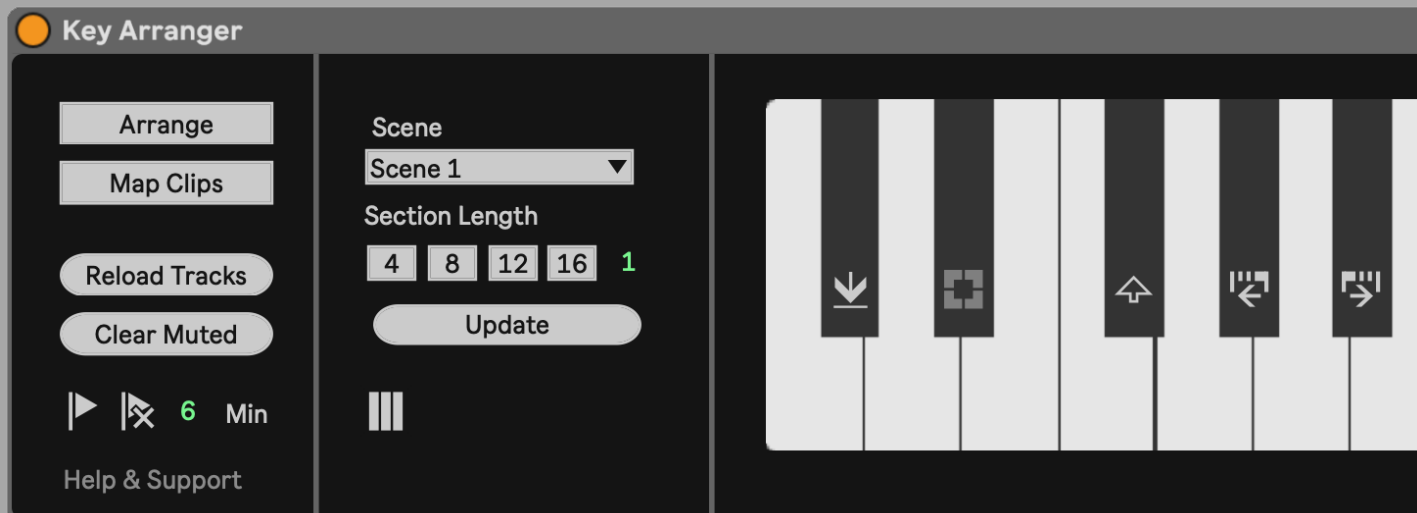




# Key Arranger

User Guide



Distributed by Isotonik Studios

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# OVERVIEW

Key Arranger is a Max for Live designed for situations when you'd like to arrange in Live's Arrangement View. The tool combines the intuitive qualities that you normally only get in the Session View with the linear workflow of the Arrangement View.

Key Arranger lets you try out and create sections solely by pressing keys on your keyboard. While it is already possible in Live to map clips to Midi controller keys, the Key Arranger workflow makes it easier to try out different combinations and progress at your own pace.



## Installation

The easiest way to install the device is by double clicking the pack file **Key Arranger by XY StudioTools.alp**. The folder will be installed in your Packs in the Live Browser, make Key Arranger available in your Max For Live Folder, and open the lesson in Live.

You can optionally drop **Key Arranger.amxd** on any track in Live from the Browser or directly from your system's file explorer.

You may also prefer to place the .amxd file in the User Library manually. Find the Max MIDI Effect folder in the following location:

### **Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10**

\Users\[username]\Documents\Ableton\User Library\ Presets\MIDI Effects\Max MIDI Effect

### **Mac OS X**

Macintosh HD/Users/[username]/Music/Ableton/User Library/Presets/MIDI Effects/Max MIDI Effect

The easiest way to access this folder is to just right-click on the User Library Place in the Live Browser and click "Show in Finder/Explorer".

# USAGE

The following pages cover how to get started with Key Arranger and its basic functionality.





**Figure 6.1** Key Arranger loads into any MIDI Track in your Live set.

## When to Use Key Arranger

Key Arranger is a Max for Live device for creating arrangements with a midi keyboard.

Key Arranger is designed for situations when you'd like to arrange in Live's Arrangement View. The tool adds intuitiveness and speed by letting you try out and create sections solely by pressing keys on your keyboard. While it is already possible in Live to map clips to midi controller keys, the Key Arranger workflow makes it easier to try out different combinations and progress at your own pace.

Note that the Key Arranger is not a performance tool, since it does not launch clips in a quantized manner like you can do in Live's Session View. It is a tool that uses the Live API to move, copy, mute and unmute clips as you press keys on your keyboard, making it useful for quickly creating arrangements.

## Intro to Using Key Arranger

With the Key Arranger you arrange your song in Live's Arrangement View by using your midi keyboard. When adding the device to Live, your clips are mapped to keys on your controller.

