

USER MANUAL · VERSION 1.1



CHORDY

Chords for the track you haven't written yet.

FOR CHORDY AND CHORDY MIDI · MACOS · AU, VST3 AND STANDALONE

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Welcome to Chordy

Every track starts with a feeling you can't quite play yet. Chordy closes that gap.

Type what you hear in your head, like *late-night deep house*, *warm minor ninths*, or pick a classic progression from the library. Chordy puts a progression on the timeline, voiced and ready to play. It shows you what every chord is called and which notes it uses, so you learn as you go. You don't need to know what a $\flat VI$ is. Chordy does.

Then the fun starts. Arpeggiate it, strum it, pull out a bass line, swap a chord, stretch the rhythm, or open a chord and move its notes by hand. When it feels like yours, drag it into your DAW as MIDI.

What Chordy isn't

Chordy doesn't make tracks, write songs or render audio. It gives you **ideas**: a handful of chords you can play with, bend and make your own. A few things keep it that way:

- **The AI suggests chord names, never notes.** Chordy's own theory engine checks every chord, fixes anything broken and voices the chords itself, with proper voice leading.
- **You stay the composer.** Every chord can be edited, varied, reordered or rewritten, and everything can be undone.
- **AI is optional.** Internal mode is a library of 43 classic progressions and a local theory engine. It works offline, with no account and no key.

Two versions

VERSION	WHAT IT DOES	PICK IT IF...
Chordy	Plays the chords with its own built-in sounds, and sends MIDI at the same time.	You want to hear ideas straight away. Start here.
Chordy MIDI	Makes no sound. It sends the chords to another instrument.	You want your chords played by your own synth or piano.

Both come as **AU** and **VST3** plugins and as a **Standalone** app, which is handy for sketching ideas without opening your DAW. Everything in this manual works the same in all of them, except where it says otherwise.

TESTED HOSTS

Chordy is tested in Ableton Live 12 on macOS. Other DAWs that load AU or VST3 plugins should work, but haven't been tested yet.

Installing Chordy

It takes about five minutes. You need a Mac and a DAW that loads AU or VST3 plugins. An internet connection is only needed for AI.

Chordy runs on Apple Silicon and Intel Macs. It's signed and checked by Apple, so macOS opens it without warnings.

Install the plugins

- 1 Open the Chordy download. You'll see the plugin files: the `.component` files (AU), the `.vst3` files (VST3) and a **Standalone** folder with the two apps.
- 2 In Finder, choose **Go → Go to Folder...**, type `~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/` and press Return.
- 3 Drag the `.component` files into the **Components** folder, and the `.vst3` files into the **VST3** folder. **Copy** the files. Don't make aliases, because macOS won't find them.
- 4 If you want the Standalone apps, drag them into your **Applications** folder.
- 5 Open your DAW and rescan plugins.
 - **Ableton Live:** Settings → Plug-Ins → **Rescan**. Turn on **Use Audio Units** and **Use VST3 Plug-In System Folders** if they're off.
 - **Other DAWs:** look for a rescan option in the plugin settings, or restart the DAW.

Chordy appears in your plugin list under **Swimming In The Sea**.

WHICH FORMAT?

Install both. For **Chordy MIDI in Ableton Live, use the VST3**: Live's AU plugins can't send MIDI out. For the Chordy instrument, either format works.

Updating

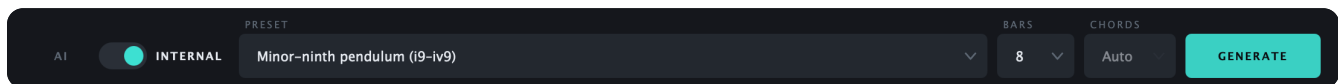
Copy the new files over the old ones, then rescan. Your projects keep their progressions: Chordy saves the exact notes with each project, so an old song sounds the same after an update.

Your first progression

Two ways in. Try the library first: it needs nothing but Chordy.

Without AI, in under a minute

- 1 Load **Chordy** onto a MIDI track.
- 2 At the top, flip the switch to **INTERNAL**.
- 3 Pick a progression from the **PRESET** list, for example the **Axis** or the **Andalusian cadence**.
- 4 Press **GENERATE**, then press play.
- 5 Press **GENERATE** again for a coloured variation of the same progression.



Internal mode: pick a preset, set the length, press Generate.

With AI

Once you've connected an AI service (see [Setting up AI](#)):

- 1 Flip the switch to **AI**.
- 2 Describe what you want, in your own words. Mood, genre, a scene, a tempo, a time of night: whatever's in your head.
- 3 Press **GENERATE**, or Return. The first chords land on the timeline while the rest are still being written.

Some prompts to start with:

