired keys in the keyboard display to add them to the chord (or remove already selected keys from the chord).**
 Trig the chord from the pad and/or from your MIDI keyboard.
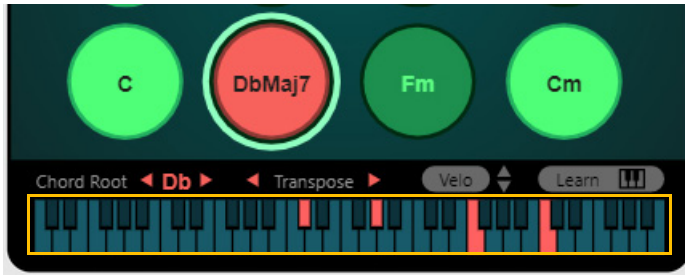
→ **Click the Learn button and play a chord on your MIDI keyboard to replace the existing chord.**
  Velocity is included, but note length and timing don't matter. You can also still activate/deactivate notes by clicking in the keyboard display:
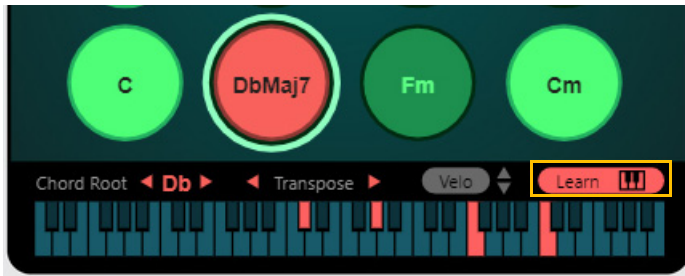

→ **Edit the root note of a chord by dragging the note item up/down - or by clicking the left/right arrows on either side:**
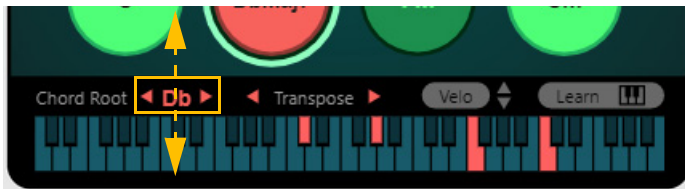

This will not affect how the chord sounds, but rather how the Chord Sequencer Player interprets the chord, for display and suitability. Note that you can have chords where the root note isn't actually played (leaving it to the bass instrument for example).
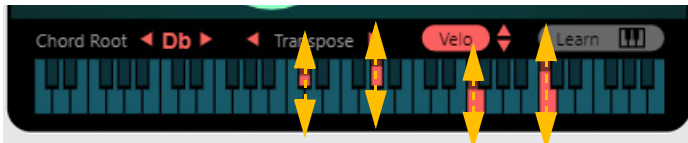
→ **Transpose the chord (in semitone steps) by dragging the Transpose item up/down - or by clicking the left/right arrows on either side:**
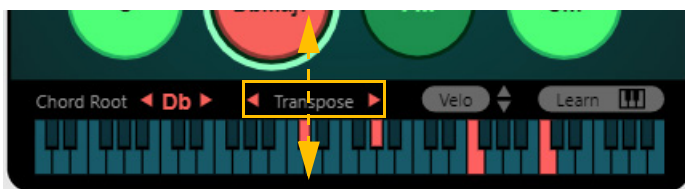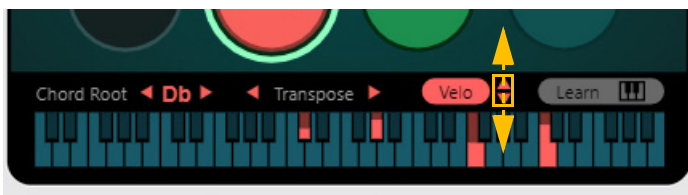
→ **Click the Velo button to be able to edit the individual velocities of the notes in the chord:**
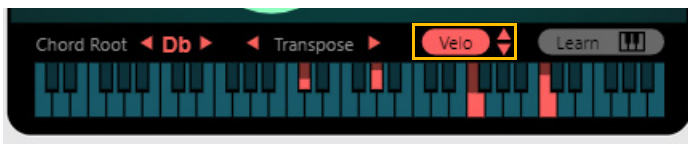

Click/drag each note up/down in the keyboard display to change the Velocity:

Click/drag the Velo arrow buttons up/down to change the Velocity of all notes in the chord:


- **When you have edited a chord, the original "suitability" values (shades of green on the pads) no longer apply.** Instead, the player falls back to general rules based on music theory. This typically means slightly less detailed suitability values that don't take style and chord voicings into account.

