



Nyckelharpas

User Guide

Soniccouture

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INSTALLING YOUR SONICCOUTURE PRODUCT

If you do not own Kontakt, you can install the free [Kontakt Player](#)



If you have an earlier version of Kontakt, [click here](#)

1. Open NI Kontakt in **standalone mode**.
2. In the *Libraries* tab, click **Manage Libraries**
3. Click **Launch Native Access** : Login or create an account if you don't have one.
4. Click **Add A Serial** (find it in your [SC account](#) with the product download).
5. Copy and paste the number in the box and click **Add Serial**
6. Navigate to the downloaded product folder and select it
7. Click **INSTALL** to complete the process.

NOTE: The login for **NI Native Access** is not the same as your login for the Soniccouture site. You must create an account with Native Instruments if you don't already have one.



LIBRARY SPECIFICATIONS

- 4.4 GB Library
- Cello and Viola Nyckelharpa Instruments
- 96 Khz, 24 bit Stereo Sampling
- Bowed, Pizzicato, key-off/up/down, sympathetic resonance samples.
- Kontakt Player / NKS compatible



ABOUT THE NYCKELHARPA



The nyckelharpa has its roots back in the middle ages. Literally translated, the name means keyed-fiddle in Swedish. Although the instrument was not necessarily invented in Sweden it died out in all of medieval Europe except for a small enclave in Uppland in Sweden. The earliest depiction is of a stone statue in a church of the island of Gotland, followed by a painting of an angel playing a keyed fiddle in Sienna in Italy. From the mid 1500s the nyckelharpa was developed and altered from a 3 stringed instrument to one with four bowed strings and 12 sympathetic resonating strings.

The pitch of the notes is altered by pressing a key on which is sited a tangent. It is this tangent that essentially frets the string. On the modern instruments each key has only one tangent that changes the pitch on one point on one string.

The sympathetic strings were presumably added to the instrument in Sweden in the mid 1700s, possibly inspired by the viola d'amore. They serve to add resonance, volume and a general zing to the sound.





The standard pitched nyckelharpa we recorded was made by Sören Åhker and is a standard Swedish 3-row tuned (low to high) C G C A. Only the top three rows are keyed, leaving the bottom string as a C. In older instruments this would have been a drone string, but on the modern instruments, it's just a C.

The cello pitched nyckelharpa, usually called an *oktavharpa*, had its body made by Olle Plahn and the key box by Annette Osann, because it is tuned exactly an octave lower than the normal nyckelharpa. This particular instrument has all four melody strings keyed and is tuned exactly like a cello - C G D A.



THE INSTRUMENT MAKERS

The standard pitched ('viola') nyckelharpa that was sampled was made by [Sören Åhker](#) and is a standard Swedish 3-row tuned (low to high) C G C A. Only the top three rows are keyed, leaving the bottom string as a C. In older instruments this would have been a drone string, but on the modern instruments, it's just a C.



The cello pitched nyckelharpa is usually called an oktavharpa had its body made by [Olle Plahn](#) and the key box by [Annette Osann](#), this being because it is tuned exactly an octave lower than the normal nyckelharpa. This particular instrument has all four melody strings keyed and is tuned exactly like a cello - C G D A.



RECORDING THE NYCKELHARPAS



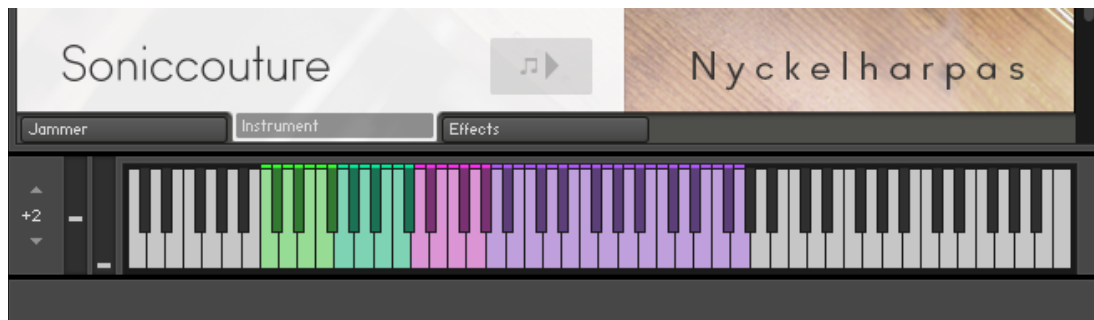
To record this project we worked closely with Vicki Swan, one of the leading proponents of the nyckelharpa in the UK, who works tirelessly to promote and teach the instrument. A graduate of the Royal College of Music and a well known figure on the British folk scene, Vicki was also a member of the European Nyckelharpa Orchestra in 2013. For more information on the nyckelharpa - <http://nyckelharpa.me.uk> For more information about Vicki also visit - <http://swan-dyer.co.uk>

The nyckelharpas were recorded at State Of The Ark studios in London, using their Neve 1073 desk sidecar and stunning collection of vintage mics.