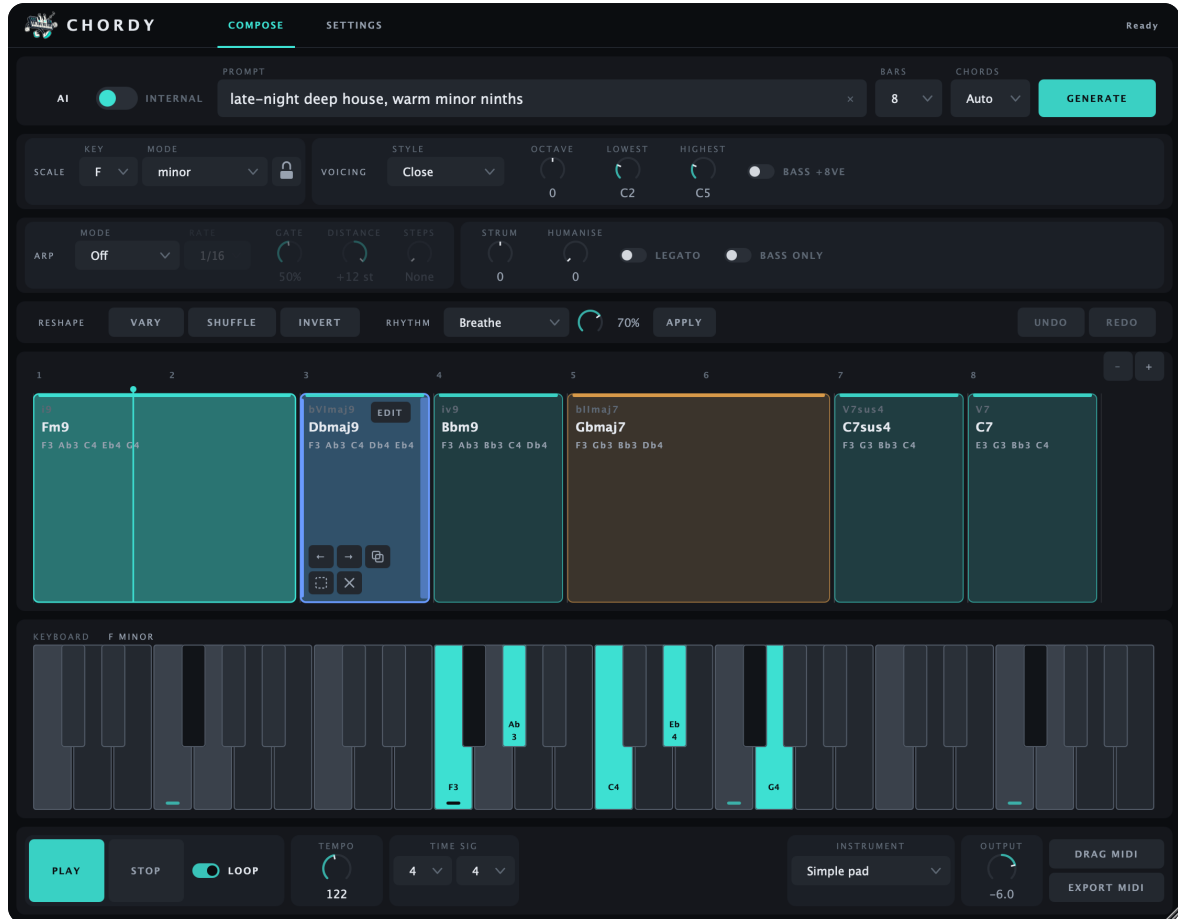
- *moody dark ambient*
- *late-night deep house, warm minor ninths, hypnotic*
- *dusty lo-fi, jazzy and a bit heartbroken, 8 bars*
- *cinematic, slow, tension that never quite resolves*
- *Detroit techno, one chord, just a stab that never moves*

Then make it yours

Press play and start pulling it around. Change the **Voicing**, turn on the **Arp**, hit **Vary**, or double-click a chord to move its notes. When you like it, drag it into your track (see [Getting chords into your track](#)).

A tour of the Compose page

Everything lives on one page, in rows. You read it top to bottom: what to make, what key it's in, how it's played, how it's shaped, and the chords themselves.



The Compose page with a progression playing. The first chord is sounding (teal) and the second is selected (blue).

- 1 **Making chords.** The AI or Internal switch, your prompt or a preset, the length, and **GENERATE**.
- 2 **Scale and Voicing.** The key and mode, and how the chords sit under the hands.
- 3 **Playback.** Arp, Strum, Humanise, Legato and Bass only. These change how the chords are played, never the chords themselves.
- 4 **Reshape.** Vary, Shuffle, Invert and Rhythm. These are real edits, and every one can be undone.
- 5 **The chord timeline.** One card per chord, as long as the chord lasts.
- 6 **The keyboard.** The scale, and the notes that are sounding.
- 7 **Global controls.** Play, tempo, time signature, the preview sound, and MIDI out.

At the top, **COMPOSE** and **SETTINGS** switch pages. The status line on the right tells you what just happened, such as which AI service wrote the chords or what an edit changed.

Making chords

The top row decides where the chords come from. The switch on the left picks the way in.

AI mode: describe it



Type what you want and press **GENERATE**. Write it however it's in your head. The AI reads your own words: Chordy doesn't turn them into a genre label first.

- **Be as loose or as exact as you like.** *Rainy Tokyo city pop* works. So does *ii–V–I in B b, jazzy, 6 chords*.
- **Name artists for their style.** *Something like Boards of Canada* borrows their harmonic habits, such as their modes, extensions and bass movement. Chordy never copies a song.
- **A key, length or tempo in the prompt wins.** *In F minor, 8 bars, 90 bpm* sets those exactly, and the controls follow.

Keep talking to it

The prompt box works like a chat. When there are chords on the timeline, Chordy sends them along with what you type, so you can steer:

- *Make the third chord darker.*
- *Longer chords, more space.*
- *Same vibe, but in Dorian.*
- *End on something unresolved.*

Send the **same** prompt again and you get a fresh take instead. The **x** in the prompt box clears the text.

While the AI works



While a request is out, the page rests under the mascot. Chords appear as they arrive.

If an answer takes more than a moment, the page dims and the mascot gets to work. **GENERATE** becomes **CANCEL**, and **Escape** cancels too. The transport keeps playing, so you can keep listening to what you had.

Chordy checks every chord that comes back. A slightly broken answer gets repaired. If more than half of it is unusable, Chordy throws it away and plays a progression from its own engine instead, so you always get music.

Internal mode: the library



No prompt and no internet. Pick one of **43 named progressions** from the **PRESET** list and press **GENERATE**. The presets are grouped by what they do, not by genre, so a jazz turnaround might be exactly what your techno track needs. The whole library is listed in [the appendix](#).

- **The first Generate** plays the preset as written, in the key you've set in the Scale row. Each preset brings its own mode, so a minor loop stays minor, and the Mode control follows it.
- **Press again** for a coloured variation. It keeps the shape but finds new colours inside it.
- **Hover over the Preset menu** to see where you've heard the chosen progression before.