- **You can select (click) other pads while in Edit mode, to quickly learn a series of chords on different pads.** To store your edited chords, simply click the Edit button again to exit Edit mode.

- **When you have edited a chord, the name of its Chord Set is shown with an asterisk (*) in the display:**
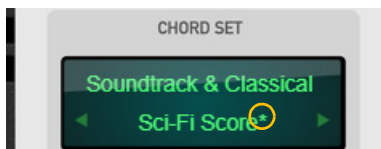
► **If you want to work with your own chords exclusively, you can start by loading the "Empty" Chord Set from the Chord Set pop-up menu and then fill the pads with custom chords in Edit mode.**

The Chord Functions
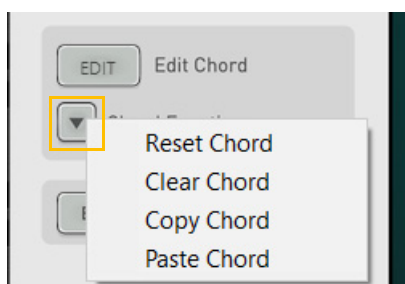
The Chord Functions drop-down menu features the following functions:

- **Reset Chord**
  Select a chord, by clicking its pad or by playing on your MIDI keyboard, and then select "Reset Chord" to clear all manual chord edits and revert to the default chord.

- **Clear Chord**
  Select a chord, by clicking its pad or by playing on your MIDI keyboard, and then select "Clear Chord" to delete all notes in the chord.
- **Copy Chord**
  Select a chord, by clicking its pad or by playing on your MIDI keyboard, and then select "Copy Chord" to copy all chord parameters to the "clipboard".
- **Paste Chord**
  Select a chord, by clicking its pad or by playing on your MIDI keyboard, and then select "Paste Chord" to paste the chord currently in the "clipboard".
- ► Note that you can copy chords from one Pattern and paste into another Pattern. To switch Patten, simply click the desired Pattern button:
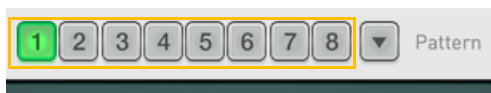
Chord playback settings
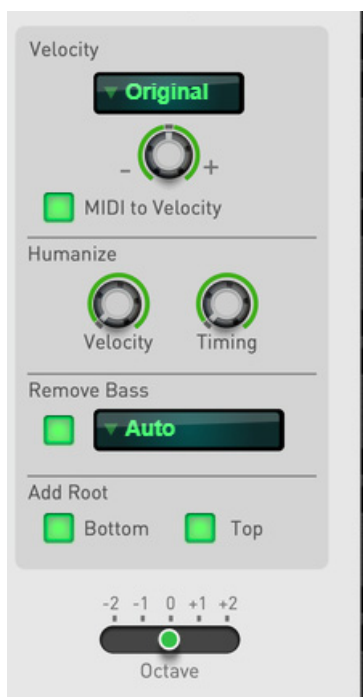
To the right of the chord pads are some settings that affect the chord playback:

Velocity

Velocity can either be Original (as stored in the chords) or Fixed (at a Velocity of 100). In both cases you can adjust it with the bipolar control below, and scale it by MIDI velocity if you trigger the chords with incoming MIDI notes. The Velocity setting affects any individual Velo settings you may have made proportionally (see "Editing chords").

Humanize

The Humanize controls introduce random variations to note velocity and timing, so that chords don't sound static when repeated. The Humanize setting affects any individual Velo settings you may have made proportionally (see "Editing chords").

Remove Bass

Remove Bass can remove the lowest note(s) of a chord, which can be useful if they interfere with the bassline.

- **In "Auto" mode, the lowest note is automatically removed if it's more than 7 semitones below the next note above.**
- **In "Below" mode, you set a threshold note value - all notes below this will be filtered out on playback:**

- ! **Note that this function is also reflected in the keyboard display.**

Add Root

Add Root allows you to add the root note to the top and/or bottom of the chord.

- ! **Note that this function is also reflected in the keyboard display.**

Octave

The Octave transpose setting is for adjusting to the sound of the instrument you're playing.