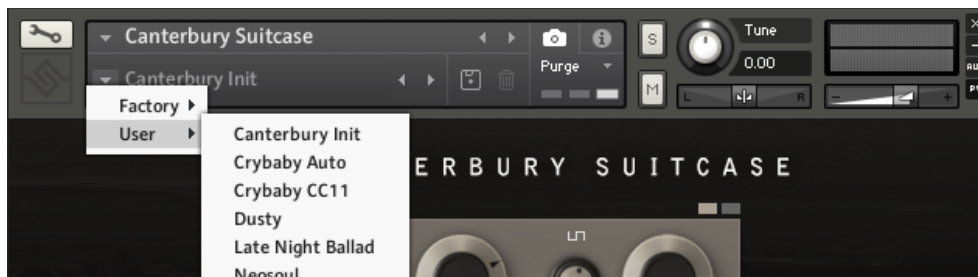


THE KONTAKT INSTRUMENT

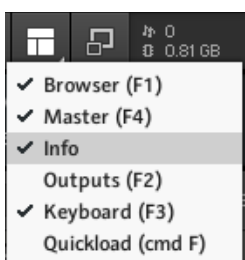
There are two Kontakt instruments included in this library, the Nyckelharpa Cello and the Nyckelharpa Viola. Their controls are identical, only the pitch range is different. You can see the pitch range (and exact string ranges) coloured on your Kontakt virtual keyboard, or on your NKS compatible keyboard if you're using Maschine or Komplete Kontrol to host the Nyckelharpas.



SNAPSHOTS



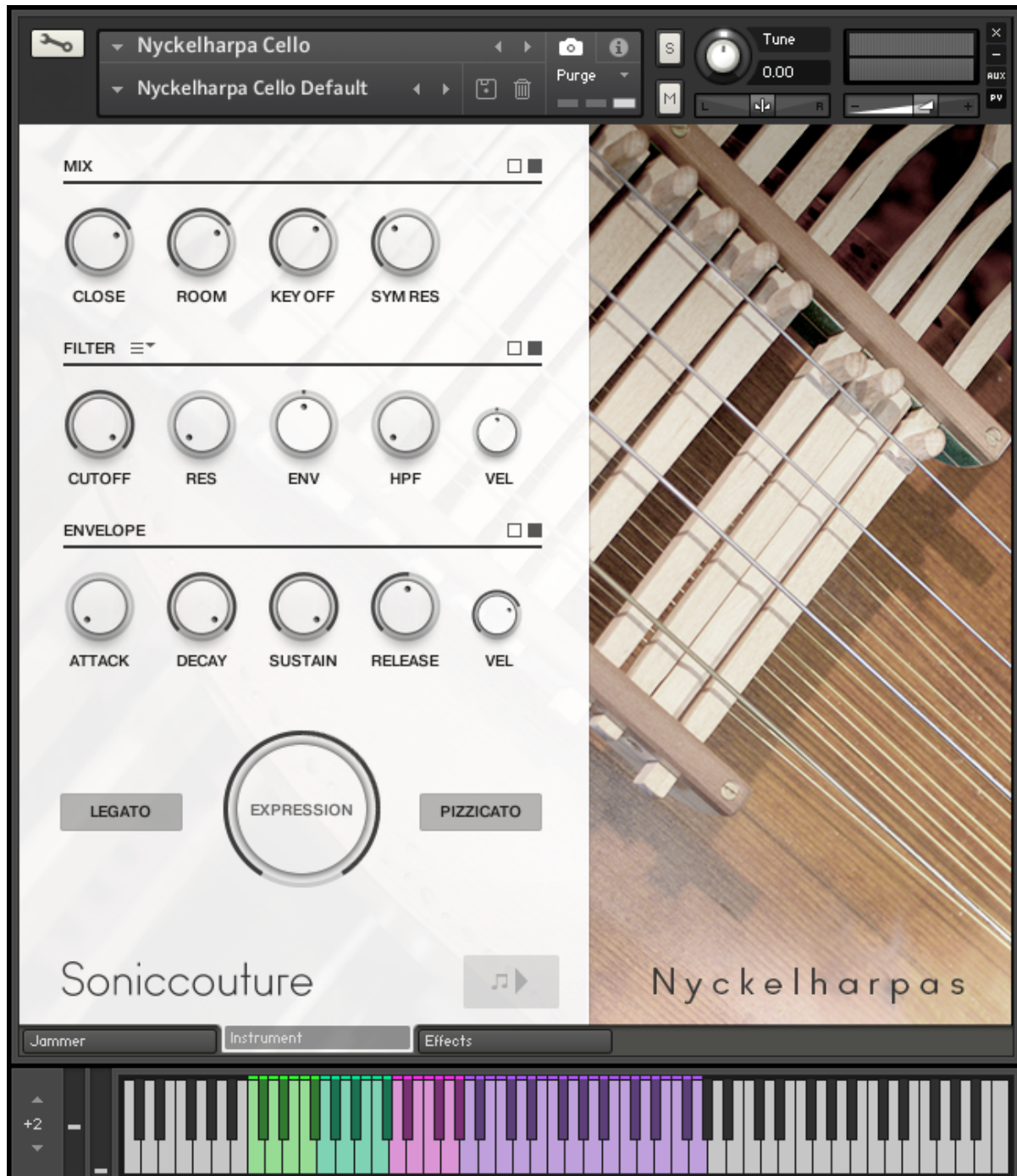
Kontakt stores presets as Snapshots, and we've provided a selection of different Nyckelharpa sounds here as Snapshots. To access them, click the 'camera' icon at the top of the Kontakt window and you'll see a drop down menu. The Factory section contains the ones we've made, and your own will be stored in the User section.



