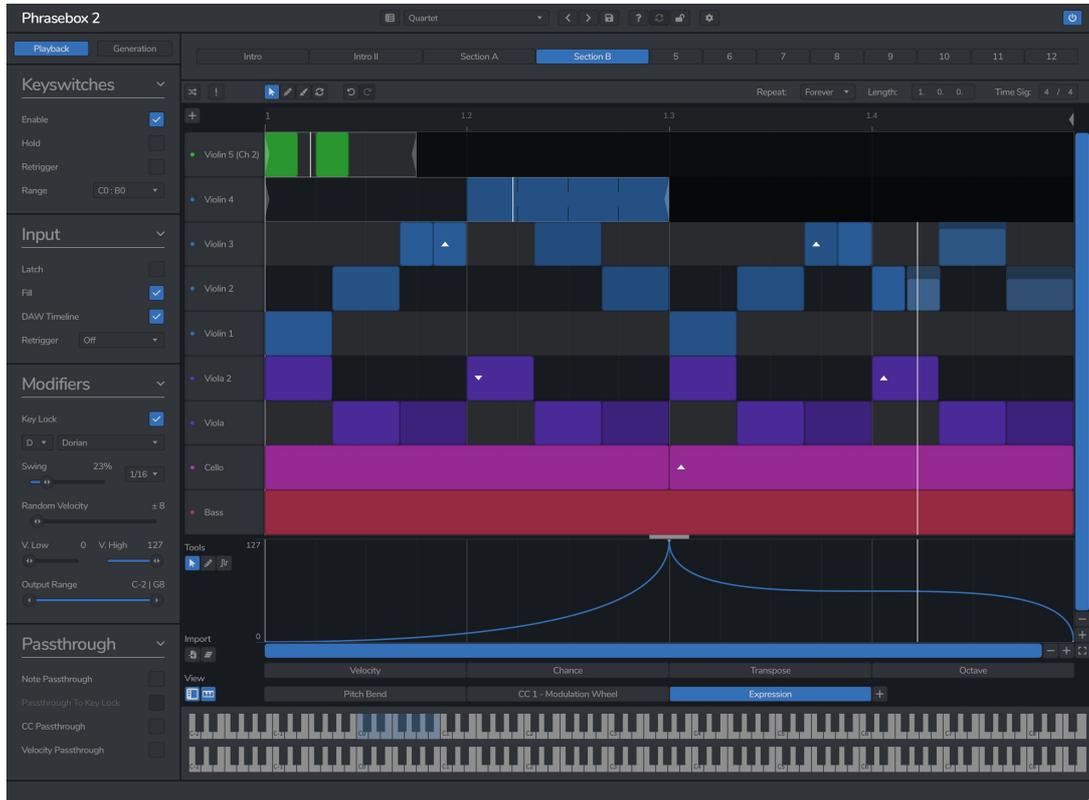


# Phrasebox 2

v2.0.1



Phrasebox is a phrase arpeggiator which lets you map incoming notes onto custom phrases designed on a piano roll.

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## Installing Phrasebox 2

To install Phrasebox 2 on **Mac** or **Windows**, simply run the installer and follow the instructions. Once installed, Phrasebox 2 will be ready to use the next time you open your DAW.

To install the plugin on **Linux**, simply extract the files and run the install.sh script. In your Terminal app, run the following commands:

```
cd ~/Downloads Change to your Downloads folder
mkdir tempinstaller Create a temporary folder to extract to
tar -C tempinstaller -zxvf PLUGIN.tar.gz Extract the bundle
bash tempinstaller/install.sh Run the installer script
rm -R tempinstaller/ Clean up the temp folder
```

Phrasebox 2 requires the following system specifications:

### Windows

- Windows 10+
- 64-bit VST/VST3/AAX Compatible DAW

### Mac OSX

- MacOS 10.13+
- 64-bit VST/VST3/AAX/AU Compatible DAW
- Intel or M1 Processor

### Ubuntu

- Ubuntu 22.04+
- 64-bit VST/VST3 Compatible DAW

## Registering Phrasebox 2

The plugin will run in demo mode until a licence is entered and the software is restarted. In demo mode the plugin will not recall the state from a saved track, it will timeout after 30 minutes, and the saving of presets is unavailable. After you have purchased a licence, you will need to register the plugin, which will unlock the full, unrestricted version of the software. Any tracks you have saved with the demo version will now recall correctly.

Click the padlock icon in the top bar area of the plugin window. A window will display where you can enter your licence from the Venomode website user area. After you have entered your licence, the full version will unlock the next time you open your DAW.

From the Venomode website, you can either copy the licence to your clipboard and paste it in the plugin, or download a keyfile and open in the plugin to register.

