

THE PLAY 6 SYSTEM

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



EASTWEST SOUNDS



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Welcome to Play 6

Play 6 is an advanced sample engine that works with an associated collection of virtual instruments, called Play Libraries.

An Advanced Sample Engine

Play is designed around 3 main views: the Player view displays a custom user interface and set of controls tailored to each Play Library, the Browser view enables instrument search via a traditional Libraries Browser, or a Database Browser, and the Mixer view features a channel strip with an FX Rack for each loaded instrument, and a sub-mixer for instruments with multiple microphone positions.

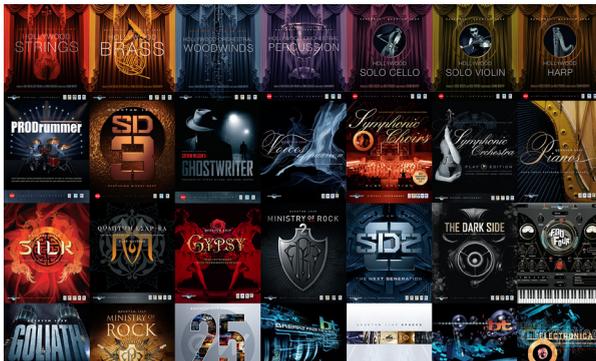


New Features

- Instrument Database (free to ComposerCloud subscribers, paid upgrade all other users)
- Unified Navigation Bar for Main Menu, Settings, Browser, Mixer and Player buttons
- Collapsible Instrument Sidebar with access to advanced instrument properties
- integration for Native Instruments Complete Kontrol and Maschine software
- new and improved convolution engine for better performance with reverb and amp fx

An Award-Winning Virtual Instrument Collection

Play Libraries are the winner of over 70 industry awards, making EastWest's vast virtual instrument collection the industry leader of highly detailed sampled instruments. Each



Play Library has a custom user interface with a set of controls designed to accommodate the unique needs of that library. Altogether, they make up a expansive library of sampled instruments that range from orchestral to rock to ethnic to electronic and beyond.

How To Navigate the User Interface

The Navigation Bar located at the top of the user interface makes it easy to get around to the different areas of Play 6. The different areas include (from left to right) the Main Menu and Settings Menu, the Browser, Mixer and Player views, an Instrument Selector that displays the currently selected instrument, and an Instruments Sidebar panel where advanced instrument properties can be changed.



The Player View

When an instrument is loaded into Play, the Player view will display the custom user interface of the Play Library associated with that instrument. The instrument name will appear in the main field of the Instrument Selector (highlighted in green).



When multiple instruments are loaded, clicking in the Instrument Selector will reveal a drop-down menu showing all loaded instruments and their MIDI channel assignments.

Click on an instrument to make it the current selection, and notice the Player view will change to the appropriate user interface based on that instrument.

When first launching Play, the Player view will display a Default Interface. This can be changed in the Settings Menu under the Other tab in the Misc section. Click in the drop-down menu and select a Play Library from the list. Next, click 'Apply', then quit and relaunch Play for the changes to take affect.



The Virtual Keyboard

The virtual keyboard in Play is color coded to identify how the samples of an instrument are mapped. White keys are the sampled range of an instrument, Tan keys indicate no samples are loaded, and Blue keys are key-switches that trigger different articulations within an instrument (abbreviated "KS" in the instrument name).



The Browser View

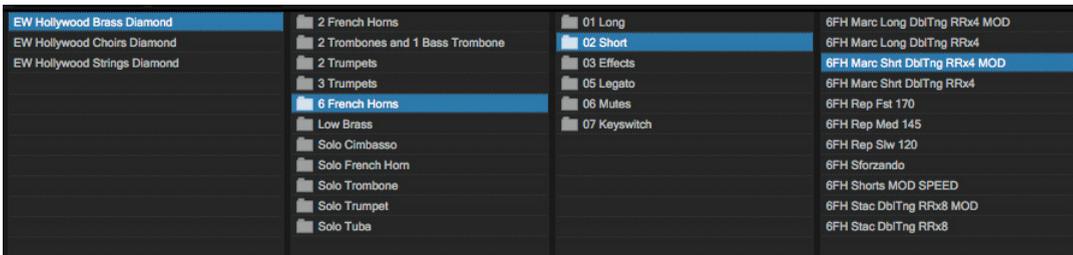
The Browser view has 2 modes: a traditional Libraries browser, familiar to existing Play users, and a new Database browser (free to ComposerCloud subscribers, paid upgrade for all others).

