VBrass French Horns User Guide

Welcome to Acousticsamples

Thank you for using the VBrass French Horns library. We hope you enjoy playing the instrument and wish it supports your musical ideas or even better: inspire new ones.
In this User Guide we will provide you with an overview of how to use the VBrass French Horns library.

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at:
samples@acousticsamples.com

or use the contact form on our website
www.acousticsamples.net

The VBrass French Horns library, produced by
Acousticsamples

Requirements and Installation

Interface and Parameters

EXPERIENCE THE NEXT GENERATION OF VIRTUAL INSTRUMENTS

Introducing VBrass French Horns - a meticulously sampled and modeled French Horn library featuring four French Horns, a Triple Horn and a Wagner Tuba. With unparalleled expressive realism and and a rich set of brand new controllable features, VBrass French Horns brings the warmth, complexity and versatility of real horns into your DAW, without overwhelming your CPU. At a download size of just 267MB per instrument, VBrass offers a powerful blend between realism and efficiency, making it as suitable for composing on-the-go as it is for high-end studio rigs. And of course, VBrass features our revolutionary harmonic alignment technology (which we call 'H.A.T.'), allowing users 100% continuous control over the sound, with no need for any keyswitches or articulation changes.

This is VSeries - the next generation of sampling.

Check out other VSeries instruments ([Big Band Brass](#) , [Saxophones](#)) as well as orchestral Woodwinds ([flutes](#) , [double reeds](#) , [clarinets](#)).

REAL vs VBRASS

Comparisons

$("audio").on("play", function() { var id = $(this).attr('id');
$("audio").not(this).each(function(index, audio) { audio.pause(); }); });

6-Instrument Bundle;vbrassHorns/allhorns9.png

VBrass French Horns contains six instruments: four French Horns, a Triple Horn and a Wagner Tuba.

Each instrument was recorded individually by world-class players, and each has its own personality and character of sound.

They can all be used as soloists and will blend together perfectly to create ensembles.

The horn is one of the most versatile instruments in the world, capable of producing everything from the most beautiful pianissimos to the most powerful fortissimos, easily heard over an entire symphony orchestra.

Our primary aim with this collection was to offer 6 individually recorded instruments with their own characteristics, whilst still being able to gel together in a variety of ensemble set-ups.

On top of the instruments' natural characteristics, we implemented many features to help offer an limitless variety of sounds within each instrument itself.

Even though we have the French Horns listed as Horns 1-4, you will find that in all 6 instruments, some offer a brassier tone, some more mellow, some instruments sing best in particular registers, some combinations of instruments produce a completely different sound to others and so on. So a Horn Quartet set-up of Triple Horn, Wagner Tuba, Horn 3 and Horn 1 is just as valid here as a quartet with Horns 1 to 4.

We hope that you enjoy exploring these instruments as much as we enjoyed designing and producing them.

The H.A.T.

Thanks to our proprietary H.A.T. (Harmonic Alignment Technology), VBrass is not just another heavily multi-sampled instrument - you can play articulations exactly like a live player would, with just a mod wheel to control air flow (or even just by drawing in automation).

There are no elaborate keyswitches involved to play staccatos, marcatos, legato, etc. - you simply load up the instrument in your DAW and play. Vibrato can even be automated.

Airflow is controlled by the central dial on the main page of the interface.

When this is set to 0, there will be no tone produced, just as if you didn't blow any air into a trumpet.

You can of course control this value with different CCs. We set it to the modulation wheel by default because it's available on almost every digital keyboard, but you can use anything you like, for example CC2, which is the default for most breath controllers - all you need to do is click on the small dot next to the CC number and move the controller you want to assign.

Vibrato can also be controlled with the airflow - to enable/disable this, go into the PREFS panel and change the "allow vibrato with air flow" value. Once this is enabled, moving the air flow controller up and down will begin to add pitch variation to the sound.

In some rare cases, and sometimes when using MIDI files imported from softwares like Sibelius, you only get velocities, so at the bottom of the CC list we added the possibility to control the air flow with the incoming velocity - just select "**VEL**".

You also have the option to use the pitch bend as the input CC, you can do so by choosing "**P. BEND**" from the list.