- ! **This is a global parameter, unlike the other playback settings which are per Pattern (see "Pattern management").**
- ! **Note that this function is also reflected in the keyboard display.**

Chord Progression Sequencer

The built-in sequencer lets you create a chord progression.
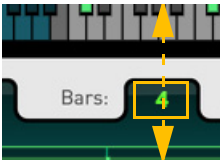
Snap/Length

- → **Click the desired Snap/Length value to set how long each chord should be and what the snap grid should be.**
  Values: 1 Bar, 1/2 bar, 1/4 bar, 1/8 bar or 1/16 bar.
- **The value can be changed at any time.**

Bars

→ **Drag the Bars value up/down to set the total length of the chord sequence.**
The sequence will automatically loop at the set number of Bars.
Range: 1-16 bars.

• **The length can be changed at any time.**
If you make a sequence shorter any previously added/recorded chords will be preserved but won't play back.

View

If you are working with a chord sequence that is longer than 4 bars, there will be additional buttons available in the View section. Each button will then display bars 1-4, 5-8, 9-12 and 13-16, depending on the total length of the sequence.

→ **Click the 1-4/5-8/9-12/13-16 button to bring the desired 4 bars into view on the chord sequencer timeline.**

► **A quick way of lengthening an existing sequence is to drag the "1-4" button to one of the page buttons to the right. This copies the first four bars to the following - then you can edit them as needed afterwards:**

Dragging the 1-4 button to another page button to add a copy of the 1-4 sequence.

Shuffle
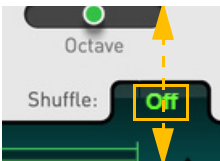
A Shuffle value can be set to introduce a "swing" in the playback.

→ **Click and drag up/down in the Shuffle display to set the desired Shuffle amount.**
Values: Off, 50-75%, Global.

"Global" locks to the Global Shuffle value in the ReGroove Mixer, see the "Global Shuffle" function in the ReGroove chapter in the Operation Manual/Help.

! **Note that the Shuffle effect will be present only on even 1/16th notes.**

► **The eight Patterns can have their own individual Shuffle values.**

Adding chords to the Chord Progression Sequencer

There are two main ways of adding chords to the chord sequencer: by dragging chords from the pads and dropping into the timeline - or by using real-time recording.

→ **To add chords to the sequencer, hold a pad and drag into the timeline:**
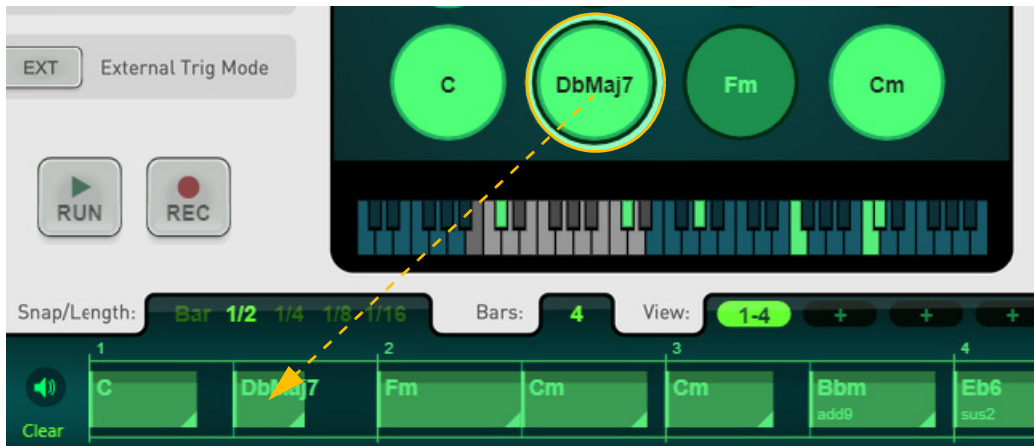
Dragging a chord from a pad and dropping into the sequencer timeline.

→ **You can also double click in the sequencer timeline to add the currently selected chord at the click position.**
The currently selected Snap/Length value determines where in the timeline the chord can be added.

→ **To replace a chord, simply drag another pad into the timeline.**
The drop position determines the result. If you drop a chord on the name of a chord in the timeline, it will be re-placed, retaining the length of the original chord (the chord will show red on mouse-over to indicate this):


If you drop a chord elsewhere on an existing chord, the Snap/Length value will apply - so you can drop a shorter chord in the middle of a long one, cutting it off.