The Libraries Browser

The Libraries browser allows you to search for instruments within each Play Library.



The left column displays all installed Play Libraries, the two middle columns display the sub-folders within the main library folder, and the right column displays instruments within the selected folder.



TROUBLESHOOTING! How to Add or Reset a Play Library in the Browser view

If a Play Library does not appear in the Browser view where all Play Libraries populate, right-click in an empty space in the left column of the Libraries browser and choose 'Add Another Product Library' from the pop-up window. Selecting a Play Library from the menu will bring up a search window. Locate the Instruments folder for that Play Library, then highlight it and click 'okay' to set the library path.



If a Play Library has been moved from its original location, it will appear grayed out in the Libraries browser. Click on the library name in the left column and use the search window to find the Instruments folder of that Play Library. Highlight it and click 'okay' to set the library path.

Selecting a MIDI Channel Assignment Mode

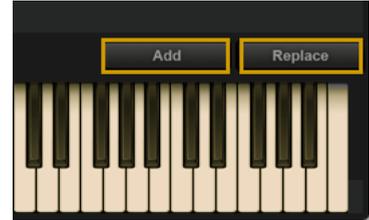
Instruments are automatically assigned to MIDI channels in one of two ways: Omni mode assigns an instrument to receive MIDI on all channels, while Automatic Increment assigns each new instrument to the subsequent MIDI channel (1, 2, 3, etc). This option is found in the Settings Menu under the Other tab in the MIDI Channel Assignment section.



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How To Load Instrument(s)

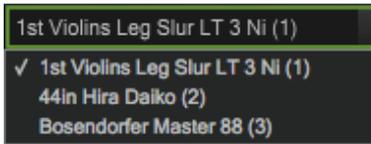
To load an instrument, select the instrument name in the right column, then click either the 'Add' button or the 'Replace' button. The 'Add' button, or double-clicking while holding [shift + control], will add the instrument to the existing loaded instruments. The 'Replace' button, or simply double-clicking, will replace the currently selected instrument with the new one.



If more than 1 instrument is loaded when you click the 'Replace' button, a prompt will give you the option to replace the current selected instrument, or replace all loaded instruments.

How To Load and Switch Between Multiple Instruments

The Instrument Selector field displays the current instrument selection (highlighted in green), which when clicked on will reveal a drop-down menu showing all loaded instruments and their MIDI channel assignments. A check-mark indicates the current selection. Clicking on an instrument will make it the current selection, and the Player view will change accordingly.



How to Create a User Favorites Location

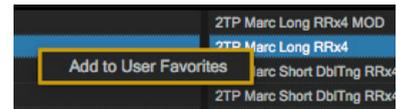
To create a new location to store all your favorite instruments, right-click in the left column of the Libraries browser and select 'Add New Favorites Folder' from the menu.



Enter a name for the folder ("User Favorites" in the example) and click 'okay' to create it.



To add an instrument to this location, right-click on an instrument name in the right column and choose the option 'Add to [folder name]'.



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The Database Browser

The [Database](#) browser allows you to search for instruments by selecting attribute tags from a variety of categories, as well as query search words directly in the [Search Field](#).

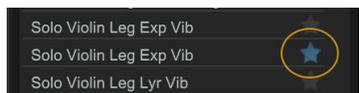


By default, the left column contains the main [Category](#), and the 3 middle columns contain [Type](#), [Style](#) and [Timbre](#).