NEW: Recorded
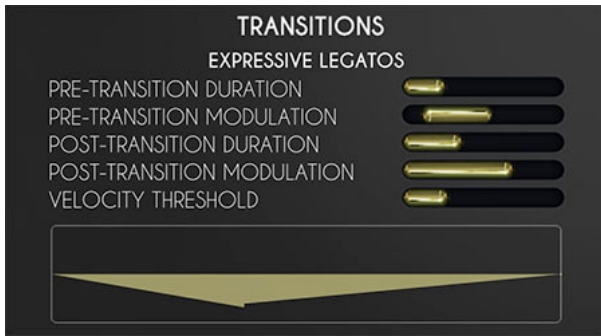
Legato;vbrassHorns/legatos.jpg

Legato transitions are often a sure giveaway that a performance is made with virtual instruments rather than real ones. Both fully-recorded and fully-modelled libraries run into their respective limitations in this area, with recorded instruments offering a more lifelike sound at the expense of speed and playability, and vice versa for modelled instruments.

Enter our brand new 'Legato Matrix' (v1.0) - an engine pushing the boundaries of sampling and modeling technology. Our new legato engine features recorded legato transitions of every single interval available on the instrument, without sacrificing any of the unparalleled playability these instruments are known for.

When you play a legato on the keyboard (when you overlap two notes), our engine will automatically transition the first played note into the second played note.

This is exactly what happens on a real brass instrument when the air flow is continuous while the player changes the note. Our legatos can be enhanced even further by careful use of CC1 to anticipate upcoming notes, but we also added several new controls to allow you to automate this process, either with or without any delay.

Legato playing is most expressive when the sound changes before a mechanical transition - most often this is a slight decrescendo, accompanied with timbral and pitch changes, but it can also include a slight 'push' (crescendo) even before this.

At the bottom of the TRANSITIONS section are a set of controls for 'Expressive Legatos'. These control the activity of the sound before and after the legato transition is heard ('Pre-' and 'Post-'). Beneath the sliders is a graphic matrix indicating exactly what is happening to the dynamics before and after a transition.

1- **Pre-Transition Duration** : this dictates how long the pre-transition activity lasts.

2- **Pre-Transition Modulation** : this dictates the direction of the dynamics of the pre-transition sound. We recommend that this is set to a negative value.

3- **Post-Transition Duration** : this dictates how long the post-transition activity lasts.

4- **Post-Transition Modulation** : this dictates the depth from which dynamics return to the base level - the higher this value, the lower the dynamic level after the transition is heard.

5- **Velocity Threshold** : The threshold at which point expressive legato is applied. Set to 0 to switch off, and set to 127 to make all legatos expressive. We recommend using a low value here, e.g. 20.

Above the Expressive Legatos settings are a series of 'Modulations' controls to enhance the legato sound even further:

1- **Transitions Volume** : The volume of the recorded transitions - note that this only affects the recorded transition itself, and not the pre- and post- expression controls.

2- **Transitions Speed Modulation** : This controls the speed of the legatos. When at 100%, the higher the velocity, the faster the legato transition. When at 0%, velocity has no effect on the speed.

3- **Flutter on Attacks** : This creates a short flutter at the beginning of new notes where silence precedes them. We recommend that this is randomized for a more realistic sound.

4- **Flutter on Legatos** : This creates a short flutter at the beginning of new legato notes, blended as part of the transitions. We recommend that this is kept to a low value, and randomized for a more realistic sound.

And finally, at the top of the TRANSITIONS section are controls for the Attacks:

1- **Velocity to attack / sustain** : This controls the relationship between Airflow (CC1 by default) and velocity: if CC1 is 75 and a note is played at velocity 20, our engine will ramp the air flow from 20 to 75 and thus create a quick volume raise. And vice versa - if the velocity is above the air flow value, it will create a quick attack and come down to the air flow value. The duration of this ramp is controlled by the **velocity to attack time** value.

2- **Velocity to attack / legatos** : This controls how legato notes are played, and the procedure is identical to that for sustains, but for legatos it covers the joins between different notes rather than sustained notes on their own. This feature is very useful on woodwind instruments as many players play legato notes with a slight crescendo between notes, so to replicate this, all you need to do is play every new legato note at a low velocity.

3- **Velocity to attack time** : The speed at which a note changes from the velocity value to the airflow value

4- **Velocity to attack sharpness** : The sharpness of the attacks, or, in more detail, control over the shape of the curve joining the velocity value to the value of the airflow. At its lowest value, the curve will emphasize the velocity, and at its highest value, the airflow.