# Using Phrasebox 2

## Overview

Phrasebox 2 is a 'Phrase Arpeggiator'. It differs from a regular arpeggiator in that rather than using predefined monophonic patterns on a fixed grid, you can create a complete polyphonic 'phrase' in a piano roll, and the notes you play in will be mapped onto to the rows in the editor.

These mappings are dependent on what is set for each row, but at a basic level, each row in the piano roll would be mapped to an input note.

A very basic example is show in the image below:

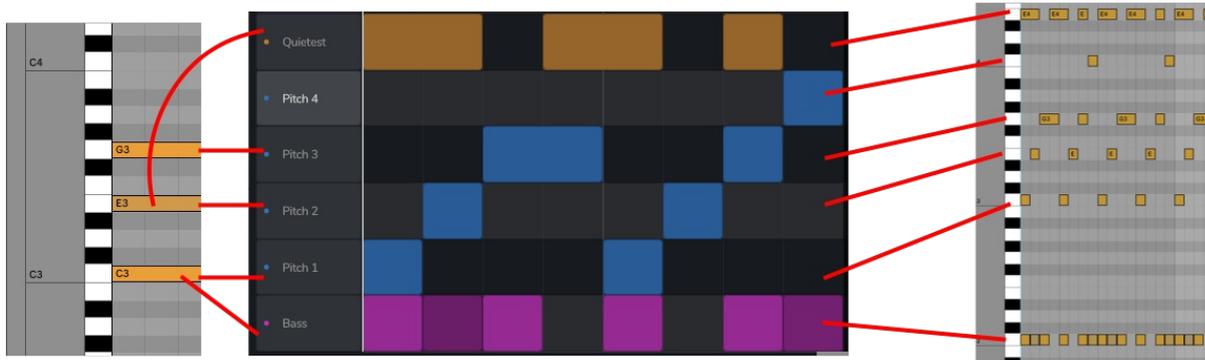


In our DAW, we are playing a very basic chord with the notes C, E and G. These 3 notes are mapped to the first 3 pitch rows in Phrasebox, and when we play back in the DAW, Phrasebox will use these notes to playback the phrase.

You may notice that we have a note in the 'Pitch 4' row in Phrasebox which has been played in the DAW. This is because Phrasebox can also fill in higher notes much like a traditional arpeggiator.

Although we have only used a very basic example using the note's pitch, there are multiple different choices for rows such as using the note with the highest or lowest velocity, the first or last note played, and a fixed pitch. Each row can have modifiers applied, such as octave or transpose shifts, or output on different MIDI channels, letting you create complex multi-channel phrases across the whole note range from just a few input notes.

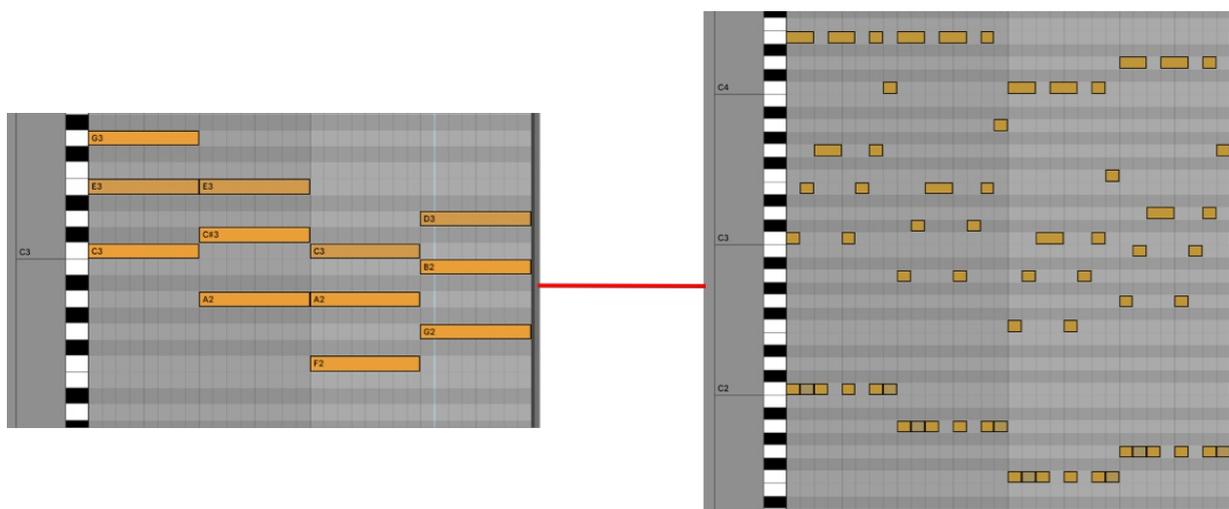
Lets take the following example:



We have added a new row called 'Bass' which takes the lowest note and transposes down an octave, and added another called 'Quietest' and transposed it up an octave. In the DAW we have reduced the velocity of the E note which maps to the new 'quietest' row.