To start, select a section length of your choice and enable your clips for arrangement. Then by pressing keys on your keyboard your clips will unmute or mute. This makes it possible to quickly hear how different parts sound together, and what it sounds like if you add or remove parts to what is currently playing.

When you have a combination that you want to keep, use a dedicated key on the keyboard to keep the section and get a duplicate to work with next.

With the Key arranger you can sketch out a full arrangement just by using your keyboard and one function key. There are also additional features such as:

- Switch scenes
- Adapt section lengths
- Capture more detailed arrangements within your current section length
- Map a group of tracks to one key, and map individual sounds from a drum rack to separate keys

## Preparing Clips

**Prepare your clips:** Key Arranger uses clips located in the Session View for creating arrangements.

In case you have your clips in the Arrangement View, set the loop around the clips you want to use, right click and select “Consolidate Time to New Scene”. This gives you a new scene with consolidated clips.

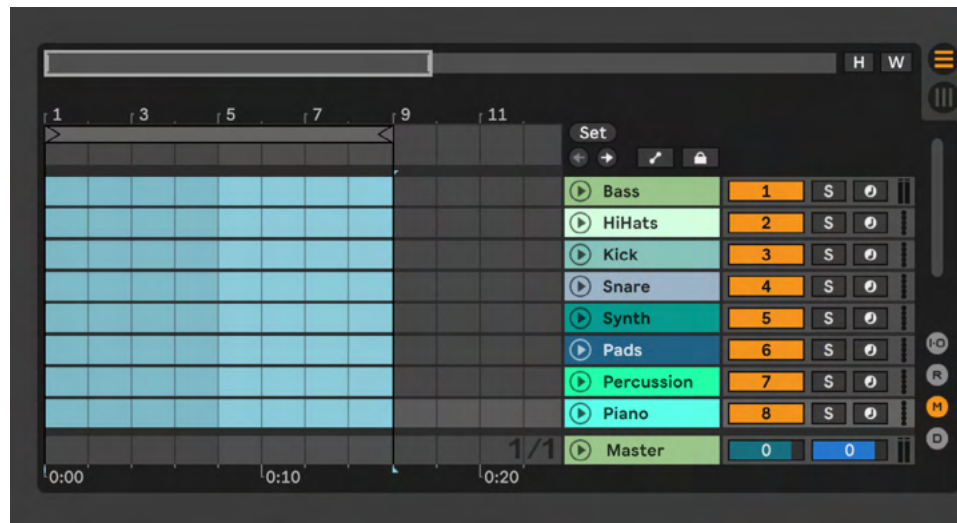


**Figure 8.1** Place your clips in the Session View

Next navigate to Arrangement View.

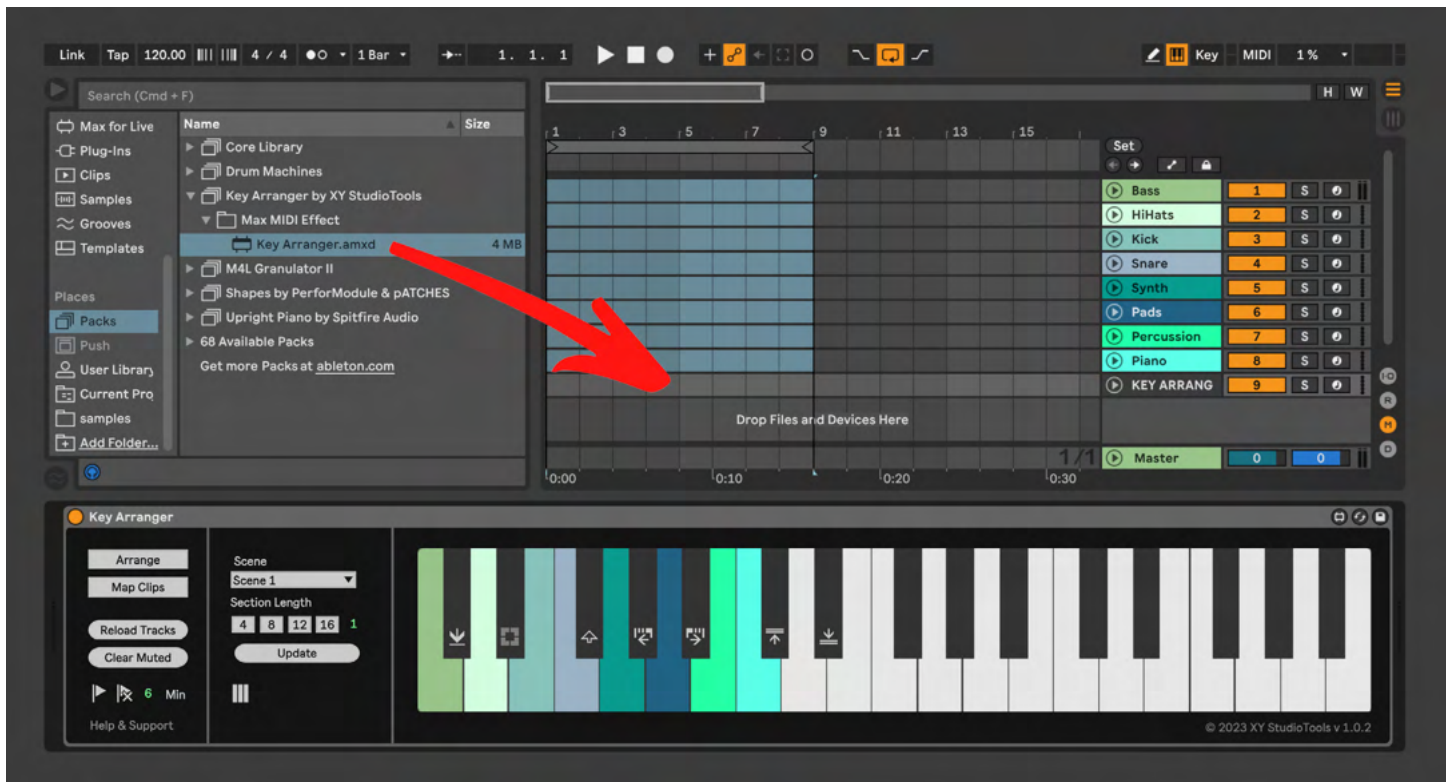
**Adjust the Live Loop length:** Set the loop length to the length you want to use when arranging.

