

Introducing the SL Mk II

SL Mk II combines a high quality semi-weighted keyboard with a full DAW and plug-in control surface, that visually feeds back all control information to the user. A giant 144-character display, back lit LED buttons and LED ringed encoders show the status of all controls. Ultra-quick mapping of all 56 knobs, faders and buttons is managed by the groundbreaking Automap 3 PRO software.

Overview

SL Mk II has been designed to equip the modern DAW user with every dimension of hardware control, enabling a hands-on approach to navigating software, mixing and controlling plug-ins. It represents extraordinary value as a controller, integrating a DAW control surface with a quality semi-weighted keyboard (with after-touch) and the most intuitive plug-in mapping capabilities available - presided over by Automap 3 PRO; unquestionably the most advanced control software on the market.

SL Mk II upholds Novation's reputation for building quality hardware (like the SL Mk I, they will also appeal to performers who need a well-constructed keyboard on stage). Quality is not just reflected in their robustness, but more importantly in the way the SL Mk II has been designed with every detail calculated to maximise workflow. The SL Mk II's visually feeds back all controller information to the user with back lit buttons and encoder LED rings.

The difficulty with other control surfaces is knowing what is assigned to what. SL Mk II has a giant 144-character ultra-bright LCD screen that displays all the parameter names and values for the currently selected row of controllers. All 8 faders and 16 knobs are touch sensitive, so the moment one is touched, the display shows the names and values on that row and puts brackets around the controller that is currently being touched. This enables the user to see which parameter is assigned to the controller without having to change the value, or refer to their software. SL Mk II also has a dedicated 'Speed Dial' knob, which can be used to change the value of any parameter the cursor is positioned over without making any assignments whatsoever.

The 8 continuous rotary encoders have 11 segment LED rings around each of them, allowing encoders to behave like pots so the user can see the value before moving them. All the buttons have LEDs underneath them so users can instantly see their status without having to press them. There are 8 soft-feel drum pads, a pitch/modulation wheel and an X/Y Xpression touchpad which

(along with footswitch and sustain pedal inputs), are all fully assignable to any parameter with the Automap software

The SL Mk II has been designed to draw minimum current so it can be used as a USB bus-powered device, and an optional 9V DC power supply can be added for stand-alone use. As well as USB interfacing, the SL Mk II has 1 MIDI in, 1 MIDI thru and 2 MIDI outs.

The power behind SL Mk II's unique ability to map controllers at the touch of a button, is contained within the included Automap software. Automap 3 PRO enables users to map controllers with incredible speed and ease - no more digging through MIDI continuous controller numbers, the Automap server takes care of it all. Automap's GUI gives the user a visual representation of all the current mappings on screen, as well as the ability to save and manage mappings across different projects. There is also an option to only bring up the GUI when a controller on the SL Mk II has been touched!

Key Features

High quality professional keyboard

It uses the same velocity-sensitive, semi-weighted action keyboard from Fatar that the original SL does, with assignable after-touch. Novation deliver the feeling of playing an instrument, rather than just a computer peripheral.

Illuminated controls provide instant visual feedback

Brightly lit LED rings around the eight smooth encoders, and backlit buttons throughout provide instant visual feedback for every physical control, further reducing reliance on the computer screen.

Giant 144-character LCD screen

Frees the artist from being chained to the computer screen, placing all the essential data right alongside the relevant controls.

Huge array of touch-sensitive controls

Full control surface supporting ultra flexible DAW control and Auto-mappable plug-in controls, 16 knobs, 8 faders and 32 assignable backlit LED buttons.

Automap 3 PRO Control Software

SL Mk II comes with Automap software which enables you to instantly map software parameters to faders, buttons, encoders and pots and other controllers.

Further Hardware Features

MIDI control interface.

Built in MIDI I/O Interface and comprehensive MIDI implementation provide complete control over all external hardware synths and other external MIDI devices.

Novation's unique 'speed dial'

A touch-sensitive rotary encoder that instantly takes control of whatever your mouse is focused on, providing real time access for composers and performers alike.

