

# Alesis A6 Andromeda FAQ

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## Program Mode, Mix Mode, and Effects

### Questions:

1. Mar 06 2002

From: Cyril Blanc <[blanc.cyril@wanadoo.fr](mailto:blanc.cyril@wanadoo.fr)>

But there is a problem somewhere else because I do not get the "thick" Padamongous sound in MIX mode, same for "Old man winter" :-[ , what is the trick ?

2. Dec 29 14:47:56 2003

From: deliverator at the-deliverator.net (The Deliverator)

Thanks for the help the other day. I now have a mix setup so that I have 4 midi channels that accept program changes on midi channels 1-4. The programs do change accordingly on the Andromeda.

I'm noticing something weird though. When I play a patch in program mode, say for example 'warm strings' , it sounds very different in program mode than it does in mix mode. This is the only patch I am playing, and it seems to happen even if I am only playing one note, so I don't think this is a voice issue.

3. > so if you have five programs, only one of those can have an effect, (Or can you have the same affect applied to more then one program?)

4. Jan 29 10:06:00 2004

From: sgt\_stadenko at hotmail.com (Kurt Robertson)

I've got 'Kick and snare' on mix channel 1, 'Kick and Snare2' on mix channel 2 and 'Kick and Snare3' on mix channel 3. They all sound the same!! Why are my fx not working in mix mode?

---

## Answers:

1. Dec 11 2003

From: dfevans at bbcr.uwaterloo.ca (David Evans)

Effects work differently in Mix mode to how they work in Program mode.

Details about this are in the manual.

2.

3. Mar 06 21:10:17 2002

From: "Michael E. Caloroso" <analogdiehard@att.net>

You might need the FX; when you add an instrument to build a MIX, the programs don't have the FX included. Although the A6 is multitimbral, you can only have one FX in a MIX. We tried to design most factory programs so that they didn't rely too heavily on FX for their sound.

You have to do a STORE, COPY (Soft Button 3), then set SP1 (Soft Pot 1) to PGM DFX, SP6 to MIX EDIT BUFFER, select the program you want FX copied from with SP3 (SP2 selects bank), and press STORE twice. Then you press CONFIG under DIGITAL EFFECTS, select the mix instrument, and set the send level for each instrument (OUT is master for all instruments). Oh, and turn FX ON!

4. You get one effect setup per mix, and you get a separate send level for each program within the mix.

5. Jan 29 10:38:22 2004

From: dfevans at bbcr.uwaterloo.ca (David Evans)

There is only one FX setup for the entire mix, since the A6 has only one effects processor. You'll need to set up the mix with the effects that you want; there's a facility to copy them from a program, IIRC.

6. Jan 29 10:42:47 2004

From: susanbaird at nc.rr.com (Susan Baird)

It seems like there are 2 questions here. The first question is why program sounds don't sound the same once you bring them into a mix. The second question is why you can't get your effects to work in mix mode.

The first question...when you have a preset mix and you are bring a program into it, you are not bringing the effects along with the sound. The mixes have their own set of effects. So when you bring a program into the mix it takes on the effects that were assigned to the mix. Every program and every mix has their own effects that were programmed into it. You can change any of these and you can copy effects from one to the other. Page 246 explains this. "Note that while each individual Program has its own Effects parameters in Program Mode, those aren't brought into the Mix since there aren't 16 separate Digital Effects and Analog Distortion sections."

The second question...Did you (1) follow the instructions on page 246? And (2) did you make sure you were sending effects to the proper channel(s)? As it states, any effect other than send or pan applies to the entire mix, not the specific channel. If this doesn't help you, tell us exactly the steps you took so someone can troubleshoot where it went wrong.

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## Compatible Cases

### Questions:

1. Jan 7 2002

Anybody have any recommendations for a good SKB type hard case for the A6? The SKB won't work because it's not deep enough. I'd be looking for one without the rivets in the side that damage the endcaps as Mike P. mentioned - mine are already damaged enough ;) Also would prefer one that doesn't weigh a ton like those black-felt-over-particle-board ones I've seen.

2. Oct 20 2003

From: markxxvii at yahoo.com (mark27)  
Subject: [A6] road case for A6?

hey everybody,

I need to get a road case asap for my A6.

Are there any hard shell road cases out there made specifically for the A6. Has anyone had a good experience with a generic off-the-shelf road case with their A6?

3. Jan 22 20:38:03 2004

From: EQ at goatrance.net (K Coulter)

Can anyone recommend a specific case for the a6? I know it would have to be something that does a good job of protecting the top panel. Remember seeing this on the list awhile back but i don't feel like poking through the archives all over again!

anyone know where a good ATA flight case can be had? I am thinking of taking the A6 on the road as my main controller, and it doesn't fit the standard SKB cases.

4. (*Dustcover*)

**Q:** Jan 23 10:28:50 2004

From: goughx at socal.rr.com (R & J Gough)

Subject: [A6] Dust cover?