**Tip:** A length of 4 or 8 bars usually works well.



**Figure 8.2** Adjust the Live loop length in the Arrangement View. Try for example 4 or 8 bars





**Figure 9.1** The colors in the Key Arranger Device reflect the track colors in your set.

## Setting Up the Arranger

Drag the Key Arranger device to an empty midi track (or to where it says “Drop Files and Devices Here”).

In the Key Arranger graphics, you should see the track colors of all tracks that have clips.

## Setting Up the Arranger (cont'd)

- Enable “Arrange Mode” by selecting the “Arrange” button.
- The button turns green and indicates that you can arrange using the keys on your midi keyboard.
- You should also see muted clips inside the loop in the Arrangement View.

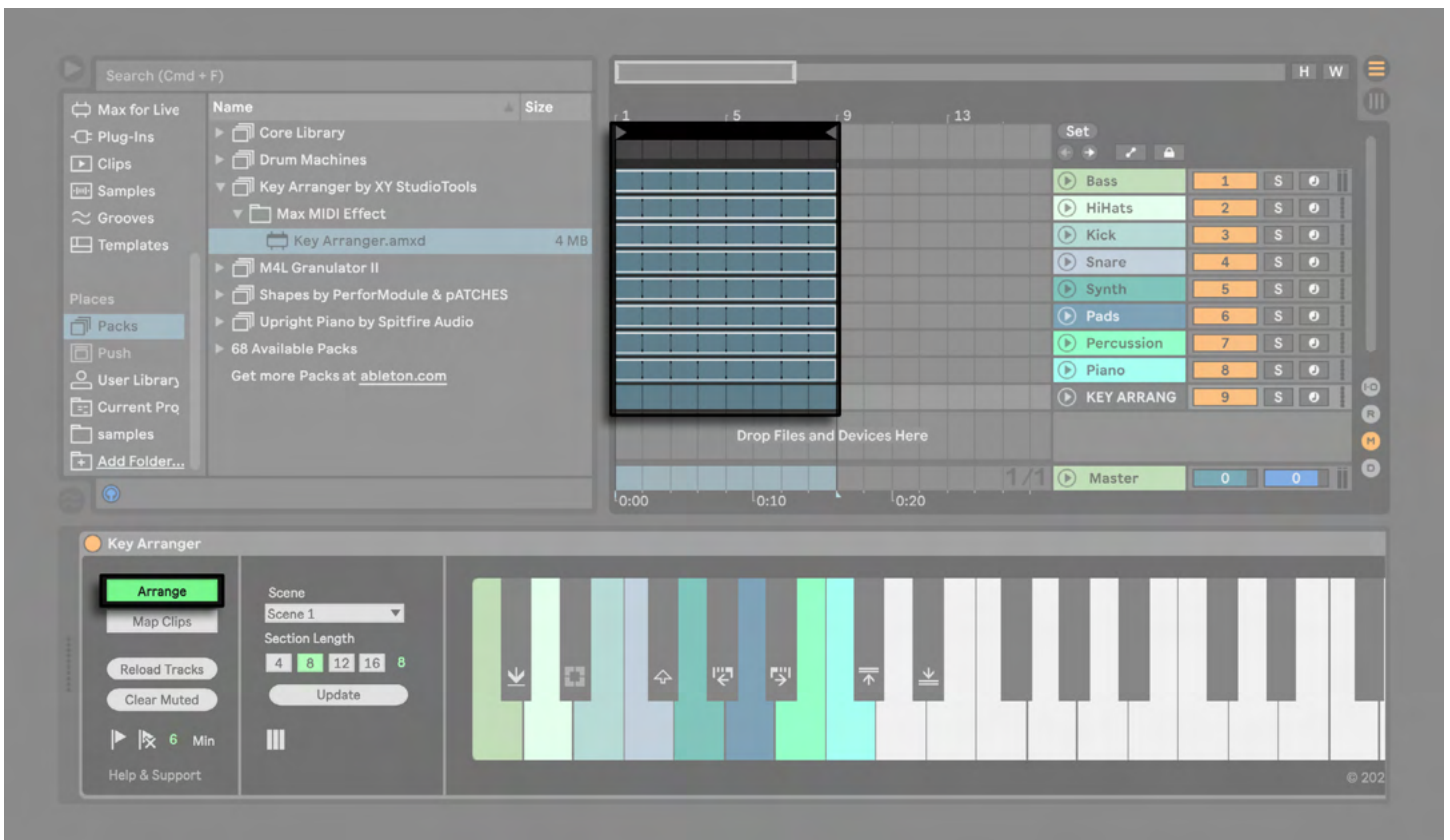
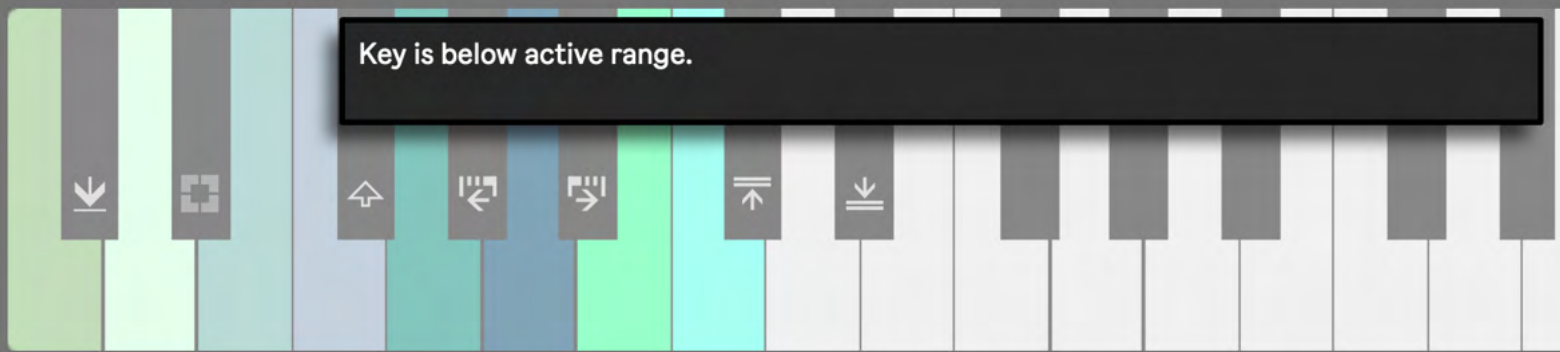


Figure 10.1 Arrange Mode activated in Key Arranger.

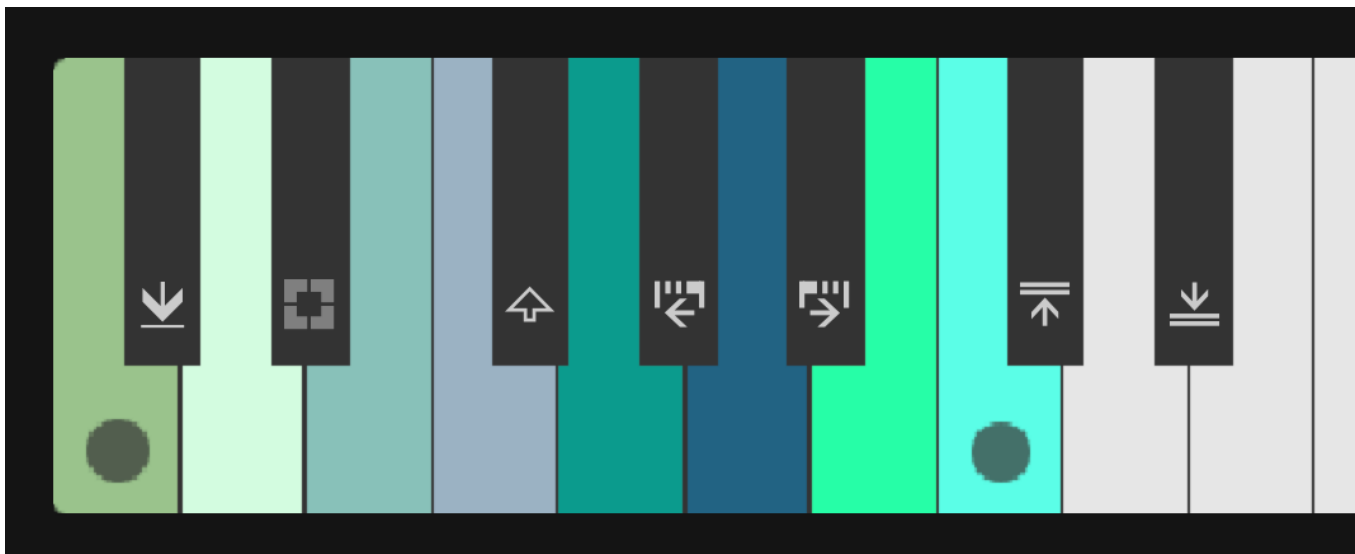
## Adjusting the Range of Your MIDI Keyboard

