Programming Tutorial

There is so much you can do with the Proteus 2000 it's impossible to describe it all. This chapter is will give you some ideas for programming your own custom sounds and contains step-by-step instructions to help you get started. In order to get the most from this chapter, we recommend you actually try each example. Have fun!

Editing Presets

One of the easiest ways to make a new preset is to edit an existing preset. This is also an excellent way of becoming familiar with Proteus 2000. If you don't like what you hear, simply select a new preset, then Proteus 2000 reverts to the original sound. Changes are not permanent until you Save them (see "Saving a Preset" on page 151).

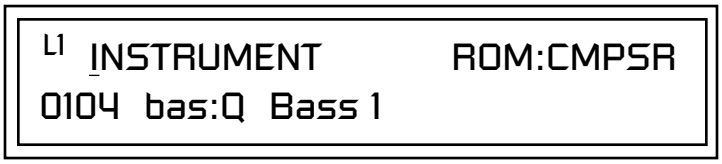
Let's experiment and modify a few parameters of an existing preset. We'll start with functions that have an obvious effect on the sound: Instrument Select, Tuning, and Chorus.

Changing the Instrument

Changing the instrument is the easiest and most dramatic way to modify an existing preset.

▶ To Change the Instrument for the Current Layer

1. Choose any cool preset, then press the Edit button.
2. Scroll through the Edit menu until you come to the Instrument page.



3. Move the cursor down to the bottom line (using a Cursor button).
4. Use the Data Entry Control to change the instrument. This changes the instrument for the current layer (in this case it's L1).
5. Play the keyboard as you scroll through the various instruments.

▶ To Change the Instrument for any Layer in the Preset

6. Move the cursor back up to the first field in the first line (the layer).
7. Use the Data Entry Control to select the layer you want.

8. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for each selected layer. Find an instrument that sounds good when combined with the previous instruments selected.

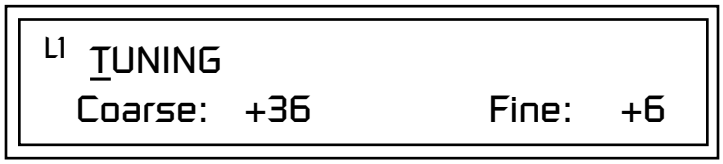
With all these great instruments to work with, you really can't go wrong. Now let's play with the tuning.

Changing the Tuning of an Instrument

Tuning the selected layer of the preset changes the pitch of the key on the controller. If the numbers are "00," it means that the instruments are tuned to concert pitch (A=440 Hz). The Coarse tuning value represents whole semitone intervals. The Fine tuning value shifts the pitch in 1/64 semitones (or 1.56 cents).

▶ To Tune the Instrument of the Current Layer

1. Scroll through the Edit menu until you come to the Tuning page.



2. Move the cursor to the Coarse field (using the cursor button).
3. Set the value to +12 to shift the pitch up a whole octave. To shift the pitch in smaller units than a semitone, use the Fine field.

Try tuning one of the instruments to a perfect fifth above the other by setting the Coarse value to +7.

Tuning an instrument far out of its normal range completely changes the character of the sound. For example, if you tune a bass guitar up 2 octaves, it's going to sound rather petite. On the other hand, if you tune it down 2 octaves, you can probably rattle plaster off the walls! Experiment with radical pitch shifting. You'll be surprised at the results.

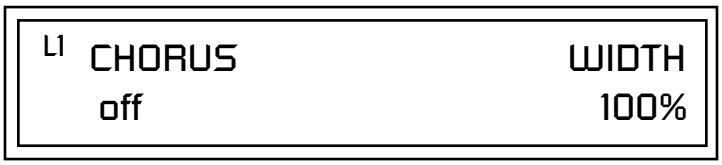
Chorus

This is an easy one. Chorus works by doubling the instruments and detuning them slightly. The larger the chorus value, the more detuning occurs. The Width parameter controls the stereo spread. A Width value of 0% reduces the chorus to mono, a value of 100% provides the most stereo separation. Chorus is useful when you want to "fatten up" a part quickly and easily.