BUILT-IN HELP

If you activate the Info pane in Kontakt, you can hover over any control in the instrument and a short note will appear in the Info pane at the bottom describing what that control does.





THE MAIN PANEL

MIX SECTION

At the top there are four main knobs that control the level of the CLOSE mics, the level of the ROOM mics, the level of the KEY OFF samples, and the level of the sympathetic resonance strings (SYM RES).



FILTER SECTION

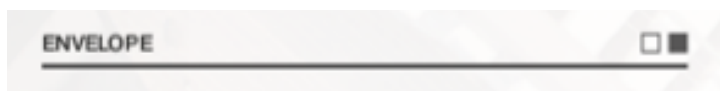
- CUTOFF:** adjusts the frequency of the low-pass filter, lower values are darker
RES: emphasises the frequencies around the CUTOFF frequency
ENV: bipolar control of modulation of cutoff frequency by the Filter Envelope
VEL: bipolar control of modulation of cutoff by velocity
HPF: A high-pass filter - this removes bass frequencies and thins the sound.



Menu selects filter type.

ENVELOPE SECTION

- ATTACK:** adjusts the speed of the start of the sound, from fast to slow
DECAY: adjusts how long the sound decays after the attack phase
SUSTAIN: adjusts the level at which the decay stops and sustain begins
RELEASE: adjusts how long the sound rings after the key is released
VEL: adjusts the velocity response



The Square switches flip between Amp envelope & Filter envelope

EXPRESSION



At the bottom there is a big wheel to control the Expression, this is by default mapped to the Mod Wheel but you may want to change this to CC11 or whatever controller you prefer to use for Expression.



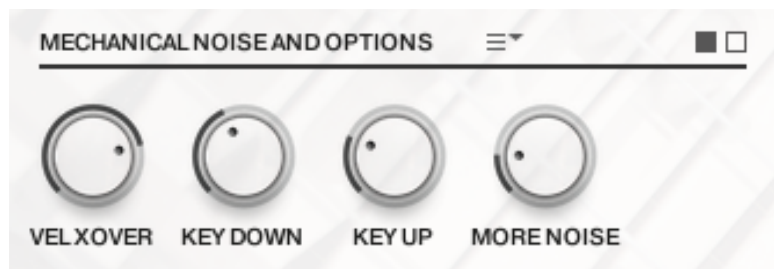
LEGATO here is a string legato, and limits the polyphony of each string to 1. PIZZICATO is indeed pizzicato.

