XenoPhone

User Manual

Performance, Tone & Resonance, Ambience & Effects, Presets and Playable Field-Resonance Interface

Immediate Playability

A bright, responsive bar instrument interface designed for fast musical results.

Field-Resonance Character

Timbre, brightness, mallet hardness and damping move the instrument from soft and natural to vivid and synthetic.

Performance Shaping

Velocity sensitivity, dynamics and presets make the instrument easy to adapt to different playing styles.

Built-In Space

Reverb, delay and stereo spread provide atmosphere without needing to leave the instrument.

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Main Features
3. Quick Start
4. Main User Interface
5. Performance Section
6. Tone & Resonance
7. Ambience & Effects
8. Playing the XenoPhone Bars
9. Presets and Practical Workflow
10. Tips & Tricks

Xylophone Fact - Wood + Sound

The word “xylophone” comes from Greek roots meaning wood and sound/voice: xylon + phone.

Introduction

XenoPhone is a compact field-resonance instrument built around the familiar idea of tuned struck bars, but presented through the luminous, cosmic visual language of Xenodimensional Audio. It is designed to be straightforward: choose a preset, shape the response, tune the tone and resonance, add ambience, then play.

The instrument is especially well suited to bell-like, wooden, mallet and resonant textures. The front panel keeps the essential sound-design controls close enough for performance while still allowing substantial changes in attack, brightness, damping, space and stereo size.

Main Features

Playable Bar Interface

Thirteen illuminated bars span the visible keyboard from C4 to A5, providing a direct visual relationship between notes and the resonant instrument surface.

Responsive Performance Controls

Velocity Sensitivity and Dynamics let the instrument respond differently to light and hard playing.

Four Tone Controls

Timbre, Brightness, Mallet Hardness and Damping cover the central resonant character of the sound.

Integrated Ambience

Reverb Mix, Delay Time and Stereo Spread let you move quickly from dry mallet tone to wide, atmospheric resonance.

Xylophone Fact - Tuned Percussion

A xylophone is a pitched percussion instrument. Each bar is tuned to a specific note, so melodies and chords can be played rather than only rhythms.

Quick Start

1. **Choose a preset.** The screenshot shows *Natural Field* as the selected starting sound.
2. **Play the bars** from your MIDI controller or use the on-screen note layout as a guide to the active range.
3. **Set Velocity Sensitivity** so your playing feels natural.
4. **Adjust Dynamics** to control how strongly performance intensity changes the response.
5. **Shape Tone & Resonance** with Timbre, Brightness, Mallet Hardness and Damping.
6. **Add space** with Reverb Mix, Delay Time and Stereo Spread.
7. **Save the resulting state in your DAW** as part of the project or use the host preset system if desired.

The upper half of XenoPhone contains every major sound-shaping control.

> **Xylophone Fact - Bars and Resonators**
>
> Concert xylophones use tuned wooden or synthetic bars, often with resonator tubes underneath to reinforce and project each note.

Main User Interface

The XenoPhone interface is divided into four obvious zones: the branding and status strip at the top, the **Performance** panel on the left, **Tone & Resonance** in the centre, **Ambience & Effects** on the right, and the large resonant-bar keyboard across the bottom.

Performance

Preset, velocity response and overall playing dynamics.

Tone & Resonance

The core material and mallet behaviour of the instrument.