NEW: Bee Dial;vbrassHorns/buzzControl.png

Everybody has their own taste when it comes to the sound of a French Horn - it is an incredibly versatile instrument which can produce warm, mellow tones just as easily as it can a buzzing and sizzling fortissimo, capable of cutting through all other instruments in the orchestra.

Aside from recording 6 different horns of varying characters of sound, we wanted to go one step further and allow for timbral changes on each horn

itself.

After carefully extracting specific frequencies one-by-one, we created a brand new 'Bee Dial', to control the amount of buzz the instrument is capable of producing. This sits right underneath the Airflow dial on the main interface, and works in sync with the Airflow, ensuring the intended dynamics and volume are preserved, regardless of the amount of buzz/sizzle in the sound.

On the main interface is the Bee dial, in between the break at the base of the Airflow dial.

It can be set to a specific amount before playing, or it can be controlled while playing live - to assign a controller to it, right click and either select from a list of controllers or simple move the controller you wish to use, and our engine will recognise and assign it automatically.

We recommend applying different values for different instruments, according to your taste; Horn 1 and Triple Horn have a powerful brassy tone at their highest dynamics, whereas the Wagner Tuba and Horn 2 are much more mellow in timbre.
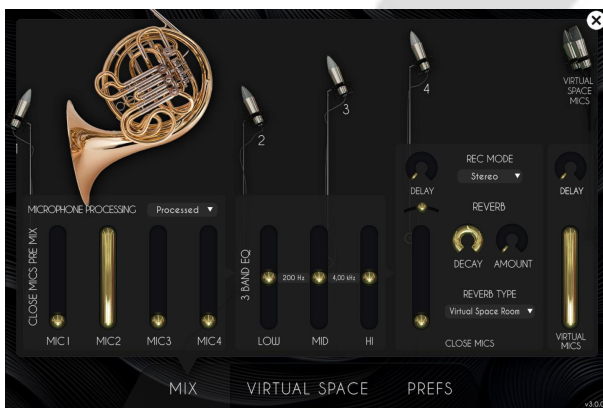
NEW: Multi-Mic Mixer

We recorded these instruments with 4 microphone positions: 1 behind the player (the bell) and 3 in front.

This library also offers the option to use the raw, untreated sound as well as a processed sound to suit different purposes.

Reverb and EQ can be controlled from the Mix tab, and the four microphone positions can be mixed in any way you like, each one will work on its own in the right context.

We recommend using Mic 2 as a starting point, on both processed and unprocessed sets, and for a warmer 'front' sound, add Mic 3 or 4, or for a brighter 'Bell' sound, add Mic 1.

MIX Tab

We recorded each of our instruments with **4 different microphones** at 4 different positions to capture their unique sounds - you can mix these however you like, and each mic can also work on its own in the right situation. Above the microphones is a brand new feature - the option to choose the 'unprocessed' or 'processed' sound - the only difference is that the processed sound has been EQ'd very slightly to help suit different set-ups, and the unprocessed sound is exactly what we recorded.

There is also a **3-band EQ**, with the option to control the frequency at which the curve begins, allowing fine control over high and low frequencies. Simply click and drag the value next to the low or high band controls, or double click and type the desired value, including the unit measurement (Hz or kHz).

We added a **pan** and **delay** for each to deal with any phase problems that can occur when multiple microphones are involved.

And you can add impulse response **reverb**, and control its decay and amount (how much is sent from the close microphones or from the virtual space). The 'amount' on the mix panel is exactly the same as on the main interface and can be controlled from either tab.

Virtual Space;vbrassHorns/virtualspace2.jpg

Our Virtual Space features simulations of three concert halls with world-class acoustics, with four microphone configurations to choose from and customizable stereo width and room size (tail).

Brand new for VSeries is also the option to tame the high and low resonances of the reverb, as well as four options for stereo source width, offering an even greater capacity for depth and colour of sound.

When the virtual mics are used (in the Mix tab), selecting a seat in the Virtual Space will place the instrument at that exact spot in the hall, dealing with the basics of depth, delay and panning all in one single click.

When using this with multiple instruments on different seats, you immediately have the spatial impression of being in front of a whole ensemble.