Bars and Chords

CONTROL WHAT IT DOES

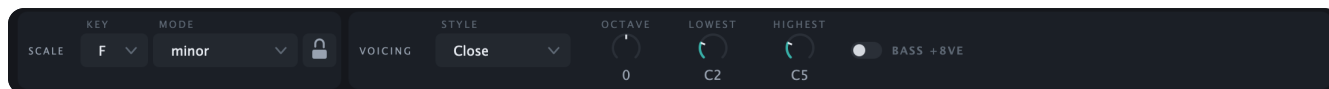
BARS	The total length. Generate fills exactly this many bars. A length in your prompt overrides it, and the control shows the prompt's value until you take the length out of the prompt.
CHORDS	How many chords to make. Auto lets the AI decide, which is usually best: an ambient pad might hold one chord for eight bars, while jazz moves on every beat. A count in your prompt overrides it. In Internal mode each preset has its own chords, so this is greyed out.

NO KEY YET?

If AI mode has no service connected, an **ADD ... KEY** button appears above the prompt. Until you add one, Generate answers from Chordy's own engine, so you still get chords.

Scale and Voicing

The left half says what key you're in. The right half says how each chord sits under the hands.



Scale

CONTROL WHAT IT DOES

KEY	The home note. Changing it transposes the whole progression, so everything moves together.
MODE	The scale. Changing it relabels the chords' numerals and the keyboard, and the next Generate writes in the new mode. It doesn't rewrite the chords already there.

The padlock Decides who picks the key in AI mode. See below.

The modes, from bright to dark: **lydian**, **major**, **mixolydian**, **dorian**, **minor**, **phrygian** and **locrian**, plus **harmonic minor**, **melodic minor** and **phrygian dominant**. Below a divider are the scales with fewer notes: **major pentatonic**, **minor pentatonic**, **blues** and **whole tone**. These borrow their chords from the nearest full mode, and the keyboard shows their own notes.

The Lock

- **Open** (the default): in AI mode, the AI picks the key and mode that suit your prompt, and the Key and Mode controls follow its answer.
- **Locked**: the AI writes in the key and mode shown. Picking a key or mode yourself locks it automatically.
- **Your prompt always wins**. Locked on F minor but typed *in D dorian*? You get D dorian, and the controls follow.

Internal mode always plays in the key shown, with the mode that belongs to the preset.

Voicing

Voicing is which notes of a chord go where: how close together, how high, what's in the bass. Changing any of these re-voices every chord straight away, and it's undoable.

CONTROL WHAT IT DOES

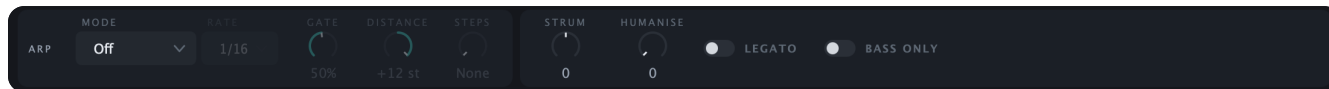
STYLE	Close: notes packed tight, like a pianist's right hand. Open: notes spread wider, for a bigger, airier chord. Drop 2: the jazz guitarist's and arranger's spread, warm and full. Shell: just the essentials, root, third and seventh. Lean and clear. Rootless: no root, the way jazz pianists leave it to the bass player. Spread: across the whole range, for pads and strings.
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CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES
OCTAVE	Moves every chord up or down by octaves.
LOWEST, HIGHEST	The range the chords stay inside. Narrow it to keep chords out of your bass or away from your lead.
BASS +8VE	Doubles each chord's bass note an octave lower, for weight.

Chordy moves from chord to chord with **voice leading**: each note travels as little as it can to the next chord, the way a good keyboard player would. That's why a progression sounds smooth, even with big jumps in the chord names.

Playback

This row changes how the chords are played, never the chords themselves. Change anything while the loop runs. It all applies to the MIDI you drag out, too.



Arp

Turns each chord into a pattern. Set **MODE** to anything but **Off** and the other controls come alive.

CONTROL WHAT IT DOES

MODE	Up , Down , Up-Down and Down-Up walk through the notes. Converge alternates from the outside in. Random picks notes at random, but the same way on every pass, so your loop stays your loop. Chord repeats the whole chord in rhythm, like a stab.
RATE	How fast: from quarter notes (1/4) to thirty-second notes (1/32). A T means triplets.
GATE	How long each note is held, from short and plucky to fully tied.
DISTANCE	How far each extra pass jumps, in semitones. +12 is an octave.
STEPS	How many extra passes to add above (or below) the chord. None plays the chord's own notes only.

Strum, Humanise and Legato

CONTROL WHAT IT DOES

STRUM	Rolls each chord, like a guitarist's hand. Turn it right to strum upwards and left to strum downwards. The further you turn, the slower the roll.
HUMANISE	Loosens the timing and velocity a little, so it sounds played rather than programmed. It's the same looseness on every pass.
LEGATO	Holds each chord right up to the next one, so they ring into each other.

Bass only

Turn on **BASS ONLY** and every chord becomes just its bass note, down in the bass register. That's the root, or the note after the slash in a chord like C/E. It's a matching bass line in one click. See [Getting chords into your track](#) for the two-drag trick.

While Bass only is on, you can choose the **Bass** preview sound in the global controls.

Reshape

Real edits to the progression. Press them as often as you like: **undo** takes you back, step by step.



BUTTON	WHAT IT DOES
VARY	Swaps some chords for others that do the same job: a borrowed chord, an applied dominant, a tritone substitution. Same mood, different colour. It leaves some chords alone, so you can still hear the original.
SHUFFLE	Reorders the middle of the progression and keeps the opening and the ending.
INVERT	Moves every chord to its next inversion, so a different note sits in the bass. Hold Alt (Option) and click to go the other way.
UNDO, REDO	Step back and forward through every edit. ⌘Z and ⌘⇧Z do the same.