To make sure you can control all the tracks you may have to adjust the octave up or down on your midi keyboard.

- Make sure your midi controller is controlling the track where you have the Key Arranger device
- Press some keys on your midi keyboard
- If you see a message that says “Key is below active range” or “Key is above active range” it means you are pressing a key that is out of range.



**Figure 11.1** In this situation you are pressing a key below the active range. You may need to increase octave on your midi keyboard



**Figure 11.2** If you can control all the tracks with your midi keyboard you are good to go (dots indicate a key is pressed)

## Track Configuration

By default all tracks that have clips available are automatically mapped to a key. You can make custom configurations in the track view if you need to assign multiple clips to a single key or map individual sounds in drum racks to separate keys.

If you change track configuration, the current arrangement is deactivated. When the arrangement is deactivated you can start a new arrangement (with the same or a new track configuration) by setting the loop and enable Arrange mode. From there you can continue where you left off or start creating something new.

Read more about track configuration in the Additional features section.





## Starting on Your Arrangement

Hold some keys on your midi keyboard. When a key is held, the corresponding clip will unmute and you will hear the sound of the selected clips.

By trying different combinations of keys, you can quickly hear different alternatives for how the arrangement should start.

Whenever you hear a combination of clips that you want to keep, you have 2 options:

### ■ Option 1: Press and release the “Keep Section” key (C#)

This option keeps the playing clips, and you get a new copy of the current section. Live continues to the new section.

### ■ Option 2: Hold the “Keep Section” key (C#)

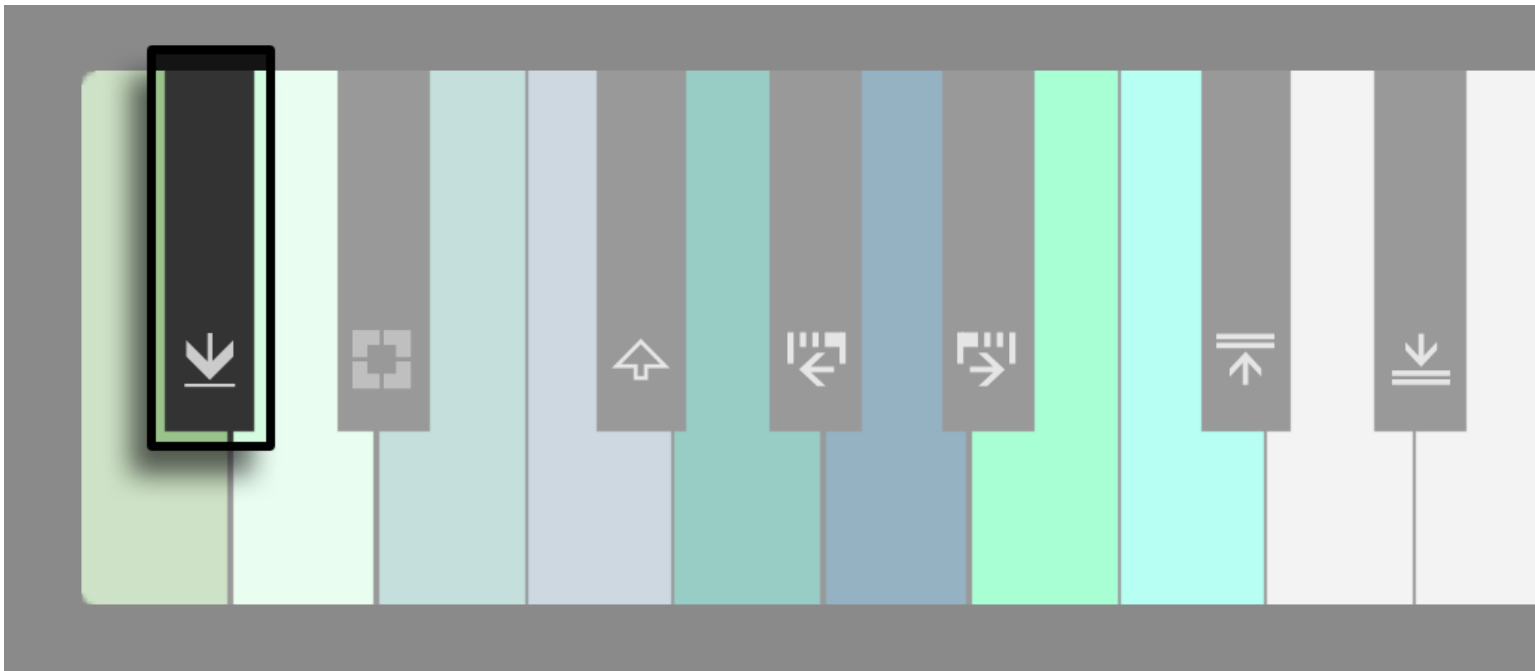
This option saves the playing clips, and Live keeps looping the section.