As you can see in the result in the DAW, we have created a more complex pattern without having to create any more input notes.

Phrasebox works in real-time, so you can change the input at any time. In the image below we have used the same phrase but used a complete chord sequence as the input instead of just a single chord:



## Routing

Phrasebox is a MIDI processor, which takes a stream of MIDI notes from your DAW, and creates a stream of MIDI data as an output. As such, you need to route the output of the Phrasebox plugin to the input of your choice of instrument.

MIDI routing is different dependent on the DAW and the plugin format.

## AU Plugin

The AU Phrasebox version is a dedicated MIDI FX. It will not load as an instrument or effect, but as a MIDI FX. In Logic Pro, you can load Phrasebox in a MIDI FX slot above the instrument in the mixer. AU MIDI FX plugins are not supported across many hosts (such as Garageband) and another format or approach will be needed.

### **AAX Plugin**

The AAX version is also a MIDI effect rather than an instrument or effect. To load the AAX version of Phrasebox in Pro Tools, you will need Pro Tools 2024.3 or later as that is the earliest version to support the new MIDI effect format. Simply load Phrasebox in the MIDI Effect slot on an instrument row.

### **VST/VST3 Plugin**

The VST specification doesn't permit pure MIDI plugins and will load as an instrument. As there is no standard, hosts all require different setups to route MIDI from Phrasebox to an instrument.

Some hosts, for example Reaper and Bitwig, allow you to load multiple instruments on the same track. To set up routing in these hosts, simply place Phrasebox before your instrument in the chain.

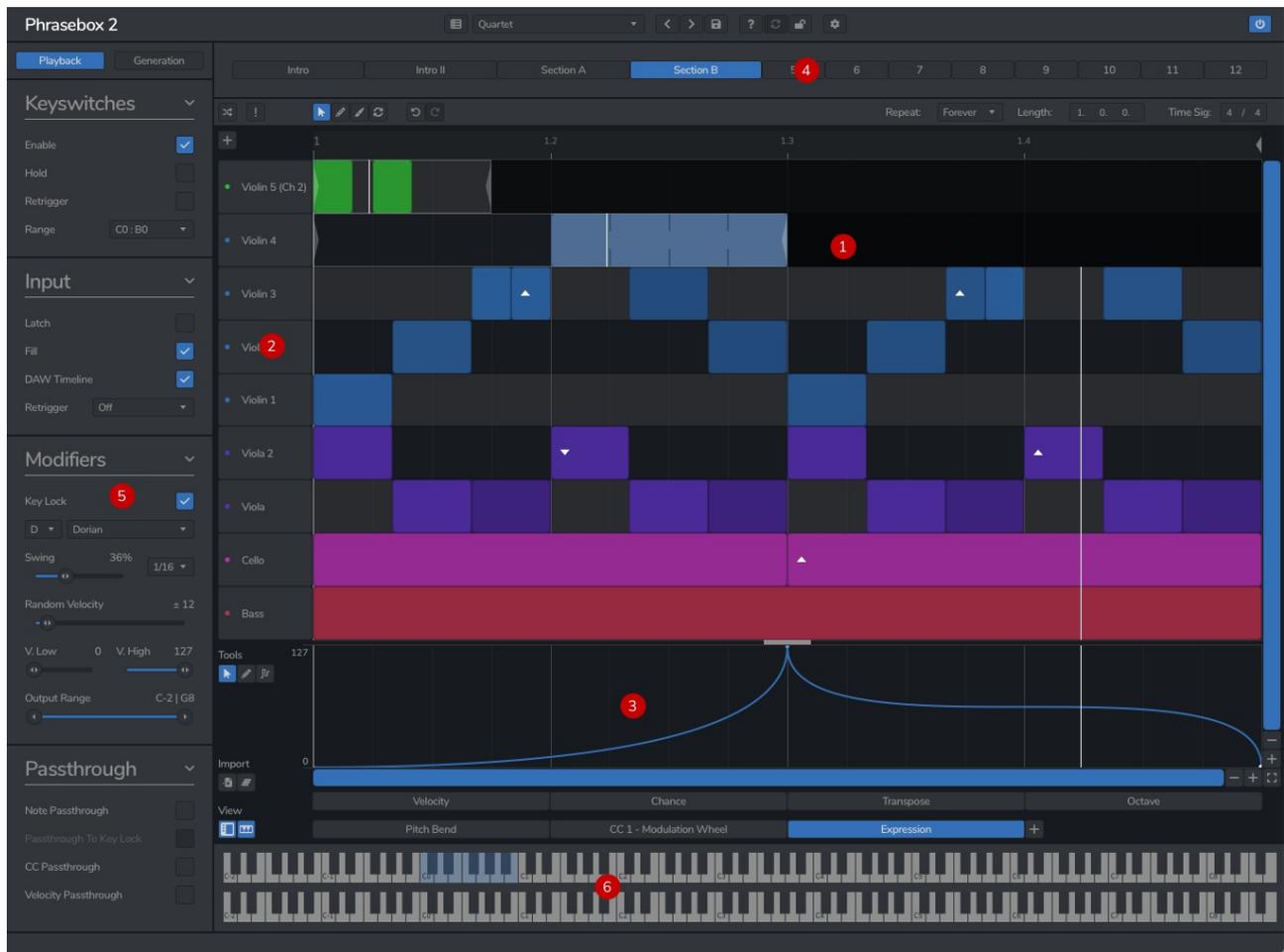
For other DAWs which only allow a single instrument, such as Live and Cubase, a multi-channel approach is required. First load Phrasebox on one channel with your MIDI chords as an input. Then set up a second channel with your instrument setting the MIDI input as the output of the Phrasebox channel. There may be other DAW specific settings to apply, a common one being enabling input monitoring.

