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### **THE CHEVIN SOUNDS PREMIUM SAMPLED GUITAR COLLECTION**

Thank you for purchasing this collection of high quality sampled guitars. These multi-sampled instruments go way beyond the thousands of free sampled sounds (mostly soundfonts) available on the internet, most of which are not good enough for serious music production. You also have the satisfaction of knowing that you have purchased a complete set of professional-quality sounds for substantially less than the price of a single instrument from one of the big name studios!

In SF2 format, these guitars will import into the vast majority of modern software samplers. However, they are now also available in Sampletank and Gigasampler format. I use these sampled guitars to create realistic backing tracks from MIDI files - I use Band-in-a-Box, Jammer and Keyfax sequences to create the MIDI tracks and then patch the sounds using software samplers. However, you can also play the guitars live using a MIDI keyboard (or even a MIDI guitar!) if your sampler supports this option.

Most free soundfonts compromise in terms of the number of samples and use sample looping in order to remain small enough to import into Soundblaster. However, the guitar presents particular problems because each string sounds different and the tone also changes as you go up the fretboard. This means that stretching notes more than a tone or so does not create an authentic sound. Also, the note decays slowly over time - something which cannot be reproduced convincingly using looped samples.

These multi-sampled guitars have been produced to professional standards with the above in mind. The guitars were sampled at the rate of 8 notes per octave (in most cases) across the entire instrument range, recorded with full decay at 48kHz/24bit. The samples were then converted to 32bit for editing. There are 3 velocity layers to produce a more dynamic sound. Also, very importantly, the guitars were sampled completely dry with little or no processing of the sound. This means that you can add whatever sound-shaping and effects you choose to suit your music project. To produce the final presets, the samples were professionally “dithered” down to standard CD quality (44.1kHz/16bit). This makes a substantial saving on computer resources in use and makes little or no perceptible difference to the sound quality. However, I would still

recommend that you render your guitar tracks to audio at 24 or 32 bit if you intend to do any further audio processing.

Please note that the electric and bass guitars will require the addition of an amp simulation or other tone shaping to be at their best, whilst the acoustic instruments may benefit from the use of plugins which simulate valve warmth. I personally use IKMultimedia Amplitube and TRacks for this purpose, but there are other equally good plugins available. You will find links to download some excellent free plugins on my website ([www.chevinsounds.com](http://www.chevinsounds.com)). The free SimulAnalog guitar suite of plugins works outstandingly well for electric guitar. You will also need some decent stereo effects (reverb, chorus, delay etc.) and a compressor, but most sequencers come with these as standard nowadays.

If you have purchased the Sampletank version of the collection, you will quickly come to realise that the sampler's excellent on-board effects perfectly complement the guitars. The "Preamp" and "Speaker" effects have come straight out of the Amplitube plugin and will bring out the best in the electric guitars. The tube-emulated "Tone" effect works especially well with the acoustic guitars, but can also be used with the bass guitars (with or without speaker simulation).

## **THE INSTRUMENTS**

### **Aria Pro II Electric Guitar**

Aria may not have a famous name, but the Aria Pro II is a high quality, solid hardwood bodied, electric guitar with excellent sustain. Made in the mid-1980's, this model was a favourite of Andy Summers (ex. The Police). It is a very versatile guitar because it is possible to switch its pickups between single coil and humbucker, meaning that it can produce both clear, bright tones reminiscent of a Fender and the more "meaty" sound of a Gibson. The guitar was recorded by DI to preserve the unprocessed sound. This ensures that the presets play correctly through proprietary amp/speaker simulations.

There are 6 presets, making full use of the pickup switching:

**Aria Pro II A (96MB)** - single coil, neck pickup.

**Aria Pro II B (92MB)** - single coil neck and bridge pickups.

**Aria Pro II C (82MB)** – single coil bridge pickup.

**Aria Pro II D (97MB)** - humbucker neck pickup.

**Aria Pro II E (88MB)** - humbucker neck and bridge pickups.

**Aria Pro II F (88MB)** - humbucker bridge pickup.

### **Dean Classical Guitar**

This is a high quality cutaway classical guitar with a solid cedar top. The sound is very balanced and well suited to both classical and Latin style music. There is just one preset, recorded using a stereo XY coincidental pair of Rode microphones. This captures the true acoustic tone of the instrument and also ensures mono compatibility. The preset is:

