



VERSILIAN STUDIOS LLC.



JOACHIM'S PIANO

PRODUCT MANUAL



INTRODUCTION

Following in the footsteps of his sensational video, “Beethoven in Havana,” Joachim Horsley has explored a specific style of piano performance unlike any other through his *Via Havana* (2019) Album and beyond. Blending elements from afro-caribbean rhythms and Western art music, cleverly combined with the unique sounds available from a prepared piano, Horsley’s broad palette of sounds and textures reminds one of numerous instruments, yet remains unique from any one.

Joachim Horsley is a composer, pianist, arranger, and a Steinway Artist. In addition to *Via Havana*, he has performed around the world as well as worked as a composer and orchestrator for film, television, and art music. Working closely with Joachim, we sought to craft a library which, at the press of a button, places you in his studio, with his piano, his mics, even his preferred effects chains, while also providing a range of different textures and options to extend far beyond into distant forms of music.

DEVELOPMENT

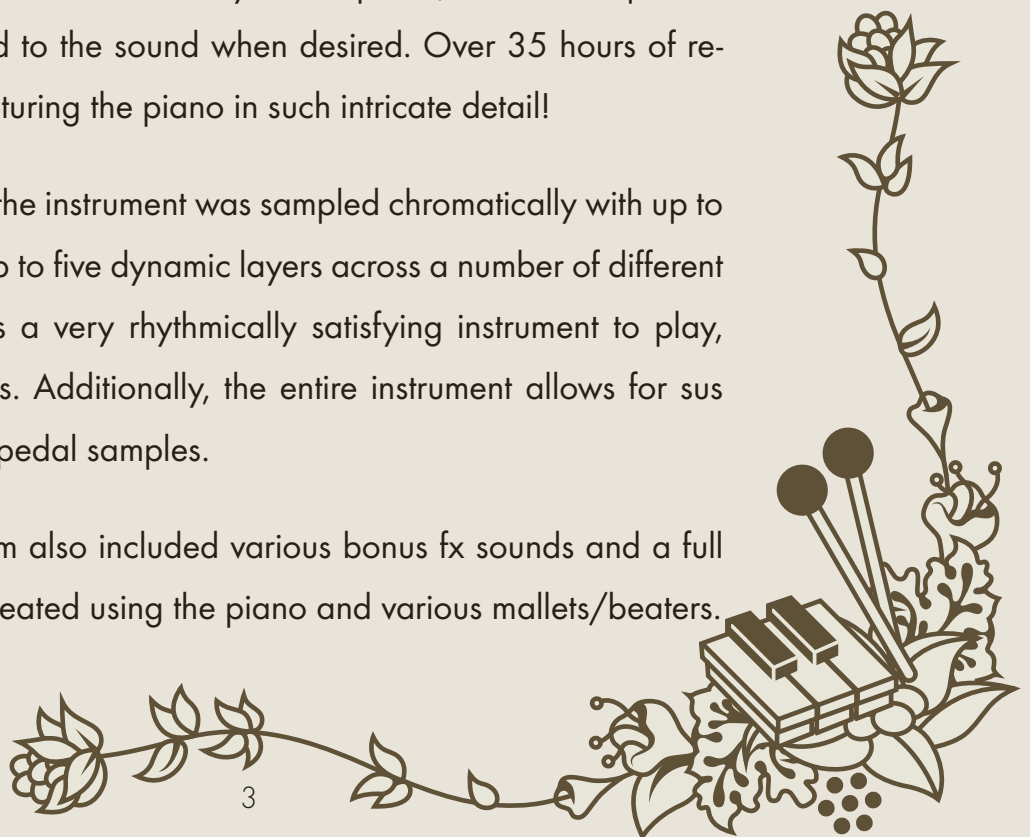
The instrument sampled was an 85-key Steinway Model B, build in the 1890's and recently (beautifully) restored. The tone and responsiveness perfectly match Joachim's style of performance, yet it has been sampled in such a way to allow it to fit numerous uses.

As a performer, in addition to the natural sounds of the piano itself, Joachim uses an array of careful, controlled preparations of the piano in order to generate unique timbres. The piano itself also is frequently used as a percussion instrument, played with a wide range of mallets, brushes, and even hands. Philosophically, his goal is to recreate the sound of an entire band, from upright bass to conga, using only the piano itself.