Anyone know of a dust cover that fits the Andromeda well?

Keywear don't recommend a size for it, although I wonder if a medium would fit. The Yamaha KDC4250 looks about the right size, but slightly large. Any other suggestions?

**A:** Jul 27 19:10:52 2003

From: gwaltzer at optonline.net (Greg Waltzer)

The keywear medium fits perfectly. \$20 at MF.

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### Answers:

1. Aug 30 2003

From: chris.pickett at mail.mcgill.ca (Chris Pickett)

I have the Gator GK-261R ... it's about half as expensive as the Anvil cases. Admittedly it has only survived the trip from Boston to Montreal as carried by UPS, but there's plenty of room for bubble wrap to protect the knobs and endcheeks ... I don't see mine getting damaged in this case. Anybody who has this case and has suffered, please comment.

2. Jan 29 12:14:03 2004

From: analoguediehard at att.net (Michael E. Caloroso)

Definitely Anvil for gigging. My Anvil case has extra dense foam on the endpieces to secure it in place when closed, and there is air space between the panel and the lid so it is amply protected. Mine cost me \$360, well worth it. I have used Anvil cases for over twenty years with my vintage gear. For a while I tried other brands (Hot Rod, Jan-al) but in the end I went back to Anvil.

Just call Anvil and ask for a distributor, then place the order for an "ATA case with recessed handles and latches for Alesis Andromeda" and you'll get the case I have. And you get free stenciling from Anvil!

I just bought a Gator polymer case for my new 6-string bass and I think it is a much better case than SKB. They can be fitted with recessed latches. If they make a case for the Andromeda it'd be cheaper than Anvil, but I have no idea how protected the front panel would be.

3. Jan 29 13:19:13 2004  
From: xray2 at nc.rr.com (Ray Phelps)

When I bought my Andromeda (has it been a year already) I also picked up a Road Ready case. I don't know the model number as I used it to get the synth home and for future carting around (I don't gig so don't know how it stands up to that). It seems fairly well constructed, has handles all over the place and castor wheels for easy dragging (which I needed cuz that thing was HEAVY with the Andy inside ;) ).

Not shilling them but here is there web address:

<http://roadreadycases.com>

4. May 12 2003  
From: jonathan at subterfuse.net (Jonathan Baker)

The Gator GK-261R. I've even flown with it, it's fantastic. Fun part is the baggers will put it on the rollers and it will get stuck at the door to the baggage area and hold everyone's luggage up for 30 minutes. That was fun :-p. But it remains (barely) within flight weight and size limitations so you can avoid extra charges.

If you call up [www.8thstreet.com](http://www.8thstreet.com) they'll get it for ya for a good price. (\$200 range if I remember right)

5. Mar 25 17:26:56 2004  
From: gwaltzer at optonline.net (Greg Waltzer)  
Subject: [A6] Hard case for A6

Just wanted to let you all know - I got a custom hard case for the A6 from Case Technology  
<http://www.keyboardcases.com/>  
It fits perfectly and best of all, the knobs are well protected.  
The price was \$206.

6. Jan 29 16:25:10 2004  
From: cgould11 at tampabay.rr.com (Chad Gould)

My main complaint about the Gator case is the placement of the handles (prefer a single, stronger center handle to two side ones) and the lack of a crossbar on the wheel side flush with the wheels (meaning that you can't stand it up straight on its wheels very well, because it ends up at an angle and can tip over if you aren't careful!)

It's certainly a good case otherwise, though, especially for the price. Very rigid and fits the Andromeda easily.

7. Case: Gator GK-261. Gator is the only one I found that lists the Andro in thier size chart, and lists this as a fitting case. It's ATA, has wheels, and recessed clasps. It lists for \$249, but I found it at music123.com for \$189.
8. soft case: SKB-KB61 (*ed.*)

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## Where to Buy Memory Cards

### Questions:

1. > where can I find the best price on a RAM card that works with the a6?

2. Jul 11 2002

From: arrakian at mac.com (arrakian)

Subject: [A6] Ram card for Andromeda

What's the difference between the SRAM with and without Attribute Memory?

3. Apr 5 08:40:29 2004

From: miguel.mendoza at terra.es (Miguel Mendoza)

Subject: [A6] PCMCIA Ram cards

Hello, can anybody tell me where I can buy on-line a PCMCIA card for the A6 in Europe, which is the biggest one I can work with?