When using this option, you can add more tracks by pressing new keys, (or mute clips if you press keys that are currently playing). Hold the “Keep Section” key to save and continue with a copy.

For both these options, the playing keys are “printed” so you no longer have to hold any keys on your midi keyboard.



**Figure 13.1** Before (left) and after (right) pressing the **Everything** button while **Tracks Mode** and **Clips Mode** are set to “Random”. A limited palette of warm colors are selected.



**Figure 14.1** The “Keep Section” key with its dual functionality of pressing or holding is the only function key you need to use to arrange a full song. The other 6 function keys provide additional control if needed.

## Continuing the Arrangement

Continue by using the “Keep Section” key to create new sections and arrange the song.

As you see, the only “function” key you need to use to arrange a song is the “Keep Section” key.

The other 6 “function” keys provide additional control and are described below.

In summary they include functionality to:

- Capture more detailed arrangement within the loop (section length)
- Moving the loop
- Changing the loop length
- Switching scene





## Usage Tips

Number of tracks in the set:

- Even though the Key arranger can be used with a large number of tracks - a tip is to use it with a limited number of tracks. Then you can still see all your tracks on the screen.
- If you already have a large number of tracks in the set and would like to use the Key Arranger, an idea is to put your main parts on top and start by arranging those.
- If you do have many layers, another tip is to consider using the voice feature to group your tracks.
- Your clip lengths can vary when arranging, as shorter clips will be extended, and longer ones will span multiple sections.
- However, if clips contain automation, ensure they are at least as long as the section length. For example, if you have a 2-bar automated clip and want to use an 8-bar section length, duplicate the clip and its automation to make sure the clip automation is included when arranging.

# FUNCTION KEYS

The following pages detail each control in the device with more technical descriptions. View these any time in Live's Info View by hovering over a given parameter.

### Keep Section

Whenever you hear a combination of clips that you want to keep, you have 2 options:

- Keeping the clips and moving on to the next section, or
- Keeping the clips and continue looping the section

**Press and release the "Keep Section" key (C#)** to save currently playing sounds and continue with a copy of the section.

- Live continues to the new section.

**Hold the "Keep Section" key (C#)** to save currently playing sounds and continue looping the section.

- You can now add more tracks by pressing new keys, or mute clips if you press

Whenever you press or hold the "Keep Section" key, the playing keys are "printed" so you no longer have to hold any keys on your midi keyboard in the Track name



### Capture Section

The Capture feature enables you to capture an arrangement within a section. For example if you work with 8 bar sections, you can use this feature to start something in the middle of that section.

**Press and release the "Capture" key** to "Capture" the last combination of mutes and unmutes, and continue to a new copy of the section.

If you instead **hold the "Capture" key**, you will get the same capture functionality but will stay in the same section.



### Change Section Length

**Press and release the "Section Length" keys** to increase or decrease loop length. This will toggle through the 4 preset section lengths, 4, 8, 12 and 16 bars.

The new length is applied when a new section is created. You can also **hold both keys** to apply the new length to the current section.

If you want to set a custom section length you can use the **Section Length input field**. You can also use this menu to set standard length sections.

Pressing the **update button** will apply the new scene selection to the current section.



### Shift

Shift changes the functionality of the “section length” keys to “Move loop”.

### Move Loop

**Hold shift and press and release the keys** to Move loop left or right.

This requires that locators have been created.

It is also possible to move the loop manually while arranging, as long as you set it to follow the structure of your sections.



### Change Scene

**Press and release:** Change scene up or down.

(The new scene is applied when a new section is created, or if the current section is updated by holding both keys).

**Hold both keys:** update the current section to a scene.

**Press and release the “Change Scene” key** to toggle between scenes. The new scene selection will be applied when a new section is created.

You can also **hold both keys** to apply the new scene selection to the current section.

You can also use the **scene menu** to select scenes. Pressing the **update button** will apply the new scene selection to the current section.

# **ADDITIONAL FEATURES**

Note that all configurations of tracks need to be done before you start an arrangement.

### Map Clips

The Map Clips feature allows you to remap your clips to your MIDI keyboard.

Click on the "Map Clips" button and press a key on your MIDI keyboard where you'd like the first track to be mapped. The other tracks will automatically be mapped above this key.