Sampling was done in Joachim's own studio, using the same exact mics, instrument, setup, and signal chain shown in his videos. A pair of Microtech Geffel CMV 563's provides the main body of the piano, while a far pair of mics provides room to add to the sound when desired. Over 35 hours of recording time went into capturing the piano in such intricate detail!

The entire range of the instrument was sampled chromatically with up to four round robins and at up to five dynamic layers across a number of different articulations. This provides a very rhythmically satisfying instrument to play, especially in fast passages. Additionally, the entire instrument allows for sus pedal usage with real sus pedal samples.

As a bonus, Joachim also included various bonus fx sounds and a full set of percussive sounds created using the piano and various mallets/beaters.



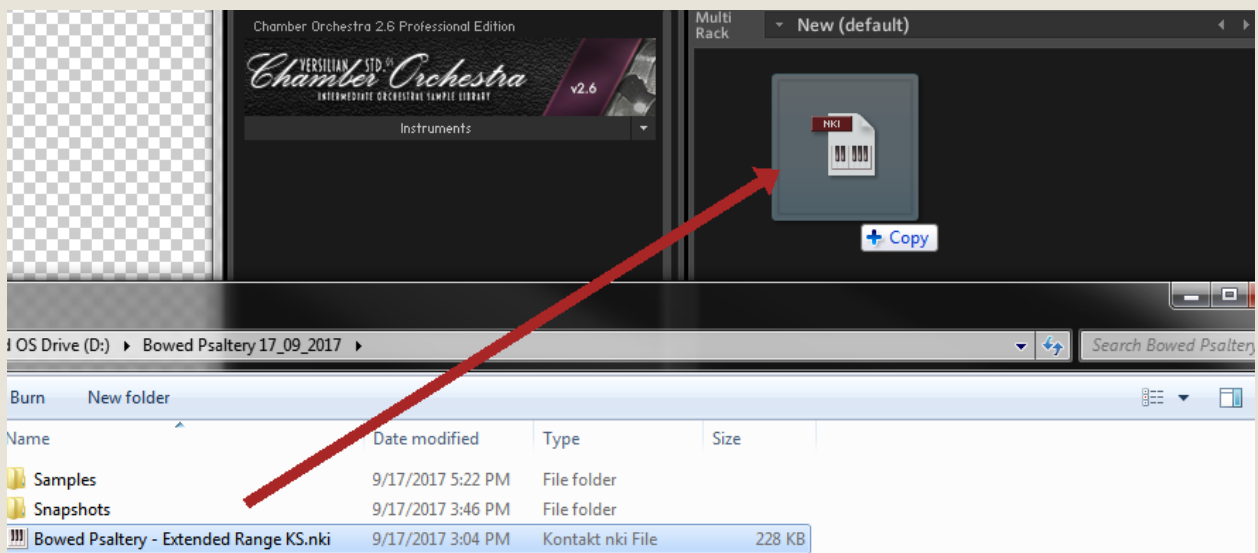


INSTALLATION

Begin installation by downloading the library after completing checkout. This will result in a numbered series of .rar files containing the entire library. Extract the contents of the FIRST .rar file, which will place the entire library in a new folder called 'Joachims Piano'.

Place this folder wherever you would like the library to be accessed from in the future – this could be on an external hard drive, an internal SSD, or your main hard drive.

To use the library, drag and drop any of the .nki (Kontakt instruments) into an instance of Kontakt (either standalone or plug-in), as shown below.



SNAPSHOTS

Within the “Joachim’s Piano” folder you will also find a folder labeled “Snapshots.” The contents of folder belong in your user files for Kontakt, and will provide you with some unique preset settings. Typically these should be copied into <User>/Documents/Native Instruments/User Content/Kontakt.

However, if you want to check this to be sure, you can click the wrench in the top left corner of the instrument, then click “Instrument Options”, then “Snapshots”. Next to the directory listed press “Show” and it will open up the location where the snapshots should go.

Copy over the 11 folders *within* the ‘Snapshots’ folder named “Joachims Bonus FX” through “Joachims Piano - Softer” directly into the ‘Kontakt’ folder you now have open.

After this is done, the snapshots should automatically appear in your open copy of the instrument if you click the camera icon to the right of the product name and then open the out drop-down that reads ‘Standard (Reset)’.

You can create your own snapshots as well. If you want to add effects to the instrument and save it as a new snapshot to recall later (e.g. adding a delay or distortion effect), click the wrench in the top left and scroll all the way down to ‘InsertEffects’. Click the plus in the corner of one of the dark gray boxes and select the effect you wish to add.