Virtual Space tab

Simply using panning to place elements in the stereo field does not sound as realistic as possible, because lots of information is left out, so we recreated a whole room placement simulation based on impulse responses, where you can set the position of the instrument in the recorded room itself.

Since there are so many ways to set up an ensemble recording, in terms of both musician placement and microphone pair selection, we decided to include as many customizable possibilities as we could.

With VSeries Virtual Space, you have access to dozens and dozens of different seats in three different halls, with the response from each seat recorded individually. You can select which **microphone configuration** you want to use (**ORTF, AB, XY, or AB Wide**), and you can select four options for the stereo source pattern, for even more variety of sound. You can finetune the sound by adjusting the stereo width for a narrow or wide section, as well as controlling the room size and the high and low frequencies of the reverb.
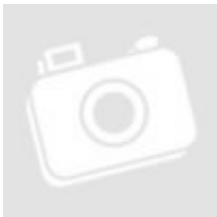
Mutes;vbrassHorns/mutes.png

Mutes are an integral part of the French Horns' arsenal - employed by the likes of Jerry Goldsmith to create an unsettling soundworld in Alien, or John Williams or James Newton Howard, creating tension and terror in films such as The Village or Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

You can choose from 4 different mutes, a stop mute, two different straight mutes (wood and metal), and a harmon/wah mute on which you can control how open or close you want it with a CC.

Simply select the mute you want to use in the top right corner of the instrument's interface and start playing - or assign the menu to a CC, and enjoy swapping between open and muted sounds seamlessly in realtime.

Rather than vastly increasing the size of the libraries by recording all samples with all 5 mutes, we instead

painstakingly simulated each mute to the point where it could even fool horn players.

Like every other control, each mute can be assigned its own control, allowing for changes between mutes without having to go into the interface every time.

The Wah mute offers continous control over its application - this is set to CC93 by default but this can be changed in the usual way. Continuous control over this mute offers users the option to recreate the 'wah-wah' effect, and we suggest trying it in combination with the growl/flutter dial for even more color.

A muted horn sound comes with a huge sacrifice to the level of volume - this is exactly what happens in real life, but it's not always ideal in preparing mixes or virtual mock-ups, so we incorporated a way to counter this by compensating for the reduction in sound. This is controlled by a small dial to the right of the the mutes menu, and of course, it can be assigned to a CC.
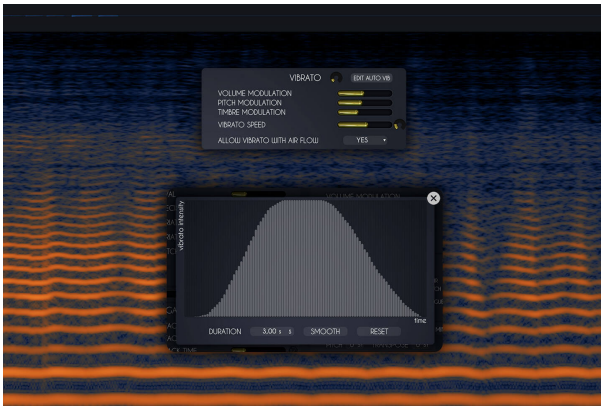
Authentic Vibrato

We carefully measured the different parameters that change when a brass player uses vibrato and we combined everything into a highly realistic and customizable vibrato for VBrass.

There are multiple ways to control the vibrato: automatic, automatic depending on time 'Auto Time', and manually, where you have full control over each undulation yourself.

Vibrato is controlled with the left dial on the front panel of the interface.

Immediately below the dial is a small menu with 3 options:

1- **Auto**: this enables automatic vibrato and the dial will simply control how much vibrato is added to the sound.

2- **Auto time**: This is similar to Auto mode, but a time envelope will control the amount of vibrato. You can edit this envelope in the preferences by clicking on "edit auto vib". This opens a small panel that displays a table to let you control the duration and intensity of the vibrato.

3- **Manual**: This is for advanced use and conrol over vibrato. In reality, a trumpet player changes the shape or position of their mouth on the mouthpiece to change the pitch up and down. In this mode, the neutral position (with no pitch change) is the middle value of the dial and a value of 0.5 (and CC at value 64). Values below 0.5 will result in a lower pitch and values above 0.5 will result in a higher pitch. This is very useful for creating vibrato that doesn't have a fixed speed.