FLIP THE PANELS



On the far right of each of the control sections you can see a small double square switch. This flips the panel to expose more controls. These are:

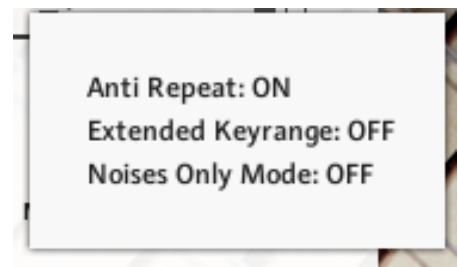
MECHANICAL NOISE AND OPTIONS



Here you can control the VELOCITY CROSSOVER POINT (at which velocity the louder samples will be chosen instead of the quieter samples), the KEY DOWN and KEY UP NOISES from the Nyckelharpa keys. And a certain amount of random MORE NOISE from string squeaks and hand movements.

The drop down menu here gives you some Options.

You can turn on or off the Anti Repeat function, which is ON by default. These are sometimes called Round Robins.



You can EXTEND the KEYRANGE if you like, beyond the natural range of the Nyckelharpa.

And if you want to be experimental you can try out NOISES ONLY MODE, in which the bowed strings are excluded from playback.



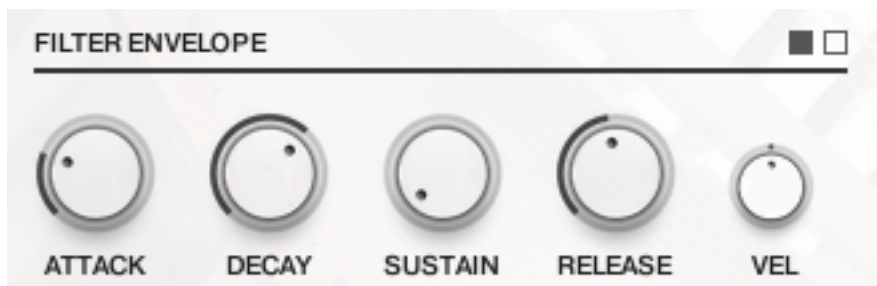
ENSEMBLE

Here you can detune the instrument, creating a chorus kind of effect. You can adjust the WIDTH difference, TIME difference, and PITCH difference between the doubled voices.



FILTER ENVELOPE

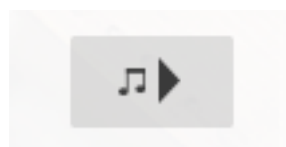
The FILTER ENVELOPE controls are the same as the amp envelope, but are routed to the main filter cutoff frequency.



THE JAMMER PANEL



The play-notes icon at the bottom enables or disables the Jammer. This control is available on all edit pages so that you can start or stop the Jammer without coming to the Jammer tab.



PRESET WHEEL AND STORE MENU

This wheel at the top chooses between 12 presets.



The menu on the right lets you store the complete Jammer setup into any of the preset positions. You can also copy and paste presets to different positions, or import / export patterns between various Soniccouture instruments that have the Jammer.



The five knobs along the middle of the Jammer are global controls, these are:

MODE This sets the type of arpeggiation used to create patterns. The original Jammer mode is Random mode, but you can also choose Up, Down, or Up Down, for somewhat more traditional arpeggiator results. This controls how the notes are selected from what you are holding down.

RATE controls the speed of the Jammer, this is always related to the tempo of Kontakt or the host sequencer.

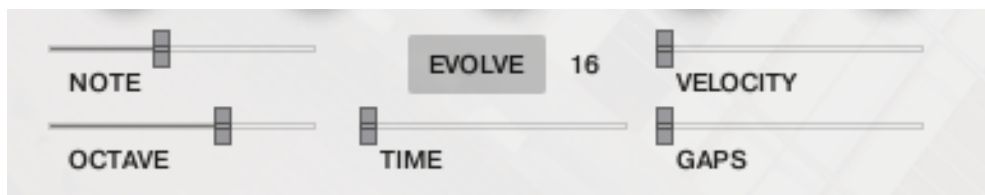
LENGTH is an offset to the duration of the created notes. In the centre position, the notes are created at the same duration set by the Rate knob, but using LENGTH you can make these longer or shorter.

VEL OFFSET adds or subtracts from the velocity of the notes created by the Jammer. Automating this can be useful for creating fades.

SWING adds some time to the offbeat notes to give a shuffle or swing feeling to the rhythm.



The next five sliders are controls for the generative part of Jammer, which are essentially randomising various aspects of note generation. These are:



NOTE add random offsets to the pitches you give Jammer (are holding down). This is in semitones, so if it's set to "1" the Jammer will output notes plus or minus 1 from the notes you play, as well as the note you play.

OCTAVE add random octave offsets to the pitches created by Jammer. This control only **ADDS** octaves, it doesn't subtract octaves.

