Intuitive Instruments Exquis MPE 2.2.0





Intuitive Instruments announces improvements to the award-winning Exquis MPE (MIDI Polyphonic Expression) controller with major updates coming courtesy of introducing firmware 2.2.0 alongside software scripts to merge its workflow with Ableton Live, Bitwig Studio, and Cockos Reaper DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations) - wholeheartedly representing several simultaneous steps towards the inspirational solutions for music lovers creator’s goal of ultimately making music-making seamless by turning the flagship instrument itself into the ultimate lightweight and compact creative hub - as of September 8...

Exquis enables seamless and natural interaction with all DAW software, MIDI synthesizers, and modular systems by becoming a direct extension of its user’s creativity as an expressive and intuitive MPE controller comprising a hexagonal

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matrix of 61 backlit soft silicon keys arranged as consecutive notes (semitones) horizontally and harmonious notes (thirds) vertically - from the lowest at the bottom to the highest at the top - that provide independent gestural control over four different dimensions: velocity (strike force), horizontal tilt (X axis - pitch bend), vertical tilt (Y axis - CC#74), and pressure (Z axis - channel pressure or polyphonic aftertouch). Alongside a namesake companion app - itself optionally offering an experience akin to traditional composition software - available on macOS and Windows with support for VST, VST3, and AUv3 audio plug-in formats, Intuitive Instruments' flagship instrument is intended to provide musicians of all levels with a fun and intuitive way of creating melodies and progressions, fully exploiting sonic potential in the process of doing so - whether working with third-party software over the USB (Type-C) connection, third-party software or hardware synthesizers through the MIDI IN and OUT (minijack) connections, and modular synthesizers via CV (control voltage) with dedicated 0-5V (minijack) connections for GATE (V-Trigger), PITCH (V/Oct), and MOD (pressure or velocity). These top out a lightweight (600g) and compact - 36 mm (H) x 146 mm (W) x 317 mm (D) - desktop design that also incorporates four rotary/push encoders and a six-zone capacitive touch slider, plus a series of selection, undo/redo, and action buttons, providing precise and intuitive control collectively over any user's sound while enhancing interaction with the app.

Out of the starting gate, Exquis wasted little time in making its mark on the music technology world when winning the hotly-contested 'Commercial Hardware Product' category at the 2023 MIDI Innovation Awards - collaboratively organised by music technologies learning platform Music Hackspace; music, sound, and event industry trade association non-profit NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants); and fellow non-profit MIDI developer-, specification- and user-connecting non-profit The MIDI Association to help highlight innovative products and projects that utilise MIDI 1.0 and 2.0 in novel ways, emphasising MIDI's role in fostering musical creativity - with an all-star judging panel including notable names like French composer and electronic music pioneer Jean-Michel Jarre and American engineer, inventor, musician Roger Linn - announced at a livestream event broadcast from Tileyard Studios in London, UK.

Intuitive Instruments is not known for resting on its laurels, however, for firmware 2.2.0 includes several major updates to Exquis, starting with its MPE Key Freeze feature that allows users to 'capture' the expressive state of any key or chord by holding keys and clicking the fourth rotary/push encoder to lock their respective X/Y/Z axis positions and sustaining complex gestures indefinitely, thereby freeing hands to perform other parts, tweak effects, or control the arpeggiator. As such, it is now possible to build evolving textures, harmonies, and — when combined with the built-in arpeggiator - arpeggiated sequences, all while preserving the expressive nuances of the original touch. Meanwhile, MIDI Score Display lets users send MIDI notes to Exquis to light up the keys like a playable score - similar to Guitar Hero; notes outside the current range are indicated by the octave buttons, while the system prioritises notes from the active scale. Sustain and expression pedals can now be connected directly to Exquis via its MIDI IN connection (using an appropriate adapter) and the following MIDI CC (Continuous Controller) messages that are

received are forwarded to both the MIDI OUT and USB connections: CC#64 - sustain pedal (standard); CC#11 - expression pedal (standard); CC#65 - portamento (on/off); and CC#67 - soft pedal (on/off). More minor updates include improved sensitivity curves and better handling of off-centre key presses; new default layouts; and the internal tempo value now being displayed directly on the keyboard, as is the currently installed firmware version (via a button combination). Existing Exquis owners owe it to themselves to update their device to firmware 2.2.0 - various fixes are also included - in order to make their music-making exploits even more seamless.