There is a fourth way to simulate vibrato, using only the air flow control. The "**allow vibrato with air flow**" setting has to be set to 'yes' in the preferences and you a fast up and down variation is needed in whichever controller you use for the air flow.

In the preferences, you have options to customize the vibrato even further to control vibrato (these options affect all 4 modes above).

1- There is a small dial that controls the overall **amount of vibrato**. This can be set to some very high values that will sound very unnatural to some, but that is necessary for using some dedicated wind controllers that have a narrow CC range.

2- You can change the amount of **volume modulation:** vibrato isn't just a change in pitch, it's also timbre and volume changes; you can control how much of this you want here.

3- You can change the amount of **timbre modulation** to add even more realism

4- You can of course change the amount of **pitch modulation** as well.

5- And you can change the vibrato **speed** - this goes up all the way to 115%.

In the bottom right corner of the vibrato section is a dial to adjust the humanization/randomization of the undulations. The higher this dial, the more uneven the vibrato will be.

Some controllers like the EWI use the pitch bend as the vibrato source, so we added the **P. Bend** option to the bottom of the CC list in case you want to use it for the vibrato and not bends.

Pitch

VBrass offers a wealth of controls over pitch, controls that can be essential to achieving a colorful and realistic sound. It's very rare to hear everything perfectly in tune, even from professional players, so we created a number of features to help adjust the accuracy of the pitch in order to achieve an even more lifelike performance.

Pitch bend is also a key part of the performance of some brass instruments, and our Advanced Pitch Bend engine helps with the realism of these bends, from subtleties in trumpet solos, to small trombone slides, all the way to the openining Clarinet wail from Rhapsody in Blue.

At the top, you will see a tuning button which opens a panel allowing you to tune each note to your liking. This is very useful for performing music not written for standard tuning systems, or for music that doesn't use traditional Western classical scales.

1- The **max glide interval** controls the maximum interval that you are able to create a continuous glide between. On a trombone for example, the maximum possible glide is from position 7 to position 1, so 6 semitones. We allow for more than 6, but to play something natural, it's better to lower that value as in reality most players will glide a maximum of 3 or 4 semitones and "cheat" the rest. Above that value, our engine will "cheat" as well and skip some notes while still ending up on the target note.

2- The **note pitch imprecision** is exactly what it says - it will make the notes sound very slightly out of tune, completely at random, between 0 and the value you set. A value of 100% will randomize +/-1 semitone.

3- The **attack pitch variation** is slightly different, it is essentially a fast but subtle bend ramp that can almost always be heard in live performances. It is more or less super-human to play every single note perfectly in tune from the first attack, so in order to create a more realistic sound, this is set slightly above 0 by default. Increasing the value will control how much bend you want (in other words; how far away the sound will be from the note you're playing) and the attack pitch variation time will decide how quick that ramp is.

The direction of the variation can be controlled by selecting the option from the menu next to the dial (**Natural**, **Up**, **Down**), and the small button immediately next to this enables a velocity-controlled attack, meaning that the higher the velocity, the more the effect will be heard.

Use Advanced Pitch Bend activates our APB engine, allowing for more realism in the pitch bends. This can be disabled to save on CPU, and we recommend this for French Horns.

Max Pitch Bend controls the possible range of the pitch bends.

Pitch with Air Variation controls the amount the pitch changes in relation to the Airflow level - if the Airflow is raipidly increased, the pitch will rise accordingly, and vice versa. We recommend keeping this setting to a very low value for French Horns.

And if you need pitch bends for the full range of the instrument, we included the option to **Use MPE** as well, but this comes at the expense of realism.

General / MIDI

Our general controls allow for different playing techniques such as flutter, control over the harmonic series and volume of every note, as well as extraneous noises, natural variation and round robins.

MIDI controls offer the possibility to finetune live ensemble playing, as well as the usual tranposition, pitch control, MIDI controller selection and a grid to tweak the shape of the airflow curve.

Please note all of the features in the preferences tab that have a small die next to them, which turns on randomization for an even more unpredictable and life-like performance. Randomize means that the value for that setting will be randomized for each new note, between the minimum value and the value you set.

1- The **growl/flutter** value controls how much growl/flutter effect is added to the sound.