**Dean Classical Nylon Guitar (91.5MB)** – stereo miked with no processing.

### **Johnson JD-26 Dreadnought**

This is a reproduction of a 1930's Martin D18 dreadnought acoustic. Made from high quality solid tonewoods and employing the traditional fully scalloped forward-X bracing system, this guitar really does deliver the vintage Martin tone, much sought after by Bluegrass and Country

musicians, but just as useful in Folk, Pop and Rock. The bass registers are full and rich but these are perfectly balanced by a detailed top-end – a superb guitar! I sampled the guitar in stereo, using a coincidental XY pair of Rode microphones, reproducing the full and detailed acoustic tone but maintaining mono compatibility. The preset is:

**Johnson Dreadnought (122MB)** – stereo miked with no processing.

### Tanglewood TW170-AS Acoustic Guitar

This excellent and very versatile all-solid tonewood acoustic guitar is my personal favourite and goes everywhere with me! It has a slightly smaller body than a dreadnought (equivalent to a Martin 000) and as such has a more controlled bass response than the Johnson. Nevertheless, the tone is superb and perfectly balanced – well defined lows, warm mids and sparkling trebles. These attributes make this the ideal acoustic guitar for studio work, equally at home for strumming or picking. This is probably the acoustic guitar to use if you really need something to cut through the mix. Again, I recorded this guitar with a stereo pair of Rode microphones. The preset is:

**Tanglewood Acoustic Guitar (112MB)** – stereo miked with no processing.

### Lag “Winter” Dreadnought Acoustic (Free Bonus Preset!)

This is another favourite guitar of mine. It is a high quality cutaway dreadnought made in China to a French design. This guitar has a slightly “darker” tone than the Johnson and Tanglewood with a bit of “attitude”. It is probably at its best when used in Rock style music for picking or strumming. Again recorded with stereo microphones.

**Lag Acoustic (98MB)** – stereo miked with no processing.

### Yamaha FGX-413SC Acoustic Guitar (Free Bonus Preset!)

This is a dreadnought cutaway electro-acoustic guitar with a piezo pickup under the saddle. However, to ensure a true acoustic sound, sampling was all done using a stereo XY coincidental pair of Rode microphones. The sound is well balanced but with less warmth in the bass than the Johnson Dreadnought. The preset is:

**Yamaha Acoustic Guitar (123MB)** – stereo miked with no processing.

### Yamaha 12 String Acoustic

I cheated with this one - I don't even own a 12 string! This soundfont was put together by blending the appropriate samples from the Yamaha 6 string acoustic guitar, using a little offset and pitch shift. I hope you agree that the result is remarkably realistic! Once again, this is a mono compatible stereo preset. The soundfont is:

**Yamaha 12 String Acoustic (83MB)**

### Vintage 5 String Fingered Bass

This is an excellent solid-bodied bass guitar, modelled on a Musicman Stingray. The double coil pickup delivers a big tone, perfect for Rock and Pop music. The instrument was sampled by DI with no added processing and will therefore require the addition of either an amp simulation or other tone-shaping plugin to work correctly. I find that both Amplitube and TRacks work well with this preset. Tone control for this bass guitar is passive and takes the form of simple filters to remove the treble. Therefore, the preset was recorded with full treble response. It is an easy matter to emulate other tone settings by applying a low pass filter immediately after your

sampler/player (although some samplers have one built in.! The preset uses a fingered playing style - the most common method of playing the bass in contemporary music:

**Vintage 5 String Fingered Bass (133MB)** - no processing, leaving the full frequency range and more attack.

### Harley Benton Acoustic Bass

This is a monster of an acoustic bass with a tone to match. I recorded it using a stereo coincidental XY pair of Rode microphones which results in a huge, expansive and detailed sound. This bass is close enough in sound to an upright bass to be used in the same situations. However, it also has a bit of extra edge, so it's worth trying it in Rock and Pop as well. If you find the stereo sound overpowering in the mix, simply render to audio in mono.

The preset is:

**Harley Benton Acoustic Bass (121MB)** – stereo miked with no processing.

## USING THE GUITARS

The 14 presets (including the free bonus guitars) are in the form of Winrar self-extracting archives. I recommend copying them to a new sub-folder within the folder where you store your sampled instruments. Double-click on each file in turn to extract it to full size – follow the on-screen instructions. If you have downloaded the files, I also recommend making a back-up of the archived files on a CD – just in case!!