1. **To record chords in real-time, click the Rec button and then the Play button.**
Alternatively, click the Rec button and then start the main sequencer playback - useful if you want a Metronome click or to hear the other song tracks while recording.

2. **Click the pads (or play the corresponding keys C1-D#2/C3-D#4/C5-D#6 on your MIDI keyboard) to add your chords:**
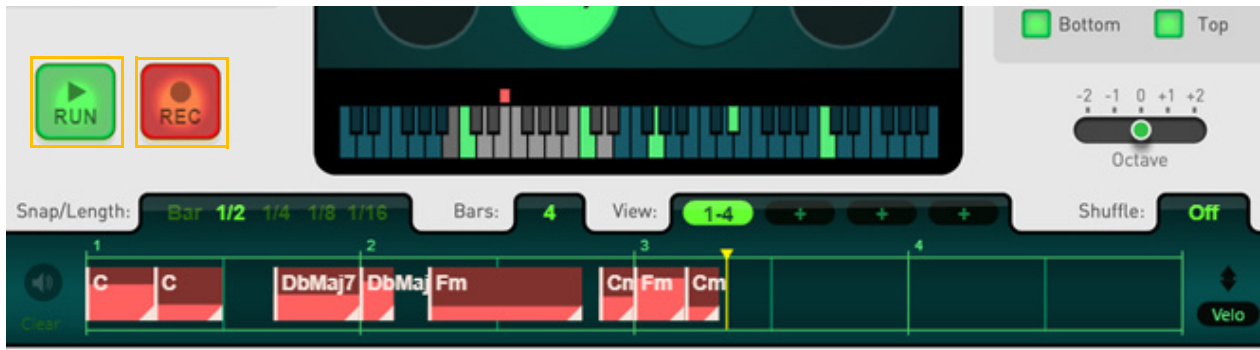
3. **Click the Rec button to disable recording, and click the Run button to stop playback.**
   As you turn off the Rec button the recorded chords in the timeline turn green.

• **When adding chords to the timeline by drag & drop, the Snap/Length setting determines the spacing and initial length of chords. You can then move or resize the chords afterwards if needed (see below).**

• **When recording chords in real-time, the chords will always snap to 1/16th note positions, regardless of the Snap/Length setting. The lengths of the recorded chords are determined by how long you hold the notes. You can then move or resize the chords afterwards if needed (see below).**

• **If you record from a MIDI keyboard, the velocity of each chord is also recorded. You can edit the Velocity afterwards if you like, see "Editing the velocity of the chords".**

• **If the Audition button is on, clicking a chord in the timeline will play the chord and select its pad:**
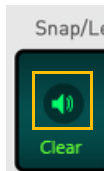

! **Note that the Chord Progression Sequencer stores and plays backs the pads, not the actual notes of the chords. If you load another Chord Set, the chord progression will change accordingly.**

Editing chord positions and lengths in the Chord Progression Sequencer

→ **To change the position of a chord in the sequence, click and drag it sideways.**
   The currently selected Snap/Length value determines where the chord can be positioned:
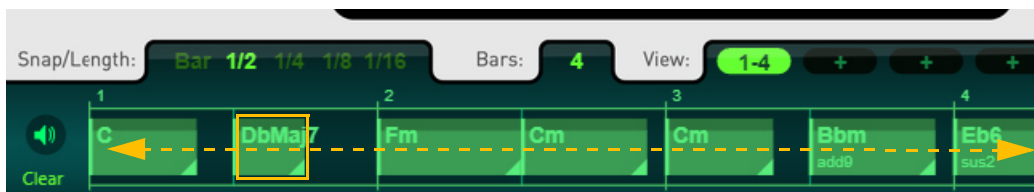
• **The chords can also be dragged to positions where other chords are already located. Then, the dragged chord will simply overlap/replace the other chord.**

