

Chords PRO



Welcome to CHORDS Pro!

CHORDS Pro is a MIDI plugin that generates looped chord and note progressions, targeted primarily (but not exclusively) at producers of electronic dance music. It is the next evolutionary step in the LOOP.engine framework, with a set of powerful features like a dynamic chord sequence randomizer.

CHORDS Pro, like its little brother CHORDS, is a composition assistant designed to create fresh musical ideas. For that reason, it is most effective if used at the beginning of a music production chain. The plugin was designed with simplicity, speed, and a free flow of creativity in mind.

In contrast to musical structures on the usual forward-oriented timeline, loops are 'circular' objects, meaning that their last element leads to their first. In other words, a proper loop has no real beginning or end. One gets lost in its whirl. CHORDS Pro reinforces that peculiar property with its unique circular graphic representation.

A loop in CHORDS Pro can contain up to eight chords, each consisting of up to four notes, i.e. a triad plus a tension note like a 7th or 9th.

The easiest way to learn the features of CHORDS Pro is by taking the guided tour through all its functional elements explained in this manual.

System Requirements

Operating systems: Windows 10 and later (64-bit only), macOS 10.15 and later (64-bit only)

Available interface types: VST, VST3, AU, AAX

Installation and Unlocking

Unpack your software, start the installer for Windows or Mac, and follow the instructions. By default, all available version formats will automatically be installed. You can also choose which versions you want to install in the process. See the options in the installer window display for custom installation on macOS.

To unlock the plugin with your serial code, click on the info button **(G1)** and follow the instructions.

DAW Connection

CHORDS Pro must be assigned to a MIDI track or instrument track on your DAW via MIDI In. For the required routing setup, follow the instructions in the manual of your DAW, or [visit our online Help Center for instructions in most major DAWs](#).

Graphical Interface and Features

The plugin display can be toggled between two logically connected control interfaces: **Loop Control (L)** and **Chord Control (C)**. In general, actions in Loop Control have an effect on the entire loop. Chord Control lets you zoom in on single chords.

Black dots indicate control elements, i.e. knobs, selectors, or toggles.

To resize the plugin click-and-drag the bottom left corner **(G2)**.

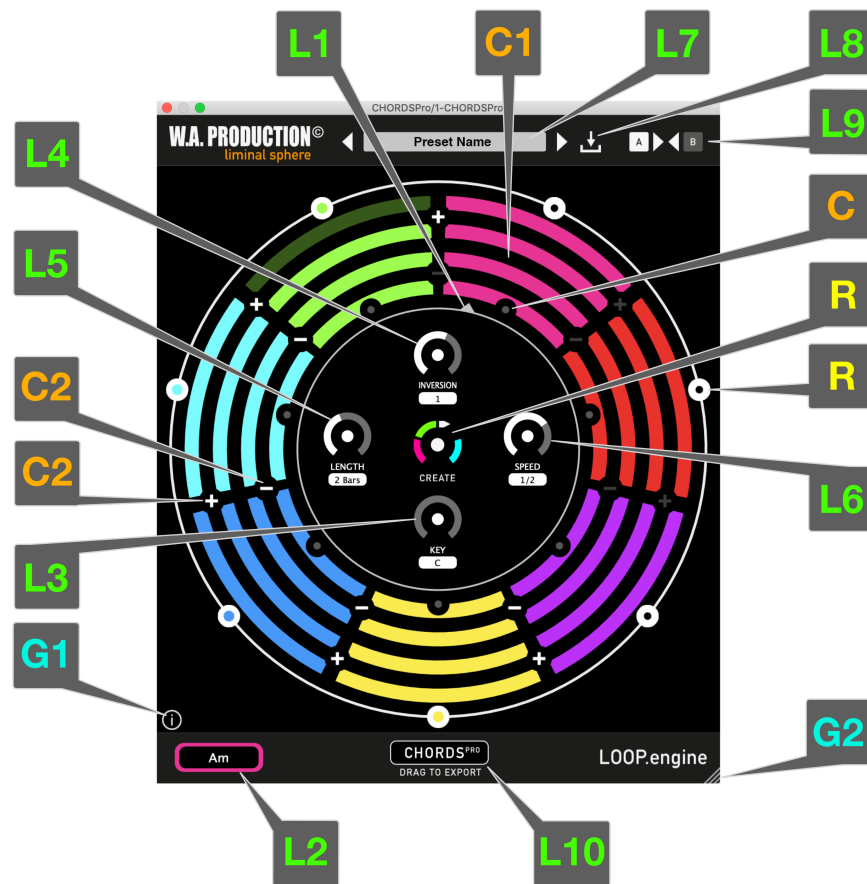
For a step-by-step tutorial to guide you through the features of the software, follow the numbers on the image tags from **L** to **C** in ascending order.