Configure it to taste, then scroll up and hit the floppy disk/save icon to the right of the snapshot name (make sure you are in the snapshot panel by clicking the camera icon again). Give it a descriptive name and enjoy your handiwork later at the press of a button!

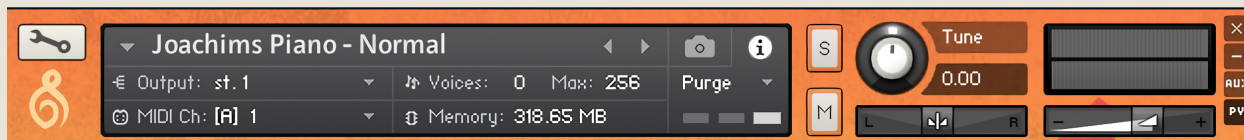




OPERATION

Once loaded in Kontakt, the GUI will become available to you. This convenient window will provide nearly everything you need to control and shape the sound of the instrument from swapping articulations to controlling the stereo image to help it fit in your mix. In this section of the manual, I'll walk you through each part of the GUI and typical settings.





Starting with the top of the instrument, we have the default Kontakt header. This area provides basic instrument settings and allows you to shrink or expand the GUI as needed.

On the left is the wrench icon, which allows access “under the hood” of the instrument. This is best for veteran Kontakt users only, but is worth exploring if you’re new to Kontakt as well.

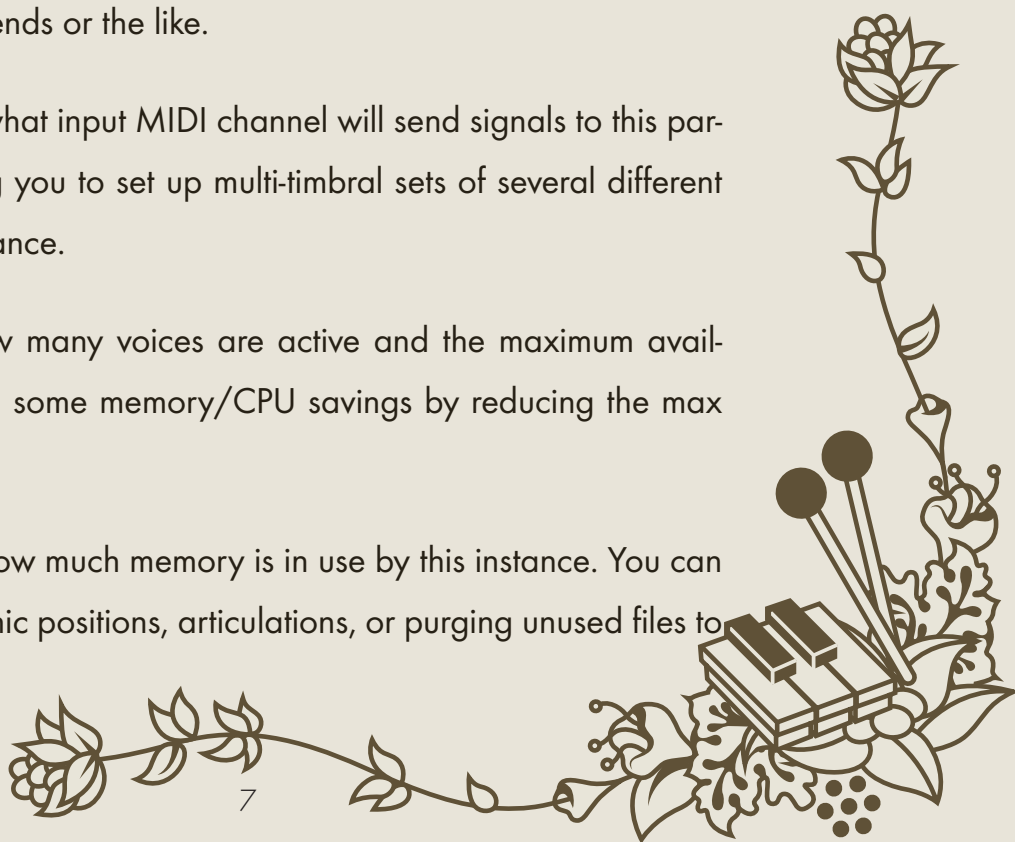
The central gray box displays general information and settings for the instrument. You can swap this display over to show the snapshots menu simply by pressing the camera icon to the right, and vice versa by pressing the information ‘i’ icon.