Some DAWs such as Reason and Maschine don't allow any internal MIDI routing. In this case, a third party host-within-a-plugin would be required.

You can see up-to-date examples of routing different DAWs in our [FAQs](#).

# Navigating the Plugin

The plugin is split into 6 main sections.

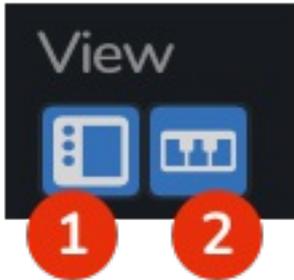


1. **Note Editor** - This is where you do most of the editing in Phrasebox. The note editor works similar to any DAW, letting you create and edit notes.
2. **Row Editor** - The rows are where you define how notes are mapped. Rows can be freely moved up and down, and right-clicking will open the options panel.
3. **Automation Editor** - The lower section lets you edit note data such as velocity, transpositions, and probability. You can also edit controller automation lanes.
4. **Phrase Selector** - Phrases can be selected via the row of buttons at the top. Using keyswitches will also toggle the view.
5. **Sidebar** - The sidebar contains the settings for configuring how Phrasebox will be setup to play, process, and generate MIDI data
6. **Keyboard Preview** - The input, output, and keyswitch range can be viewed on the MIDI keyboard view at the bottom of the screen.

## Window Functions

The plugin window is resizable within a certain range. You can resize the window by dragging the bottom-right corner of the window.

The left sidebar and the lower keyboard preview panels can be hidden using the view buttons in the lower-left corner of the note editor.