Loop Control: General (L tags)

This is the editing interface for the entire loop. Click on the black dots in the chord segments to switch between chords you want to edit (**C**). The selected chord is highlighted.

Switching from Loop Control to Chord Control (C) to edit individual chords follows the same logic: Click on one of the black dots on a chord segment (**C1**) to switch to Chord Control and to select that chord to be edited (see next page).

The **randomizer feature (R)** is laid out on the next page.



Loop cursor/playback (L1): PLAY and STOP in the DAW starts and stops the loop playback, respectively. The loop can be altered while it is rolling. The loop cursor indicates the sounding chord and shows the exact time positions within each segment.

Chord information display (L2): Provides the chord symbol of the sounding chord, i.e. root note, key, and added note (interval above the root, e.g. 7th).

Key (L3): Defines the general key of the loop. This function transposes the loop between keys.

Inversion (L4): Inversion Up pushes the lowest notes an octave up. Inversion Down pushes the highest notes an octave down. This is like turning the entire loop outward or inward in overall pitch. There is no visual feedback for different degrees of inversion.

Length (L5): Defines the length of the loop, i.e. the number of bars (or fraction thereof) on the MIDI track. Length is correlated to Speed (**L6**). The setting '1 bar' at a speed setting of '1 bar' corresponds to 1 bar on the MIDI track in your DAW. The default setting is 2 bars, with a playback speed set at 1/2, which results in one full loop cycle across 2 bars on the MIDI track.

Speed (L6): Determines how fast chords are played back. Speed is correlated to Length (**L5**).

Loop presets (L7): By default, the plugin provides a selection of loop presets as a starting point to work from.

Saving loops (L8): Loops can be saved for further editing at a later time.

A/B toggle (L9): This feature lets you switch between and work on two different loops for immediate comparison.

Drag to export (L10): Click-and-drag the MIDI notes of the loop to the MIDI timeline in your DAW.

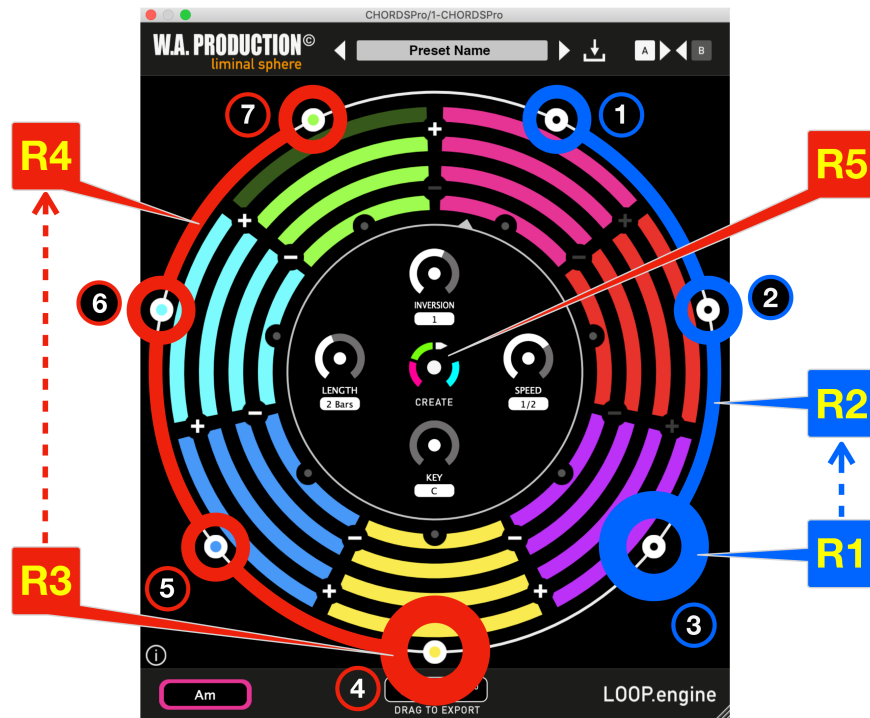
Chord segments (C1): Chords are represented as segments of the loop. A loop can be composed of up to eight chords of equal duration. The minimum loop size is one chord.

Adding and deleting chords (C2): Click on '+' between two chord segments to add a new chord at that position. Clicking on '-' will delete chords. The respective chord segment to be deleted is indicated on mouse rollover.

Loop Control: Randomizer (R tags)

This feature was designed to support users in building up a loop gradually, incorporating 'elements of surprise' to boost creative inspiration with a maximum of control over the process.

The randomizer function follows voicing rules for a smooth transition between notes, e.g. by inverting chords. It generates musically pleasant chord progressions, over the complete loop or only parts of it.



By clicking on the dots placed on the outer ring, you lock or unlock chord segments for randomization. You can have all chords of the loop randomized, or just a selection. All chord segments are unlocked by default, i.e. their outer dots are colored. Locked segments show black dots.

