

USER MANUAL



A KONTAKT INSTRUMENT BY

soundsphat

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1. Introduction

The Riga Piano is a Kontakt instrument built for the free Kontakt 8 Player, sampled from a rare upright piano recorded in Moldova. The instrument is built around this piano's distinctive tone - capable of sounding emotional and intimate at softer dynamics, and considerably more energetic and aggressive when played harder and higher up the keyboard.

The piano was recorded in the bedroom of Christian's wife's childhood house - a space with its own particular natural sound and timbre, rather than a large professional recording hall. This lends the Room microphone position in particular a distinctly intimate character rather than a big, formal hall ambience.

System Requirements

- Free Kontakt Player 8.6.1 or higher (or full Kontakt 8.6.1 or higher).

2. The Microphones Page

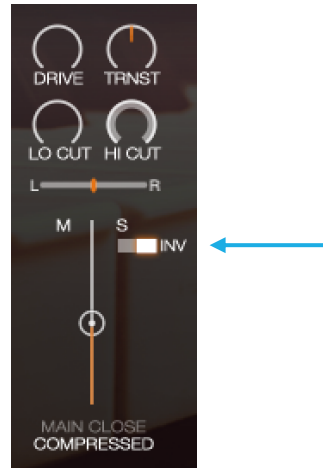
The instrument opens on the microphone page, offering four distinct mic positions recorded on the source piano, each loadable and blendable as its own layer.

- **Main Close:** the primary close-mic'd recording of the piano.
- **Main Close Compressed:** a separately processed version of the close microphone recording, compressed specifically to bring out more of the piano's natural sustain and ring-out. This was created because that ringing, sustaining quality can otherwise get lost in typical sample-library recordings, so a dedicated compressed mic position was built to preserve and enhance it.
- **Main Overhead:** a pair of microphones positioned directly above the upright piano.
- **Room:** a pair of microphones positioned further away, capturing the natural room sound of the bedroom the instrument was recorded in - intentionally intimate rather than a large hall, useful for blending in a touch of room ambience without moving to a fully distant, washed-out sound.



Phase Inversion

A phase-inverting button is available, primarily intended for the Main Close Compressed microphone. When blending the Main Close and Main Close Compressed microphones together, it's recommended to invert the phase of one of the two (either the compressed or the standard close signal) to avoid phase cancellation between them.



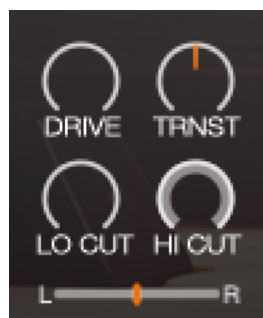
Per-Layer Controls

As with the company's other instruments, each individual layer - each of the four mic positions here - includes its own dedicated processing:

- **Saturation / Drive:** adds harmonic drive to the individual layer.
- **Transient Slider:** adds or scoops out transient attack on that layer - useful either for helping a sound cut through a busy mix, or for restoring attack and transient information that might otherwise be softened by further processing later in a chain.
- **Low Cut & High Cut:** independent per-layer frequency roll-off; pushed to extremes on both ends simultaneously, this can be used to create a lo-fi "old radio" or telephone-style effect.