• **You can copy chords too, by holding [Option](Mac)/[Alt](Win) and dragging.**
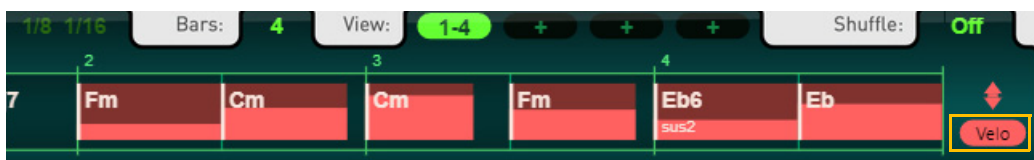
→ **To change the length of a chord in the timeline, click the lower right corner and drag it sideways.**
The length "resolution" is always 1/16th note, regardless of the current Snap/Length value:
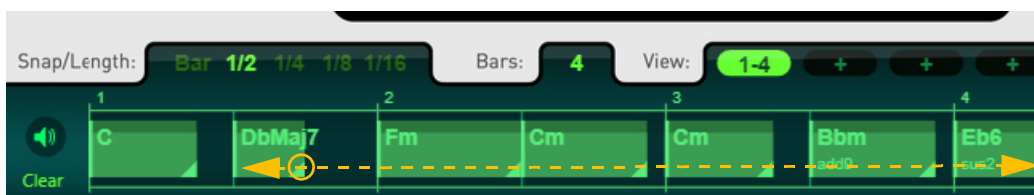
- **The chord lengths can also be extended to resize or replace other chords later in the timeline.**

► Remember that the [Cmd]/[Ctrl]+[Z] (undo) command is your best friend if you should accidentally mess up the chord progressions.

Editing the velocity of the chords

1. **Click the Velo button to enter Velocity Edit mode:**

2. **Click/drag each chord up/down to change the velocity offset of the individual chord - or drag the Velo arrows up/down to change the relative velocities of all chords in the timeline:**

! **Note that changing the velocity of a chord adds to or removes from the original velocity of each note in the chord. Those can still differ. I.e. you're not setting an exact velocity here, only an offset.**

Deleting chords in the Chord Progression Sequencer

→ **To delete a chord from the sequence, drag it outside the display - or double click it:**
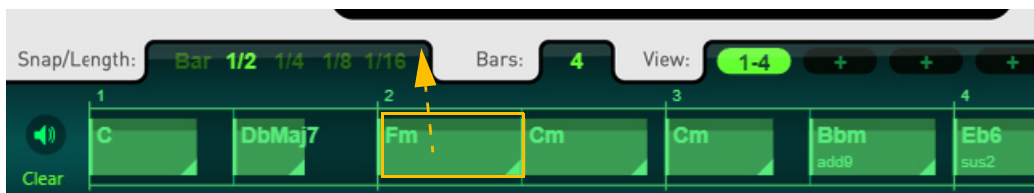
→ **To delete all chords in the sequence, click the Clear button:**

► Remember that the [Cmd]/[Ctrl]+[Z] (undo) command is your best friend if you should accidentally delete the wrong chords.

Pattern management

The Chord Sequencer Player features eight patterns. Each pattern can have separate chord layouts (Chord Sets), sequences and playback settings (except for Octave, which is global for all patterns).

The menu button next to the pattern selectors lets you copy the settings from the selected pattern to another pattern. It also lets you delete the selected pattern:
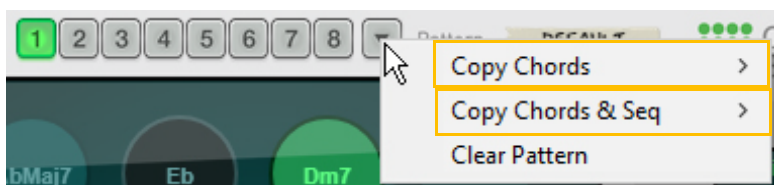
Copying Chords/Chords & Sequence

1. **Click the desired Pattern button to select which pattern to copy:**

2. **Click the arrow button and select "Copy Chords >" or "Copy Chords & Sequence >" and then select the desired destination Pattern slot from the sub-menu.**
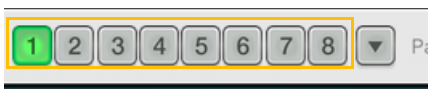   "Copy Chords" copies the Chord Set + playback settings and the "Copy Chords & Sequence" copies the Chord Set, playback settings and chord sequence:
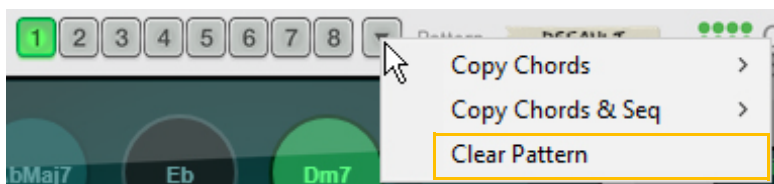

Clearing (deleting) patterns

The Clear Pattern function resets all parameters to their default values.

