

Quick Startup

Even though the Solaris is a very sophisticated device, there are a few simple things to keep in mind when just getting started:

1) Unlike every other synth on the market, there are no presets or preset memory inside the Solaris!

What this means is that ALL preset data (as well as the OS, samples, factory patterns, and the Global init file) reside on your Compact Flash (CF) card. DO NOT LOSE YOUR CF CARD! It is highly recommended you get a CF card reader and back up your card to a computer. (You do not need a CF card to get sound from the Solaris; without a CF card inserted, a simple default patch using Square waves should sound.)

2) For most listening applications, Outputs 1 & 2 (or the headphone out) are all you need.

The factory presets are designed for listening from Outputs 1 & 2, or the headphone out. Outputs 1 & 2 act as Left & Right as well. If you want to use the S/PDIF output, you must change a System setting (see later).

3) Yes, the power supply is outside of the synth.

This avoids noise in the audio, and makes things simpler in the design.

So, to get started, plug in the power supply and audio cables, insert your CF card, and turn on the Solaris. (Also, it's always a good idea to have your system volume down when turning on gear). The five text displays should say, 'Bootng...;', and the graphics (gfx) display will eventually also show a number of 'opening credits' screens, the last of which is the gracious support message from Waldorf Music, giving permission to use their Wavetables. (I would like to say here again, "Thank You So Much!" to Stefan Stenzel and the directors at Waldorf for their generosity!)

Selecting Presets

After about 30 seconds, the main Preset screen should show on the gfx display. You should get a short message about the CF card. The Preset LED should be lit (upper right above the keypad). If not, press it ON.

You can select presets in several ways:

1) Use the Inc/Dec buttons right above the data knob. This automatically loads each preset as you step one by one through the bank.

2) Use the data wheel to scroll through presets. When you see the one you want, press Enter to load.

3) Use the keypad to directly enter a Preset number. You must press ENTER to load the preset.

4) Use the knobs below the graphics display to dial up different Presets or Banks. You must then press ENTER to load the preset.

A more convenient way to select various Banks is to use the keypad, as follows:

Any number pressed on the keypad that is followed by the decimal point button (dot) will be used as the selected Bank number. Any number following that will be used to select the Program number. If no new bank number is entered (you do not press the dot), then any number entered will be used as a Program number for the current bank.

So, for example, to select Bank 3, Program 12, you would press 3.12 then ENTER.

Preset Mode - Graphics Display

Preset Mode is enabled when you press the Preset button ON (above the keypad area). This must be ON to select any presets. As soon as an edit is made anywhere on the front panel, the Solaris will automatically leave Preset Mode to allow for editing, so when you want to play through the presets, make sure this Preset button is lit. NOTE: you must have a Compact Flash (CF) card inserted to select presets!

For most all of the graphics display functions there will be a pair of numbers on the lower right-hand corner. These indicate which page of the current functional group you are on, out of how many total pages there are for that functional group. For Preset Mode, there are 3 such pages, shown as 1/3, 2/3, and 3/3. (You can read these as page 1 of 3, page 2 of 3, page 3 of 3.) You use the up/down buttons to the left of the display to access these pages. Note: these are always working in 'wrap around' mode.

The first page of Preset Mode shows the preset name, MIDI Bank and Program number, and the Category logic and filtering. The second page allows you to assign 5 knobs as Performance Knobs for any preset parameter in the synth. The third page allows you to view 10 presets at a time, to get a better overview of where you are in the bank. Use the data wheel to scroll through the preset names here.

About Categories

When you save (store) a preset, you have the option of assigning 2 categories to the sound. These categories allow you to search for matching presets when you use the Category logic on the Preset Mode's page 1. When you set the logic to one of the 3 choices, scrolling through presets will be limited to only those that satisfy the conditions of the search. The categories are:

Category 1: Arpeggio, Bass, Drum, Effect, Keyboard, Lead, Pad, Sequence, and Texture (with more categories to come....).