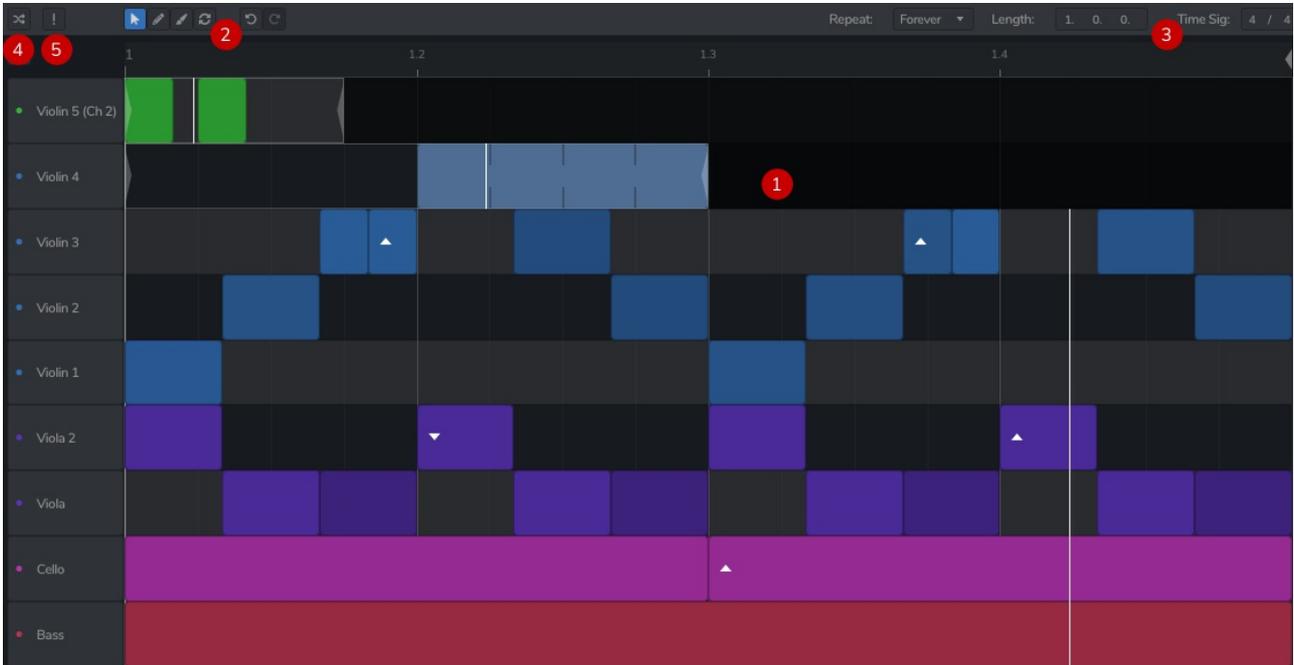


1. **Sidebar Toggle** - show or hide the left sidebar
2. **Keyboard Preview Toggle** - show or hide the keyboard preview

In the setting menu there is also an option the scale the entire GUI.

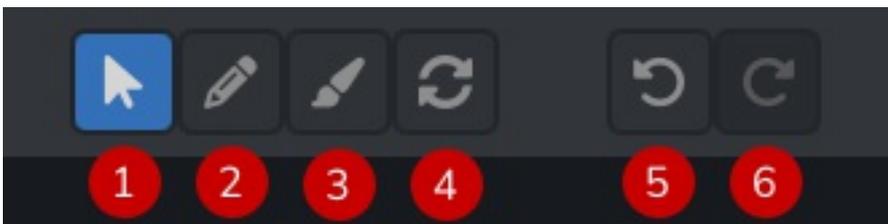
## Note Editor

The note editor is where you control the pattern the arpeggiator is playing. Notes can be freely added, removed, and resized. Depending on the selected tool, the notes can be edited in different ways.



1. **Note Editor** - the main area for editing notes
2. **Tools Buttons** - select different tool modes for the editor
3. **Phrase Settings** - set the phrase's length and loop mode
4. **Generate Button** - generate randomised phrases
5. **MIDI Panic** - kills all notes

## Tools Buttons



- **1 - Cursor** selects and moves notes
- **2 - Draw** draws notes directly into the piano roll
- **3 - Brush** fills in notes based on the grid size
- **4 - Loops** displays the individual row loop regions
- **5 - Undo** undos the last action in the piano roll
- **6 - Redo** redos the last undo action

## Cursor Mode

In 'cursor' mode, clicking and dragging in empty space will create a selection box to select multiple notes. You can double click to create a note based on the current grid size. Clicking notes will select them and holding shift will select multiple notes.

Dragging either side of a note will resize it, and dragging the note will move it. Moving or resizing while holding shift will disable snapping. You can use the arrow keys on your keyboard to move notes around the piano roll grid. Using the delete key on your keyboard will delete any selected notes.

Right clicking on a note will display a menu where you can modify the note, such as setting the repeat value.

### **Draw Mode**

In 'draw' mode, clicking and dragging in empty space will create a note with the length that you drag. It otherwise works in the way cursor mode does.

### **Brush Mode**

When using brush mode, you can quickly fill in notes of the grid by dragging across an empty area. This mode doesn't have any other operations such as selecting or moving.

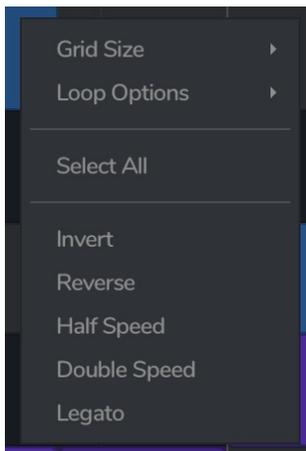
### **Loops Mode**

In loops mode, you can view and edit the loop region for an individual row. You can resize the loop start and end point, and drag it to move it. During playback, when the playhead reaches the loop end region it will loop back to the loop start.

### **Undo and Redo**

Whenever you perform an action in the piano roll, it is saved in the undo history. If you click the 'undo' button the last action will be undone, and if you click 'redo' it will revert the last undo. When you hover over the undo or redo button, the bottom toolbar will display what will be changed.

### **Right Click Menu**



The right click menu in the note editor provides extra settings and functions.

**Grid Size** - sets the grid to a specific value

**Loop Options** - has options to reset the loop region for a row without changing tool

**Select All** - selects all notes

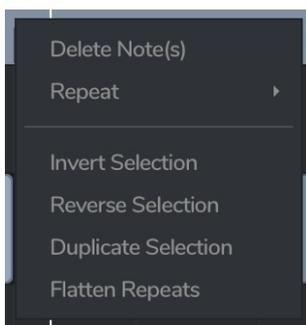
**Invert** - inverts all the notes so higher notes are lower, and lower notes are higher

**Reverse** - reverses all the notes

**Half Speed** - shortens the phrase and all the notes and controller values

**Double Speed** - lengthens the phrase and all the notes and controller values

**Legato** - edits the phrase so that there is always only one note playing at the same time



Right-clicking on a note gives a different set of options, depending on the note and selection.