Timed to coincide with the must-have firmware 2.2.0 release, the brand-new Python-based Ableton Live Remote Script sees Exquis seamlessly integrated into Live's native controller family, duly delivering launchpad-style Session control and an instrument-grade expressive touch - thanks to its MPE twist - that makes playing melodies and chords feel effortlessly natural. Needless to say, it is simply a case of installing it in the same way as any official Ableton controller template that requires Live 12, with the following functionality available as a result: create, launch, and delete clips or scenes in Session View without touching a mouse or trackpad; arm, select, mute, and solo any track, also acquiring instant access to volume, pan, and aux sends; chords, melodies, and drum racks flow through all 61 soft silicon keys with independent and polyphonic five-dimensional controls; set Live 12's tempo, root note, and scale directly from Exquis; recall any of the keyboard's eight onboard layouts - or custom-created ones - automatically when changing tracks, instantly reconfiguring Exquis into a specific instrument for every track; quickly call up Live 12 racks or plug-in presets via Exquis' exclusive favourites system; tweak any parameter on any device and any track using Exquis' four rotary/push encoders and 10 action buttons; and display a clip's MIDI notes directly on Exquis' keys, regardless of which track is armed, allowing anyone to visually see the music while they play.

Playfully inspired by that Ableton Live Remote Script and also his own extensive work with a wide range of controllers, Jürgen Moßgraber has extended support for Exquis in his DrivenByMoss Bitwig Studio Extension and DrivenByMoss 4 Reaper scripts - the latter effectively adapting the former to Reaper - by leveraging Intuitive Instruments' developer tools to create an even deeper integration with those platforms, enabling advanced control that fosters creativity while keeping users fully focused on making music with several key features well worth highlighting here: Play View - unlock Exquis' full expressive potential with MPE; Track, Device & Parameter Selection View - effortlessly navigate and control tracks, devices, and parameters; and Clips/Scene/Mix View - manage clips, scenes, and the mix directly from the keyboard, for instance. It is also possible to start, duplicate, or delete clips with a single gesture via alternative clip functions. All add up to ensuring Exquis functions as a truly expressive and intuitive instrument across different DAWs, delivering unprecedented creative freedom to musicians working with the flagship instrument itself.

"It is our goal to make music-making seamless." So says Intuitive Instruments CEO

Bruno Verbrugghe, verifying that bold statement when ending on an appropriate high note: “By merging our workflow with Ableton Live, Bigwig Studio, and Reaper, Exquis enables users to access countless functions without touching the mouse, keeping them focused on the music. With the new firmware and scripts, it becomes a fully expressive, intuitive electronic instrument - like a guitar with pedals and a looper.”

Intuitive Instruments’ latest firmware (2.2.0) update for Exquis and Intuitive Instruments’ Ableton Live Remote Script are available to download for free from Dualo's website below. Jürgen Moßgraber’s DrivenByMoss Bitwig Studio Extension script with extended Exquis support is available to download for free from Mossgrabers, as well as Jürgen Moßgraber’s DrivenByMoss 4 Reaper script - effectively adapting his DrivenByMoss Bitwig Studio Extension script to Reaper - with extended Exquis support.

Exquis itself is available through Intuitive Instruments’ growing global network of retailers and its own website, priced at a price of €299.00 EUR (Exquis Pure version) and €349.00 EUR (Exquis Deluxe version) and a price of $299.00 USD (Exquis Pure) and $349.00 USD (Exquis Deluxe).

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