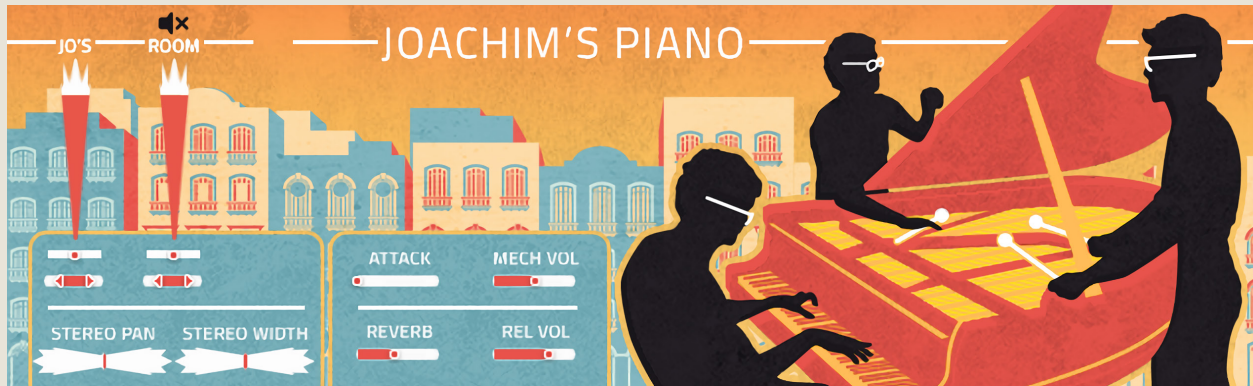
Output will control where the audio data goes to. Typically this should be left untouched unless working with a surround mix or bussing specific instruments to different reverb sends or the like.

MIDI Ch. controls what input MIDI channel will send signals to this particular instrument, allowing you to set up multi-timbral sets of several different instruments in a single instance.

Voices displays how many voices are active and the maximum available. You may experience some memory/CPU savings by reducing the max number.

Memory displays how much memory is in use by this instance. You can reduce this by unloading mic positions, articulations, or purging unused files to the right-hand side.





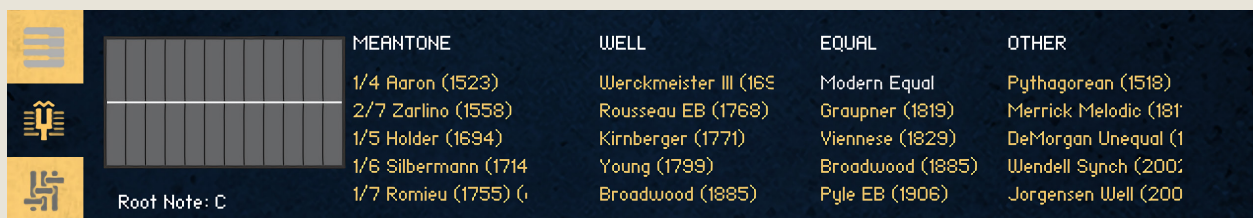
The central part of the GUI is dedicated to shaping the sound of the instrument.

To the left are the controls for the available mic positions. From top to bottom there are a disable/enable toggle (to save memory), volume slider (vertical), a stereo pan slider, and a stereo width control.

Beneath the mic position controls are horizontal controls for stereo width and stereo pan. These use delay and other special processes to truly perceptually move the instrument around the virtual soundscape as opposed to traditional volume-based pan found in your DAW or mixer, providing a much more realistic result, especially when used in subtle combination.

To the right are 'quick control' features, allowing access to the most important parameters for sound shaping and reverb. Attack may be used to soften the attack, while mech vol increases or decreases separately sampled key and pedal sounds. Rel[ease] vol[ume] controls how strong the release tails sound when keys are released.