---

### Answers:

1. <http://www.timasci.com/sram.htm>

2 MB SRAM Card SN5002-P \$69.49

(the one without attribute memory)

ie about \_60\_ bucks cheaper and they ship worldwide AT ACTUAL COST!!!  
other companies tried to charge me 40 -50 bucks for sending just one card to Europe. The staff at tima went to great length to help me out and were very friendly to boot.

they tried to warn me that Alesis synths needed 512 Kb cards but i explained to them that the Andromeda could handle it :)

2. Jan 23 10:27:21 2004  
From: peabreu at sapo.pt (Paulo Abreu)

You can order it from TEC.SYS in Germany ([www.tecsys.de](http://www.tecsys.de)) I got mine from them, and I believe other members did it too. The reference is SJA-002M5C (pcmcia sram, 2Mb memorycard, 68-polig) but if you ask, they know exactly what is needed for the Andromeda.

3. Thu Jul 11 2002  
From mark.strijbos at hccnet.nl  
Subject: [A6] Ram card for Andromeda

> It needs to be an SRAM card, NOT a Flash card. Unfortunately, SRAM> cards are considerably more expensive.after a long hard search i have found a good source for Pretec SRAM cards at [www.timasci.com](http://www.timasci.com) <http://www.timasci.com/sram.htm>

4. Apr 5 16:51:46 2004  
From: clusterchord at hotmail.com (tomislav babic)

hola

I'm in Croatia, and i ordered form Tyma (Canada) . I got them in less than a week. Shipping was quick and cheap.

i payed \$133 total for two 2MB SRAMs

They work! (i get 8 preset banks, or 6 preset plus 4 mix banks, on a single 2MB card)

<http://www.timasci.com/sram.htm>

model you want is: SN5002-P \$58.89

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## More SRAM Card Info

[load from SRAM card](#)  
[remove SRAM while on](#)  
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## Can I Load Programs and Mixes from the SRAM card?

Oct 3 2002

From: fernstudio at telus.net (Fernstudio)

Subject: [A6] Selecting Programs from RAM Card

Hi

Let's try this again. My first mail did not get through. I am hopefully soon buying an Andromeda. I've been reading the manual to get familiar with it and I have one question which the manual does not explain clearly. Can I select programs from a RAM card without loading them into User memory first? I.e., does the card operate like a memory expansion as well as storage or can I only store banks on the card and must load them if the sound is not in the User bank? I could not find an answer in the archives.

Fernstudio

Oct 4 2002

From: arnd at reinklang.de (Arnd Kaiser)

Hi,

Yes, you can load programs directly from a RAM card and you can save to the card both single programs/mixes or whole banks. You can even select card programs directly via MIDI program change commands, using bank select messages.

Arnd

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RAM Cards or Sysex

Aug 20 2003

Quoting Dave Scrimenti <dscrimenti@adelphia.net>:

As far as I know, you can save patches with any software that can save midi sysex data, I started using midiox but then found jsynthlib which I personally like better. Both are freely available on the internet. The only problem is that recalling saved patches from one of those programs involves a sysex dump back into the A6 and even though I haven't had any problems yet, I've heard that occasionally it can fail and you have to muck around with settings and if you get a corrupt patch you may have to re-initialise and so on. Needless to say it takes some time and all your PC and stuff has to be set up and running, with a



memory card, on the other hand, you just change banks and off you go, it's as easy as recalling patches from the preset banks, that's worth the \$70 in my opinion.  
-&e.

## Removing SRAM Card While A6 is On

May 23 17:51:05 2004

From: analoguediehard at att.net (Michael E. Caloroso)

Subject: [A6] Removing Sram card while A6 is on?

> Will this fry the Sram card or A6? :)

No, but removing the card while data is being written to it can corrupt the data on the card and render it unreadable.

These are PCMCIA compliant devices which are designed to be removed safely with the power on. Think laptops.

MC

## How do I initialize the SRAM card?

Oct 2002

From: "Karl West" <karl.west1@btopenworld.com>

Fire up the A6 put the card in and the A6 should detect the card. Then press store, followed by card (soft button 6). Turn soft knob 1 all the way round until "hit store to initiate card" shows. Press store to initiate and you will be given options to how you want the card structured. For saving just program banks on the card press soft button 1, for just mix banks soft button 2 and for mixes and programs soft button 3. I used soft button 3 so I can have 6 program banks and 3 mix banks. Then downloaded the five program banks (by Rob Papen, Klaus Peter etc) from alesis's site

(<http://www.alesis.com/downloads/software/A6/index.html>) for card banks 1-5. This means you'll have an added 635 preset sounds and you can use card bank 6 for your own patches. Plus you'll be able to save 3 banks of your own mixes.

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# Tuning issues

## Questions:

1. Mar 27 07:46:08 2004  
From: CBVGUITAR at aol.com (CBVGUITAR@aol.com)  
Subject: [A6] A6 won't stay tuned

I'm a newbie to analog synthesizers so I'm not sure as to the severity of my problem. My A6 is behaving strangely on all of its presets. The unit will not go in tune. Sometimes it's about a semitone out and other times it dips out of tune while being played. I've tried hard and a soft reset, autotune....nothing has helped.

Does my A6 need servicing and what that might entail?