If you already own a compatible sampler/player, I will presume you know how to patch the sampler to a MIDI track and import the guitars. If you do not own a sampler and have purchased presets in the soundfont (SF2) format, you can use the excellent free Sfz player (I have provided links to this at my website [www.chevinsounds.com](http://www.chevinsounds.com) ). This is a high quality and stable VST sample player. Its main drawback is the lack of ADSR (attack, decay, sustain, release) adjustments. However, the retail version of the player, the Sfz+, does have adjustable ADSR and retails at just \$60, available for immediate download from Cakewalk's website ([www.cakewalk.com](http://www.cakewalk.com)). Patch the player in accordance with your sequencer's requirements and import one of the guitars by clicking on the instrument window and browsing for the sound you want.

Play the guitar and add an amp/speaker simulation, EQ, compression, reverb and delay effects to create the sound you want. Adjust these to suit your mix. Please note that most amp simulations require you to adjust the output from the sampler to an appropriate level for them to work optimally. In fact, using a compressor plugin prior to the amp simulation can normally achieve this if you adjust the compressor's output – this also has the benefit of levelling out the signal somewhat. Indeed, some compression will generally benefit all of these sampled guitars and basses, although it is easy to overdo it! If using the free Sfz player, which has no amplifier, you may need to patch into the chain an additional plugin effect which can amplify the sound without colouring it - I use the TRacks EQ plugin or compressor as an amplifier.

Depending on the style of playing on the MIDI track, you may also need to adjust the release setting for the soundfont to get best results - this is best done by ear. In general, strumming works better with shorter release times, whilst arpeggio and picking styles will work better with

a longer release. The basses seem to work best with a very short release time and should not require adjustment.

All of the acoustic guitar presets use stereo samples, as this approach delivers better detail than a mono recording – it is particularly useful in situations where the guitar is the main instrument in the mix. However, there may be instances where a mono guitar track will be more appropriate to your mix. In this case simply render your guitar to audio in mono, as the samples are fully mono compatible.

Using a powerful computer with plenty of memory, as well as a reasonable sampler/player, you should find it possible to play quite a number of these soundfonts at once, together with other instruments. Also, if your sampler allows layering of different sounds on a single MIDI track, you can blend 2 soundfonts together and even pan the sounds - this can create some interesting effects. Alternatively, you can clone your MIDI track and patch a different soundfont to each.

Finally, I would stress again that the electric and bass guitars do require an amp simulation or tone shaping to work correctly.

### MIDI CONSIDERATIONS

The authenticity of the sound created with these soundfonts is entirely dependent on the quality of the MIDI information used to play the sounds.

With certain samplers, you have the option to play soundfonts via a MIDI keyboard. You can then use the pitch wheel to bend notes (although it takes some practice to get this right!). This is the only way to create realistic guitar solos with pitch bending, unless you have a MIDI guitar.

Both MIDI keyboards and note sequencing by mouse can create fairly realistic picked guitar sounds (eg. arpeggios). However, it is almost impossible to create convincing strummed sounds using a keyboard. In fact, only MIDI sequences recorded on a MIDI guitar can properly recreate strumming. The Keyfax collections are probably the best for this ([www.keyfax.com](http://www.keyfax.com)). However, Band-in-a-Box ([www.pgmusic.com](http://www.pgmusic.com)) and Jammer Pro ([www.soundtrek.com](http://www.soundtrek.com)) also include MIDI guitar sequences produced in the same way and can create some very authentic sounds. All of my demo songs were created using combinations of these three products.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Please check out the links on my website ([www.chevinsounds.com](http://www.chevinsounds.com)) to source some excellent free sounds and VST plugin effects. The plugins include 2 excellent FREE guitar amp simulation suites plus the “Classic” series of effects (EQ, compressor, reverb, chorus etc.).

If you have any comments, suggestions or requests, please feel free to contact me by email at:

[paul.chevin@virgin.net](mailto:paul.chevin@virgin.net)

I hope to develop additional multi-sampled sounds in the future and may be able to respond to special requests. Therefore, I hope you will visit my website periodically to check for these.

I hope you enjoy the guitars!