Beneath these controls are three tabs: articulation, temperament, and effects. Let's take a look at the second tab, temperament—



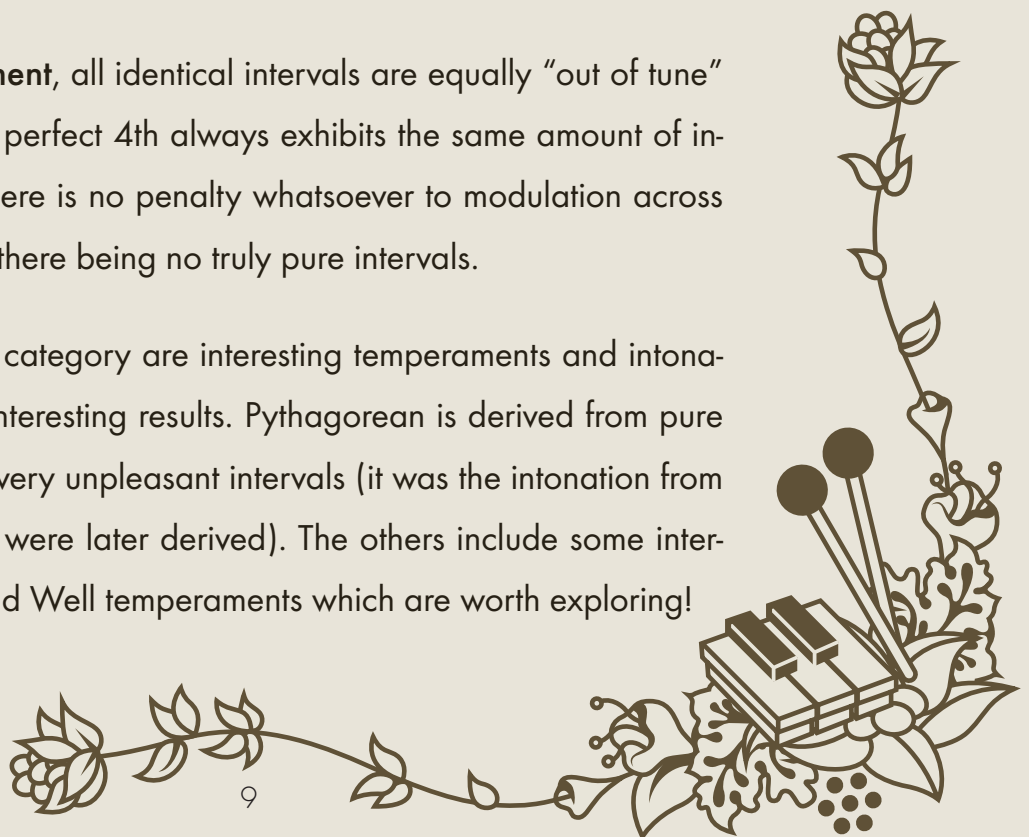
Temperaments are alterations made to a tuning system in order to make certain intervals or keys more or less harmonious. There are 20 factory temperaments provided, grouped in logical banks of five based on the underlying principles of the temperament/intonation. To the left, a graph indicates the alterations made to each of the 12 tones relative to Equal Temperament.

The first bank, **Meantone** seeks to maximize pure intervals (in particular 3rds) in the 7-9 “easiest” keys, putting all of the nasty inharmonicities in less used keys (e.g. Ab, Db, Gb/F#). Meantone is most synonymous with the Renaissance period, but was used in various forms through the Baroque period as well. It is best in simple, non-modulating works in the range of Bb to A Maj.

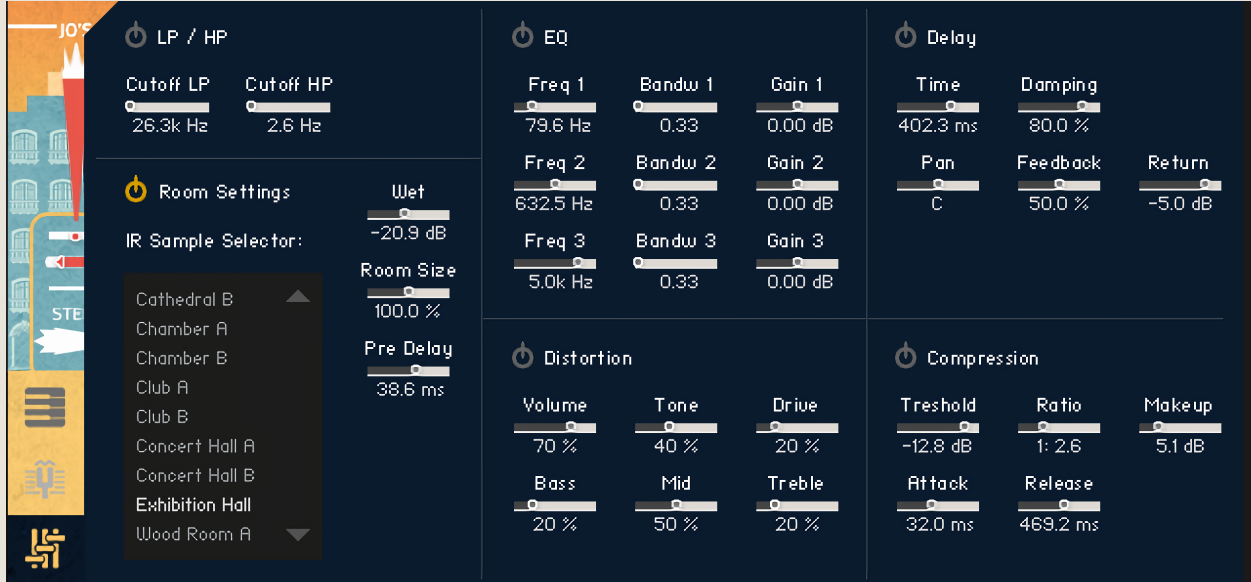
Well temperaments interpolate this behavior, gradually transitioning from being very pure in C Major to very impure in C# Major. This allows for tone color, where each chord and key provides a different feeling due to the gradual increase of inharmonicity as one works towards the more obscure keys at the bottom of the circle. Well temperaments are excellent for the performance of Classical and Romantic piano works.

