

## ARTURIA STORM 1.5 - FUORI PRODUZIONE



**59,00 € tax included**

Reference: ARSTORM15

ARTURIA STORM 1.5 - FUORI PRODUZIONE

Version 1.5 of Storm is a major upgrade of Arturia's flagship all-in-one studio software. It now comes in Mac and PC flavors, supports ASIO and VST on both platforms, and sports several new high-end sound modules. Arturia Storm is optimized for creating one-measure, 16th-note loops and combining them into Songs with full parameter automation. It makes the process extremely fast and comes packed with a huge supply of preset patterns. If it were my job to name this product, I might call it Jiffy Loop. Click here to access files referenced in this article. Arturia Storm Studio consists of a software Rack of instruments and effects together with a multitrack Song Sequencer. Storm's 11 instruments fall into three categories: drum boxes (5), synthesizers (4), and sample loopers (2). Also, a sampler module records and plays AIFF, WAV, and MP3 files of any length that available RAM can accommodate. Arturia Storm's ten effects include the usual suspects as well as several creative alternatives. The Studio Rack holds four instruments and three effects at a time, which limits each song to that number of modules. However, songs can be recorded and bounced into the EZtrack sampler module for more complex compositions. Arturia Storm installs from a cross-platform CD-ROM and requires run-time Java, which is supplied for the Mac and PC. (All audio processing is programmed in assembly language for optimal performance.) MIDI is handled on the PC by DirectX and on the Mac by Open Music System, the latest versions of which are also provided. Arturia Storm requires challenge-and-response authorization and automatically takes care of that the first time you launch it if your computer is online. Otherwise, Arturia Storm generates a printout that you can mail, fax, or e-mail to Arturia for the response code. (Storm runs 20 times without authorization.) I had no problems with automatic online authorization. Software that attempts to run several synthesizer and sampler modules at once generally requires a fast CPU, and Arturia Storm is no exception. A full Storm Rack pushed my Mac G3/300 MHz (the minimum recommended configuration) beyond the 80 percent CPU limit on several occasions. However, on my Pentium III/700 MHz laptop, Storm's CPU meter stayed comfortably within the 25 to 35 percent range. For VST operation, you also must consider the host's CPU load. Storm requires a VST host that supports multiple audio outputs. (currently only Steinberg's Cubase does so.) I tested Storm 1.5 for this review, but version 1.51, which contains several enhancements and bug fixes, should be out by press time.

### BUILDING A STUDIO

The first job during any Storm session is to build a Studio by selecting the instruments and effects that you want in the Rack. (Alternately, you can load a Studio from disk.) Fig. 1 shows Storm's Studio Builder screen with a fully configured Studio. To add modules to the Rack, simply drag them from the Instruments and Effects menus at the sides of the Rack. To delete them, drag them back from the Rack to the menu. When you drag a module to the Rack, it is placed in the slot to which it is dragged, moving other modules down as needed. Arturia Storm Studios don't require any cabling, because instruments are assigned mixer channels according to their position in the Rack, and each instrument has bus sends to each of the Studio's effects. Each effect also has bus sends to the other effects. (Storm 1.51 will feature back-panel cabling for routing instruments to separate audio channels on systems in which the sound-card drivers and host environment support that.) Once you're acquainted with Storm's instruments and effects, you can build a Studio in a matter of nanoseconds. After you configure your Studio, click on the Start button, which takes you to Storm's colorful Composer window (see Fig. 2). Storm takes a few moments to compile the Studio and then starts playing your song. What song? Most instruments have a built-in Pattern Sequencer filled with preset patterns. If you haven't yet recorded anything in the Song Sequencer, Storm simply starts looping the first pattern for each instrument. I'll look more closely at the Song Sequencer in a moment, but one of its main uses is to let you program pattern changes for each of the instruments' Pattern Sequencers. Arturia Storm's Pattern Sequencers operate slightly differently for different kinds of

instruments, but with a few exceptions, the patterns are always one measure of 16th notes. (A built-in global Shuffle setting frees you from the constraint of straight 16th notes.) Each of Storm's five drum boxes has eight drum sounds, and their Pattern Sequencers generate Velocity-sensitive triggers for those sounds. For the synthesizers, the Pattern Sequencers generate MIDI notes and, in some cases, MIDI Control Change (CC) data. The H3O sample looper has four four-bar sample tracks, and a pattern for it is an arrangement of samples on those tracks. Scratch has no Pattern Sequencer; it simply loops the samples assigned to each of its two turntables. In addition to MIDI Notes, triggered drum sounds, and looped samples, a Storm Song consists of sound-parameter changes (such as control-panel knob and slider changes), mix automation, and global chord changes. Again, those are recorded in different ways for different types of instruments. For the drum boxes, the sound-parameter changes are recorded in real time as part of the Pattern Sequence. All control changes are therefore one-measure loops. The Pattern Sequencers are always in Record mode. Everything else (instrument and effects parameters, mix automation, pattern selection, tempo, time signature, and key signature) is recorded in the Song Sequencer. Arturia Storm's control-panel knobs and sliders can be assigned to MIDI CC messages. Right-clicking (Control-clicking on a Macintosh) on the control opens a window in which you can select the MIDI CC number and MIDI Channel with the mouse. Any MIDI CC message received while the window is open makes the assignments automatically. The keyboards of Storm's synthesizers can be assigned to incoming MIDI Note messages in the same way. (MIDI triggering for the drum boxes will be added in Storm 1.51.) Once assigned, automation can be recorded using MIDI or the mouse. Arturia Storm's Song Sequencer has five tracks — one for each of the four instruments in the Rack and a fifth Mix track for recording everything else. The tracks are arranged in four-measure blocks across the top of the Composer window. The Song Sequencer has two recording modes: Real Time and Static. In Static mode, you select a group of measures, and any change you make to any control (for the relevant track) becomes the setting for the whole selection. You can delete all the data in a selection of measures, but you cannot delete just the data for an individual parameter, thereby regaining manual control of that parameter. (That is a tremendous inconvenience that I hope will be remedied in a future update.) Once you've composed a Song, you naturally want to record it, and Storm's built-in audio recorder allows you to do just that. (When Storm is operated as a VST plug-in, the recorder is not necessary.) Recording can be started and stopped manually or set up automatically for a specific range of measures. Audio is recorded in Storm's compressed-audio Cassette format. Cassette files can be exported in AIFF, WAV, and MP3 formats. Even though Cassette recordings are compressed, they can make Storm Studio files large and slow to load. Generally, it was more convenient to export them to my hard drive in one of the other formats and then delete the Cassette files from the Studio. The three MP3 files accompanying this article on the EM Web site were exported directly from Storm with no need for any other encoding software. (Very nice!) **THE SOUND OF THE STORM**