### Reload Tracks

Click the "Reload Tracks" button if you've made changes to your track setup after adding the device, for example changing the order of tracks or adding new tracks.

### Clear Muted

When you have created an arrangement, the "Clear Muted" button can be used to clear the arrangement from muted clips.

### Create Locators

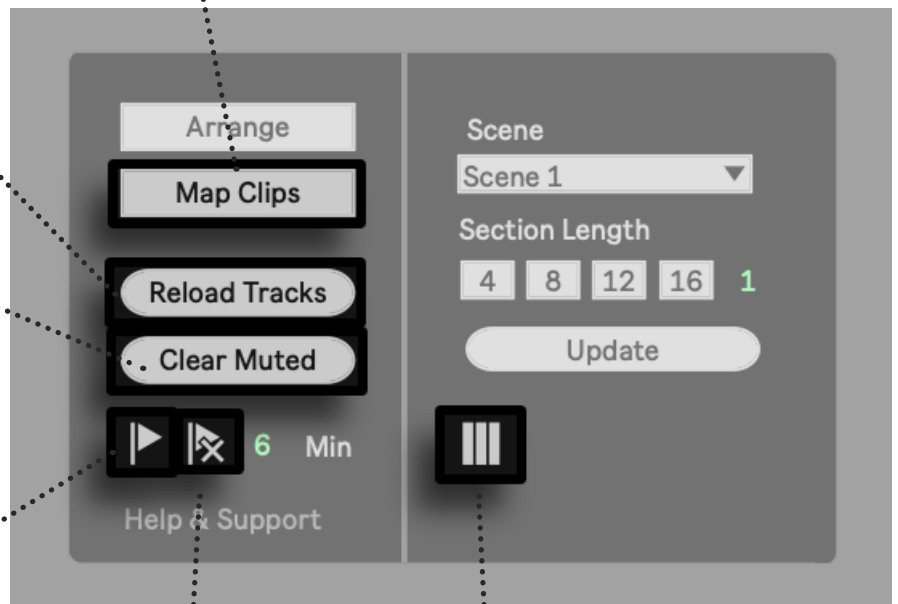
In order to use the feature "Move Loop" described above, locators need to be present.

To create locators:

- Set a length in minutes, for example 5 minutes.
- Then press the "Create Locators" button

The locators enable you to move the loop with the keys while arranging.

When using this feature, you'll notice MIDI dummy clips being placed on the Key Arranger track, in addition to the locators. This makes it easier to zoom out and see all locators by using Live's 'Optimize



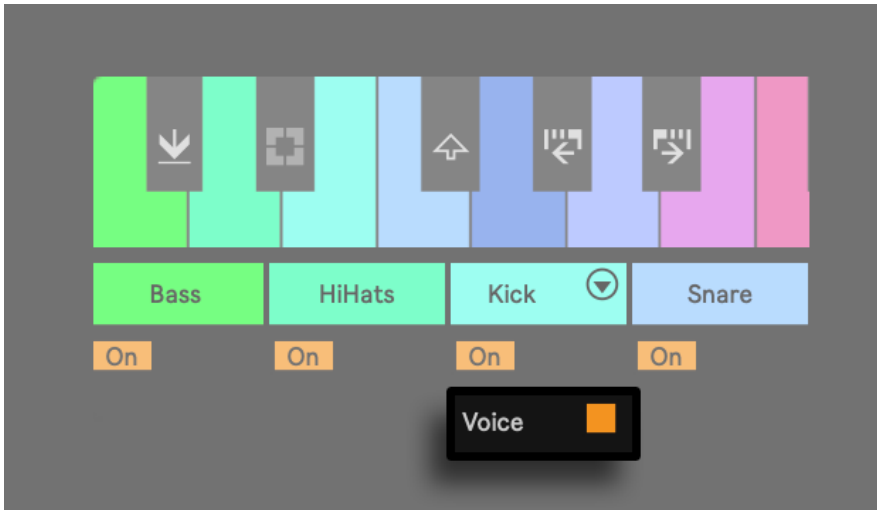
### Delete Locators

To delete all locators in the set, click the "Delete Locators" button.

### View Tracks

The View Tracks function displays a view of the tracks in your Live set.