In **Equal Temperament**, all identical intervals are equally “out of tune” (or in tune, if you wish); a perfect 4th always exhibits the same amount of inharmonicity. This means there is no penalty whatsoever to modulation across distant keys, at the cost of there being no truly pure intervals.

In the final ‘**Other**’ category are interesting temperaments and intonations which may provide interesting results. Pythagorean is derived from pure 5ths, but results in several very unpleasant intervals (it was the intonation from which most temperaments were later derived). The others include some interesting alternatives to ET and Well temperaments which are worth exploring!



Let's now look at the effects tab, accessible via the bottom button—



The top left effect is a lowpass/highpass filter combo. The LP filter will remove high frequencies (hiss, air, brightness), while the HP will remove low frequencies (rumble, key strikes, pedal motion, etc.).

Below that is the convolution reverb, which provides a range of excellent room and hall sounds, which may be selected from the bank on the left. The 'Room' is a measure of how much room sound (i.e. reverb) is mixed back into the signal. This is typically best between -15 and -5 dB. Below that and the reverb will not sound much, and higher may result in a muddy tone.

Finally, the 'R. Size' (room size) will control how large the space is. At 50%, it is analogous to a medium rehearsal space. At 100% a full concert hall, and beyond that it enters surreal levels of size.

The pre-delay controls when the sound of the instrument reaches the mics after bouncing off the walls. This is similar to placing the mics farther or closer to the sound source (it takes about 2.9 ms for sound to travel one meter, or 0.9 ms for sound to travel one foot, so place your pre-delay accordingly to fit your virtual placement).

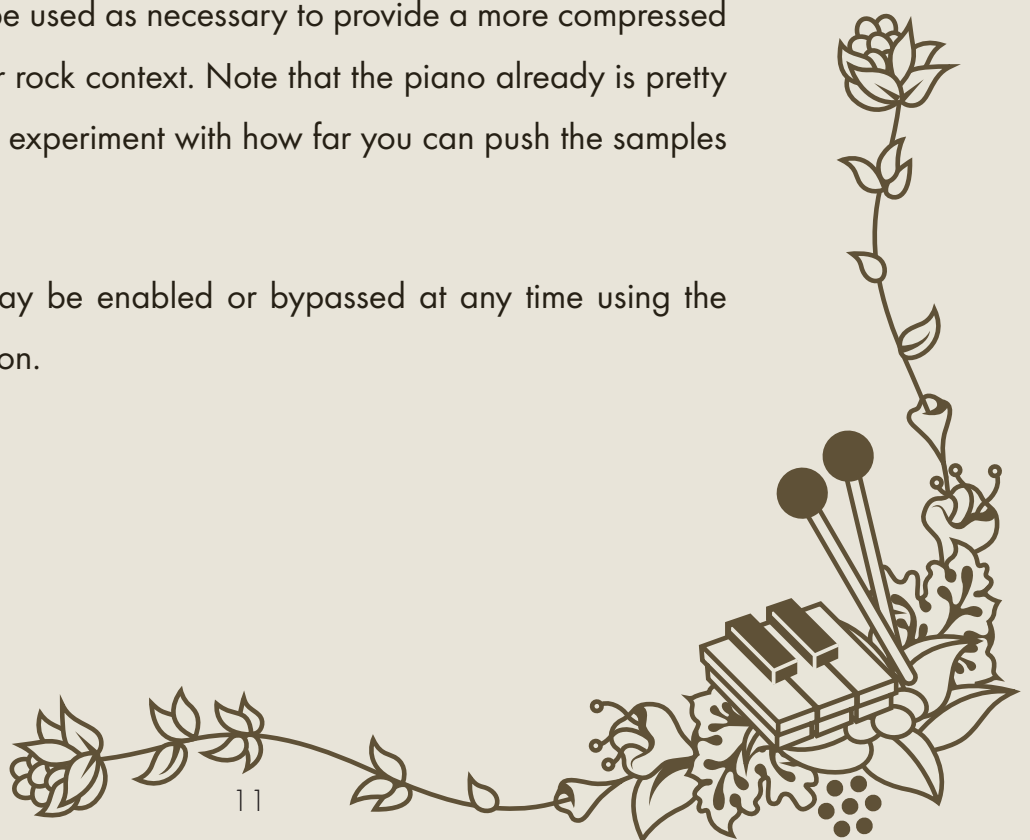
The EQ is a simple three-band EQ, useful for making general corrections or alterations to the sound if no other EQ is available. As with any factory/built-in EQ, it is recommended that you stick to low bandwidth (Q) factors and gentle changes in order to avoid excessive changes to phase and color. You may disable or enable the EQ or any of the other effects via the power button in the top left (grey = off, gold = on).