Programmable 'soft-feel' drumpads

Eradicates the need for a separate set of drumpad triggers, providing the ideal platform for sketching out beats or triggering samples

Unique 2-Axis Controls

Fantastic 'Xpression' pad and adjustably sprung pitch/mod joystick, both freely assignable in MIDI Controlling mode

Dedicated, yet fully-assignable transport buttons.

Control the sequencer's start/stop/loop/record/forward/rewind actions, direct from the MIDI controller, reducing reliance on mouse and screen, or switch them out to allow use of more assignable buttons. SL Mk II recalls how these buttons were previously assigned.

USB buss powering

Provides the artist with a mobile MIDI control solution, freeing them from the confines of the studio

Includes the Xcite+ bundle

Featuring a host of royalty-free loops and samples, a full-fledged soft-synth and Ableton Live 7 Lite, providing an affordable upgrade path to Ableton Live.

What is Automap3?

Put simply, Automap is a bit of software that enables you to assign parameters in your sequencer and plug-ins with incredible speed and ease, to the buttons, knobs, faders and other controllers on your Novation SL or Nocturn.

Anyone who has used a hardware controller can testify to how time consuming and awkward this can be - searching through hundreds of MIDI continuous controller numbers and trying to match them with numbers assigned to knobs on the hardware.

For many plug-ins, Automap enables you to simply touch the controller, click on the parameter and its assigned! Novation controllers also provide instant and comprehensive control over all major sequencers - Automap even allows you to instantly assign almost any QWERTY or ASCII keyboard shortcut to buttons and other controllers on the hardware: So you can open and close windows, jump to locators in your DAW and make edits without touching the mouse or keyboard!

Remembering which parameters are assigned to which controllers is a problem of the past. As soon as a controller is touched, all your mappings are shown on the computer screen via Automap's GUI, as well as the LCD screen of the SL. You can also manage all your mappings from the on-screen GUI; rename them, swap them around by dragging and dropping, or even change the resolution of each control. If the GUI starts to clutter up your screen, you can turn on the "Autoview" function which only brings it up on the screen when a controller is touched, then hides it again after the controller is released.

This is a very broad introduction to what Automap3 can do. If you want to read in more detail about Automap's features, [click here](#).

Key Features - Automap 3

Automap 3 PRO software comes bundled free with SL Mk II, and boasts the following features:

Intelligent control over all sequencers and VST/AU/RTAS/TDM plug-ins. Automap 3 removes the pain and time involved in assigning MIDI parameters, and all layouts are fully customisable.

Heads-up transparent control GUI

Places a transparent control map across your computer screen - see at a glance how the parameters are automatically assigned to each of SL Mk II's controls.

Instant 'learn' function

Simply click on the software parameter and touch a touch-sensitive control to assign it. Now you can re-assign every control in seconds.

Keystroke Assignments - Automap 3 can assign almost any computer keyboard shortcuts to hardware controls. For example arrow key functions can now be assigned to hardware controls, allowing you to flick between tracks using buttons on your SL/Nocturn. You could also zoom in and out, open windows or create and jump to markers in your DAW.

Innovative MIDI support within Automap

Name your parameters and store mappings for later use. The same heads-up display provides quick and simple assigning of regular MIDI parameters. This ensures SL MkII can also turn its hand to controlling the few software application that still rely solely on the MIDI protocol.

Plug-in and Mixer Browser

Lets you review all open plug-ins, then quickly switch to control and one of them. Mixer 'MIDI maps' can be created, saved and recalled via the same map browsing facility.

Autoview Mode - Optional Autoview mode means that the GUI only becomes visible when a controller is touched, then it disappears again allowing you to get back to your DAW.

ReMOTE SL vs SL MkII

What are the differences between ReMOTE SL and SL Mk II?

- Mk II ships with the latest Automap 3 PRO
- All dials and faders are now touch-sensitive
- All SL Mk II's buttons are illuminated
- Mk II features a single LED screen (as it now features the Automap Heads-up GUI)
- SL MK II's top row of dials have 11-LED rings for instant feedback
- Top row of encoders are now smooth, rather than detented.
- SL Mk II's transport control buttons can also be used as fully assignable buttons.