**Delete Note(s)** - deletes any selected notes

**Repeat** - sets a note to repeat either an even number of times, or based on a grid size

**Invert Selection** - inverts the selection of notes

**Reverse Selection** - reverses the selection of notes

**Duplicate Selection** - duplicates the selected notes after the current selection

**Flatten Repeats** - splits a repeating note into individual notes

## Phrase Settings



The phrase settings area lets you change the length and loop mode of the phrase.

1. **Repeat** - how a phrase handles repeats
2. **Length** - the length of a phrase in bar/beat/quarter values
3. **Time Sig** - the time signature of the phrase

To change the length, you can drag the bar/beat/quarter values up and down. You can select any length of sequence.

The 'Repeat' option defines how a phrase repeats. 'Forever' will continue to loop forever. 'Never' will only play once, as a one-shot. The number values will set how many times it will repeat before stopping.

The time signature affects the way the grid and timeline display the beat and bar counts.

## Note and Controller Editor

The lower half of the piano roll is the area for editing note data such as velocity, transposition and chance. You can also edit any CC (continuous controller) values.

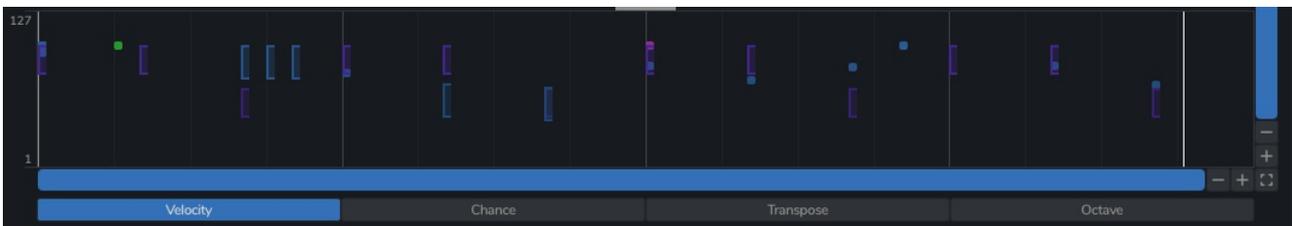


- **1 - Editor** displays the note or controller values
- **2 - Buttons** select what to show in the editor
- **3 - New Controller** creates a new controller
- **4 - Resizer** resizes the editor

### Editor

The editor area will show the values of the mode you have selected. When using velocity, chance, transpose, or octave mode, you will see individual sliders for each note. When a note is selected it will display in a slightly lighter colour.

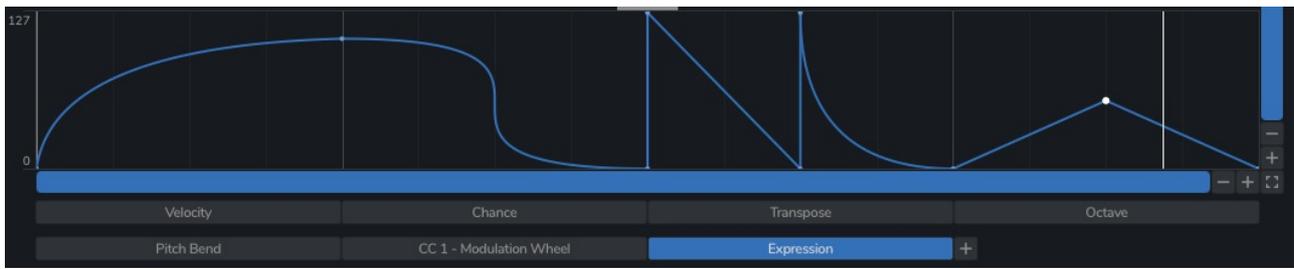
### Range Mode



If you right click in the editor, you can select the 'range mode' option. This will change the sliders from a single value to a range. You can drag the lower and higher parts of this slider to increase or decrease the range.

When Phrasebox plays a note with a range, it will choose a random value within this range. In the example image above, we have used range mode for velocity to create subtle changes during playback. Range mode is available for velocity, transpose, and octave.

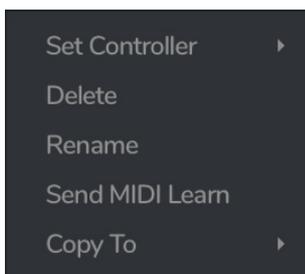
### Controller Editor



When selecting a controller, the view will display the controller editor. Clicking on a curve will create a new point, and it can be dragged around. You can select multiple points by holding the shift key, or by dragging a selection box around any points.