1. **Click the desired Pattern button to select which pattern to clear:**

2. **Click the arrow button and select "Clear Pattern" to delete the Chord Set, playback settings and chord sequence of the selected pattern:**

Chord Progression Sequencer playback considerations

When you start playback in the main sequencer (Reason or host DAW), the Chord Sequencer Player will run and play in sync with the host.


However, let's say you have an 8 bar chord sequence that should start on bar 3 in the song. Then the procedure is different depending on whether you run Reason standalone or Reason Rack Plugin:

- **In Reason standalone, you would automate the pattern selection and add a pattern clip starting at bar 3.**
  At the start of the clip, the Chord Sequencer will run from its beginning. You can also use the Pattern Offset setting for the clip to get other results.

- **When Reason Rack Plugin is used in a host DAW, there are no pattern clips.**
  Pattern Selection can be automated like any parameter, but then playback will be position synced to the main sequencer (so that, if the pattern is selected on bar 3, the chord sequencer will start playing on its third bar).

  Instead, the best solution would probably be to record the output chords as MIDI notes on a MIDI track in the DAW and then adjust the note positions manually in the DAW sequencer afterwards.

Rear panel connections
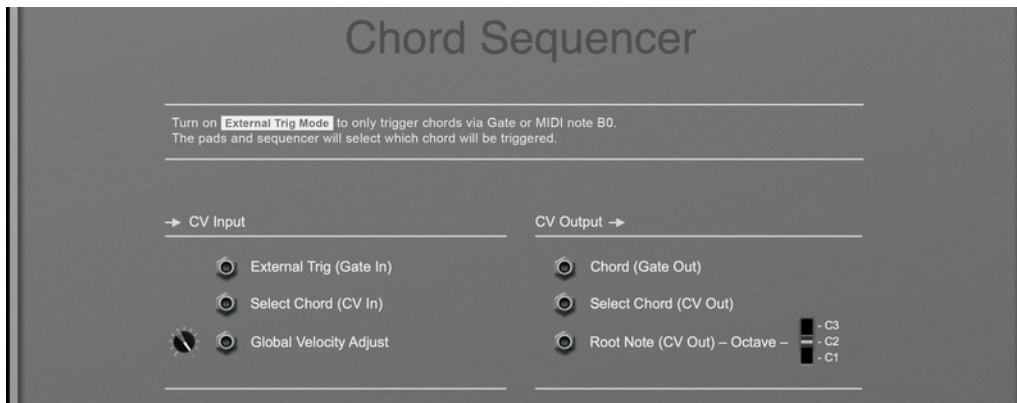
!   **Remember that CV connections are NOT stored in the Chord Sequencer patches! If you want to store CV connections between devices, put them in a Combinator device and save the Combi patch.**

CV Input

External Trig (Gate In)

A Gate input here triggers the currently selected chord - useful for rhythmic effects. This is the same function as playing the B0/B2/B4 MIDI notes (see "Playing back a Chord Set from a MIDI keyboard" and "Playing back chords rhythmically using the B0/B2/B4 keys").

Select Chord (CV In)

A CV input here selects (but doesn't play) a chord. Use together with the Play Selected Chord Gate input above (or play the B0 note on a MIDI keyboard).

Global Velocity Adjust

This raises or lowers the velocity of the chord note based on the incoming CV value.

The incoming signal level can be attenuated with the corresponding attenuation knob.

CV Output

Chord (Gate Out)

This sends out a gate signal each time a chord is played.

Select Chord (CV Out)

By connecting this to the Select Chord CV In on another Chord Chord Sequencer, you can synchronize chord changes for multiple Chord Sequencer devices.

Root Note CV Out

This outputs the root note of the currently selected chord, for connection to other devices (see "Controlling a bass synth from the Root Note CV Out and Chord Gate Out"). Select which octave you want to send to the connected device with the Octave switch.

Tips & Tricks

Playing back chords rhythmically using the B0/B2/B4 keys

1. **Click the EXT (External Trig Mode) button on the front panel:**

2. **Select the desired chord by playing any of the Notes C1-D#2/C3-D#4/C5-D#6 on your MIDI keyboard.**
   The chords will be selected - but not played back - when the EXT button is on.