***WARNING**: Since it works by doubling the instruments, Chorusing halves the number of notes you can play on Proteus 2000.*

▶ To Chorus a Layer

1. With the cursor on the top line of the display, turn the Data Entry Control until you find the Chorus page.
2. Use the cursor buttons to advance the cursor to the Chorus field (the first field in the bottom line of the display). Use the Data Entry Control to turn on chorus.



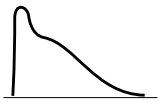
3. Select a Width value based on the amount of detuning you want. Smaller numbers mean less detuning, larger ones more.

You can select various amounts of chorusing for each of the instruments, just play around with the Chorus and Width parameter until you like what you hear.

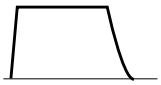
Volume Envelope

Every sound you hear, whether it's a piano note, a drum, or a bell, has a characteristic volume curve or envelope. This Volume Envelope shapes the volume of the sound which grows louder or softer in various ways during the course of the sound. The volume envelope of a sound is one of the clues our brain uses to determine what type of sound is being produced.

An envelope shapes the sound or volume of the sound over time. The envelope generators in Proteus 2000 all have six stages to the contour: Attack 1, Attack 2, Decay 1, Decay 2, Release 1 and Release 2. When you press a key on the keyboard, the envelope goes through each of the first four stages, advancing to the next stage when the defined Level for each is reached. As long as you continue to hold the key down, the envelope continues through the first four stages holding at the end of the Decay 2 level until the key is released. When you release the key, the envelope jumps to the Release stages (no matter where the envelope is when you release the key) ending at the Release 2 level.



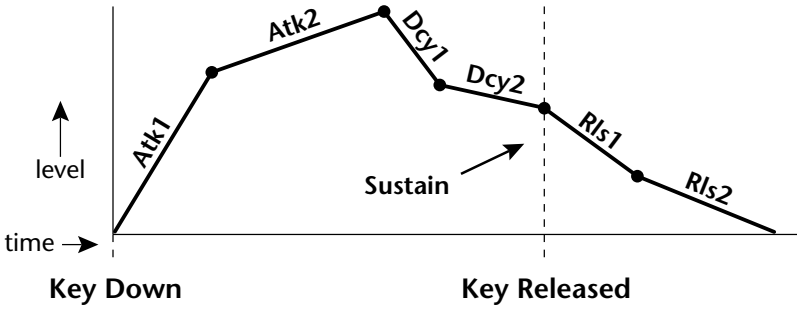
Piano



Organ

Strings

Percussion



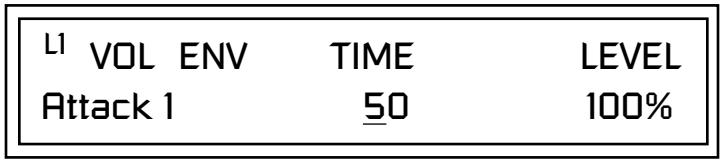
Every instrument in Proteus 2000 has it's own predetermined volume envelope which is used when the Volume Envelope parameter is set to "factory." By setting the Volume Envelope to "time-based" or "tempo-based," we can reshape the instrument's natural volume envelope any way we want. By reshaping the volume envelope of a instrument, you can dramatically change the way the sound is perceived. For example, you can make "bowed" pianos or backward gongs. The diagrams to the left show the characteristic volume envelopes of a few common sounds.

In preparation for this experiment choose a fairly "normal" preset (like an organ or synth) which continues to sustain when the key is held down. Go to the Instrument page and set it to "None" on all layers except Layer 1. Now you're ready to play with the Volume Envelope.

