

Visual Jazz Guitar VST plugin

Visual Jazz Guitar is a midi fretboard visualizer plugin intended for display of midi guitar files. Why Visual *Jazz* Guitar? It was created for Jazz Guitar Instruction (*Matt Otten's Jazz Guitar Improvisation Exercises and Examples*), and the user interface shows a jazz guitar fretboard. Other than that, it can be used for any midi guitar (files). The current version displays midi channels 11 to 16 on the six strings of the guitar.

The VST plugin needs a host program, which can be any (Windows) audio/midi sequencer that supports VST instruments (VSTi). All major sequencers support this and even some free (or very cheap) ones do.

Assuming you have such a VSTi host program installed, what you need to do is the following:

- install the Fretboard Visualizer by just copying the file **midifretboard.dll** to the VST plugins folder of your sequencer; it will automatically be recognized as a VST plugin.
- Start your sequencer/host
- Load the guitar midi file you want, you will see one midi track appearing.
- Load the midifretboard plugin from the VST instruments panel or menu of your sequencer
- Assign the midi track output to the plugin. Now, when you play the track, you will see the fretboard displaying the notes played¹.

The VST plugin is only for visualisation and does not produce sound. To get sound you have two options:

Option 1

Play the midi using any sound source that can be played with midi from your sequencer, for instance a sampler plugin, the midi sounds on your sound card or an external sound module etc. To do this, you may have to copy the midi track to a second track assigned to the midi sound source, or use 'midi thru'. Obviously, you would select a guitar sound if available. Using only midi, no audio, has the advantage that you can play the midi at arbitrary tempo, which makes it easier to study.

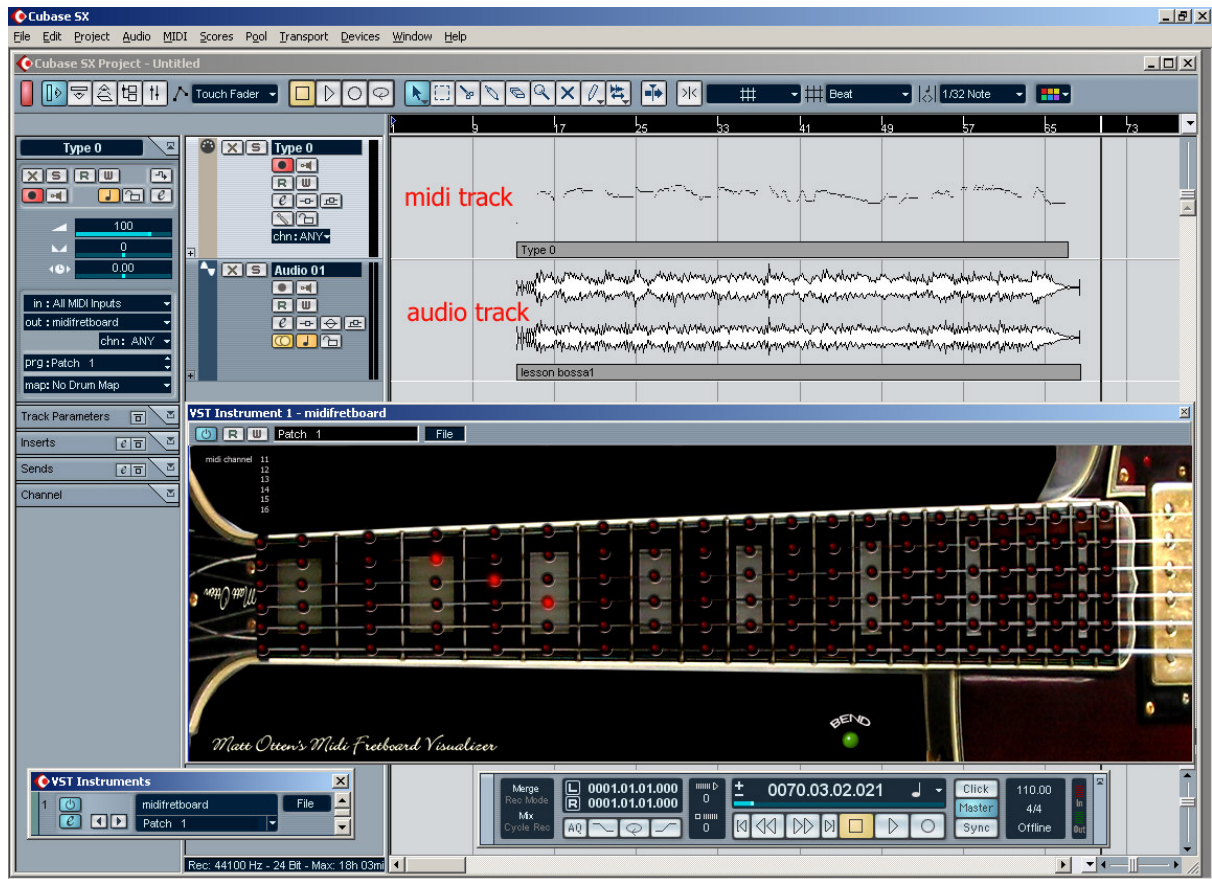
Option 2

Load the corresponding example mp3 file as well and put the newly created audio track parallel to the midi track. Now when you play it, you will hear the track playing while you can watch the notes appearing on the fretboard in real time. Of course the example is a especially prepared audio file, that was recorded at the same time as the midi, over a backing track; this is a great way to create audio-visual guitar lessons!

Depending on how your sequencer loads or imports files, you may have to align the midi and audio track manually, just make sure they have the same starting point. If your sequencer does not adopt the tempo from the midi file you may have to set it by hand. The tempo of the example track is 110.

¹ Make sure the channel settings do not re-channel the midi to one single channel, the plugin must receive all channels 11-16 as they are in the midi file.

The figure below shows the general setup in Cubase SX. It should look quite similar in other sequencer programs.



Once you have set up a track in your sequencer like this, you can of course save it in its own native format, so that you don't have to set it up again.

A package of educational jazz mp3/midi file combinations can be found on the Matt Otten web site.