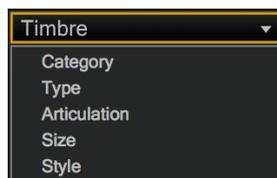
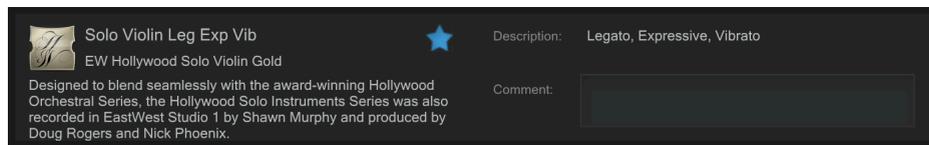
The right column contains a [Results List](#) that populates with instruments that match the selected criteria. At the top of that column is an [Instrument Count](#) that provides the number of resulting instruments.

At the bottom of the column are a set of [Filters](#) that allow you to further narrow the current selection of instruments to only show those tagged as Favorites, or Installed and/or Licensed to your computer.



To tag an instrument as a [Favorite](#), click on the star icon to the right of the instrument name in the results list. The star icon will light up to indicate it has been tagged.

The [Instrument Panel](#) is located in the lower center area, and contains information for the instrument selected in the results list. This information includes the instrument name, the Play Library or Collection it's from, a blurb about the library, a description of the instrument and comments box for user notes.



To access additional attribute categories including [Articulation](#), [Library](#) and [Size](#), click on a category name to reveal a drop-down menu, then click on the desired attribute category. A checkmark indicates the current selection.

The Database Hierarchy

The Category column has the highest level of hierarchy in the database. It contains broad attribute tags such as instrument groups like ‘Ethnic Strings’ and special categories like ‘Loops & Kits’. Selecting a tag in this column will affect all other columns, narrowing down the visible results in each.

The Type column has the second highest level of hierarchy in the database. It contains attribute tags that are a subset of Category, including instrument types like ‘Dulcimer’ and special category types like ‘Drum Loops’. Selecting a tag in this column will affect all other columns (except Category) by graying out the visible results in each. This behavior allows you to always see the narrowed results in all other columns based on the main Category selection, even as you further define the search in the Type category.

Category	Type	Style
Any	Any	Any
Bass	Bass Drum	Acoustic
Drums	Big Drums	African
Ethnic Strings	Drum Ensemble	Ambient
Ethnic Winds	Drum Kits	American
Guitar	Drum Loops	Breakbeat
Keyboards	Field Drum	Chinese
Loops and Kits	Performance	Dance
Orchestral Brass	Small Drums	Downtempo
Orchestral Strings	Snare Drum	Electronic
Orchestral Woodwinds	Timpani	Ethnic
Percussion	Toms	European
Synth and FX	ZenDrum	Experimental
Vocals		Far East

The remaining categories represent the third tier of hierarchy in the database. Style tags pertain to musical style (genre) and production style (w/ FX), Timbre tags describe the quality or tone of a sound, Articulation tags define the performance technique(s) used, and Size tags are related to the loading size of an instrument: small, medium, large and x-large. Libraries tags can be used in conjunction with other search categories to find “all the basses in Fab Four”, for example. This differs from the search function of the Libraries area, where instruments are located by searching the folders of of Play Libraries.

Tag Selection Rules

The Category and Type categories enable 1 tag to be selected at a given time, while all other categories enable multiple tag selections by holding down ‘command’ (Mac) or ‘alt’ (Win) keys while selecting tags.

When selecting multiple tags in the Style, Timbre, Articulation, Library and Size categories, please note that only instruments containing all selected attributes will appear in the results list, not just one or the other. This allows you to find, for example, drums that are both fat and punchy.