▶ To Setup the Volume Envelope

1. Go to the Volume Envelope mode screen and set the Volume Envelope mode to "time-based."

2. Now move on to the next screen to set the Volume Envelope parameters.



3. Increase the Attack 1 time value and play a note. The attack controls the time it takes for the sound to reach the Attack level when a key is pressed and held.

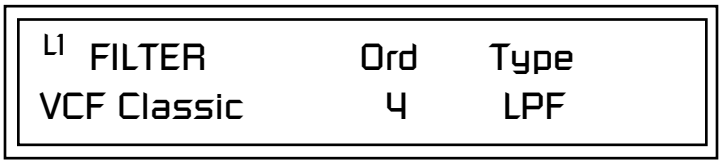
4. Move the cursor to the first field in the bottom line and use the cursor buttons to advance to the Release pages.
5. Increase the Release 1 and 2 times. Note the effect as you release the key on the controller. The Release stages controls the time it takes for the sound to die away when a note is released.

Working with Filters

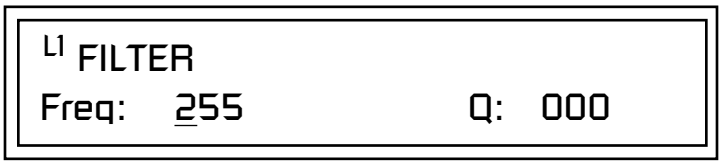
The filters make it possible to remove certain components of the sound. A low pass filter removes the high frequency components or put another way, it "lets the low frequencies pass." A high-pass filter removes the low frequency components from the sound letting only the high frequencies pass. See "Proteus 2000 Filter Types" on page 104 for a complete list of Proteus 2000's filters and their descriptions.

In preparation for the next tutorial, select preset the "Blank Preset".

1. Go to the Instrument screen and select Instrument #321 - Rast Keys. This is a really buzzy sound. Since filters work by removing or accentuating certain frequencies, we want to make sure that we have a lot of frequencies to start with.
1. Advance to the Filter Type screen using the Data Entry Control. Select the VCF Classic filter.

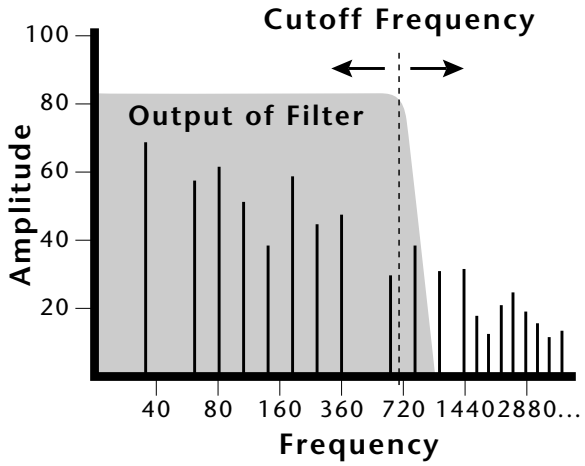


2. Go to the Filter Frequency and Q screen. Position the cursor in the Freq: field as shown in the following illustration.



The Frequency parameter determines the filter cutoff frequency or the frequency the filter uses as the highest frequency allowed to pass.

If you play the keyboard now, you should hear the raw Looped Perc 1 sound. Slowly decrease the filter cutoff frequency value as you play the keyboard. The sound gets more and more dull as you remove more and more high frequencies from the sound. At some point, the sound completely disappears. (You have filtered out everything.) The chart on the following page illustrates what you just did.



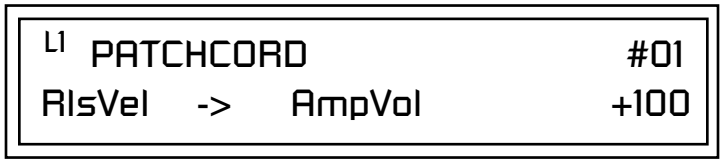
3. Open the filter back up to 255, then move the cursor to the Q field.
4. Set the Q to 10, then move the cursor back under the Freq value. As you change the frequency, notice that the sound now has a sharp, nasal quality. A high Q boosts or amplifies the frequencies at the cutoff frequency (Fc).
5. Reset the cutoff frequency to the lowest setting (0.08Hz) and the Q to 00.