The Delay is a potent tool for atmospheric sounds. In combination with the reverb (and perhaps a generous helping of the 'attack' setting from the 'quick controls' (pg. 8)), enormous, organic pads and textures can be created with relative ease. The Pan slider allows the creation of 'ping-pong' delay effects, and the other settings may be adjusted to taste for the desired effect.

The Distortion effect is a simple distortion processor allowing all sorts of crunchy and raw sounds to be generated. With very subtle distortion, a 'tape cassette' sound may be achieved, or greater amounts can be used for interesting effects.

Compression may be used as necessary to provide a more compressed sound, such as in a pop or rock context. Note that the piano already is pretty aggressive, but feel free to experiment with how far you can push the samples to meet your needs.

All of the effects may be enabled or bypassed at any time using the respective power button icon.





PATCHES & ARTICULATIONS

Within the instruments folder, you will find several .nki files. Each file allows access to a different set of samples or sound generated from those samples.

- 📁 Snapshots
- 🎹 Joachims Bonus FX.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Harmonic Piano +24.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Harmonic Piano.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Muted Bass Piano.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Muted Piano +24.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Muted Piano.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Percussive Piano.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Piano - Hard.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Piano - Normal.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Piano - Soft.nki
- 🎹 Joachims Piano - Softer.nki
- 📄 Visage.nkc
- 📄 Visage.nkr

Joachims Piano - Normal is the normal, un-prepared version of Joachim's piano, with all five velocity layers and two round robins. **Hard** only includes the top layers, while **Soft** and **Softer** only include the lower and lowest layers.

Joachims Muted Piano is a percussive, pizzicato-like sound. In the lower register, it resembles an upright bass in sound. +24 is transposed for a viola-like tone.

Joachims Harmonic Piano is a harmonic-rich sound resembling harmonics on a guitar or harp, caused by carefully-positioned mutes on every key. Note the difference with and without sustain! As with Muted Piano, there is a +24 version.

Joachims Muted Bass Piano is a similar effect to Harmonic Piano, but with a different spin.

Joachims Percussive Piano contains various methods of striking different parts of the piano, including a kick-like sound created by smacking the lid of the piano with the hand, taps on the frame with soft mallets, and numerous other sounds.

Joachims Bonus FX are a set of extra effects, primarily with aleatoric/horror sounds.

There are three mic positions available on most instruments:

Jo's: A mix with Joachim's chosen EQ and processing.

Room: A main pair of LDC's close to the piano.

Far: A pair of far mics providing a room perspective.





TROUBLESHOOTING

If you are experiencing issues with the library, there are a few steps you can try to resolve the issues before contacting us. Below is a list of common possible problems and 'home remedies' that will work to fix them.

1. Samples missing dialogue.

If you see this window, it means that the samples were moved or are missing from their original location. If you can find the samples, move them into the Joachims Piano folder. If you still get the dialogue, do a batch re-save. Select the floppy disk icon at the top of the Kontakt window towards the right and select 'Batch Re-save'. Navigate to the 'Joachims Piano' folder and select it. When the dialogue pops up, click 'Search for folder' and select the samples folder. After the batch re-save is complete, you should not experience any further samples missing dialogues.