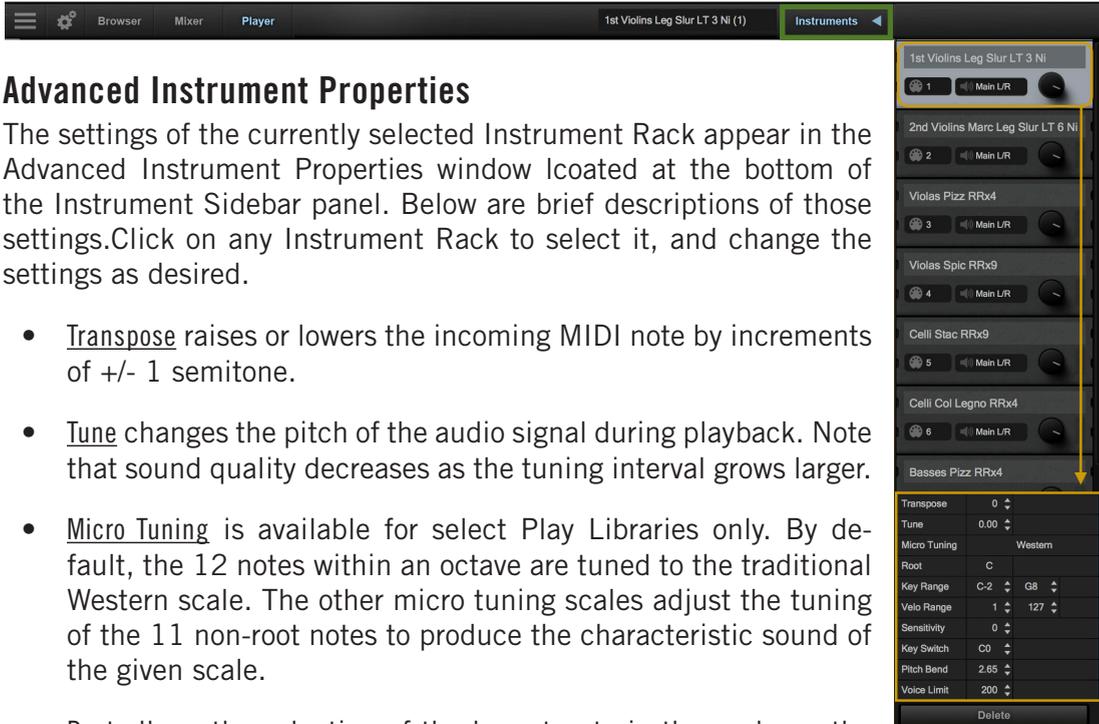
How To Reset Tag Selections

Clicking the ‘Any’ tag at the top of the Category column will reset existing tag selections across all categories.

Clicking the ‘Any’ tag at the top of every other category will reset only the tag selections in that given category.

The Instruments Sidebar

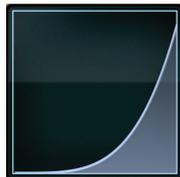
Click the Instrument Sidebar button on the right side of the Navigation Bar to open a panel that displays all loaded instruments in Instrument Racks containing MIDI channel, audio output and volume controls.



Advanced Instrument Properties

The settings of the currently selected Instrument Rack appear in the Advanced Instrument Properties window located at the bottom of the Instrument Sidebar panel. Below are brief descriptions of those settings. Click on any Instrument Rack to select it, and change the settings as desired.

- **Transpose** raises or lowers the incoming MIDI note by increments of +/- 1 semitone.
- **Tune** changes the pitch of the audio signal during playback. Note that sound quality decreases as the tuning interval grows larger.
- **Micro Tuning** is available for select Play Libraries only. By default, the 12 notes within an octave are tuned to the traditional Western scale. The other micro tuning scales adjust the tuning of the 11 non-root notes to produce the characteristic sound of the given scale.
- **Root** allows the selection of the lowest note in the scale, or the “root note”. The intervals of all other notes in a given scale are relative to the root.
- **Key Range** specifies the range of notes to which the instrument will respond, effectively muting notes you don’t want to hear, or giving you the ability to split the keyboard between multiple instruments on a single MIDI channel.
- **Velocity Range** specifies the minimum velocity and maximum velocity range for a given instrument. Values below the minimum or above the maximum velocity are respectively remapped to the lowest and highest values.
- **Sensitivity** determines what part of the dynamic range the instrument is most sensitive to, ranging in values between -100 (left) and +100 (right). The Sensitivity Curve Graph included in the Player view of some Play Libraries will reflect changes made here.