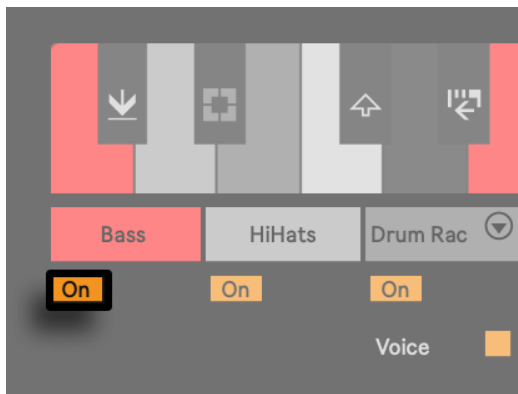
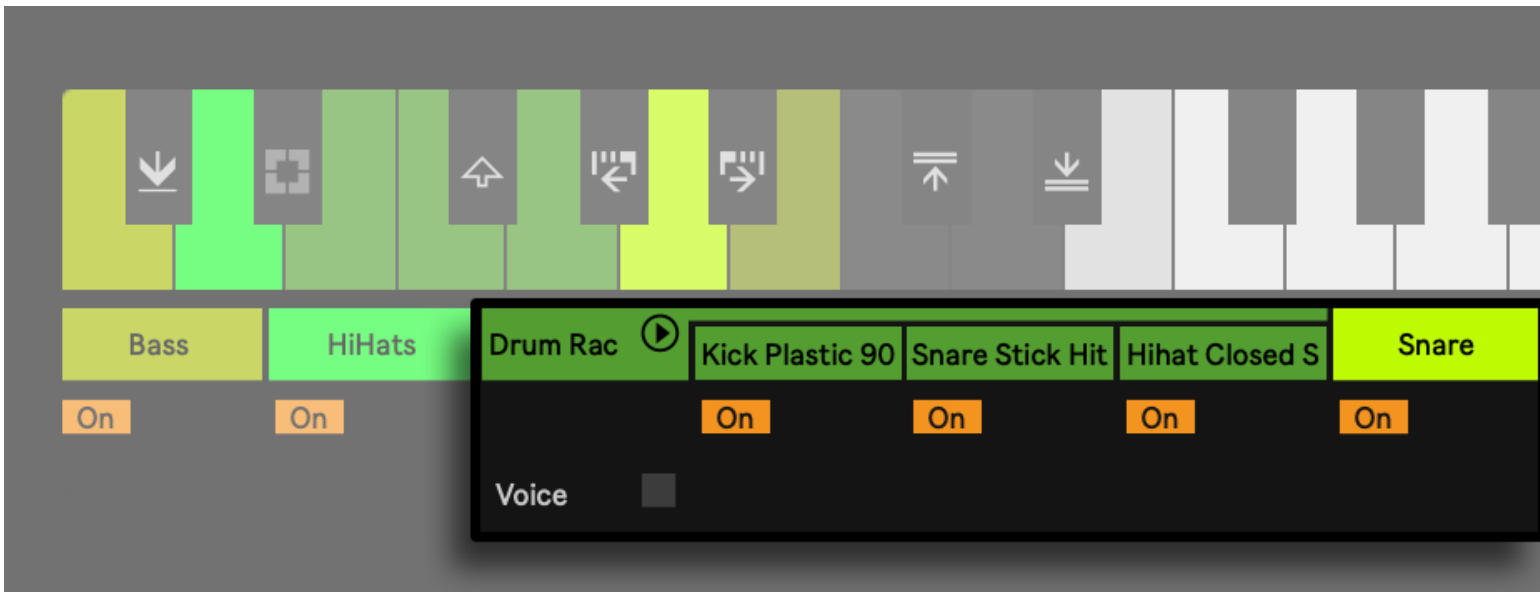
### Use group as Voice

A group in Live can be set as "Voice". This means multiple tracks are mapped to a single key.

In the example to the right, a group track with 3 bass tracks are mapped to a single key.

### Set individual drum sounds within drum racks to "Voice"

To arrange individual sounds in drum racks, uncheck the voice toggle on the drum rack. This will separate the drum rack and allow you to map the individual sounds to separate keys. You can also use drum chains to map certain groups of sounds within a rack to a key.



### Track on/off

The Track On/Off function allows you to include or exclude a track to be used in the Key Arranger.

## Limitations

While it is possible to use a computer keyboard for playing MIDI notes in Live, Most computer keyboards have limitations in handling multiple simultaneous keypresses, so please note that the app is meant to be used with a real midi keyboard.



# INFORMATION

Version 1.0.0

Last updated on 9 April 2023

## Download

The download link for this device is <https://isotonikstudios.com/product/key-arranger-by-xy-studio-tools/>

Developer Link is XY Studio Tools - <https://isotonikstudios.com/product-category/isotonik-collective/xy-studiotools/>

## Links to Video Tutorials

[Key Arranger Demo](#)

[Key Arranger Installation](#)

[Key Arranger Getting Started](#)

[Key Arranger Additional Features](#)

## Contact

Comment or query? Suggestions? Just want to say hi?  
We'd love to hear from you!

Send an email to [support@isotonikstudios.com](mailto:support@isotonikstudios.com)

## Credits

Manual designed by Daniel Hilse <https://www.patches.zone>



Isotonik Studios is a collective of developers dedicated to Innovating with Ableton Live. From MaxforLive Devices and MIDI Controller scripts to full blown performance templates.

[www.isotonikstudios.com](http://www.isotonikstudios.com)