Category 2: Acoustic, Aggressive, Big, Bright, Chord, Classic, Dark, Electric, Moody, Soft, Short, Synthetic, and Upbeat.

If the Category logic is set to AND, both categories must be valid to select a preset. If the Category logic is set to OR, either category will be used to select a preset. If the Category logic is set to NOT, all presets that do NOT have the 2 categories listed will be available to select. If the logic is blank, then all presets are available.

How to set the Performance Knobs on page 2

Even though you have 5 text screens to edit parameters, doing so will immediately take you out of Preset Mode. Also, there are parameters in the gfx display for many different functional groups, and you might want to have access to these. You use the SHIFT button (to the left side of the lower row of knobs) to assign these knobs.

- 1) Holding down the SHIFT button, select which of the 5 Performance Knobs you want to assign
- 2) Continue to hold down SHIFT, and select the parameter you wish to associate with the Performance Knob
- 3) Release the SHIFT button. You should see a descriptive text string for the assigned knob at the bottom of the screen.

You will also see a +/- % value. The Performance knobs are relative to the programmed value; they can add or subtract from the parameter value. Only a one-to-one assignment is allowed (one parameter per knob). Since the parameters in the text displays are fairly easy to reach, usually these Performance knobs will be selected from one of the many soft key pages, but they can be any stored Preset parameter you want, to provide quick access, and keep the synth in Preset Mode.

Storing Presets

As soon as you edit any parameter, the Preset LED will go off, putting you in live edit mode. Once you have made changes that you want to keep, press the Store button (above the keypad). This gives you the first Store screen, and lets you select a new bank and preset location in which to store your preset. If you just want to store it in the same location, you don't need to change anything. If, however, you want to listen to the new location to see if you don't want to keep what's there, you can press Compare, which will load the new location's preset and allow you to play it. Compare will stay lit when you are listening to the Compare buffer. Turn it off when you are ready to Store your edited preset.

Press Store a second time, and now you will be taken to the Naming and Category page. Each Preset name can be 25 characters long, and you must use the data wheel and the Inc/Dec buttons above it to select the position and character you want to use. Using the Inc/Dec will shift the current letter position left or right through each of the 25 positions, and scrolling the wheel will select through the entire character list. You can also select category types [here](#) - simply scroll through both categories to select.

Press Store a third time, and this time, you are done! Turn on the Preset LED and Inc/Dec the preset, then go back to your newly edited preset, to check and make sure all is saved as you wanted.

General User Interface Rules & Navigation

The Solaris is organized so that you can get to a number of parameters rather quickly. That's why I've decided to use six displays - five text displays and one graphics display. Even so, with over 1200 parameters, inevitably there is going to be the need to 'page' the displayed parameters.

All synthesizers have several basic sections to create sound; the five text displays are used to handle the parameters for seven of these sections (2 of the 5 displays are 'shared'). These sections are: Oscillators, LFOs, Mixers/InsertFX, Filters/VCA's, and Envelopes. The sixth display is called the graphics (gfx) display, and is used to handle all remaining parameters of the instrument. More information on this section will be found below.

For each of the text display sections, you have 2 pairs of buttons stacked vertically. The pair of buttons to the left of the displays are Inc/Dec buttons. Below those are the sub-group buttons. The upper sub-group is called 'Main', the lower one 'Mod'. For each section, you will find general settings under the Main pages, and all possible modulation to that group under the Mod pages. Typically there are 2 Main pages and 4 Mod pages per group, although this does vary a bit.

There are several ways to step through the pages. The user can decide to step through all pages with the Inc/Dec buttons, and then stop at the end, or to be able to continuously 'wrap around' from the last to the first page. This function is called Wrap, and is set on the System page (found in the softkeys sets accessed by pressing the More button several times). Also here is Split, which allows you to stay within the boundaries of either the Main or the Mod sub-group. This is handy when you want to switch quickly back and forth between two related pages, say Shape in the Main pages and a modulation of Shape in the Mod pages.