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- Keyswitch sets the selected instrument's default keyswitch note, which specifies the articulation in the keyswitch file that plays when no keyswitch note has been played in its MIDI channel in the current session. Please note, the instrument must be saved to the file system with an [.ewi] extension and reopened from that [.ewi] file for the new default value to take effect.
- Pitch Bend Intensity specifies how strongly the Pitch Bend Wheel modifies the pitch. A value of "100%" specifies that pushing the Pitch Bend Wheel all the way up or down moves the pitch by an octave. Negative values reverse the direction, so pushing the wheel up lowers the pitch.
- Voice Limit specifies the maximum number of voices that an instrument can playback, up to a limit of 999. If an instrument receives more voices than the voice limit value, it will cut off voices that began playing first.

The Mixer View

The Mixer view displays a channel strip for each loaded instrument with controls for volume, panning, mute and solo, as well as buttons to access an FX Rack and to open Sub-Mixer channels for instruments with multiple microphone positions.



The FX Rack

The FX Rack contains EastWest's Amp Simulator and Convolution Reverb, Ohm Force's Ohmicide distortion plugin, and SSL's suite of audio processing tools that includes a Filter, EQ, Compressor, Gate/Expander, Transient Shaper and Stereo Buss Compressor.



The Sub-Mixer Channels

For Instruments that contain multiple microphone positions, a Sub-Mixer button will appear to the right of the mute, solo and FX buttons. Single microphone instrument do not display this button.



Click on this Sub-Mixer button to reveal the channel strips for each available microphone position. Click on the microphone name to load and unload an instrument. Loaded instruments are illuminated in white, while unloaded instruments are gray.

Optimizing Playback and Performance

To access the Main Menu, click on the button with three horizontal bars in the left corner of the Navigation Bar of the Play user interface.

Adjusting the Streaming Cache

The Sample Cache settings are found in the 'Streaming' tab of the Settings Menu. Adjusting this setting is very important to enabling Play 6 to stream optimally!

IMPORTANT! As a general rule, find the lowest setting that also results in smooth playback. If dropped voices or CPU spikes occur, simply raise the 'Cache Level'.

The lowest recommended 'Cache Level' setting depends on:

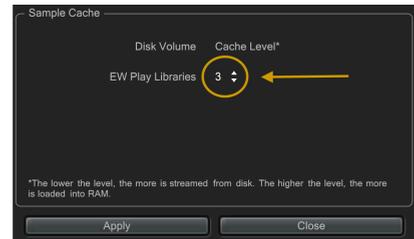
- the speed of the computer's processor (CPU)
- the amount of installed memory (RAM)
- the drive type and connection
- the demands of a project

Adjusting the 'Cache Level' affects the following:

- the loading time of your project
- the amount of memory usage
- the playback performance

Outlined below are recommended 'Cache Level' settings based on your computer specifications, but please be aware that the demands of a given project are also a factor in determining the best 'Cache Level' setting.

For example, with the same computer specifications, a large Hollywood Orchestra template will require a higher setting than a project with a few small instruments from Fab Four. That's because raising the 'Cache Level' results in more of each sample being loaded into memory (RAM), reducing the reliance on disk streaming, which allows larger and/or more instruments to playback smoothly at a given time.



In the 'Settings' menu under the 'Streaming' tab is a list of available drives that appear under 'Disk Volume' with their respective 'Cache Level' settings to the right. Use the up and down arrows to adjust this level for each drive.

A 'Cache Level' between 0 - 1 results in the fastest load times and smallest memory (RAM) usage, but requires a fast, multi-core processor (CPU) and Solid State Drives (SSD) with a fast connection type to achieve smooth playback.

A 'Cache Level' between 2 - 3 results in less demands on the processor (CPU) but requires more memory (RAM) usage. These settings are best for a computer with an average CPU, but still plenty of RAM and SSDs with a fast connection type.

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A 'Cache Level' between 4 - 5 results in the most memory (RAM) usage, but makes less demands on the processor (CPU) and hard drive. These settings are recommended for computers with an aging CPU and traditional 3.5" HDDs.

Using Sample Purge to Free System Resources

Found in the Main Menu under Sample Purge, these set of options allow you to free up system resources in large projects by removing unused samples from memory. This can be done across all instruments, or on a per-instrument basis.