Rhythm

Rewrites how long each chord lasts, and keeps the order and the total length. Pick a pattern, set how strongly it applies with the knob, then press **APPLY**.

PATTERN	WHAT IT DOES
Even	Every chord the same length.
Breathe	In each group of four chords, the first lasts longest, like taking a breath.
Long-short	Long, then short, over and over.
Short-long	Short, then long: a push into each chord.
Slow build	Starts with long chords and changes faster and faster towards the end.
Push to cadence	Hurries through the chord before the last one, then holds the ending, so it really arrives.
Random	A surprise. Press Apply again for a different one.

The chord timeline

One card per chord, as wide as the chord is long. The bar numbers run along the top.



Each card shows the chord's **numeral** (its job in the key, such as $i9$ or $bVIImaj9$), its **name** and the **notes** it plays, lowest first.

What the colours mean

- Teal** Playing right now, with the playhead running across it.
- Blue** The chord you've selected.
- Amber** From outside the key: a borrowed or chromatic chord. Usually where the magic is.
- Grey** A rest: silence that releases the chord before it.

Working with chords

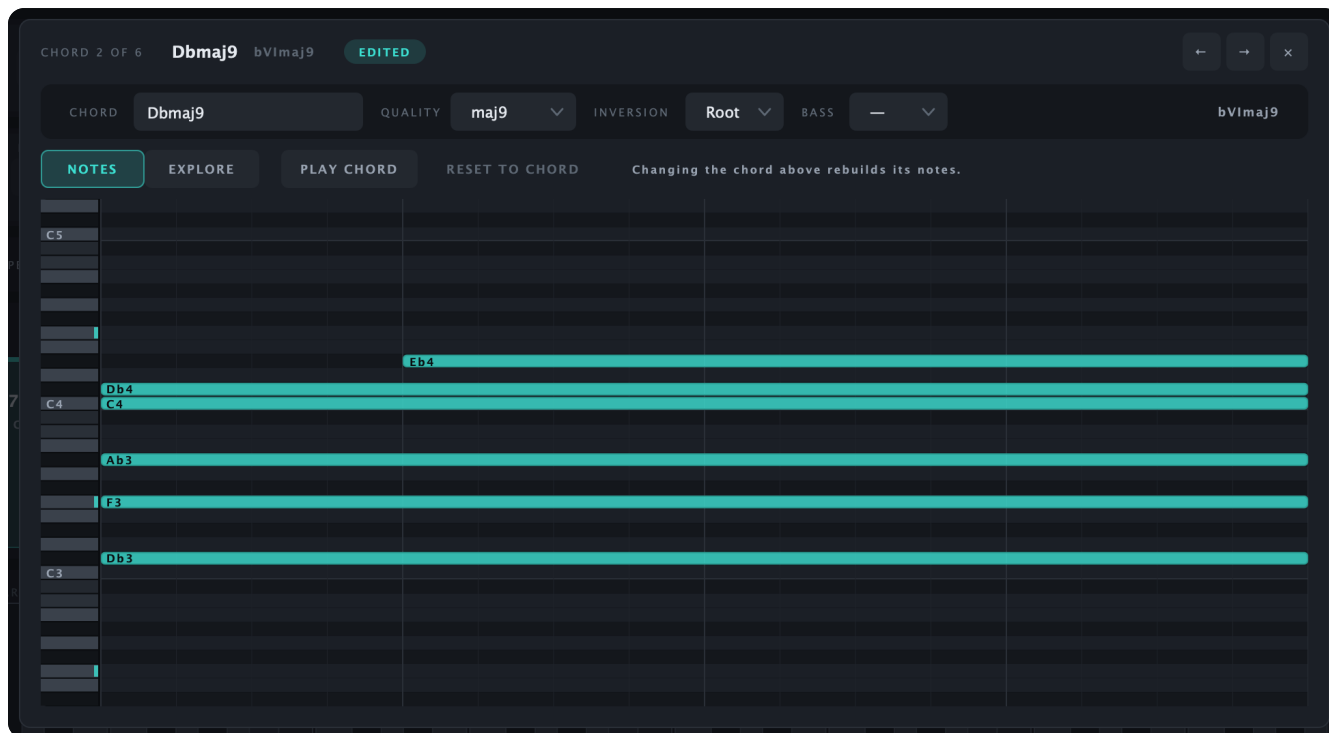
- **Click** a chord to select it and hear it.
- **Drag** a chord to move it to a new position.
- **Drag its right edge** to make it longer or shorter.
- **Double-click** a chord, or press Return, to open it in the [chord editor](#). Press **E** to open it straight on [Explore](#).
- **Right-click** any chord for a menu of everything below.
- **Zoom** with **-** and **+** at the top right, or **%-**, **%+** and **%0** to fit.

The selected chord carries its own buttons, so it's always clear what they act on. On a narrow card they float in a small bar at its foot.

BUTTON	WHAT IT DOES
EDIT	Opens the chord editor.
← →	Moves the chord earlier or later in the progression.
Duplicate	Copies the chord right after itself. %D
Rest	Inserts a rest after the chord. R
x	Deletes the chord. Delete

The chord editor

Open any chord to change what it is, to find something more interesting to put there, or to move its notes by hand in its own little piano roll.



A Dbmaj9 with a low root added and the ninth coming in on beat 2. Chordy tagged it EDITED and kept the name, because the notes still spell Dbmaj9 .

Open it with the **EDIT** button on the selected chord, a double-click, or Return. It floats over the page while the transport keeps running. Close it with **x** or Escape. The **←** and **→** buttons at the top step to the previous or next chord without closing.

Under the chord row are two tabs. **NOTES** is the piano roll. **EXPLORE** suggests other chords to try in this spot. Press **E** to switch between them. The editor opens on whichever you used last.

