Akai Professional Advance61

Akai Professional Advance 61: Virtual Instrument Production Controller User Manual

Model: Advance61

Introduction

The Akai Professional Advance 61 is a 61-key virtual instrument production controller designed to bridge the gap between software instruments and live playability. It features an interactive, full-color LCD screen and comprehensive hardware controls, allowing for unprecedented manipulation of virtual instruments.
Key features include:

- Integrated 4.3-inch high-resolution full-color screen with dedicated interface buttons.
- Screen provides 1:1, real-time feedback of plugin parameters.
- Includes Virtual Instrument Player (VIP) software for virtual instrument preset management, control mapping, and multi-patch creation.
- 61 premium, semi-weighted velocity-sensitive keybed with aftertouch.
- 8 large, endless, and continuously variable control knobs.
- 8 velocity- and pressure-sensitive, multicolor-backlit pads.
- Pitch-bend and modulation wheels.



Figure 1: Top view of the Akai Professional Advance 61 controller.

Box Contents

Ensure all items listed below are present in the box:

- Advance 61 Controller
- USB Cable (6 feet)
- Software Installation Card
- Quickstart Guide
- Safety & Warranty Manual
- VIP Software Package Download Instructions
- Akai Software Download Instructions

Setup

Follow these steps to set up your Akai Professional Advance 61 controller:

1. **Power Connection:** Connect the included power adapter to the controller's power input and then to a power outlet.



Figure 2: Rear panel connections of the Advance 61.

2. **USB Connection:** Connect the Advance 61 to your computer using the supplied USB cable. This connection provides MIDI and power (if not using the power adapter).
3. **Software Installation:** Insert the Software Installation Card into your computer or follow the Akai Software Download Instructions to download and install the Virtual Instrument Player (VIP) software and any other bundled software. Ensure your operating system (PC or Mac) meets the minimum requirements.
4. **Driver Installation:** The Advance 61 is class-compliant for most operating systems, meaning drivers will install automatically. If prompted, follow on-screen instructions for any necessary driver installations.
5. **MIDI Connections (Optional):** For connecting to external MIDI hardware, use standard 5-pin MIDI cables to connect the MIDI In/Out ports on the Advance 61 to your MIDI devices.
6. **Pedal Connections (Optional):** Connect a 1/4" TRS expression pedal to the Expression pedal input and a 1/4" TS sustain pedal to the Sustain pedal input for additional control.

Operating the Advance 61

The Advance 61 is designed for intuitive control over virtual instruments. Here's an overview of its operational aspects:

Virtual Instrument Player (VIP) Software

The VIP software is central to the Advance 61's functionality, allowing you to manage and control your VSTi library. VIP can operate as a standalone application or as a plugin within any major Digital Audio Workstation (DAW).

- **Plugin Management:** VIP organizes your VSTi library, enabling intuitive browsing by plugin, artist collection, instrument type, timbre, and more.
- **Multi-Instrument Control:** Access, edit, and mix up to 8 virtual instruments simultaneously.
- **Setlist Feature:** For live performers, the setlist feature allows instant switching between patches from any plugin directly from the keyboard.
- **Mapping:** The Advance 61 is pre-mapped to hundreds of industry-leading virtual instruments. You can also create

custom mappings for extensive key zone splitting and instrument mixing.

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Video 1: Akai Pro On Stage featuring Monte Neuble, demonstrating the Advance 61's capabilities with virtual instruments like Omnisphere.

Hardware Controls

- **Keys:** The 61 velocity- and pressure-sensitive keys provide a responsive playing experience. Use the Octave Down/Up buttons to access a 10-octave range.
- **Pads:** The 8 velocity- and pressure-sensitive pads are multicolor-backlit and can be used for triggering samples, drums, or other MIDI events.
- **Encoders:** The 8 360° assignable encoders allow for precise control over plugin parameters. The additional 360° encoder with push function is used for display navigation.
- **Switches:** Utilize the 8 assignable switches (amber-backlit) and 23 function switches (amber-backlit) for various controls. Four directional cursor buttons aid in display navigation.
- **LCD Display:** The 3.75” x 2.125” full-color LCD provides real-time control and feedback of all virtual instruments, adapting instantly to the selected plugin’s controls.