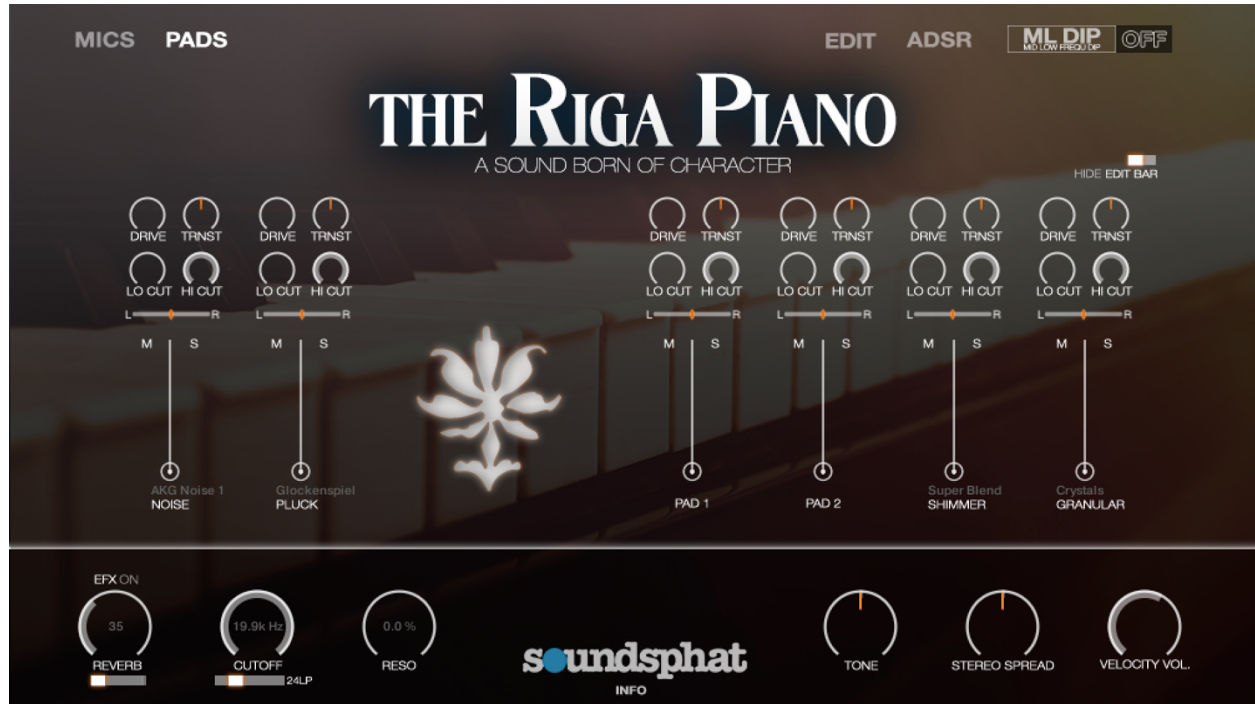
As with all bipolar sliders throughout the company's instruments (identifiable by an orange center-line arrow), holding Command and clicking a slider snaps it back to its default value. While the orange arrow is visible and centered, that control isn't colouring the sound at all; it disappears as soon as the slider is moved off-center.

A dedicated knob can hide these per-layer feature controls entirely if the page feels too busy, and bring them back into view with another click.



3. The Pads Page

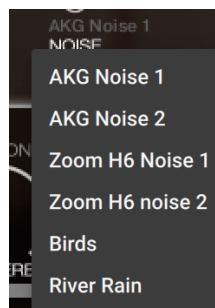
Beyond the four microphone layers, the Pads page adds six further layers that can be blended in on top of the core piano recordings.



Noise

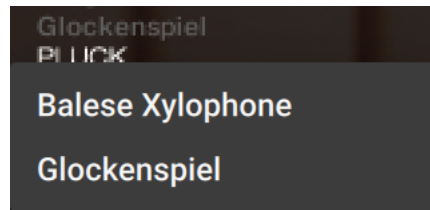
A menu of different noise sources can be added in, including the natural self-noise of the AKG microphones used for the close/overhead recordings, the self-noise of the Zoom H6 recorder, and field recordings of birds and river/rain captured in the local environment where the piano was recorded. This is intended to add a little extra natural intensity and atmosphere around the already-recorded piano sound.

The core piano samples themselves were carefully denoised during production - particularly important since un-treated noise can become excessive and distracting when multiple notes are played together as a chord. The Noise layer lets you dial a controlled amount of that natural mic/room noise back in deliberately, rather than being stuck with however much noise happened to be present in the original raw recording.