---

## Answers:

1. Analog synths with real analog oscillators require a warmup period of about 15-20 minutes before the electronics and tuning have stabilized. When any analog oscillator is powered on cold, there is a tuning error which goes away as the circuit warms up to ambient temperature. This is because the linear voltage to exponential current converter in each analog oscillator circuit (32 total in the A6) has a temperature factor in its transfer function. That is an unavoidable fact of life with analog oscillators.

2. Jul 22 12:33:32 2003  
From: protokol13 at hotmail.com (Tony J)

I usually turn on my A6, leave it on with background tuning OFF, and Temp tuning ON. I leave it on for around 10 minutes and then I play some pieces to see if it's in tune. If it's still out of tune I use auto-tune. I rarely use background tuning because I actually hear weirder tuning problems when it's on, and I only turn it on if I need the A6 to be in tune quickly. Just keep this in mind "auto tune" AFTER the A6 warms up, I find it sounds a lot better.

3. Myself, I find that the best sound out of the A6, as a whole, comes with

turning Autotune off and leaving Temptune on. In this mode, the A6 seems to have a nice 80s polysynth sound, with quite a bit more stability and quite a bit longer of a tuning time compared to some. :) Turning off temptune actually doesn't add too much to my ears, and severely impacts tuning stability.

4. Jan 28 04:25:21 2004  
From: demokid at home.se (Demokid)

Hi

I think this is a good thing... It is an analogue synthesizer and they need time to warm up. I rather have a synthesizer that I have to tune ones in a while but sound alive then a boring digital synthesizer.

I think the A6 is very stable if I compare to e.g. a Memorymoog or OB-Xa. I always wait ca 15-20 minutes before I tune my A6, Prophet-5, JP6/8 and Minimoog.

I don't use any temp or background tuning on the A6 since I think it kills the analogue feeling. I think it is cool if every tone sounds a little different from each other.

5. Mar 1 15:43:49 2004  
From: dfevans at bbcr.uwaterloo.ca (David Evans)

I don't know whether you'll get a definitive answer on this.  
Try the various combinations and pick the one that sounds best to you.

6. Mar 31 07:06:43 2004  
From: gmoehrke at execpc.com (Geoff Moehrke)

FWIW - I gig with my A6 several times a month (for the last 2 years or so). A little care and a solid flight case is all it takes. No tuning issues here. I do recall my P5 (many years ago), often required a self-tune during breaks, etc. It usually didn't take as long as the A6 to tune, but it had 9 fewer voices to worry about. From my experience, once the A6 has stabilized (usually less than 10 minutes for me), it seldom requires another tuning for the remainder of the night.

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## What is the latest OS?

**Answers:**

1. 1.40.12 ? Press the Global button. Then press SB 6&7 simultaneously. Then press SB 7&8 simultaneously. You should see the version.

2. May 6 13:59:47 2004

From: chris.pickett at mail.mcgill.ca (Chris Pickett)

I typed "1.40.13 a6" into google and found:

<http://roland.code404.com/pipermail/a6/2002-June/000014.html>

which pointed me to:

<http://alesis.com/beta/a6/>

Apparently it only benefits saving global parameters, and dates back to 2002.

3. May 7 04:30:52 2004

From: spd2156 at sympatico.ca (NeonLights)

Hi, Joshua If I'm correct the latest official A6 OS is 1.40.12 .

4. Sep 26 2002

From: spd2156 at sympatico.ca (M.G.S.)

Subject: [A6] Updating A6 OS for Mac Users

Hi you all:

I just got my A6 and even though they toll me that the new units were being sold with the latest OS , v01.40.02 is what I got on my A6.

As I understand v01.40.12 is the latest official OS update.

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## How Do I Update the OS? (Mac)

### Questions:

1. Sep 12 2003

From: RSchwim295 at aol.com (RSchwim295@aol.com)

Subject: [A6] A6 OS help needed

Help--

I downloaded the latest OS for the A6, got a stuffit folder which went to an old version (classic) to unstuff, which doesn't seem right. I unstuff it in OSX and get six versions of a Quicktime Player thing that sez "A6 OS", but doesn't specify much more than that. In addition to the 6 OS versions in Quicktime, I get 6 gibberish text versions of some thing. I'm not sure if these OS things are valid, and I certainly don't want to dump them into the A6 without knowing what they are. That's about it.

Rob Schwimmer

2. Sep 26 2002

From: spd2156 at sympatico.ca (M.G.S.)

Subject: [A6] Updating A6 OS for Mac Users

Hi you all:

I just got my A6 and even though they toll me that the new units were being sold with the latest OS , v01.40.02 is what I got on my A6.

As I understand v01.40.12 is the latest official OS update.

Now , I'm a Mac user , how do I do it? I'm a bit afraid.

If I use cubase, do I open each midi file and send each one in intervals? Will the A6 wait each time?

Or just by sending one midi file will do the update?

which midi file is the single one?

Or is it better to use the single Syx file?