Adding the Filter Envelope

Now let's modulate the Filter Frequency with the Filter Envelope. The Filter Envelope is a device that can automatically change the filter frequency during the course of the note. Before we define the Filter Envelope, we need to patch the Filter Envelope to the Filter Frequency.

▶ To Setup the Filter Envelope

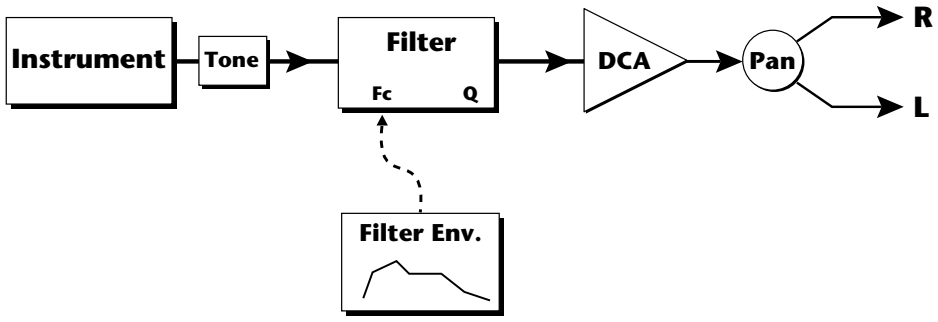
1. Go to the PatchCord screen.



2. Move the cursor below the first field in the bottom line of the display. This is the Source field. Use the Data Entry Control to change the Source to “FiltEnv” as shown in the following illustration.
3. Advance the cursor to the next field. This is the Destination field. Use the Data Entry Control to change the destination to “FiltFreq.”

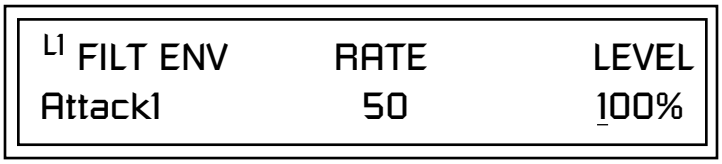
4. Move the cursor to the last field in the line. This is the Amount field. The Amount field determines the amount of modulation applied. Set this value to "+100."

This setup connects the Filter Envelope Generator to the Filter Cutoff as shown in the following diagram.

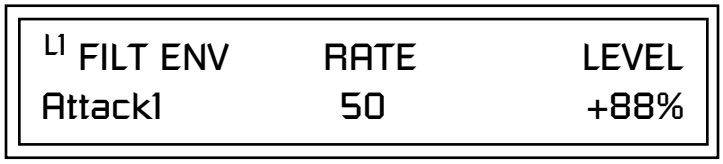


5. Now, return to the Filter Envelope Mode screen. Set the Mode to "time-based."

6. Advance to the Filter Envelope parameter page.



7. Move the cursor underneath the time field and change the value to about +50. Now when you press a key the filter slowly sweeps up.



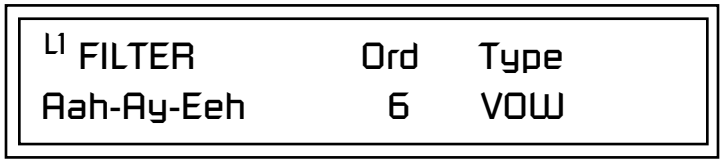
8. Change the attack rate and note the change in the sound.
9. Set the envelope parameters as shown in the following table.