Plucks

- **Belize Xylophone:** spread across the full keyboard range, so it's available no matter which register you're playing in.
- **Glockenspiel:** available only in the higher register of the keyboard rather than across the full range - the lower keys remain just the core piano sound. Particularly effective for adding an orchestral-style top end to a performance.

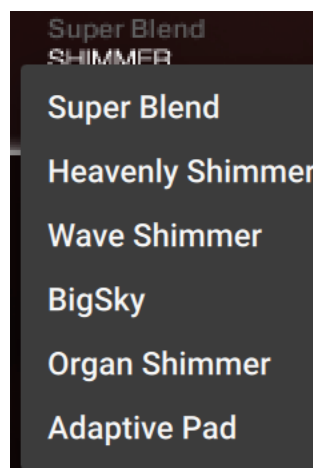


Pads

Two pre-made pad layers are available: a warmer-sounding pad, and a brighter-sounding pad. The Release control is a useful companion to these for shaping how the pad tail behaves.

Shimmer

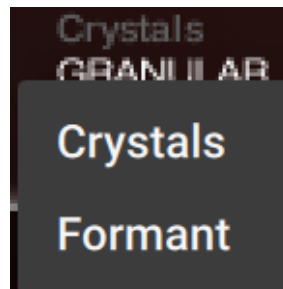
A menu of shimmer-effect options, created by running the instrument's samples back through a variety of hardware shimmer reverb units (custom-built specifically for this purpose) as well as digital shimmer simulations - including a shimmer captured from a Strymon Big Sky pedal, noted as one of Christian's personal favourite guitar-pedal sounds.



Granular

A sixth layer offering purely granular-based textures, with a choice between Crystals-style and Formant-style granular processing, intended to be layered underneath the main sound. This is described as sounding particularly beautiful when combined with the Shimmer layer and an additional pad on top.

As with the Microphones page, these six layers can be hidden or shown via a dedicated toggle knob.



4. The Edit Page

Master Effects

Nine effects are available on the Edit page, all of which can be stacked and run simultaneously:

- **Convolution:** 71 custom convolution impulse-response triggers.
- **Room, Delay, Compression, Tape Simulation, EQ, Chorus, Flanger, and Phaser.**



Round Robin Behaviour

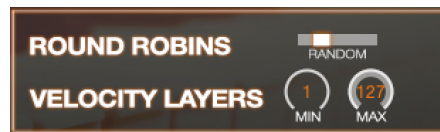
Three round robins were recorded per sample. Playback behaviour is adjustable:

- **In Order:** the default - cycles through round robin one, two, then three, then loops back to one again.
- **Random:** the instrument picks randomly between the recorded round robins on each trigger.
- **Fixed Selection:** the round robin behaviour can also be locked to play only round robin one, two, or three specifically, rather than cycling or randomizing.

Velocity Layers & Curve

By default, all 127 velocity values trigger their corresponding recorded dynamic layer. This range can be narrowed from either end - for example, excluding the most aggressive fortissimo layers so that no amount of hard playing will trigger them, or conversely excluding the softest layers, or narrowing from both ends at once for a tighter dynamic window.

A separate Velocity Curve control is available below this, with a graphic display showing the shape of the curve as it's adjusted - useful for correcting a keyboard that's difficult to push into higher velocities, or conversely one that triggers high velocities too easily.



5. ADSR

The ADSR page follows the same layout used across the company's other instruments, offering a Volume envelope and a Cutoff envelope. By default, the Volume ADSR is active and the Cutoff ADSR is switched off; either can be toggled by clicking its title. Each envelope includes an Envelope Amount control alongside its five standard ADSR stage parameters. Clicking a stage's title returns you to the starting/overview page.