Change the chord

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES
CHORD	Type a chord name, like Fmaj7 or G7/B , or a numeral like ii7 or bVII (type bVII). Press Return.
QUALITY	The chord type: major, minor, 7, maj9, sus4 and more.
INVERSION	Which chord note is in the bass: root position, 1st inversion, 2nd and so on.
BASS	Puts any note in the bass, making a slash chord like C/E. Choose — for none.

Changing the chord here rebuilds its notes from scratch, so any hand edits on that chord are replaced. Undo brings them back.

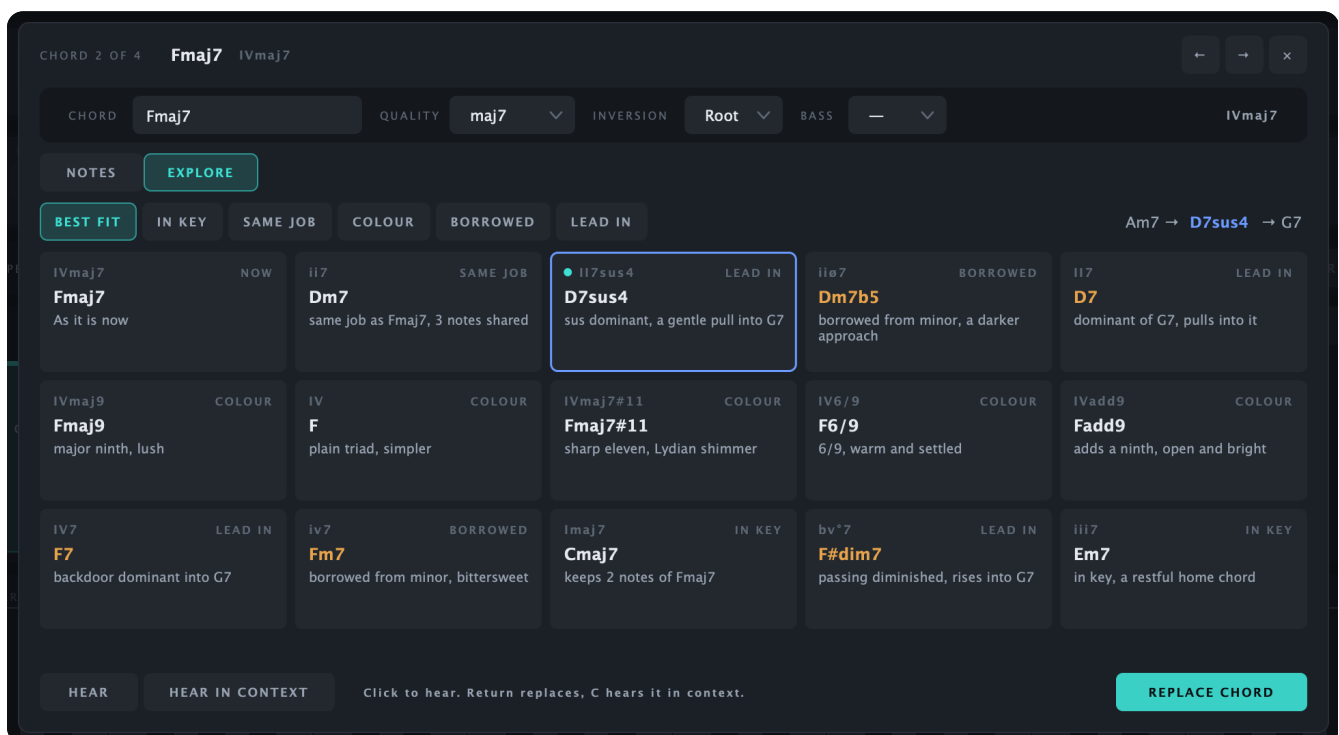
Move the notes

- **Drag a note** up or down to change its pitch, or left and right to change when it starts. It snaps to sixteenth notes. Hold  to move freely.
- **Drag either end of a note** to make it start later or end sooner.
- **Click an empty spot** to add a note.
- **Double-click a note**, or select it and press Delete, to remove it. A chord keeps at least one note: to silence it, use Rest.
- **Arrow keys** nudge the selected note: up and down by a semitone (hold Shift for an octave), left and right by a sixteenth.
- **Scroll** to see higher or lower notes.

Every drag is one step in Undo. **PLAY CHORD** lets you hear the whole chord. **RESET TO CHORD** throws away your hand edits and lets Chordy voice it again.

Explore alternatives

You know the chord could be better but not what it should be. Explore lays out chords that make musical sense in this spot, next to the chords before and after it, and tells you in a few words why each one works.



CHORD 2 OF 4 **Fmaj7** IVmaj7

CHORD **Fmaj7** QUALITY **maj7** INVERSION **Root** BASS **—** IVmaj7

NOTES **EXPLORE**

BEST FIT IN KEY SAME JOB COLOUR BORROWED LEAD IN

Am7 → **D7sus4** → G7

IVmaj7 Fmaj7 NOW As it is now	ii7 Dm7 SAME JOB same job as Fmaj7, 3 notes shared	• ii7sus4 D7sus4 LEAD IN sus dominant, a gentle pull into G7	iiø7 Dm7b5 BORROWED borrowed from minor, a darker approach	II7 D7 LEAD IN dominant of G7, pulls into it
IVmaj9 Fmaj9 COLOUR major ninth, lush	IV F COLOUR plain triad, simpler	IVmaj7#11 Fmaj7#11 COLOUR sharp eleven, Lydian shimmer	IV6/9 F6/9 COLOUR 6/9, warm and settled	IVadd9 Fadd9 COLOUR adds a ninth, open and bright
IV7 F7 LEAD IN backdoor dominant into G7	iv7 Fm7 BORROWED borrowed from minor, bittersweet	IImaj7 Cmaj7 IN KEY keeps 2 notes of Fmaj7	bv°7 F#dim7 LEAD IN passing diminished, rises into G7	iii7 Em7 IN KEY in key, a restful home chord

HEAR HEAR IN CONTEXT Click to hear. Return replaces, C hears it in context. **REPLACE CHORD**

Alternatives for Fmaj7 between Am7 and G7. D7sus4 is selected and was the last one played (the teal dot). The amber names use notes from outside the key.