2- The **natural variation air** and **pitch** values control that very quick and almost undetectable variation that even the best brass players can't avoid when they play. Since the air flow should never be always perfectly constant, the timbre and pitch vary all the time and you can control how much of each you want. By default, it is set to 100% which is representative of a very good player with the least variation possible and you can go above that to make the playing more natural.

3- The **valve noises** lets you control how much noise you hear from the individual valves being pressed on the instrument.

4- The **tongue noises** lets you control the volume of the small noise produced by the tongue as it blocks the air flow when a note is stopped.

5- The **round robin** menu lets you control if you want no round robin, a 3x round robin alternating on adjacent notes all the time or a smart round robin which only alternates in fast passages.

MIDI section

1- **Pitch**: You can pitch the whole instrument up or down up to +-12semitones. This affects the tone of the instruments and can be useful to cover other instruments that have a different range. Pitching the flugelhorn down can make it sound similar to a trombone, for example.

2- **TRANSPOSE**: This is just a MIDI transposing tool, so for example, a value of 2 semitones will play a D instead of a C. If you use the pitch and transpose at the same time, but opposite values, you will hear the correct note and will only change the timbre and range.

3- The Ensemble will be detailed in the ensemble section below.

4- The type of **controller** you use can induce a few internal changes. The EWI for example requires some tweaks to play legatos as it does not overlap MIDI notes by default. You can select the type of controller you use from the list here.

5- Next to the controller selection, there is a small dial that controls the reactivity of the controller. On some keyboards, for example, the mod wheel can be non-continuous and have small gaps that lead to unnatural-sounding variations. To fix this, just increase the value on the dial. If you use a breath or wind controller though, make sure this value is set to 0 - otherwise it will be hard to get very sharp attacks. Selecting the right controller will take care of this value change for you.

6- You can change the position on the keyboard of the few keyswitches we use. (Keyswitches information updated very soon)

7- You can control the response of the instrument to your MIDI controller using the air curve. If for example you don't want the instrument to reach the highest volumes, you can just cut the top end of the curve. Since the curve is not big or precise, you can make sharp changes and hit the smooth button a few times until the curve is perfectly smooth. Changing the MIN value will reset the curve and set what the volume for the minimum of air flow is.

Ensemble

If you load multiple instruments at the same time, it will play unisons exactly at the same time.

We added some smart features that first can change the timbre of the instruments, transpose everything by a fixed interval and also act on the MIDI performance.

For example, you can have all 6 instruments with a different transposition value play the same C minor scale, so no matter what you play on the keyboard, it will sound in key.

Playing **ensembles** with VBrass is easy, as you can see in the overview video. You can adjust a few things in the MIDI tab.

1- The **Transpose** values can be changed to get the desired interval change.

2- You can then select a **scale** and **root** on which the instrument will be forced to play, no matter what you play on your keyboard. If you select C Major, then whatever you play on your keyboard will stay in C Major even when using the transpose value.

3- The **timing** value will create a randomized time delay each time a new note is played, this way when you

play a note on the keyboard, not all instruments will start at the same exact time just like a section of musicians would do in real life, no matter how good they are.

There are a few things to add if you really want to make the performance convincing. Here are a few tips:

- Make the natural variation value quite high (air and pitch) and randomize them.
- Use the round robin feature if you are using the same instrument twice.
- To add some variation to the velocities, select the dice next to the velocity to attack for sustain, legatos and time.
- Set a value for the flutter transition and randomize it as well.
- The most important part will be the pitch aspects, so increase the note pitch imprecision, as well as the pitch variation and pitch variation time and randomize them.

Once all this is set, it should have plenty of variation, but a good solution to make it even more convincing is to go a step further and just have two different MIDI files with randomized note positions as well as slightly different air flow controls. The best solution would even be to just play the performance twice as it wil introduce all of the necessary variation.

Keyboard, Breath Controller or Wind Controller

VBrass can be played using a keyboard by selecting the notes on the keyboard and controlling the air flow with a MIDI controller like the modulation wheel or a breath controller.

You can also use a wind controller like an EWI, an Aerophone a Sylphyo or any other brand, in which case you need to use the appropriate controller menu in the MIDI section.

Features

UVI Workstation v4.0.2 is required for the library to function properly, VBrass will not work on windows XP, or OSX 10.13, it will not work on a receptor either.

about 240Mb per instrument (1.5Gb for all 6 instruments) compressed in lossless flac format.

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