Ambience & Effects

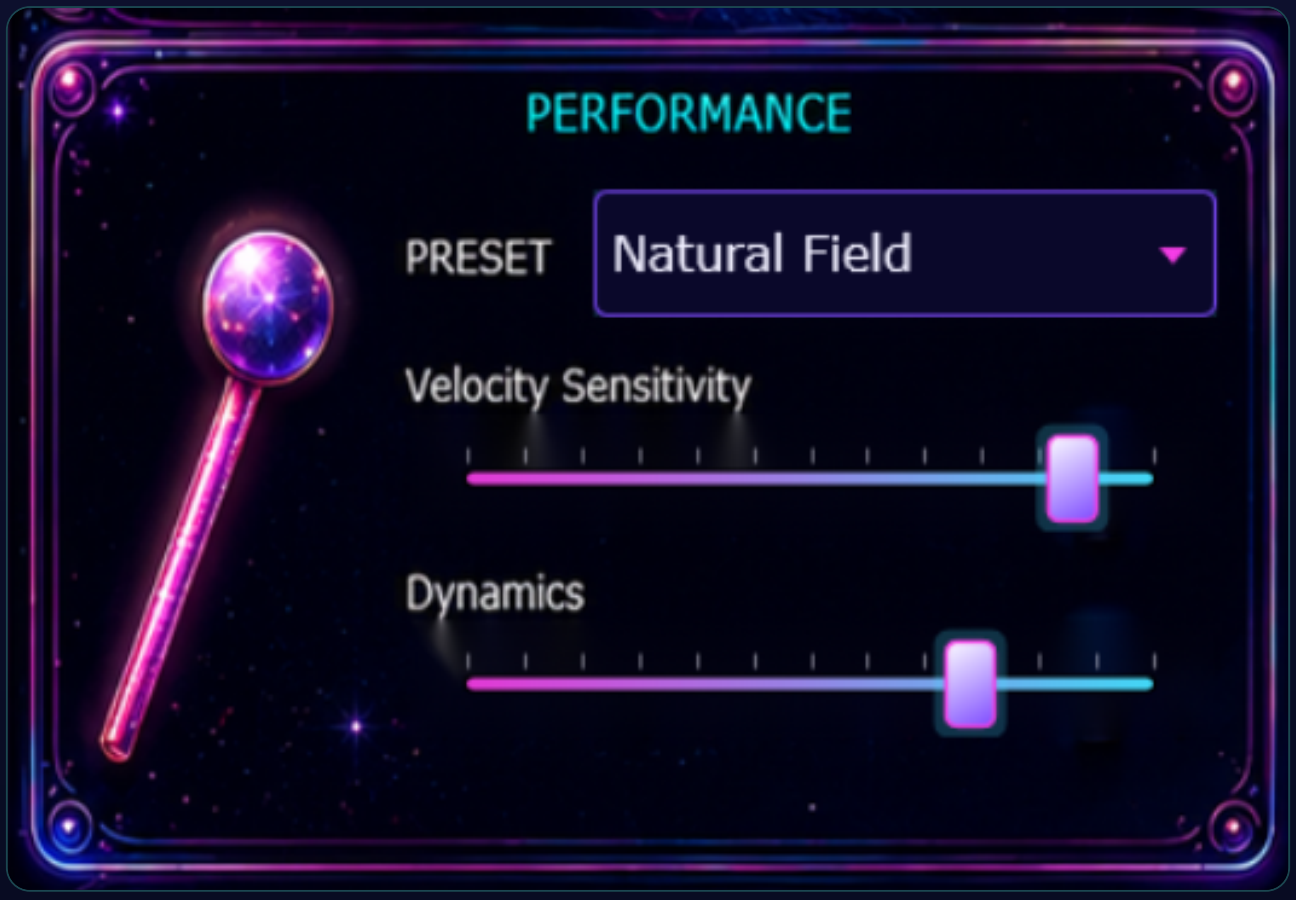
Reverb, delay and stereo-space controls.

The small field-resonance instrument display in the upper-right functions as a status/ version identification area.

Xylophone Fact - Keyboard Layout

The bars of a concert xylophone are arranged in a two-row pattern that mirrors the white and black keys of a piano.

Performance Section



Control	What it does	How to use it
Preset	Selects a prepared instrument character. *Natural Field* is shown in the supplied interface.	Start here when you want an immediate voicing before making manual adjustments.
Velocity Sensitivity	Controls how strongly incoming note velocity affects the instrument response.	Raise it for expressive dynamic playing; lower it for a more even, consistent response.
Dynamics	Controls the overall dynamic range or strength of performance-dependent variation.	Use more dynamics for a living, performance-driven instrument; reduce it for tighter level consistency.

Playing tip: If the instrument feels too explosive under hard playing, reduce Velocity Sensitivity first. If it feels too flat, increase Dynamics and then refine Velocity Sensitivity.