TIME add random changes to the timing of the Jammer, so that the result is less stable and rhythmic.

VELOCITY add random changes to the velocity of the output notes. This always uses the input velocity as a starting point, so if the **VELOCITY** range is small, it will just add small changes to your input velocity.

GAPS add random rests or silent beats into the Jammer sequence.



In the middle of this section you'll see a button titled "EVOLVE", with the number 16 to the right of it (by default). **EVOLVE** mode means that the Jammer is working to generate new data constantly, the randomisers are always creating new patterns from your input notes.

If you click on **EVOLVE**, the button changes to display **LOOP**. Now the Jammer is repeating the pattern it most recently created. The length of this pattern is determined by the number to the right, so by default it repeats the last 16 generated 'notes'.

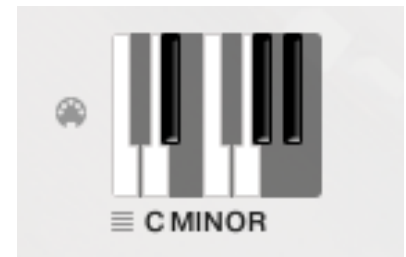
It's important to remember that the Jammer is not storing the 'notes' themselves, but rather the choice of, and offsets to, the input notes you play into it. So even in **LOOP**



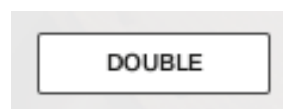
mode, the Jammer will output different notes depending on what notes you play. The pattern is stored, not the exact notes themselves. This means you can create quite complicated patterns, but play them with any chord or input notes.

THE PITCH FILTER

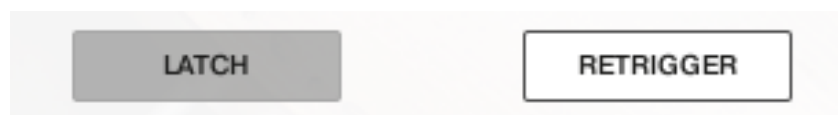
Below the EVOLVE section is a small keyboard that represents a pitch filter. Here you can limit the output notes of the Jammer to a certain key or chord or any selection of notes you like. At the top of the small keyboard is a drop down menu with some popular scales, but you can click on the keyboard directly to allow or disallow any pitch as you like.



You can also use the MIDI input switch on the left of the keyboard to LEARN a scale by playing it into the Jammer.



DOUBLE NOTES will trigger two notes on each step, as if you are playing with both hands simultaneously.

