KNIGHTSNARE

Knight Strings 74

String Ensemble — User Manual



Instrument plugin for Mac (AU, VST3, Standalone), Windows (VST3) and Linux (VST3).
knightsnare.com
Inspired by the 1970s Solina String Ensemble. Knight Strings 74 is an independent Knightsnare product: not affiliated with or endorsed by the makers of the original. No samples are used.

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1. Welcome

Knight Strings 74 is a string machine in the style of the mid-1970s string ensembles behind countless disco, prog, new wave and synth-pop records. It's fully polyphonic: every key can play at once, just like the original's divide-down design.

The sound is generated the way those machines did it: one master clock divided down to every note, stepped sawtooth waves, simple filters for each register, and then the all-important **ensemble** chorus that turns a thin buzz into a lush wall of strings. A built-in phaser, the same one as in Knight Phase 74, adds the classic swirl.

2. Installing

Mac

Open the downloaded zip and double-click the installer. It installs the Audio Unit (Logic, GarageBand) and the VST3 (Ableton Live, Cubase, Studio One, Reaper and others). Then open your DAW and let it rescan its plug-ins. The installer is signed and approved by Apple, so macOS won't warn you. macOS 11 or later, Apple Silicon and Intel.

Windows

Unzip the download and copy the **.vst3** into `C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3`, then rescan plug-ins in your DAW. 64-bit Windows 10 or 11.

Linux

Unzip the download and copy the **.vst3** into `~/.vst3` (create the folder if needed), then rescan in your DAW (for example Reaper or Bitwig). 64-bit, Ubuntu 22.04 or newer, or a similar distribution.

> **Tip** This is an instrument. Load it on an instrument or MIDI track, not as an audio effect.

3. The panel



Knight Strings 74.

Control	What it does
Register buttons	CONTRABASS, CELLO, VIOLA, VIOLIN, TRUMPET and HORN. Light one or more to build the sound.
CUTOFF, RESONANCE	A 24 dB low-pass filter on the strings: darken the sound or add a resonant peak.
ENSEMBLE	The lush chorus that makes it sound like an orchestra.
PHASER, COLOR, RATE	The built-in phaser: on/off, Soft or Deep, and how fast it sweeps.
VOLUME BASS	Level of the low registers (contrabass and cello).
CRESCENDO	How slowly the strings swell in when you press a key.
SUSTAIN LENGTH	How long notes ring on after you let go.
VOLUME	The overall level.
PROGRAM display	Click for the preset list; the arrows step through presets.

4. Registers: choosing the sound

Register	Sound
CONTRABASS	Deep bass strings, one octave below the cello. Lower half of the keyboard only (below G3), like the original's bass split.
CELLO	Dark, warm 8' strings. Also only below G3.
VIOLA	Brighter 8' strings across the whole keyboard.
VIOLIN	The viola one octave up: the classic high string sound.
TRUMPET	A brassy tone through a resonant filter, with a fast attack.
HORN	Like the trumpet but mellower. Trumpet and horn share one filter, so only one of them can be on at a time.

Tip The classic sound: VIOLA + VIOLIN with ENSEMBLE on. Add CELLO and CONTRABASS for a full orchestra under your left hand.

5. Shaping the sound

- **CRESCENDO** sets how long the strings take to swell in. Short for stabs and rhythm parts; long for slow, dramatic pads. The brass registers always start quickly.
- **SUSTAIN LENGTH** sets the release for everything: short for staccato, long for notes that hang in the air.
- **CUTOFF** and **RESONANCE**: the filter is fully open (no effect) at the top with no resonance. Turn CUTOFF down for darker, softer strings; add RESONANCE for a synth-like peak, right up to self-oscillation.
- The keys aren't velocity sensitive, just like the original: every note plays at the same level.
- Like the old machines, each key's timing varies by a few percent and the tuning has the same tiny quirks, which is part of the charm.

6. Ensemble and phaser

- **ENSEMBLE**: three chorus lines, each moved by a slow and a fast wobble, spread across left and right. It's what makes the sound. Turn it off for a raw, buzzy organ-like tone.
- **PHASER** turns on the swirl. **COLOR** picks **Soft** (gentle, 6 stages) or **Deep** (intense and resonant, 12 stages). **RATE** sets the sweep speed.
- The signal goes strings, then filter, then ensemble, then phaser.

7. Presets

Click the red PROGRAM display for the list of 50 presets, or step through them with the arrows beside it. Each one sets every control and they're all level-matched, so switching presets doesn't jump in volume. Presets 1-40 leave the filter wide open; 41-50 use the filter.

8. Getting good results

Sound	Starting point
Disco strings	VIOLA + VIOLIN, ENSEMBLE on, short CRESCENDO, medium SUSTAIN.
Slow cinematic pad	CELLO + VIOLA + VIOLIN, long CRESCENDO and SUSTAIN, PHASER Soft with a slow RATE.
Space-rock swirl	VIOLIN + TRUMPET, PHASER Deep, RATE slow.
Dark synth strings	VIOLA + CELLO, CUTOFF halfway, a touch of RESONANCE.

About

Knight Strings 74 is made by Knightsnare. It is inspired by the 1970s Solina String Ensemble and written from scratch; no circuits, sounds or code from the original are copied. Solina is a trademark of its respective owner. Knight Strings 74 is an independent product: not affiliated with or endorsed by them.