Envelope Phase	Time	Level %
Attack 1	40	65
Attack 2	65	100
Decay 1	80	85
Decay 2	25	50
Release 1	97	20
Release 2	73	0

With the above setup, the filter sweeps up, then Decays back down to the Decay 2 Level until you release the key. Then it sweeps down at the Release rates. Play with the envelope parameters for awhile to get a feel for their function. (If you're having trouble understanding the Envelope Generators, please refer to the Programming Basics section in this manual.)

Changing Filter Types

Go back to the Filter Type screen shown below and move the cursor down the lower line of the display. Change the filter type while playing the keyboard. There are 17 different filter types.



These filters are extremely powerful and have been carefully crafted to offer maximum flexibility and musical control. You may want to change the Envelope (PatchCord) Amount, Q and/or the Filter Frequency to get the right sound for each filter and instrument. These three controls, coupled with the Filter Envelope, are perhaps the most important controls on Proteus 2000. Take the time to learn how they interact with each other and you will be able to create sounds beyond imagination.

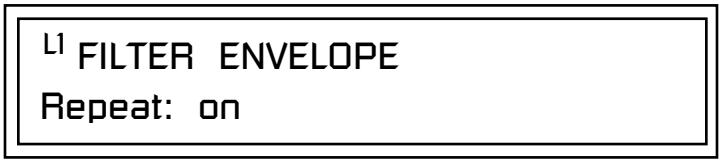
Envelope Repeat

The Envelope Generator can also be made to repeat. When the envelope repeat function is On, the Attack (1&2) and Decay (1&2) stages will continue to repeat as long as the key is held.

▶ To Make the Filter Envelope Repeat:

1. Go to the Filter Envelope **Mode** screen shown below.
2. Move the cursor to the Mode field.

3. Turn the data entry control clockwise. The Mode field will change to Repeat as shown below.



4. Move the cursor to the on/off field and turn Envelope Repeat On.
5. Play a key on the keyboard. You should now hear the envelope repeating.
6. Go back to the envelope parameter page and adjust the Attack 1&2, and Decay 1&2 parameters. The repeating envelope cycles through these four stages as long as the key is held.

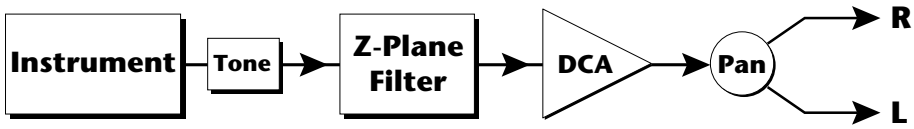
Practice Modulating

- Try modulating the pitch with the Filter Envelope generator
- Use Velocity to modulate the Filter Envelope PatchCord or the Filter Frequency. This brightens the sound as you play harder.
- Program the LFO to modulate Filter Frequency and Volume (Patch-Cord screen).
- Modulate the LFO with the other LFO, with Velocity, and with the Modulation Wheel.
- Think of ten different modulation routings, then try them out. The key to learning Proteus 2000 is to experiment.

Troubleshooting

A common source of confusion when working with the filter envelope is that the Attack or Release parameters might not seem to be working correctly. If you are not getting the expected result, try to analyze the situation. There will be many times when you will have to stop for a minute and think, “What am I trying to do and why isn't it working?” When this happens (and it will), don't panic. Troubleshooting is a normal part of the synthesis process. Simply examine the various parameters and try to be as analytical as possible as you solve the problem. The solution is usually simple (the filter is already wide open and can't open any more). Learning to play any instrument takes a little patience and practice.

Referring to the diagram below which shows the Proteus 2000 signal flow, notice that the DCA comes after the Filter. The DCA controls the final volume of the sound, so if the filter's release is longer than the release for the DCA, you won't hear it, because the DCA has already shut off the sound.



You’re getting the general idea by now. Remember not to select a new preset before saving the current one or all your changes will be lost (the preset reverts to the last saved version). If you want to save your creation, select the Save/Copy menu and select a destination preset location for your masterpiece, then press Enter.