Somehow I feel more confident with Cubase.

Can you help me?

3. Oct 3 2002

From: spd2156 at sympatico.ca (M.G.S.)

Hi you all Mac Users:

I spent many hours (Days?) trying to update my A6 from 1.40.02 to 1.40.12 Up to this hour

I'm still getting checksum error : Try again!

I'm following the manual to the letter!

Here's what I'm trying:

Cubase : The 6 midi files , loading them individually.

Cubase : The 6 midi files in a single track.

Motif sequencer : loading each midi file individually , as Song or Pattern.

SysEx v.4.5.2 : Single sysex file : Single and individual sysex files.

OMS SysEx Sender : Single and individual sysex files.

Freeloader doesn't work at all ????????

Downloaded fresh OS copies from the Alesis site.

Is there a hidden page I'm bypassing? or a parameter I can't see?

NOTE: Testing to see if (SysEx and OMS SysEx) will work , I sent a patch to the A6 and . . .

I almost had a heart attack as my beloved A6

FROZE!! I was forced to do a hard re-set. (The A6 was OK. after that)

This is what forced me to stop trying as I don't know what else can happen!?

---

### Answers:

1. Sep 29 2002

From: spd2156 at sympatico.ca (M.G.S.)

A simple solution is to download Sysex Librarian OS X from the Apple website, and you can use this program to directly load the single .syx file that comes with the OS update. It is a little slow, but works well.

-Marshall

2. Oct 3 2002

From: peake at pacificnet.net (Mike Peake)

Your MOTU MIDI interface might present better results ;-)

It's been a while since I've updated one, but Sysex 4.5.2 always worked like a charm for dumping the large, single OS sysex file. You have to slow down the send rate to 80 or it won't work.

3. Oct 4 2002

From: peabreu at sapo.pt (Paulo Abreu)

I have always used the latest version of SysEx 4.5.2 without any kind of problems. But I still use only OS8.6 on a B&W G3...not fast but solid as a rock. To find SysEx 4.5.2 just get to any Tucows mirror, its everywhere as a shareware...its really a great app.

4. Sep 13 2003

You should also get one large ".syx" file (about 740k) which has all of the data in sysex format. I've successfully used SysEx Librarian to update my A6 OS. Go to <http://www.snoize.com/SysExLibrarian/>

Just run the tool, drop the large .syx file on the librarian window, choose to send it to your A6, and press "run". You might want to increase the pause between played messages, if it doesn't work first time around. (See Prefs)

The "a6\_os.update.pdf" doc (recommended reading, btw) says you can also use the 6 smaller files and send them one at a time.

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## Will there be a new version of the OS?

### Answers:

1. From MelloT at aol.com Tue Feb 3 13:14:08 2004  
From: MelloT at aol.com (MelloT@aol.com)  
Date: Tue Feb 3 13:15:03 2004  
Subject: [A6] First Post: fx sync / voice stealing  
Message-ID: <7a.50074834.2d516920@aol.com>

This is a very old story... but you are new here, so here is the short version: Alesis is not going to give out the code, and they will probably never change the OS. The synthesizer you have is not perfect but it does a lot, so we should be happy with what it does. No old keyboards are perfect, but this one does so much more already. The A6 was not a success for Alesis, and the company almost died because of this and other things. Someone else has bought Alesis now and they choose to spend their time and money on things that will make them more profit, but not the A6. This is the way it is...

2. Unlikely.

3. Mar 19 2002  
From: Justin Maxwell [soc@code404.com](mailto:soc@code404.com)

I've asked this numerous times. As far as I know, they don't understand how beneficial open source can be to the development of an OS, and are keeping it internal. There are a lot of die-hard a6 users on this list. If one of them wants to develop the OS while alesis sits on it, they should be able to...But it's copyrighted technology, and not something most companies

will easily make public.

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## Patch Librarians & Sysex Editors

### Questions:

1. > Isn't there a program that lets you save A6 patches on your computer so you don't have to deal with these expensive memory cards?
- 

### Answers:

1. May 13, 2004  
Simon Fine wrote:

I use the JSynthLib from <http://www.jsynthlib.org/>. I used it with my Matrix 1000 and presently use it with my A6. I find it great and easy to use.

2. May 13, 2004  
Chris Pickett wrote:

Emagic's SoundDiver 3.0.5.2 for PC and Mac works OK. The only thing I could find on their site was:

<http://www.emagic.de/support/download/sounddiverX.php?lang=EN>

which is a Mac-only public beta. I've also seen copies of the PC version floating around on some p2p networks. Cyril Blanc wrote the A6 module for it, but the last we heard things were not progressing very well on that front ...

If you can get it to work, MIDI-Ox is fine for transmitting patches and banks, but there is nothing A6-specific about it. Latest version is 7.0

<http://www.midiox.com/>

The last thing I played with was JSynthLib, which IIRC works on OS X, Windows, and Linux. There was an A6-specific driver for it written by Kenneth Martinez if I'm not mistaken, and it



is under the GPL. Latest version is 0.18.