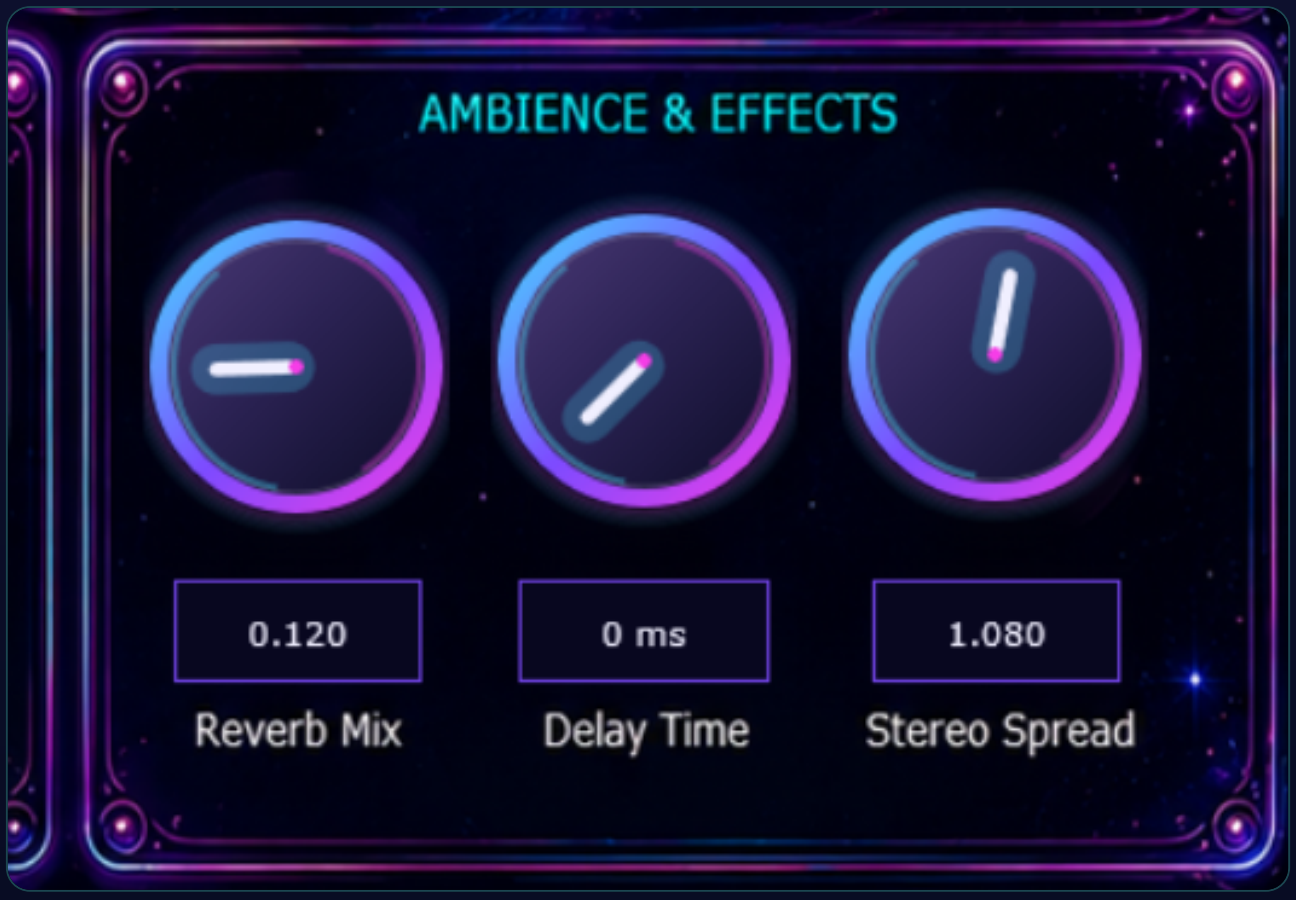
Tone & Resonance

Control	Function	Practical effect
Timbre	Changes the broad spectral character of the resonant body.	Use it as the first major tone-shaping control when moving between softer, rounder and more complex colours.
Brightness	Emphasises or reduces upper-frequency energy.	Increase it for sharper definition and sparkle; lower it for a darker, mellower response.
Mallet Hardness	Changes the apparent hardness of the striking surface.	Harder values create a more pronounced attack; softer values reduce the click and soften the onset.
Damping	Controls how quickly the resonant energy is absorbed.	Increase damping for shorter, tighter notes; decrease it for more sustained ringing.

Interaction between the controls

These four controls are most useful when treated as a system. A bright timbre with a hard mallet produces a crisp, cutting note. A darker timbre with softer mallet response and more damping creates a muted, intimate voice. Conversely, low damping and generous brightness can make the bars feel more synthetic and resonant.