When holding Cmd/Alt when hovering over a curve, you can adjust the segment shape. Dragging up and down will create a smooth curve, and dragging left and right will create an 'S' shape. You can hold the shift key to move without snapping to the grid.

Right clicking on any controller button



Right clicking on a controller button will open a menu with additional options.

**Set Controller** - sets the controller to a different number or channel

**Delete** - deletes this controller

**Rename** - allows a custom name to be displayed in on the button

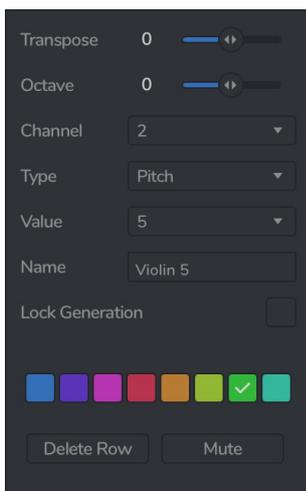
**Send MIDI Learn** - sends out a CC message to trigger MIDI learn in synths

**Copy To** - copies this shape to another controller

## Phrase Rows

Each row in the editor specifies which of the input notes are to be played. The default patch will have the pitch rows 1-8 which relate to the lowest 8 notes that are played, and an 'All' row which plays all the input notes.

If you right click the row a popup will let you edit the row settings, and you can drag rows to reorder them.



The 'Type' dropdown lets you choose different methods of selecting notes:

**All** - plays all the notes as a chord

**Pitch** - selects based on the pitch order

**Velocity** - selects based on the incoming note velocity order

**Timing** - selects based on the order of notes played in

**Fixed** - plays a predefined note which doesn't change based on the input

**Random** - plays a random note from the incoming MIDI

The 'Value' dropdown changes depending on the type you have chosen. This could be the position in the order of pitch, velocity, or timing, or for a fixed note, it will be a specific note.

The 'Channel' dropdown lets you send this row to a different MIDI channel than the default channel 1. This could be useful for multi-timbral phrases, or for controlling individual strings of a guitar instrument for example. **Please Note:** not all DAWs support this feature. Some DAWs such as Ableton Live will merge all data to channel 1.

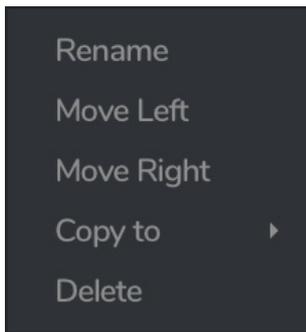
At the top are two sliders for transposing and octave shifting the entire row. You can also give the row a custom name and colour to help organise your phrases.

Selecting 'Lock Generation' will stop this row from being modified when using the generate button.

## Phrase Selectors

The phrase selector buttons let you switch between the 12 phrases that each instance can have.

Right clicking on the phrase's button will open a popup menu with additional options.



The 'Type' dropdown lets you choose different methods of selecting notes:

**Rename** - renames this phrase

**Move Left** - changes the order of this phrase, moving it left

**Move Right** - changes the order of this phrase, moving it right

**Copy to** - copies this phrase into another slot

**Delete** - deletes this phrase clearing out all notes and controllers

# Sidebar

The sidebar has two different views: Playback and Generation.

The playback view shows all the controls that affect how Phrasebox operates, and the generation view shows the controls for generating randomised phrases.

## Playback

The playback sidebar is divided into 4 sections: Keyswitches, Input, Modifiers and Passthrough.

### Keyswitches

Phrasebox 2 uses keyswitches for switching phrases. The range can be changed to any octave and will be displayed on the mini-keyboard at the bottom.

- **Enable** enables or disables keyswitching
- **Hold** will only play the phrase if you are holding the keyswitch down
- **Retrigger** will retrigger the phrase if the keyswitch is pressed again
- **Range** selects the range the keyswitching works on

### Input

The Input section sets up how the incoming notes are handled.

- **Latch** will keep notes held until all notes are released and a new note is played
- **Fill** will create notes above what is played in
- **DAW Timeline** enables syncing only to the DAW timeline. When enabled, Phrasebox's playback is controlled only by the DAW timeline. When disabled, Phrasebox will continue to play when the DAW has stopped.
- **Retrigger** will retrigger the phrase every time a new note is played in
  - **Off** - the input doesn't retrigger the phrase
  - **Note On & Off** - note on and offs will both retrigger the phrase
  - **Note On** - note on messages will retrigger the phrase
  - **Note Off** - note off message will retrigger the phrase
  - **All Notes Off** - the phrase will only retrigger if a note plays when no other notes are playing

### Modifiers

The modifiers section affects notes before being sent back to the DAW.