<http://www.jsynthlib.org>

3. Sep 2 2002

From: prauz at lycos.com (Paul Evenblij)

Subject: [A6] Mac patch randomizer v1.2 available

Version 1.2 of my patch randomizer is now available. New stuff in:

- + A 'Normalize' button to reset selected modules to default parameter values.
- + It is actually possible to instantly switch from randomizing to normalizing (and vice versa), just by holding down the Normalize (or Randomize) button.
- + A 'Repeat' option to keep looping through the modules.
- + (And now for the million-euro functionality...) MIDI settings are now saved as preferences!

General info:

Andromizer is a patch randomizer for the Alesis A6 Andromeda synthesizer, running on Macintosh computers. It can randomize all relevant program mode parameters. You can choose which modules to process, so you have a certain degree of control over the chaos you hopefully create.

Currently Mac OS 8-9 only, and you need OMS 2.0.

Mac OS X version is being researched.

Please have a look or download:

<http://www.knoware.nl/users/paulpaul/dm/andromizer>

Thanks,

Paul

4. A6 Banker Andromeda Sysex Utility

Jul 1 2002

From: mark.strijbos at hccnet.nl (Mark Strijbos)

Pleased to announce a SysEx dump utility for the Alesis Andromeda (wintel platform). It sends and receives individual programs & mixes, banks and global data dumps and reads & writes standard SysEx files.

A free trial version can be downloaded at this URL:

<http://home.hccnet.nl/mark.strijbos/syn/a6/index.html>

Mark Strijbos

5. Mar 2 2003 (Windows)

From: karl.west1 at btopenworld.com (Karl West)

Getting the PCMCIA card is a big help when saving patches but you can save over the top of the user presets if you want. Just press the store button and select where you want to save the patch to (whether to the PCMCIA card slots or over the user patches). I usually back up all my patches on my PC also just in case I accidentally reset my PCMCIA card or I lose my patches. Just download midi OX from alesis's site and bulk dump your patch via midi and record the bulk dumped information with midi OX. Just set midi OX to record sysex, press store on the A6, then soft button 5 for "sysex" page and store again to bulk dump. Then save the patch in midi OX. I usually record all my bulk dumped sysex data from my other synths in my sequencer, but for some reason cubase SX won't record bulk dumps from the A6

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## Poly-Aftertouch Problems?

### Questions:

1. Mar 07 2002

From: [Marzzz@aol.com](mailto:Marzzz@aol.com)

I wish there was a polyaftertouch keyboard on the Andromeda, that was so much a part of the CS-80, and would make the A6 that much better (btw Peake- when are we going to get that "zero touch point" option on the A6 ribbon?). I am also looking into an old Ensoniq controller for the polyAT.

2. Poly AfterTouch

Hi! Has anyone got the A6 to respond to poly-AT? According to the Users Manual it should be able to receive both channel and poly-AT. But using my recently acquired GEM S3 (a synth with poly-AT) as MIDI controller, I get no response from my A6 using poly-AT. My A6 has OS version 1.40.12.

3. Sep 24 2002

From: Marzzz at aol.com ([Marzzz@aol.com](mailto:Marzzz@aol.com))

Subject: [A6] PolyAftertouch

Hello-

I recently acquired a GeneralMusic S3 keyboard, which has the unique

capability of transmitting PolyAftertouch. Unfortunately, I can not get the A6 to respond to it. When the S3 is set to transmit channel AT, the A6 responds normally. I have A6 OS 1.40.12, and I have tried setting both "Key" and MIDI Aftertouch as a mod source to filter frequency, but there is no response. I have the MIDI OUT of the S3 connected directly to the MIDI IN.

Polyaftertouch on the S3 works locally, and messages are being transmitted polyphonically when it is connected to my sequencer (Logic Audio Mac) in the MIDI monitor window.

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### Answers:

1. Mar 07 2002

From: Mike Peake [peake@pacificnet.net](mailto:peake@pacificnet.net)

Hi Jose, that is why the A6 can receive polyphonic aftertouch via MIDI. Just assign it to any destination you want :-)

2. Sep 25 2002

From: peake at pacificnet.net (Mike Peake)

I believe that it must be assigned per mod destination, not globally.

"MIDI Aftertouch".

3. May 14 2003

From: dfevans at bbcr.uwaterloo.ca (David Evans)

Sure, but isn't there also a mod source for poly aftertouch? ;-)

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## Oscillator FM Problems?