To begin, click the 'Reset' button to clear the memory of previous playback information. Next, playback the sequence in your DAW. Any notes not played since the last reset will be removed by clicking the 'Purge' button. To bring back purged samples, click the 'Reload' button.

Note the memory usage readout on the right of each Instrument row. These values are updated whenever a button is pressed.

How to Achieve Realistic Results

In order to achieve more realistic results with Play Libraries, MIDI Continuous Controllers (CC's) must be used to shape loudness, dynamics and/or vibrato. Only the essentials are covered below, so please see the Play System Manual and library-specific manuals for greater detail on the subject.

IMPORTANT! Initialize the Mod Wheel (CC1) and Expression (CC11) values after loading an instrument to ensure they sound as the producers intended. The easiest way to do this is to assign the MIDI Continuous Controllers (CCs) to the assignable knobs or sliders of your MIDI controller, then jog them after loading an instrument. You can also input a starting value into the MIDI Continuous Controller (CC) lanes inside your preferred DAW.

MIDI Continuous Controllers (CC's)

Below are the most commonly used MIDI Continuous Controllers (CCs).

- **The Mod Wheel (CC1)** is programmed differently depending on the instrument, but generally is used to shape loudness, dynamics, and/or vibrato.
- **Volume (CC7)** is used to set the overall instrument volume. It is recommended that you set the relative balance among all the instruments in your project by inputting a starting value at the beginning of your project.

- **Panning (CC10)** adjusts the relative loudness between the stereo channels to offset the instrument right or left of center. Please note that some libraries are recorded in the positions instruments normally sit in a concert hall.
- **Expression (CC11)** is used to change an instrument's loudness within a line of music, like a crescendo or decrescendo, relative to overall volume loudness (CC7).
- **MIDI Velocity** is most commonly use to affect loudness and/or dynamics in instruments, so they respond to how hard or soft you play. Instruments with multiple dynamics layers have an additional level of realism because a change in timbre occurs when the instrument gets louder. Other times MIDI Velocity is used to trigger different articulations within the velocity range, like in the Hollywood Harp Maestro instruments.

Using the Round Robin Reset

This control is found in the 'Other' tab of the Setting menu. It allows you to specify either a MIDI note or MIDI continuous controller (CC) to reset the round-robin cycle. The numeric value in the spin box specifies which note number (middle C = 60) or which continuous controller (CC) will be interpreted as a reset. Once set, all the round robin instruments in any given MIDI channel will be reset when that note or CC value is received.

Additional Resources

This Quick Start Guide is only intended to get you going quickly. Please see the Play System Manual and the individual Play Library Manuals for more detail on specific technical information. And please stop by the Soundsonline Forum to get help, advice or otherwise chat with fellow music makers!

EastWest Support Center

Visit the EastWest online [Support Center](#) to:

- submit a support ticket
- troubleshoot by reading FAQs on a variety of support topics
- find quick start guides, user manuals, video tutorials, and more!

EastWest Soundsonline Forums

Visit the EastWest [Soundsonline Forums](#) to:

- read comments and questions from other users of EastWest products
- find helpful information on both technical and musical aspects of the software
- receive support by posting to the Support section of the forum

EastWest User Manuals

Please visit the [EastWest Manuals](#) section of the Support Center to find the latest documentation. In addition, they are also installed into following directories:

(Win): C: // Program Files / EastWest / Documentation

(Mac): Mac HD / Applications / EastWest / Documentation

- [Play 6 User Manual](#) describes the Play System as a whole. It addresses how to install and use all aspects of the software that are common to all Play Libraries.
- [Play Library Manuals](#) describe aspects that differ from one Play Library to the next, such as the included instruments, or the user interface. These manuals are installed into the main library folder of each Play Library.
- [Master Navigation Document \(MND\)](#) is a one-page PDF that allows easy navigation between the PLAY System Manual and the Play Library Manuals using links. Links to the Master Navigation Document (MND) can be found at the bottom of each chapter in both the Play User Manual and Play Library Manuals.