Figure 3: Angled view of the Advance 61, showcasing its controls and display.

Maintenance

To ensure the longevity and optimal performance of your Akai Professional Advance 61, follow these maintenance guidelines:

- **Cleaning:** Use a soft, dry cloth to clean the surface of the controller. For stubborn marks, a slightly damp cloth can be used, but ensure no liquid enters the device. Avoid abrasive cleaners or solvents.
- **Storage:** Store the controller in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight, extreme temperatures, and high humidity. If transporting, use a padded case to protect it from physical damage.
- **Connectivity:** Regularly check all cable connections (USB, MIDI, power, pedals) for wear and tear. Ensure they are

securely plugged in during use.

- **Software Updates:** Periodically check the Akai Professional website for firmware and VIP software updates. Keeping your software up-to-date ensures compatibility and access to new features or bug fixes.

Troubleshooting

If you encounter issues with your Advance 61, refer to the following common troubleshooting steps:

- **No Power/No Display:**
  - Ensure the power adapter is securely connected to both the controller and a working power outlet.
  - If powered via USB, ensure the USB cable is connected to a powered USB port on your computer or a powered USB hub.
  - Try a different power outlet or USB port.
- **No Sound/MIDI Output:**
  - Verify that the Advance 61 is recognized by your computer's operating system and your DAW/VIP software. Check MIDI input settings in your software.
  - Ensure the correct virtual instrument is loaded and active in VIP or your DAW.
  - Check the volume levels on the Advance 61, in VIP/DAW, and on your audio interface/speakers.
  - Confirm that the virtual instrument is receiving MIDI input from the Advance 61.
- **Software Glitches/Crashes:**
  - Ensure your VIP software and controller firmware are updated to the latest versions from the Akai Professional website.
  - Restart your computer and the Advance 61.
  - If using VIP as a plugin, try running it standalone to isolate the issue.
  - Check for conflicts with other software or drivers on your system.
- **Pads/Keys Not Responding:**
  - Check the velocity and sensitivity settings on the controller and within your software.
  - Ensure the correct MIDI channel is selected.
  - Perform a factory reset if necessary (refer to the full user manual for instructions).

Specifications

Keyboard	61 velocity- and pressure-sensitive keys; 10-octave range with Octave Down/Up buttons; Pitch-bend wheel; Modulation wheel
Encoders	8 360° assignable encoders; 1 360° encoder with push function for display navigation
Pads	8 velocity- and pressure-sensitive pads; multicolor-backlit
Switches	8 assignable switches (amber-backlit); 23 function switches (amber-backlit); 4 directional cursor buttons
Display	3.75” x 2.125” full-color LCD
Connections	(1) 1/4” TRS expression pedal input; (1) 1/4” TS sustain pedal input; (1) 5-pin MIDI input; (1) 5-pin MIDI output; (1) USB port; (1) power adapter input

Power	6 V DC, 1 A, center-positive
Dimensions (W x D x H)	36.0” x 11.5” x 3.5”
Weight	12.1 lbs

Warranty and Support

For detailed warranty information and technical support, please refer to the "Safety & Warranty Manual" included in your product box or visit the official Akai Professional website. Online resources often include FAQs, software downloads, and contact information for customer service.

Ask a question about this manual

Ask about setup, troubleshooting, compatibility, parts, safety, or missing instructions. Manuals+ will review the question and use this page’s manual context to help answer it.

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Question

Example: How do I reset this device or fix this error?

Details

Model number, symptoms, what you tried, or the section of the manual you are using.

Submit question