If you want to quickly reach the topmost page of any object (Oscs, LFOs, Mixers, Filters, VCA's, Envelopes), just quickly 'double click' that object's select button. You can also use the object select buttons to do a "copy & paste" operation - simply hold down the button of the object you want to copy until it starts blinking, and then select the button where you want to paste the data. (Of course, this only works with like objects - LFOs to other LFOs, Filters to Filters, etc.).

The Center Graphics Display - Soft Keys, etc.

The center section with the graphics display is the softkey functional display area. It also has a Preset Mode when the Preset switch is on (upper right area). Other functional buttons located here are Home and More.

The graphics display handles all of the remaining parameters that are not covered in the dedicated text display sections. There are 6 soft key buttons, whose labels change depending on which functional group is selected. There are currently 5 functional groups, which are selected by repeatedly pressing the **More** button.

For direct access to these 5 groups, you can also hold down the More button for 2 seconds to change the soft key labels to reflect the 5 groups. These are labeled as follows:

- 1) Arp/Seq - the controls for the arpeggiator, sequencer, and ribbon are here
- 2) Out/FX - The output assignment, effects bussing, and effects controls are here
- 3) AM/VS - This page as 2 each of Amplitude Mod and Vector Mixer sections; also Looping EG
- 4) KeyTab/Lag - The 4 Key Tables and 4 Lag processors are here; also the Env Follower
- 5) Sys/Midi - All other system parameters and MIDI controls are here. This data is not stored in a preset, but as a glo.ini file.

Pressing one of these will take you to the associated set of soft key labels.

For each of the softkey gfx displays, there may be more than one page of information. You can tell by the small numbers in the lower right of the gfx display if there are additional pages. For example, if you see 1/4, this means you are looking at page 1 out of 4 possible pages. Use the up/down buttons to the left of the gfx display to move through the pages.

Other performance oriented buttons

Across the lower left side, above the ribbon, are 8 buttons. These are:

assignable buttons 1 & 2

transpose down & up

Sequencer start/stop

Arpeggiator start/stop

Hold (has no function when Sequencer is ON)

Tempo

The **Assignable** buttons can be set to momentary or toggle mode. This is done in the Global (Home) functions, page 3. You also can assign the desired function for each button on this page. The choices are: Keyboard Glide on/off, Oscillator Glide on/off, individually or ALL, start/stop Seq, start/stop Arpeg, and Arpeg Transpose. When selected in the Mod Source list, the assignable buttons generate full value (+Max value) when pressed, and a zero value when not.

Transpose buttons should be self explanatory. They change the range of the keyboard, but must be pressed before you play to get the transposed values (they will not transpose keys currently held).

Hold has the function of a sustain switch. It does not work with the sequencer, as this is a 'gated' sequencer, which only works when keys are held down.

The **Tempo** button is actually a Tap Tempo button as well. Holding it down will allow a pop-up on the screen to show the current BPM, and allow you to change it with either leftmost knob of the graphics display. Tapping the Tempo button will determine an average BPM after 2 taps, and will continue to average the tempo for subsequent taps. Tempo is stored with the preset, but can be overridden (ignored) by setting this in the System page. Select 'Load BPM - ON' if you want the presets to load their programmed tempos.

Preset Contributors

Special thanks to the sound designers who helped work on this first set of sounds:

Marco Paris (Bank 1 - MP)

Carl Lofgren (Bank 2 - CL)

Howard Scarr (HS), Kurt Ader (KA), and Stephen Hummel (SH) all in Bank 3.

(There's also myself, John Bowen (JB) with Bank 0 presets)

Note that all presets have the author's initials at the beginning of the preset name, and banks are not programmed with all slots filled. Because we are not limited in the usual sense by a fixed amount of on-board preset memory, it's possible to have a variety of banks that are of different sizes, or reflect different groupings. Since it's very easy to select different banks, one idea put forward by the sound designers is to have banks created that groups sounds by type, i.e., a bank of basses, a bank of pads, etc.. This is easy to do, but is just something I've not had a chance to organize yet.