2. Instrument uses up too much memory or CPU.

Use the circles beneath the articulations to purge any you doubt you will typically need, and turn off any effects you don't use (filter/reverb). Save this patch (under the floppy disk/save icon at the top of the Kontakt window itself) so that way it will load this way

by default. Note that snapshots include which articulations and mic positions are selected and enabled/disabled.

3. Instrument is only available in "DEMO" mode.

This is caused by trying to run the instruments in Kontakt Player. Unfortunately there's nothing we can do about this- making libraries for Kontakt Player requires a licensing agreement with Native Instruments, which is simply not economical for small products like this.

However, Kontakt is on sale often around December/January for \$200 USD, and honestly that's not a bad price to pay for the "gateway drug" to literally thousands of free and commercial sample libraries. Regardless, we would be happy to offer you a refund if you are experiencing this issue and aren't interested in upgrading to the full Kontakt.

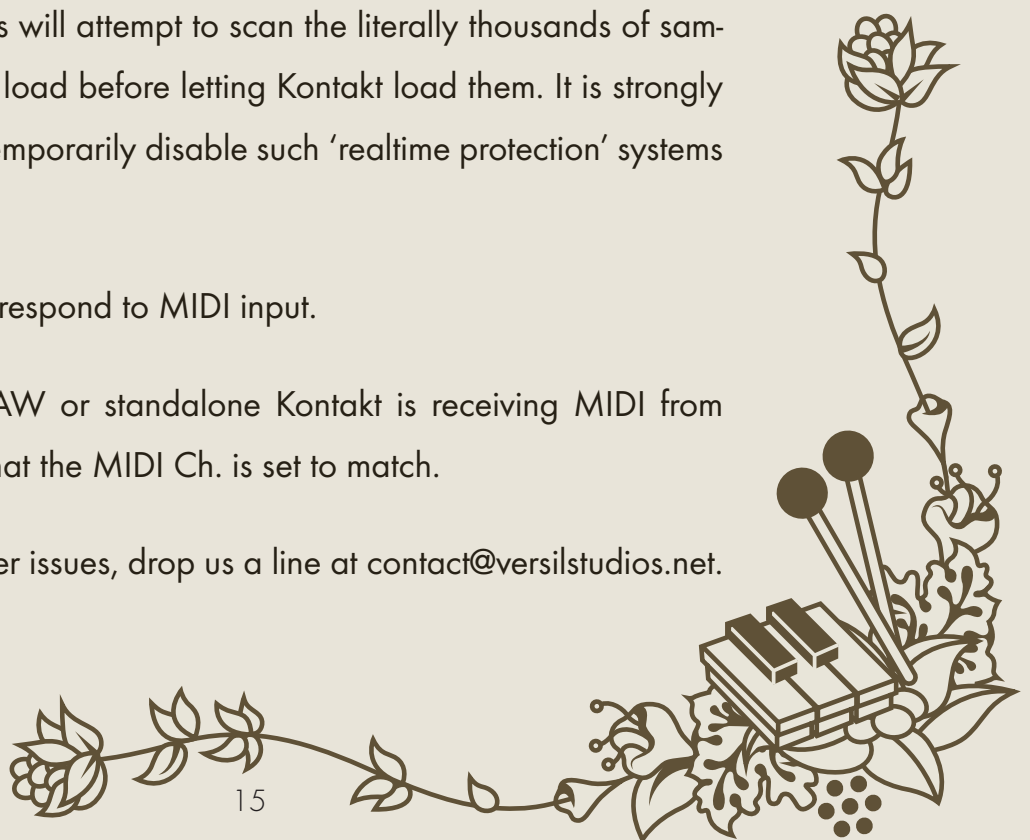
4. Instrument takes a long time to load.

On Windows 10 devices or devices with 'realtime protection' anti-malware systems, such systems will attempt to scan the literally thousands of samples that Kontakt needs to load before letting Kontakt load them. It is strongly advised that you at least temporarily disable such 'realtime protection' systems while loading libraries.

5. Instrument won't respond to MIDI input.

Make sure your DAW or standalone Kontakt is receiving MIDI from your device, then ensure that the MIDI Ch. is set to match.

If you have any other issues, drop us a line at contact@versilstudios.net.





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