Ambience & Effects



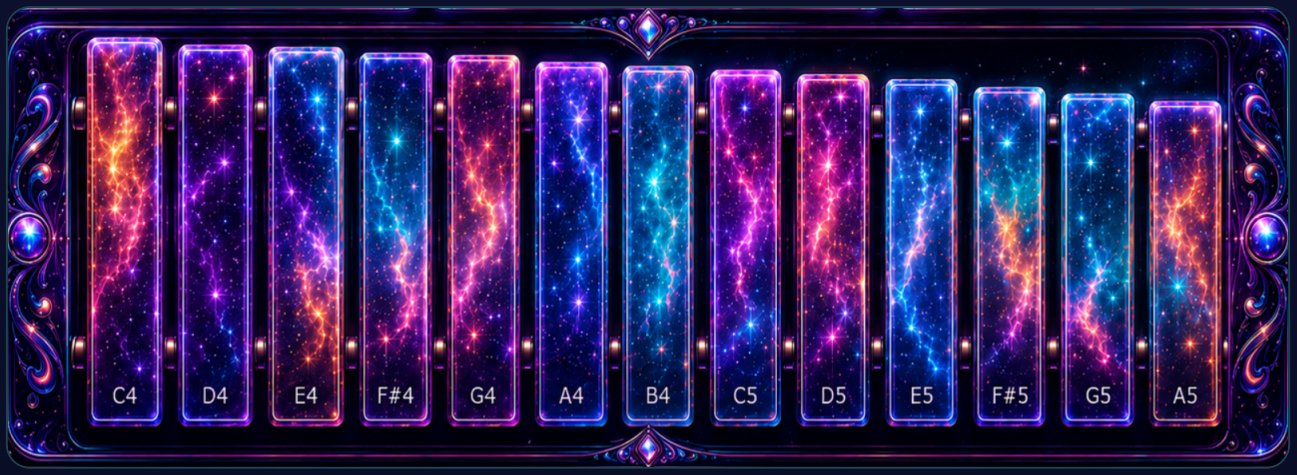
Control	Function	Typical use
Reverb Mix	Blends reverberant space with the direct instrument sound.	Keep low for intimate, dry percussion; raise it for floating, environmental or cinematic space.
Delay Time	Sets the spacing of the delay effect.	Short values can create thickening or slap-like reflections; longer values produce clearly separated echoes.
Stereo Spread	Controls the width of the stereo presentation.	Use modest values for a focused instrument image and larger values for expansive spatial placement.

For natural xylophone-style playing, use only a little reverb and keep stereo spread moderate. For more Xenodimensional territory, allow longer delay and a wider field so individual notes leave spatial traces behind them.

Xylophone Fact - Global Family

Wooden-bar instruments have long traditions across Africa and Asia. The precise historical origin of the xylophone family is complex and spans multiple cultures.

Playing the XenoPhone Bars



The visible bar set runs from **C4 to A5** in the supplied interface, using the note sequence shown on the front panel: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5 and A5.

The large illuminated bars are intentionally more instrument-like than a conventional piano keyboard. Their alternating cosmic colours help each note feel like part of the same resonant field while remaining individually readable.

Performance ideas

- Use repeated notes with different velocities to exploit the mallet and dynamics behaviour.
- Play simple ostinatos with moderate damping for crisp, pulse-like patterns.
- Lower damping and increase stereo spread for slow melodic figures that bloom into a larger space.
- Raise mallet hardness for busy passages that need to cut through a mix.

> **Xylophone Fact - The Balafon Connection**
>
> The West African balafon is a related wooden-bar instrument that traditionally uses gourd resonators beneath its keys.

Presets and Practical Workflow

Presets are the fastest way to change the overall personality of XenoPhone. Start from a prepared sound, then make small manual changes rather than rebuilding the instrument every time.

For natural mallet tones

- Moderate Timbre
- Controlled Brightness
- Medium Mallet Hardness
- Moderate to high Damping
- Low Reverb Mix

For atmospheric field tones

- Higher Brightness
- Lower Damping
- Longer Delay Time
- More Reverb
- Wider Stereo Spread

Recommended order of adjustment

1. Preset
2. Velocity Sensitivity
3. Dynamics
4. Mallet Hardness
5. Timbre
6. Brightness
7. Damping
8. Reverb / Delay / Stereo Spread

This order prioritises playability first, tone second and ambience last. It makes it easier to avoid compensating for a poor performance response with excessive effects.

Xylophone Fact - Bones in the Orchestra

Saint-Saëns famously used xylophone in “Danse macabre” to evoke the clatter of dancing skeletons.

Tips & Tricks

- **Shape the strike before the space.** Mallet Hardness and Damping usually have more influence on the apparent identity of the instrument than reverb does.
- **Use brightness carefully.** Bright mallet instruments can occupy a lot of upper-midrange space in a mix.
- **Let velocity do the work.** If a performance should feel human and expressive, allow the player to create variation rather than automating everything.
- **Short notes can feel larger with width.** Stereo Spread can make dry, quickly decaying tones feel bigger without making them more reverberant.
- **Delay creates composition, not just ambience.** A well-chosen delay time can turn simple melodic fragments into counter-rhythms.
- **Save contrasting versions.** One dry and one ambient version of the same patch can be useful when arranging a track.

Closing Thoughts

XenoPhone is intentionally direct. Its front panel contains the controls most likely to matter during real use, and the visual bar interface keeps the musical object itself at the centre. Begin with the performance response, shape the resonant body, then add only as much space as the part needs.

> **Xylophone Fact - Fossils Too**
>
> The xylophone is also prominent in “Fossils” from Saint-Saëns’ Carnival of the Animals, where its bright attack helps create a brittle, skeletal character.