Because you can save your work, it’s worth spending time to get the sound just right. When designing sounds you become an instrument builder as well as a musician and with Proteus 2000 you can design virtually any instrument you want!

Linking Presets

See "Preset Links" on page 123 for more information.

Using the Link pages in the Edit menu is a quick and easy way to create new sounds. Use the Links to "layer" presets and to "split" a keyboard into sections containing different sounds.

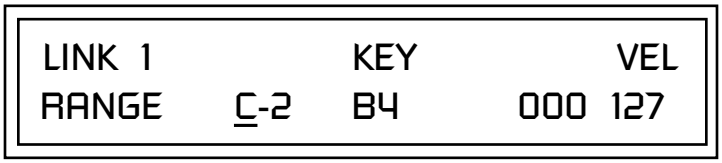
▶ To Layer Two Presets

1. Select the first preset you want to layer.
2. Press the Edit button. Use the Data Entry Control to move through the screens until you find either the "LINK 1" or "LINK 2" screen shown below.

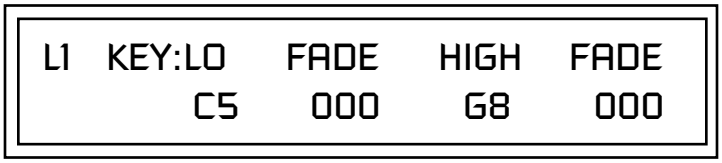
3. Move the cursor to the second line of the display. Select the preset you want to link with the preset you selected in step 1. Play the keyboard as you scroll through the various presets to hear the results.
4. If you want the link to be a permanent part of the preset, be sure to save the preset. Otherwise, simply change the preset to erase your work.

▶ To Create a Split Keyboard Using Links

1. Follow steps 1 through 4 above.
2. Press Enter and use the Data Entry Control to advance to the next page.



3. Set the keyboard range of the linked preset as desired.
4. Press Enter and use the Data Entry Control to go to the Key Range page (It's one of the first Edit menu pages).

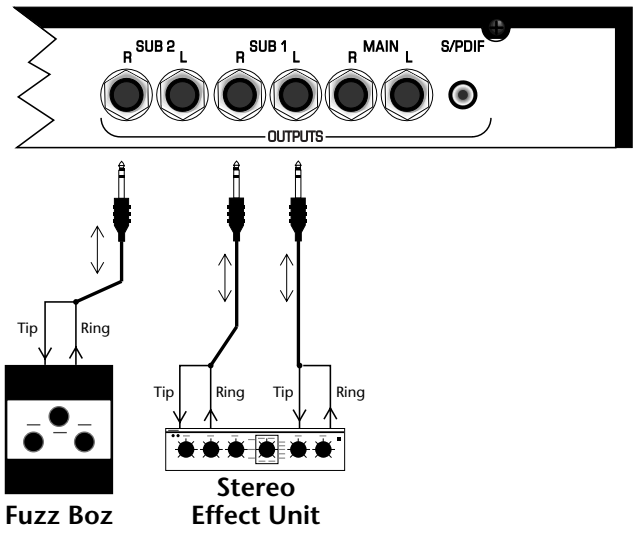


5. Set the range of the original preset so it fills the remaining keyboard area. Save the preset.

Using External Processing

Don't be afraid to use external processing on specific sounds. The submix sends and returns on Proteus 2000 are there for just that reason. In many instances, a bit of reverb or EQ will be just the thing an instrument needs to give it a distinct identity. Incidentally, an external fuzz box can work wonders on otherwise harmless sounds. By dedicating one of your old fuzz boxes to a submix out/in, you can have programmable distortion for use on basses, organs, whatever!

Try running a submix out into a guitar amp (Hint: reduce the volume). If you think about it, this makes perfect sense if you're looking for an authentic electric guitar or bass sound. You'll be amazed!



Using the submix outputs and returns, specific presets can be routed through your favorite effects without using up precious mixer channels.