- SL Mk II features new 'soft-feel' drum pads.
- No longer features batteries

Note - SL MKII uses the original ReMOTE SL keyboard

Xcite+ Pack

Xcite+ bundle ships free with SL Mk II and consists of the following:

Ableton Live 7 Lite software (DAW)

502MB of Mike the drummer drum loops - Quality live drum loops

Novation Bass-station synth

Loopmasters Samples library consisting of 1GB of royalty free samples

Specifications

Physical controls

Assignable controls:

- 8 Encoders (Infinite Rotation) with touch-sensitivity and 11 segment Led rings
- 8 Pots (270 Rotation) with touch-sensitivity
- 8 Sliders with touch-sensitivity
- 32 Buttons with integrated LEDs (37 in MIDI mode]
- 8 soft feel Trigger pads
- Xpression Pad (as on existing SL)
- Xpression Stick (as on existing SL)
- Touch sensitive Speed Dial (as on Nocturn)

System buttons:

- General Automap Operation Buttons (Learn, View, Browser Groups etc.)
- Octave up/down buttons with LED indicator

The central system buttons from the SL have been simplified; there is now:

- 1 Automap button with LED to toggle Automap mode on and off (this replaces the PLAY button) – this way, manual MIDI mode is separate from Automap mode and can be avoided completely if preferred
- Template and Edit modes have been combined into one edit mode, for editing both individual controls and overall settings within one Template

Connectivity

Rear Panel connections are as follows:

- Data Port: 1 x USB (Win XP/Vista and Mac OSX – Not Class Compliant)
- MIDI: MIDI ONE: IN, OUT and Thru, MIDI TWO: OUT
- Sustain Pedal: 1 x 1/4 Jack Input
- Expression pedal: 1 x 1/4 Jack Input
- Power switch: Ext DC/USB

Minimum Operational Requirements (taken from Nocturn):

Mac OSX 10.4.0 or greater (Leopard also supported) or Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or greater (Vista 32/64 also supported)

Minimum Computer spec: Mac - G4/1GHz, both with 256MB RAM or PC - Pentium 3/1GHz/256MB RAM (machines running Vista will require a higher spec)

Dimensions

Size (25 key): W=468mm, H=68mm, D=293mm

Size (49 key): W=803mm, H=68mm, D=293mm

Size (61 key): W=965mm, H=68mm, D=293mm

Weights

25SL net weight : 3.3kg /unit

49SL net weight: 5.2kg/unit

61SL net weight : 6.1kg / unit

Reviews

Sound on Sound: June 2009, reviewed by Mike Senior

"Backlit buttons and LED rings surrounding the endless rotary encoders transmit a tremendous amount of information to the end user, which is likewise of enormous help"

"The touch-sensitive controls, speedy controlled assignment, and masses of visual feedback all added up to a very pleasant experience"

"affordable and near-universal control that is both fast and simple to use. As such, it deserves to win Novation a big crowd of new friends."

Computer Music July 2009

"The action of the semiweighted Fatar-made keyboard is very pleasing, and it has aftertouch too, with further Rick Wakeman-esque keyboard heroics being made possible via the XY pad and the combined pitch and modulation joystick"

"the new units have only one screen, In use we didn't miss it at all, for a number of reasons. Firstly, sliders and pots are now touch sensitive, so if you lay a finger on one, the LED-encrusted rotary encoders and backlit buttons give you clear visual feedback."

"you've got Automap 3 software to show you what's going on, and its this that really makes Novation controllers so attractive"

"the unit feels really solid and well constructed without being heavy"

Music Tech - July 2009. Reviewer: Hollin Jones

"The SL MkII is a great keyboard and controller, but what makes it stand out from the crowd is the innovative Automap software, greatly simplifying the process of controlling any plug-ins and your

DAW. The editor software has tons of features but is relatively easy to get to grips with, plus visual and tactile feedback from the hardware is good"