- **Click a card** to hear it. Arrow keys move between cards and play each one, so you can browse by ear.
- **HEAR IN CONTEXT** (or ) plays the chord before, the one you picked, and the chord after, a bar each, with your Arp, Strum and other playback settings.
- **REPLACE CHORD** (or , or a double-click) puts it in the progression. The chord keeps its place and length, and it's one step in Undo.
- The first card, **NOW**, is the chord as it is, so the original is always one click away.

Nothing changes until you replace. Browsing and listening never touch your progression or your Undo history. The strip above the cards, for example **Am7 → D7sus4 → G7**, shows where the chord sits.

FAMILY	WHAT YOU'LL FIND
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BEST FIT	A few of the strongest choices from every family, so there's always a surprise or two.
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IN KEY	Other chords from the key.
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SAME JOB	Chords that do the same job: feeling like home, moving away, or building tension. Dm7 for Fmaj7 , say.
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COLOUR	The same chord with a different flavour: sevenths, ninths, sus, 6/9, a Lydian #11.
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BORROWED	Chords from the parallel major or minor, like the bittersweet minor iv, the cinematic bVI, or the Neapolitan.
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LEAD IN	Chords that pull into the next one: its dominant, a tritone sub, a backdoor dominant, a passing diminished.
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Suggestions are worked out on your Mac. They're instant, work offline, and never use your AI service. They're suggestions to try, not rules: trust your ears.

GOOD TO KNOW

The first and last chords of the loop count as neighbours, because that's how a loop sounds. A rest counts as silence, so there's no chord to lead into across it. Replacing a chord whose notes you placed by hand drops those notes, and Explore warns you before you do. Undo brings them back. While your DAW is playing, Explore stays quiet so it doesn't play over your song. Stop the transport to listen.

The name follows the notes

After a note edit, Chordy works out what the chord now is and renames it. Add a B to a C major and it becomes **Cmaj7**. Put an E at the bottom and it becomes **C/E**.

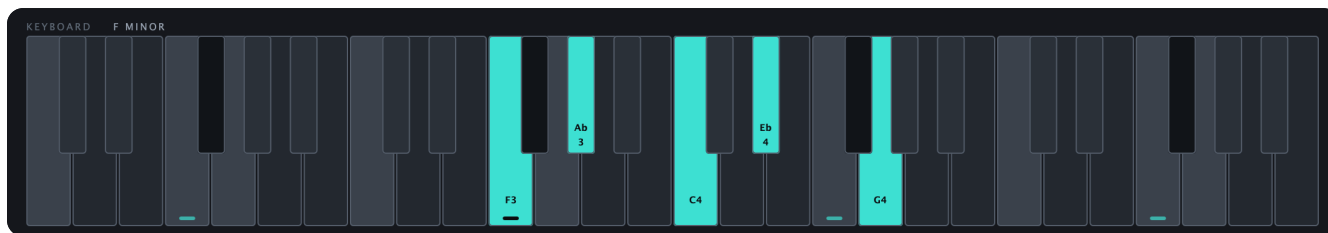
- **EDITED** means the notes were placed by hand but still spell the chord's name.
- **CUSTOM** means the notes no longer fit any chord name. The old name stays, and the card on the timeline gets a small amber dot.

GOOD TO KNOW

Hand-edited chords keep their notes when you change the Voicing controls or use Invert. Transposing moves them with everything else. While the **Arp** is on, it plays the notes you placed but uses its own rhythm, not their timing.

The keyboard

A map of the key, and a window on what's sounding.



- **Keys in the scale are lighter**, so you can read the scale at a glance. The label above it names the key, here F minor.
- **A small bar marks the home note** in every octave.
- **Sounding notes light up in teal**, with their names, as the progression plays.
- **Click a key** to hear that note.

Watching the keyboard while a progression plays is a quick way to learn what makes a chord sound the way it does.

Global controls

The bottom row stays in reach on every page.



CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES
PLAY, STOP	Play or pause the progression, and stop. In the Standalone app, Space does the same.
LOOP	Plays the progression round and round.
FOLLOW HOST	In a DAW only. When it's on, Chordy plays along with your DAW's transport and tempo, and the tempo reads Host tempo . Turn it off to play Chordy on its own.
TEMPO	Chordy's own tempo, used when it isn't following your DAW and written into exported MIDI files. A tempo in your prompt sets it.
TIME SIG	Beats per bar, and the beat unit. A time signature in your prompt overrides it.
INSTRUMENT	Chordy's preview sound: Simple pad , Organ , Slow pad , Electric piano , Strings , or Bass while Bass only is on. It's just for listening, and it never changes the MIDI Chordy sends. Chordy MIDI has no preview sound.
OUTPUT	The volume of the preview sound.
DRAG MIDI	In Ableton Live only. Drag it onto a clip slot or into the arrangement to drop the progression in as a MIDI clip.
EXPORT MIDI	Saves the progression as a <code>.mid</code> file.

Getting chords into your track

What you hear in Chordy is exactly what lands in the clip: the notes, the rhythm, the strum, the arp, all of it.

Drag it in

- **In Ableton Live:** drag the **DRAG MIDI** button onto a clip slot or into the arrangement.
- **In other DAWs:** drag from the bar numbers along the top of the chord timeline. It carries the same MIDI file, and works wherever your DAW accepts a dropped MIDI file.
- **Anywhere else:** press **EXPORT MIDI** to save a `.mid` file.

A bass line in two drags

- 1 Drag the progression onto your pad or keys track.
- 2 Turn on **BASS ONLY** in the Playback row.
- 3 Drag again, this time onto your bass track.