Locking chords: You can only lock chords in clockwise order, always counted from the very first chord in the loop. I.e. when you click on the dot of the third segment in a loop of seven segments (**R1**)—provided all segments were unlocked before—only the chords ④ through ⑦ get randomized and chords ① through ③ remain unchanged (**R2**).

Unlocking chords: The same logic applies to unlocking chords: If you click on the dot of an unlocked segment (**R3**), all chords from this chord to the last in the loop are unlocked (**R4**). All chords before that segment in the loop are locked and cannot be altered by the randomizer.

The possibility to add and delete chord segments to the loop changes dynamically with the amount of locked/unlocked segments.

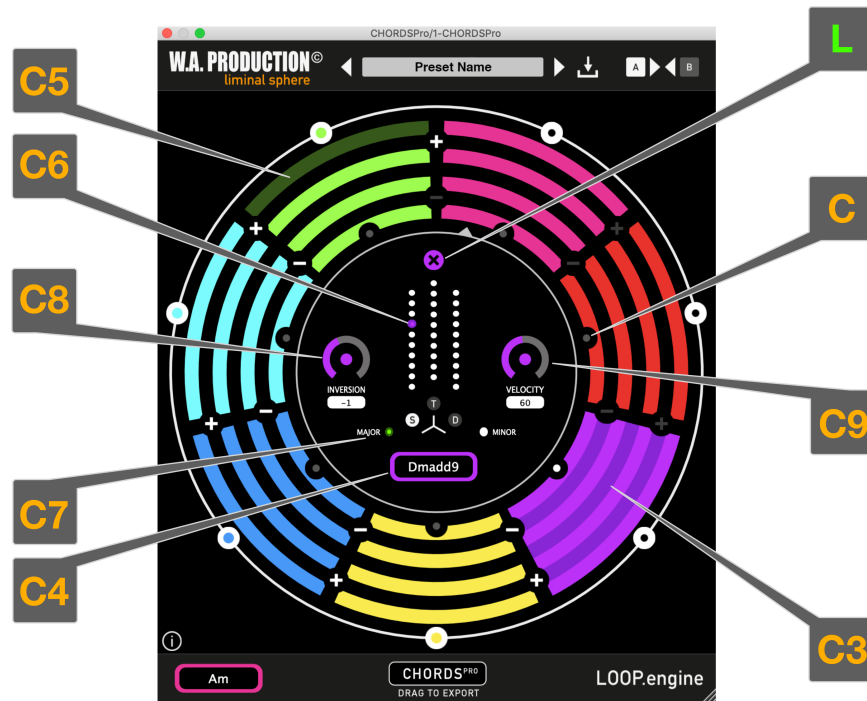
Create (R5): This 'magic button' activates the randomization process for the unlocked chords. The animation effect provides additional visual feedback on which loop segments get altered.

The randomization feature was designed to seamlessly interact with all the other layers of control elements. Use the A/B toggle and shift to Chord Control to extend the range of possibilities—all in real time.

Chord Control (C tags)

This is the editing interface for individual parameters of single chords. Click on the black dots in the chord segments to switch between chords you want to edit (C). The selected chord is highlighted.

Switching to Loop Control (L): To end Chord Control mode and switch to Loop Control click on the 'x' symbol.



When DAW playback is halted (STOP), every change applied to a chord—including adding new chords—yields an acoustic preview of the result by the assigned MIDI instrument.

Chord information display (C4): Provides the exact chord symbol of the chord being edited.

Individual chord notes—mute and unmute (C5): The four curved lines of a chord segment represent the four notes of the respective chord. The innermost line indicates the lowest note, the outer line stands for the highest note. Clicking on a note line mutes or unmutes the corresponding note. Activated note lines appear brighter in color.

Chords are always initially arranged in their root position, i.e. their lowest note is the root note. This is the most transparent and musically flexible approach. But it sometimes results in audible 'jumps' between chords, which can easily be "smoothed" by adjusting the inversion settings for individual chords.

Triads often contain octave-transposed notes to preserve the four-note chord structure of loop segments.

Chord function and complexity (C6): Chords are arranged in a matrix of *tonal function* (Tonic, Subdominant, and Dominant) and *complexity* (from bottom to top according to the degree of their probability in the progression).

Major and Minor toggle (C7): The basis of major and minor harmony is the major and minor scale, respectively. Chords are derived from those scales in the range of major and minor. Very simply put however, major sounds 'brighter' or 'more positive', whereas minor feels 'darker'.

Inversion (C8): Like in Loop Control but for individual chords: Inversion Up pushes the lowest notes an octave up. Inversion Down pushes the highest notes an octave down.

Velocity (C9): Adjustment of the volume of individual chords

Have fun with CHORDS Pro!