



Arturia PC MAC V Collection 6 €499

Adding four more legendary analogue and digital instruments to the 17 already in place, this bolstered bundle just about has it all...

> The last time we looked at Arturia's ever-expanding V Collection library of classic synths and keyboard instruments was way back in **cm215**, where version 4 scored 9/10. 2016's V Collection 5 saw the addition of a handful of organs, a piano emulation and a superb Synclavier to the roster, an improved browser, and an overhaul of many of the older GUIs.

Now, V Collection 6 adds a further four icons to the pantheon: CMI V, DX7 V, Buchla Easel V and Clavinet V (each also available individually for €199). It also updates a couple of the existing offerings (see *More of the same*), GUI window scaling from 60-200%, and Retina/HiDPI support for Solina V, VOX Continental V and Wurli V. As before, every instrument runs standalone or as a VST/AU/AAX plugin.

Easel does it

Launched in 1973, the Music Easel - Don Buchla's hipper, groovier alternative to the Moogs of the

day - is one of the maddest, most creative synths ever made, and Arturia's digital remake keeps it that way. Buchla Easel V is by no means an easy synth to get into, but once you figure out the unusual CV-driven semi-modular architecture, Dual Low Pass Gate filter/amp combo, inverted sliders, clever colour coding and generally quirky 'west coast' angle, it all

"This is an instrument that no committed synthesist could fail to fall in love with. It's one of Arturia's finest so far"

starts to make sense. The Complex Oscillator uses wave folding to generate harmonics from a sine wave, enabling dramatic tonal shifts through manipulation of the Timbre slider and knob, the latter blending in a saw, square or triangle wave. Next door, the Modulation Oscillator can generate modulation and audio signals, and is hardwired to serve as an FM, AM or RM source; and the Sequential Voltage Source offers quick CV step modulation.

Naturally, Arturia's Easel emulation is much more convenient and practical than the original hardware purely on its own terms, but they've also added a number of entirely new features, including a noise generator, note pitch quantise for the oscillators, the usual insert effects (two slots, ten processors), and three extra sequencing and CV control systems. The first is essentially a bank of five freely assignable looping multistage envelope generators; the second is a polyphonic step sequencer; and the,

“DX7 V isn’t going to change any games, but it is a great synth that fills an obvious gap in the line-up.”

er, Gravity Universe is an utterly brilliant physics emulation engine, where modulation projectiles bounce around, their trajectories guided by the gravitational and surface effects of placed Planets, Repellers, Walls and teleporting Wormholes. It’s an amazing feature, and we’d love to see it added to more Arturia synths.

Overall, Buchla Easel V is by far the best new addition in V Collection 6. It reimagines and embellishes the sought-after hardware beautifully, without compromising any of its core strengths. Evolving, tonally shifting ‘scapes, FX and expressive performance patches are its forté, and this is an instrument that no committed synthesist could fail to fall in love with. It’s one of Arturia’s finest so far.

And then there were three

DX7 V is one we’re genuinely surprised Arturia have only just got round to. A virtual Yamaha DX7, of course, it elaborates on the basic six-operator architecture of the real thing (including all 32 original algorithms) with the addition of a library of 25 waveforms for each operator, as well as per-operator multimode filters and feedback circuits, multistage envelopes, step sequencing, and four effects slots drawing on 11 processing modules. It’s everything you might expect from an Arturia take on Yamaha’s 80s classic, embiggining the fundamental concept and sounding spectacular in the process, with all that characteristic bite and sheen.

If you’ve already got a decent DX7 emulation in your plugin arsenal (highly likely), DX7 V isn’t going to change any games, but it is a great and versatile synth that fills an obvious gap in the V Collection line-up.

CMI V follows-up v5’s flawless Synclavier with an equally on-point Fairlight CMI IIx sampling and synthesis workstation. Every factory sound from the original instrument is onboard, but rather more than just a nostalgia trip, CMI V also comes complete with the ability to load your own samples, hybrid additive/wavetable



Analog Lab 3 brings all 6000+ of V Collection 6’s presets together in one tidy instrument



Piano V2 is an unusual but welcome inclusion in V Collection 6

More of the same

As well as the four new instruments, V Collection 6 updates Piano V to v2, and the Analog Lab ‘preset aggregator’ to v3.

Piano V2 adds three new models to Arturia’s impressive physically modelled piano studio – Plucked Piano, Attack Piano and Japanese Grand – bringing the total to 12, and reworks the ones that were already there. It also throws in Compressor and Delay effects, and ups the number of parametric EQ bands by two to three (plus High and Low Shelves). It sounds fantastic and can also be bought on its own for €249.

Working along similar lines to Native Instruments’ Complete Kontrol,

Analog Lab brings together all 6000+ presets from the full range of Arturia synths in a dedicated GUI that puts eight essential parameters from the loaded synth engine at your fingertips, and automaps them to the company’s controller keyboards. If you own the instrument in question (which, as a V Collection 6 owner, you will do), you can open its full UI within Analog Lab, making it a handy way to quickly audition sounds from across the Collection, before switching to the main synth when required. New for v3 are presets from the new synths and Clavinet V, and various UI tweaks.

functionality, FFT conversion of samples to additive harmonic profiles (and back to samples again), beefed-up sequencing and modulation, and effects.

For pure sampling there’s absolutely no reason to use CMI V over your modern soft sampler, of course, and the factory sounds are so old-hat now that a law should be passed; but the spectral synthesis angle is interesting and useful, if not entirely intuitive.

Finally, Clavinet V is a splendid physically modelled Hohner Clavinet, featuring all the switches of the real thing, plus a host of new controls (Hammer Noise, String Resonance, etc), spring reverb amp simulation, and a configurable board of appropriate stompbox-style effects. It sounds wicked, and couldn’t be more performer-friendly and easy to use.

Very Collection

Thanks mostly to Buchla Easel V, VC6 is one of the most inspiring updates to Arturia’s stunning vintage playground yet. The other new entrants make for some tasty icing, though, and as a whole, V Collection 6 is without doubt the most powerful and expansive self-contained arsenal of classic synth and keyboard emulations money has ever been able to buy. **cm**

Web www.arturia.com

Alternatively

Native Instruments Komplete 11 cm253 » 10/10 » £159-959

A peerless collection of VSTi’s and effects, but with nowhere near as many classic synths onboard

Korg Legacy Collection cm111 » 9/10 » \$199

Only Korgs, obviously, but a great deal for fans of the music technology giant’s classic synths

Verdict

For Buchla Easel V is superb
DX7 V, CMI V and Clavinet V ain’t half bad, either
Great value – 21 quality instruments

Against No NKS support for new instruments at time of writing
Easel V and DX7 V will punish your CPU

More classic synths and keyboards than you can shake a stick at, plus the very helpful Analog Lab 3, at a very fair price

10/10