You now have chords and a bass line that fit each other exactly. Add the Arp before the first drag and you've got a pattern on top as well.

Chordy MIDI in Ableton Live

Chordy MIDI drives your own instruments. Live doesn't let a MIDI plugin sit in front of an instrument on the same track, so use two tracks:

- 1 **Track 1:** load the **VST3** version of **Chordy MIDI**. Live's AU plugins can't send MIDI out, so the AU won't work for this.
- 2 **Track 2:** load any instrument, such as Wavetable or a piano. Set its **MIDI From** to Track 1, choose **Chordy MIDI** in the menu below it (not Pre FX or Post FX), and set **Monitor** to **In**.
- 3 Press play in Live. Chordy MIDI now plays your instrument.



Done: MIDI From **1-Chordy MIDI**, **Chordy MIDI**, Monitor In. The meter shows Wavetable playing.

On the instrument track, pick **Chordy MIDI** in the second menu. Pre FX and Post FX carry the MIDI going into Chordy, not the chords it plays.

Chordy MIDI shows this reminder at the top of its window too. Or skip the routing entirely: drag the MIDI onto the instrument's track.

Everything is saved with your project

Chordy saves the progression, the exact notes and every Chordy control with the song. Your AI key is **never** saved in a project, so sharing a song never shares your key.

Setting up AI

AI mode uses your own account with an AI service. You paste its **key**, a long password-like code, into Chordy. Some services are free.

Which service?

SERVICE	COST	GOOD TO KNOW
Google Gemini	Free	The easiest start: a Google account, no card. The daily limits are generous for making music.
Ollama Cloud	Free plan	Email sign-up, no card. A monthly allowance, one request at a time. Ollama doesn't train on your prompts.
OpenRouter	Free models	Email sign-up, no card. 50 requests a day for free. You need to change one privacy setting (see below).
Ollama (local)	Free	Runs entirely on your Mac, fully private, and works offline. Needs a download of 2 GB or more. Results are simpler.
Anthropic Claude	Paid	Excellent results. Needs prepaid credit. A Claude Pro or Max subscription does not include it.
OpenAI	Paid	Needs prepaid credit (\$5 minimum). A ChatGPT Plus subscription does not include it.

Not sure? Choose Google Gemini. It's free and takes two minutes.

ABOUT SUBSCRIPTIONS

A ChatGPT or Claude subscription is for the chat app only. Plugins like Chordy use a separate account, called the API, with its own prepaid credit. Prices and free plans change often: these were checked in September 2026.

Connect a service

- 1 Click **SETTINGS** at the top of Chordy.
- 2 Choose your service under **PROVIDER**.
- 3 Click **Get a key**. Your browser opens on the right page. Sign in and create a key.
- 4 Copy the key, paste it into the **KEY** field and press Return.
- 5 Chordy tests the connection. When it says it worked, go back to **COMPOSE**, switch to **AI** and make something.

Google Gemini

Sign in with your Google account, click **Create API key** and copy it. That's all. Outside the EU, the UK and Switzerland, Google may use prompts sent on the free plan to improve its AI.

Ollama Cloud

Create an account at ollama.com, open **Settings → Keys**, create a key and copy it.

OpenRouter

Create an account at openrouter.ai and create a key under **Settings → Keys**. Then open **Settings → Privacy** on openrouter.ai and allow **free endpoints**. Without that, free models won't answer. In Chordy, keep the model on `openrouter/free`. The free models may keep or train on your prompts: that's the trade for them being free.

Ollama on your Mac

Download Ollama from ollama.com and open it. Open the Terminal app, type `ollama pull llama3.2` and press Return. That downloads a model of about 2 GB. In Chordy, choose **Ollama (local)**. You don't need a key, and your prompts never leave your Mac.

Anthropic Claude or OpenAI

Create an account, add a little credit on the billing page (a few dollars lasts a long time for chord progressions), then create a key and paste it into Chordy.

Is my key safe?

Your key is stored only on your Mac, in your own user account. It's never saved in projects or presets. Chordy only goes online when you press **GENERATE** or test a key: never when it loads, when a project opens, or when your DAW scans plugins.

Settings

PROVIDER: Google Gemini

MODEL: gemini-3.6-flash

KEY: Paste your key... [SHOW](#) [Get a key](#)

Free tier available, no card needed. Outside the EU, UK and Switzerland, Google may use free-tier prompts to improve its models.

Stored for this user only, never in projects or presets.

[TEST CONNECTION](#)

MIDI CHANNEL: 1

THEME: Dark

CHORDY
SWIMMING IN THE SEA

Build 2026-09-24 15:50:52
#20260924155052

SETTING	WHAT IT DOES
PROVIDER	The AI service for AI mode. Built-in (offline) uses Chordy's own engine, with no network at all.
MODEL	Which of the service's models writes your chords. The default is a good choice.
KEY	Your key for that service. Show reveals it, and Get a key opens the service's key page. Once a key is saved, the link becomes Manage keys .
TEST CONNECTION	Checks the key and the service, and shows the answer underneath.
MIDI CHANNEL	The channel Chordy sends its MIDI on.
THEME	Dark is the studio default. Light is the same design on white, for bright rooms.

Settings are yours, not the project's: they apply to every copy of Chordy on your Mac, in every song.

The foot of the page shows your version of Chordy, for example **Version 1.1.0**, and the build it came from. Quote both if you ever need to report a problem.

Keyboard shortcuts

On the Compose page

KEYS	WHAT THEY DO
Return	In the prompt: Generate. With a chord selected: open the chord editor.
E	Open the selected chord in the chord editor on Explore.
Escape	Cancel a generation.
⌘Z / ⌘⇧Z	Undo / Redo.
← →	Move the selected chord earlier or later.
⌘D	Duplicate the selected chord.
R	Insert a rest after the selected chord.
Delete	Delete the selected chord.
⌘- / ⌘+ / ⌘0	Zoom the timeline out, in, and to fit.
Space	Play and pause, in the Standalone app. In a DAW, Space stays with your DAW.