### Questions:

1. Jun 20 2002

From: ohesch at web.de (oliver hesch)  
Subject: [A6] andromeda FM problem, do you have a solution?

hi i take the freedom to contact you as alesis support doesn't answer and hopefully some of you might be able to help with a problem i have encountered on my new andro.

i have noticed on my new andro, (manufactured september 2001, version 1.40.02) that as soon as i switch on FM, the voices stop being in tune and in rotate mode, each time you strike the same key, the sound will be very different 16 times (so for all of teh voices). if you continue you start hearing the same different 16 sounds. so each voice responds differently to FM. this happens even though the unit is perfectly in tune. i have tried everything (FM with noice OSC2 mod OSC1 mod starting from different sounds and a new patch etc.) the only way to use FM under such circumstances is to switch it to mono and static voice allocation to get always the same sound. you can't do poly sounds this way. that is a serious limitation.

the calibration of the OSCs seems to be quite random for FM even though they are perfectly in tune. is there a bug in the FM implementation?

2. Jan 7 2003

From: jered at future-retro.com (Future Retro Synthesizers)  
Subject: FW: [A6] Future of the A6... Comment

Hello all,

I recently started using the A6, and am new to the list. I notice some strange things when modulating oscillator A with oscillator B's waveform. I play a note and set the FM to create a desired tone. I then play the same key repeatedly and the tone varies for each new key press (I assume this is due to different voices being used to play the tone). I should mention that the unit is on for more than 30 minutes before tuning, and more than often retuning again. I saw the note about improper FM tracking below, so is this something others have found as well? In my thinking, if the amplitude of the A6's waveforms vary slightly in amplitude from voice to voice this could be the problem.

3. Jan 07, 2003

From: dfevans at bbcr.uwaterloo.ca (David Evans)

Yep. This is basically a FAQ. The VCA that controls the FM index is not calibrated by the CPU, so there's no way to ensure that it is the same for all voices. I don't know whether the hardware precludes such a calibration or whether the software simply doesn't do it.

4. I did ask them specifically about FM tracking. It sounds like calibrating them closer just isn't possible with the hardware they have. They're aware that you can save a program and then recall it later and it will sound different because of drift. They recommended leaving background tuning off when using FM, because the oscillators might "correct" themselves and change the sound.

---

## Answers:

1. Jun 20 2002

From: dfevans at bbcr.uwaterloo.ca

This has come up briefly before. IIRC, the VCAs that are responsible for FM cannot be calibrated by the microprocessor. If the FM amount is at all high the VCAs' errors manifest themselves as differing FM indices on each voice, leading to just what you describe.

2. Nov 26 2002

From: kmartinez at bency.com (Kenneth Martinez)

How about switching from rotating voice assignment to lowest for your FM programs, so voice 1 always plays first? That way it sounds consistent...at least, that's what I've done.

3. I don't think that the issue is tracking but rather lack of precise control over FM index, caused by the inability to calibrate the relevant VCA. In a way this may be a harder problem to solve than tracking, since it's pretty easy to adjust VCO frequency offsets under CPU control. My guess is that the ASIC designers just ran out of space and had to stop somewhere.

4. Nov 26 12:58:44 2002

From: peake at pacificnet.net (Mike Peake)

The A6 allows an extremely deep index of exponential FM on the oscillators and filters as well, far greater than on the MKS80 (I've had a couple of those as well). The VCAs which control this amount, along with the VCAs which control the amount of external modulation of oscillator frequency, filter frequency etc. are not calibrated, as you've found; I don't remember the specific reason why, but there it is; you should be able to duplicate what can be done on the MKS80 with the A6 if you use the FM sparingly. An issue way down the wish list would be to see if these parameters could be hand set in some sort of sub-menu; it is unknown if they would have to be tuned after each power-up (by hand, again).

Analog is, well, analog. Digital offers

perfect tracking and pitch stability (with the resultant precise FM) for those who need it. It has yet to be demonstrated that virtual digital systems can produce the organic character of musically-oriented gear.

The VCAs, for some reason, were not looped back into the feedback path which allows the computer to calibrate things. I don't remember if this was due to an impossibility (chip layout) or not.

5. Sep 2 2003  
From: protokol13 at hotmail.com (Proto)

Actually there are several things you can do about the FM in the A6. The problem as mentioned before is that the VCAs are at slightly different amplitudes, but this is only an issue if you are making a polyphonic patch with FM. The solution is to set you FM patch to mono and limit it to a specific voice number, you will find that your FM patches will be fairly stable as long as the same voice is being used. Unfortunately, with only two oscillators there's not much you can do as far as FM... Yet the overtones will still be quite harsh because the A6 has very rich overtones in waveforms that have them present (saw, pulse, etc).

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## Are Arp or Seq Midi Notes Transmitted?

No.

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## How do I save programs and mixes?

### Questions:

1. May 6 14:27:31 2004  
From: demokid at home.se (Demokid)

I can't SysEx dump programs or banks from the A6 to Cubase SX. Cubase does not receive any data, I can however record knob data... Du you think 1.40.13 might help me?

---

### Answers:

1. Try using MIDI-Ox with 128 buffers of size 2350 bytes (the size of one patch) ... it also worked for me with 2048 byte buffers.