3. **Trigger the currently selected chord by pressing Note B0/B2/B4 on your MIDI keyboard:**
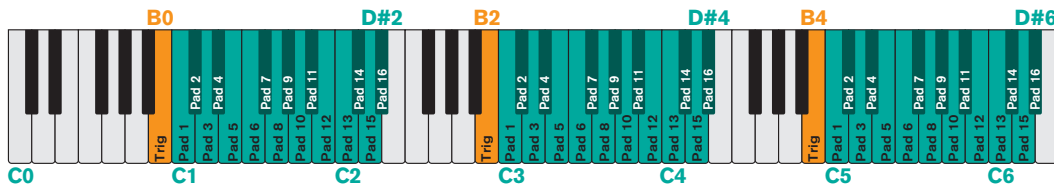
   ► Instead of playing B0/B2/B4 on your MIDI keyboard you could use another Player that plays B0/B2/B4 (adding it above the Chord Sequencer Player in the Player stack) - or connect a Gate signal (from a Matrix, for example) to the "Play Selected Chord (Gate In)" input on the rear panel, see **"External Trig (Gate In)"**.

Controlling a bass synth from the Root Note CV Out and Chord Gate Out

1. **Create a synth device and select a (monophonic) bass patch.**

2. **Flip the rack around and connect the Root Note CV Out and Chord Gate Out of the Chord Sequencer Player to the Sequencer Control Note and Gate inputs of the synth.**
   Now, the bass synth will play the Root Note of the Chord Sequencer Player (in addition to the chord played back on the instrument connected to Chord Sequencer Player). If desired, change the Octave with the Octave switch to the right of the Root Note CV Out jack.
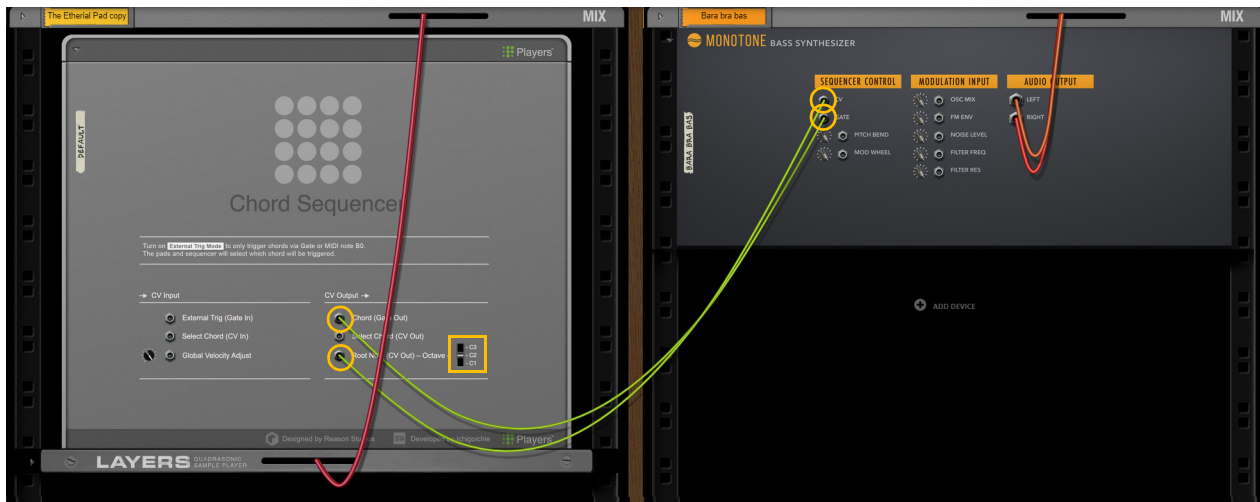
Generating arpeggios based on the Chord Sequencer chords

I very nice and useful Player combination is to attach a Dual Arpeggio Player to the Chord Sequencer Player, to generate arpeggios based on the chords in the Chord Sequencer Player.

1. **Create an Instrument device.**
   In this example we create an ID8.

2. **Select the ID8 device in the rack and double-click a Chord Sequencer Player device.**
   The Chord Sequencer Player device is automatically attached to the ID8.

3. **Select the ID8 device in the rack and double-click a Dual Arpeggio device.**
   The Dual Arpeggio device is attached between the Chord Sequencer Player device and the ID8 device:

4. **Play single notes on your MIDI keyboard (or On-screen Piano Keys) and hear how arpeggios are now generated from the Chord Sequencer Player chords.**