In the chord editor

KEYS	WHAT THEY DO
E	Switch between Notes and Explore.
↑ ↓	Notes: move the selected note by a semitone. Hold Shift for an octave. Explore: move to the card above or below and hear it.
← →	Notes: move the selected note by a sixteenth. Explore: move to the previous or next card and hear it.
C	Explore: hear the selected card between its neighbours.
Return	Explore: replace the chord with the selected card.
Delete	Notes: remove the selected note.
⌘ + drag	Move or resize a note without snapping.
Escape	Close the editor.

Mouse

ACTION	WHAT IT DOES
Double-click a chord	Open it in the chord editor.
Right-click a chord	Edit notes, explore alternatives, move, duplicate, rest or delete.
Double-click an Explore card	Replace the chord with it.
Drag a chord's right edge	Make it longer or shorter.
Drag the bar numbers	Drag the progression into your DAW as MIDI.

Troubleshooting

WHAT YOU SEE

WHAT TO DO

Chordy doesn't show up in my DAW	Check the files were copied , not aliased, into the right folders, then rescan plugins.
Chordy MIDI doesn't play my instrument in Live	Use the VST3 version, and check the routing on the instrument track: MIDI From Track 1, Chordy MIDI (not Pre FX or Post FX), Monitor In. Then press play in Live. Chapter 13 has screenshots of the right settings.
I can't hear anything	Chordy MIDI makes no sound by itself. With Chordy, check the Output knob and your track's volume. If Follow host is on, press play in your DAW.
An ADD ... KEY button in AI mode	No key is set for the chosen service, so Chordy is answering from its own engine. See Setting up AI .
"Rate limited (HTTP 429)" or "exceeded your current quota"	On OpenAI or Anthropic, this usually means there's no credit on the account. Add some. On a free service, you've hit the limit for now. Try again later, or tomorrow.
"That key was rejected"	The key was copied incompletely, or it's been deleted. Create a new one and paste it again.
"That looks like a ... key"	The key belongs to a different service. Choose the matching Provider.
OpenRouter says "No endpoints found"	Allow free endpoints in OpenRouter's Settings → Privacy .
Ollama: "Could not reach..."	Open the Ollama app first, then try again.
The service is busy (HTTP 503)	The AI service is overloaded. Try again in a minute or pick another model. Chordy still gives you a progression from its own engine meanwhile.
A chord has an amber dot	Its hand-placed notes no longer spell its name. That's fine if it sounds good. Reset to chord in the chord editor puts it back.

Still stuck? Get in touch, and include the message Chordy shows under **Test connection**. Never send anyone your key.

The progression library

All 43 presets in Internal mode. Each plays in the key you set, in its own mode. Numerals show each chord's job, so **I–V–vi–IV** in C is C, G, Am, F.

Loops and vamps

Axis	I–V–vi–IV
Sensitive female	vi–IV–I–V
Axis, minor rotation	i– ^b VI– ^b III– ^b VII
'50s progression	I–vi–IV–V
I–vi–ii–V	I–vi–ii–V
Three-chord trick	I–IV–V
Royal Road	IVmaj7–V7–iii7–vi
Aeolian vamp	i– ^b VII– ^b VI– ^b VII
Dorian vamp	i7–IV7

Club loops

Minor-ninth pendulum	i9–iv9
One-chord stab	i7
Parallel minor stabs	i–v–iv–v– ^b vi– ^b vii
Can You Feel It	^b VIImaj7– ^b VII–i–i7
Minor-eleventh drift	i11– ^b VIImaj7

Cadences and turnarounds

Two-five-one	ii7–V7–Imaj7
Minor two-five-one	ii ^ø 7–V7–i7
Tritone substitute	ii7– ^b II7–Imaj7
Backdoor	iv7– ^b VII7–Imaj7
Rhythm changes A	I6–vi7–ii7–V7–iii7–VI7–ii7–V7
Double plagal	I– ^b VII–IV–I
Mario cadence	^b VI– ^b VII–I
Minor plagal	I–IV–iv–I
V–IV–I turnaround	V–IV–I

Root-motion cycles

Circle of fifths	vi7–ii7–V7–Imaj7
Ragtime progression	III7–VI7–II7–V7–I
Montgomery–Ward bridge	I7–IV7–ii7–V7
Fifths up to the tonic	^b VI– ^b III– ^b VII–IV–I
Coltrane changes	Imaj7– ^b III7– ^b VIImaj7–VII7–IIIImaj7–V7

Descending lines

Andalusian cadence	i- $\flat$ VII- $\flat$ VI-V
Hotel California	i-V- $\flat$ VII-IV- $\flat$ VI- $\flat$ III-iv-V
Pachelbel's Canon	I-V-vi-iii-IV-I-IV-V
Descending bass	I-V/7-vi-vi/5-IV-I/3-ii-V
Minor line cliché	i-i(maj7)-i7-i6

Borrowed and chromatic

Major III to minor iv	I-III-IV-iv
Neapolitan drift	I maj7- $\flat$ II maj7
Just the Two of Us	IV maj7-III7-vi7-v7-I7

Forms and grounds

Twelve-bar form	I7-IV7-I7-V7
Eight-bar form	I7-V7-IV7-I7-V7
Bird changes	I maj7-vii $\emptyset$ 7-III7-vi7-II7...
La Folia	i-V-i- $\flat$ VII- $\flat$ III- $\flat$ VII-i-V
Romanesca	$\flat$ III- $\flat$ VII-i-V
Passamezzo antico	i- $\flat$ VII-i-V- $\flat$ III- $\flat$ VII-i-V
Passamezzo moderno	I-IV-I-V-I-IV-I-V



Chordy · Swimming In The Sea · Now go make something.