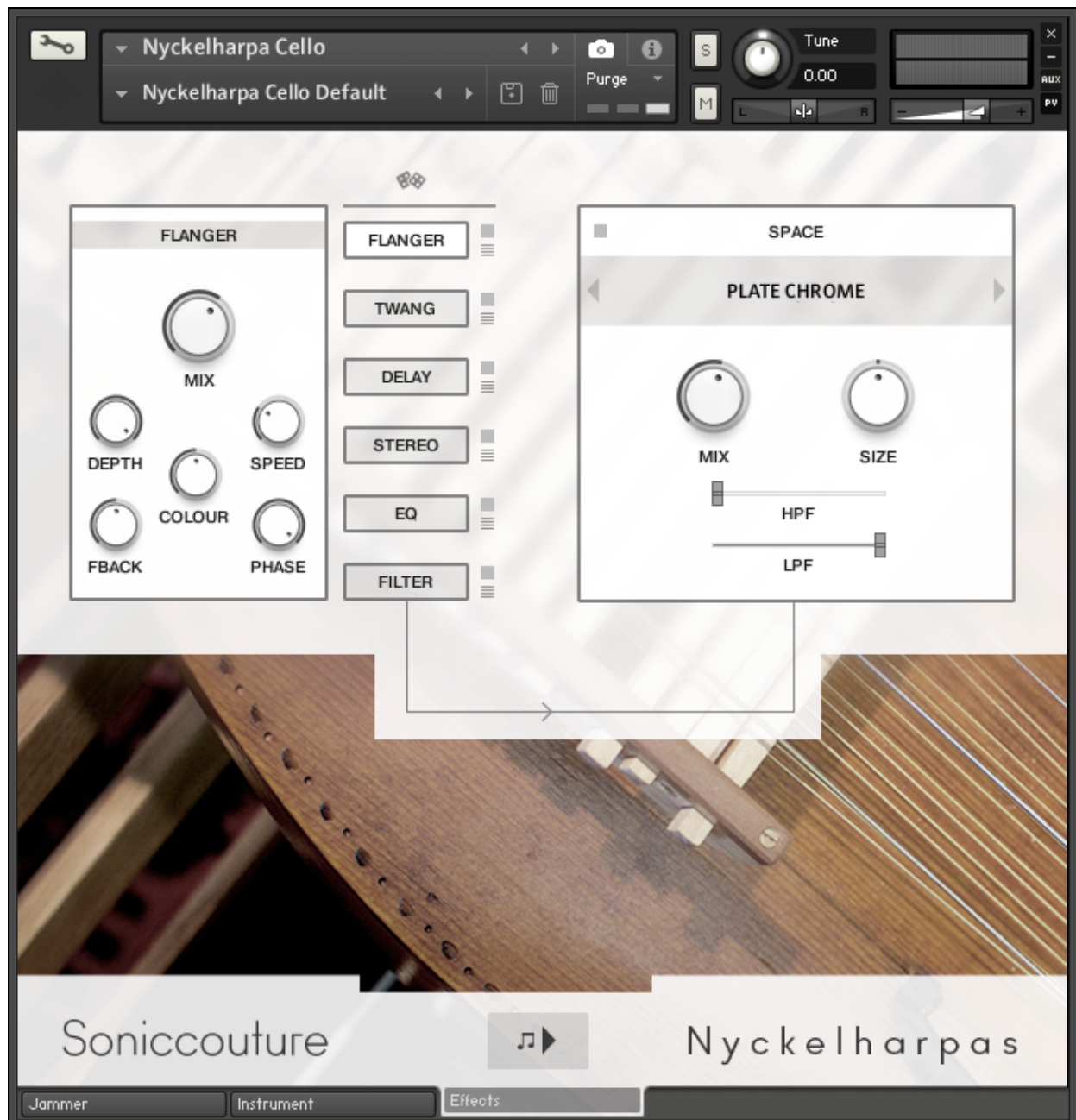


RETRIGGER will force the Jammer to start from the beginning after all notes are lifted (legato).

KEY LATCH will tell the Jammer to hold the current notes until new notes are received.



THE EFFECTS PANEL



The Effects panel lets you configure up to six INSERT effects however you like, as well as a SPACE convolution reverb on the right.

The INSERT effects are selected by the large button displaying their name, and the selected insert's editing controls will appear to its left. The small square switch to the select button's right turns the effect on or off, and the menu below that lets you choose a different type of effect.

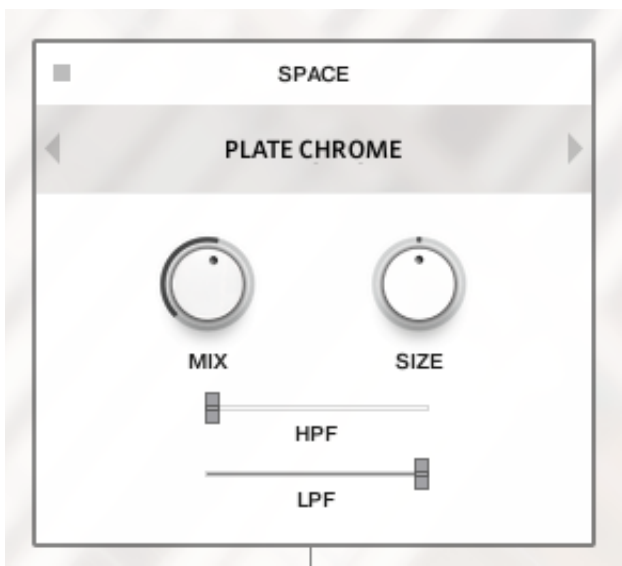




INSERT effects are in order of top to bottom. If you select an existing effect the POSITION of those inserts will be swapped.

The small dice at the top of the INSERT list will randomize all the effect selections.

THE SPACE PROCESSOR



On the right hand side of the panel is our custom convolution based reverb processor SPACE.

Click the arrows or the name in the middle to load one of our preset impulse responses. Conventional halls or rooms are at the top of the list, vintage reverbs in the middle, and crazy spatial effects towards the end. Bear in mind that the longer the reverb time the higher your CPU meter will go.



SUPPORT

If you have any problems or questions relating to the use of this product, please feel free to contact us. You can email us at :

<http://www.soniccouture.com/en/support/>

We will always endeavour to reply to any enquiry within 24 hours. We are based in the UK, so please bear in mind differences in time zones.

While you are waiting, you will find lots of answers to common questions in our FAQ.



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