ML Dip

A dedicated Mid-Low Dip control sits on the right side of the ADSR page - a one-click tonal shift that thins out lower-midrange frequency information. This was designed specifically with electronic dance music arrangement in mind: in a “drop” section (a bass- and drum-heavy part of a track), there's typically already a kick and bass occupying the low-mid/low-end frequency range, so additional low-mid content from a piano layer can clutter the mix. Clicking ML Dip thins the sound out for exactly that kind of drop-style context, while leaving it off gives the fuller low-mid presence more suited to a breakdown or verse section. As Christian describes it, this is a personal-taste feature born from his own production workflow, included as a quick one-click way to switch between the two contexts rather than needing to manually EQ around it each time.



6. The Main Panel

As with the company's other instruments, the main panel runs along the bottom of the interface and stays visible everywhere in the instrument.

- **Effects Send (EFX):** blends in Reverb, Delay, Room, and Convolution. Clicking EFX toggles a full bypass of all four sends at once (“EFX Bypassed”) for the raw, unprocessed recording; turning it back on restores every send to its previous value.
- **Filter Station:** Cutoff and Resonance, with 12 dB, 24 dB, and 36 dB per octave Low Pass modes, plus a 24 dB per octave High Pass and a 24 dB per octave Band Pass.
- **Tone:** a tilt EQ handling roughly 3–6 kHz, dialed in either direction; as with all bipolar sliders, Command+click resets it to center (marked by the orange indicator line).
- **Stereo Spread:** taken fully left/down for a mono signal, or spread wider to the right for a broader stereo image.
- **Velocity Volume:** on the right-hand side of the panel.

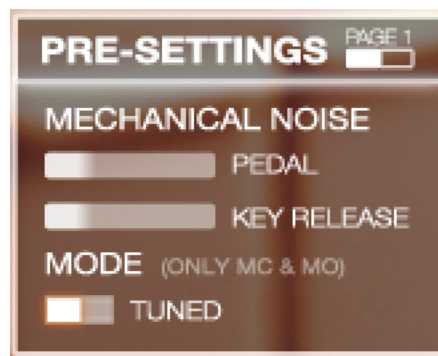


7. Settings Drawer

A small dedicated drawer holds two additional pages of settings and adjustments.

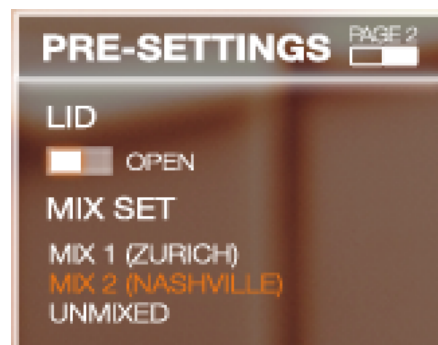
Page 1: Mechanical Noise & Mode

- **Mechanical Noise:** controls for pedal sound and key-release noise, adjustable to taste.
- **Mode (Tuned / Natural):** applies only to the Main Close and Main Overhead microphone positions. The Tuned version has had natural performance glitches and recording artifacts edited out; the Natural version is left less tuned, retaining those artifacts and imperfections. The Room and Main Close Compressed microphones are only available in their tuned form, since Christian felt those two signals specifically didn't benefit from retaining the extra artifacts.



Page 2: Lid Position & Mix Sets

- **Lid:** open or closed.
- **Mix Sets:** three options - the Zurich Mixdown (mixed in Christian's Zurich studio, with a bit more low end), the Nashville Mixdown (mixed in his Nashville studio, with slightly less low-mid content but somewhat clearer high end and transients), and Unmixed (the fully processed and noise/artifact-edited signal, but without either studio's final mix applied).



8. Inspiration Backgrounds

A dedicated “fun knob” lets you switch between a selection of alternate visual wallpapers/backgrounds within the interface - included on the idea that playing piano parts benefits from some visual inspiration alongside the sound itself. If the default background starts to feel stale, this offers a quick way to change the visual mood while playing.



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