- **Key Lock** will repitch any notes to match the given key signature selected in the dropdown
- **Swing** will apply a swing to the notes, based on the speed and amount set
- **Random Velocity** applies a small amount of random velocity to notes
- **V. Low & V. High** scales the velocities to within this range. For example you could automate the V. High in your DAW to create a crescendo
- **Output Range** limits the output range to the values set in the sliders. Any notes that would be outside of the range are not passed to the DAW

## Passthrough

The passthrough section sets how various data is passed through Phrasebox.

- **Note Passthrough** will pass through any incoming notes unmodified.
- **Passthrough To Key Lock** will pass through any incoming notes via the Key Lock
- **CC Passthrough** will pass through any controller messages from the DAW. When disabled, only Phrasebox controllers will be sent to the DAW
- **Velocity Passthrough** will set Phrasebox to use the incoming note velocities rather than the ones set in Phrasebox

# Generation Sidebar

The Generation sidebar sets up the parameters for generation phrases.

It is split into 4 sections: Notes, Modifiers, Controllers, and Regeneration

## Notes

The Notes section sets how notes are regenerated.

There are 4 different generation modes:

- **Random** generates notes randomly
- **Response** splits the phrase into two. Both phrases play the same rhythm with different notes
- **Invert** splits the phrase into two. The second half is an inverted version of the first
- **Reverse** splits the phrase into two. The second half is an reversed version of the first

There are 3 different polyphony modes:

- **Mono** generates only monophonic patterns
- **Poly** generates polyphonic patterns
- **Chords** generated chords rather than single notes

The sliders set how the notes are generated

- **Chord Density** sets how many notes are in a chord in 'Chords' mode
- **Note Density** sets how many notes will be generated
- **Note Length** sets the general length of generated notes
- **Length Variation** sets how far away from the general length a note may be

## Modifiers

The modifiers section sets the note's additional data

- **Velocity** sets a range for the note's velocities to be generated in
- **Chance** sets a range for the chance values
- **Transpose and Octave** sets the range for transpose and octave values, and the change slider sets how likely a transpose will be

## Controllers

Each controller has its own generation setting.

- **Enable Button** will enable generation for this CC
- **Range** sets a range the controller curve will stay in
- **Density** sets how many points the curve will have

## Regeneration

The regeneration panel has options for generating certain parameters of the phrase.

- **Phrase** will regenerate the entire phrase
- **Notes** will regenerate the notes, keeping any controllers
- **Velocity** regenerates note velocities
- **Chance** regenerates note chances
- **Transpose** regenerates note transpose values
- **Octave** regenerates note octave values
- **Controllers** regenerates the controller curves

## Keyboard Preview

The lower section of the note editor displays a keyboard preview with the notes which have been played in, the notes which Phrasebox is playing, and the range of keyswitches.

The keyboard preview can be hidden or shown by clicking the keyboard icon in the view section just above the left edge of the keyboard.



1. The upper keyboard displays the MIDI at the input stage. Any notes which are being played will be coloured a dark blue. This keyboard can be clicked to trigger keyswitches or a single input note.
2. The light shaded notes in the upper keyboard display the current phrase keyswitch range.
3. The lower keyboard displays MIDI at the output stage. The notes will play in realtime to show what Phrasebox is generating.

## Import / Export

In the lower left area area of the main editor are the import and export options. These buttons can be clicked to open a file browser to select a file, or alternatively you can drag and drop a file onto the button. Drag and drop support is determined by the DAW and does not work in all cases.

1. Version 1 Preset Loader
2. Pattern Importer

### Version 1 Preset Loader

Presets from version 1 of Phrasebox are not directly compatible with version 2 and must be imported.

Clicking the button will open the default user folder for version 1 presets, however you can navigate to any folder where your version 1 presets are stored.

When a preset is selected, Phrasebox 2 will load the preset into the editor.

Right clicking lets you bulk import an entire folder.

## **Pattern Importer**

The pattern importer lets you import a MIDI file and load the notes into the current phrase's note editor. The importer works by extracting all notes, and mapping them to a pitch index. For example, if your MIDI file uses the notes C3, E3, and G3, those notes will be mapped to rows 1, 2, and 3.

## Top Bar

The top bar is where you can manage the plugin. The middle section shows the currently selected preset, and if you open this list you can choose from all the factory and user presets. Clicking on the left and right arrow icons manually cycles to the previous or next preset. The save icon will open a window where you can save the current state of the plugin as a custom preset. Enter your preset name in this window and click save.

You can view this manual at any time by clicking the question mark button.

The padlock icon will open the registration window. Enter your licence code exactly as shown in your Venomode user area and click "Register". You can simply click the licence in your Venomode account to copy it to your clipboard. See the registering Phrasebox 2 section for more info.

The cog icon will open a settings window where you can alter the GPU acceleration settings, GUI scale and theme. The update icon is two arrows in a circle. This button will activate when a new version is available for download.

The top right icon with a power button symbol will enable or disable the plugin.

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