2. Sep 30 2003

From: chris.pickett at mail.mcgill.ca (Chris Pickett)

3. In MidiOX:

select view, and then sysex. this opens the sysex window

go to sysex, and then configure in the sysex window.

there should be settings for low level input and ouput buffers (4 different numbers). they should be 2048, 128, 2048, 128.

delay (milliseconds between buffers): 250

first checkbox: delay after f7: 250

5th checkbox also ticked.

these are the settings that worked for me. you have to open and send the banks using the controls in the sysex window ... not sure if it works in the rest of midiox, haven't tried it.

i'm using version 6.5.1.346

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## Getting Started

## Questions:

1. Dec 23 2002  
From: subby33 at yahoo.com (KC Jackson)  
Subject: [A6] starting from scratch

I just got my andromeda today. I cant find in the manual to find a preset to start from scratch. Can anyone help me? Thanks

## Answers:

1. You 'can' press soft button 8, then pressing STORE. This loads 'The Default Program'. But beware that this one already has several modulation routings active, for some reason...
2. ...which you get by pressing SB8 (labeled NEWPRG) then STORE from the main Program screen (the one that shows the patch name).

3. May 1 2003  
From: tom at synthservices.com (Tom Moravansky)

My initial experience was similar, except the manual had not been written yet. :-)

It took a week of solid experimentation and playing around to 'get' the A6. After a week or two of 4 hour sessions per day, the A6 made sense and it was easy to get around. It's one of those synths that makes sense if you work with it every day and it takes a while to get spun back up if you don't touch it for a couple months. Kind of like setting up Zones in the Matrix 12 (or doing anything with a Voyetra 8...).

My advice: Take the default program, turn off all the mod routes, save that as your personal default.

Now go in and focus on one section at a time, almost as if you were a tester. Play with all the params in the oscillator section (including FM) and then move on to the filter and envelopes. After that, look at the modulation section (LFOs, etc) and start creating simple mod routes.

One trick I found useful during testing was to use the pitch wheel or mod wheel as the source for a mod route. That way, I could control the introduction of the modulation and hear how it affected the mod destination.

4. Getting Started - Follows the manual beginning on page 103 of the manual.

Starting with Basic Tones



First set a tone for Osc. 1 and Osc. 2 so you can hear what you do to them.

Hit the Program button. Then press soft button 8 (NEWPRG). It will say, "Press 'store' to get the default program."

Turn all buttons as far to the left as they will go to turn everything off. The only things that should be on are Osc. 1, set it to a Triangle wave; Osc. 2, set it to a Saw wave; and in the Envelope module on the right of the A6, turn up the Sustain on Envelop 3 (Amp). Everything else should be off.

In the Pre-Filter Mix you can turn the Osc.1 knob and Osc. 2 knobs so that you can clearly hear both oscillators. (Mix them together)

Press the View button for Osc. 1. This will show you the parameters for Osc. 1. Press the soft buttons to view the parameter pages. Do the same for Osc. 2. Review pages 104 – 106 in the manual and become familiar with the oscillator parameters. Be sure to check out the Square wave/Pulse Width paragraph at the bottom of page 106. Try it.

#### Envelope 1 Modulating the Oscillators

Next, (page 107-108 in the manual) hit the View button for Osc. 1. Select the ENV1 page. You will see the 'enable' function for Osc. 1 and Osc.2. Enable the envelope for Osc. 1 and play with the levels. Then, as directed in the manual, play with the Envelope 1 knobs in the upper right hand corner of the A6.

Next, enable the envelope for Osc. 2 and do the same. Then enable envelope 1 for both Osc. and play with the levels and envelope 1 knobs. If you hit the Mod 1 button in the Env. 1 section you should be able to easily make helicopter type sounds.

Be sure to investigate the Live setting as described in the manual.

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## Links:

Download the 'Andromeda Tips and Tricks' document:

<http://home.planet.nl/~robnet/a6/A6TipsAndTricks.html>

<http://home.planet.nl/~robnet/a6/A6TipsAndTricks.doc>

<http://home.planet.nl/~robnet/a6/A6TipsAndTricks.rtf>

<http://home.planet.nl/~robnet/a6/A6TipsAndTricks.pdf>

<http://home.planet.nl/~robnet/a6/A6TipsAndTricks.sxw>

“Moogulator” tricks and info site:

[http://www.sequencer.de/moogulatorium/alesis\\_andromeda.html](http://www.sequencer.de/moogulatorium/alesis_andromeda.html)

A6 Andromeda Community Website:

<http://www.wohmart.com/a6>

Patches – Boele

<http://www.synthmusic.info/mp3s/andy/librarian-files.exe>

<http://www.synthmusic.info/mp3s/andy/midi-files.exe>

<http://www.synthmusic.info/mp3s/andy/sysex-files.exe>

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