

USER GUIDE

IMOGEN HEAP
BOX OF TRICKS

ARRAY-MBIRA | CELLO | COCKTAIL-KIT
TONGUE DRUM | BODY & VOCAL PERCUSSION | VIBRAPHONE
VOCALPAD | BOOMWHACKERS | WHIRLY-TUBES
GLOCKENSPIEL | SHRUTI BOX | WATERPHONE | MARXOPHONE

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 (pre 5.6.8) version of Kontakt, [click here](#)

1. Open NI Kontakt in **standalone mode**.
2. In the *Libraries* tab, click **Add Library**
3. **NI Native Access** will now launch. Login or create an account if you don't have one.
4. Enter your product serial number (shown in your [SC account](#) with the download product).
5. Navigate to the downloaded product folder and select it. This completes the installation.

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

- 13 unique Imogen Heap instruments: *Array Mbira, Boomwhackers, Cello, Cocktail kit, Glockenspiel, Marxophone, Shruit Box, Tongue Drum, Vibraphone, Waterphone, Whirly tubes.*
- 24 bit 96 khz stereo sampling
- 30 GB library (14 GB with NCW compression)
- over 9,000 samples
- Custom KSP tools and effects: Jammer, Euclidean Beats, Roundhouse Reverbs
- Multiple velocity and round robin layers



THE BOX OF TRICKS PROJECT



A few years ago, after responding to a tweet in which Imogen mentioned *Soniccouture Xtended Piano*, we got to talking with her about the possibility of a free promotional Heap/SC instrument. Somehow though, that discussion grew somewhat in scope, and here we are, some time later, with a monster 30GB collection of instruments.

Producing Box Of Tricks was quite a long process. Recording began at Heaps Roundhouse in Essex in early 2014. The vocal and body kit session was very successful, but it did become clear that Imogens studio might not be suitable for longer sampling sessions of the acoustic instruments, due to bird noise coming in via the studio windows. Accordingly, all instrument sampling was done in external studios, SNAP & The Pool in London, in the summer of 2014 and spring 2015.

Once the recordings were completed, the process of developing the instruments with Imogen was very interesting - many of her ideas resulted directly in functions for the kontakt instruments. The one that sticks in the mind most is the 'SLIM' control - a kind of EQ effect which reduces the fundamental frequency of each chromatic note, and has the effect of boosting the smaller details of the instruments sound. We also rebuilt our

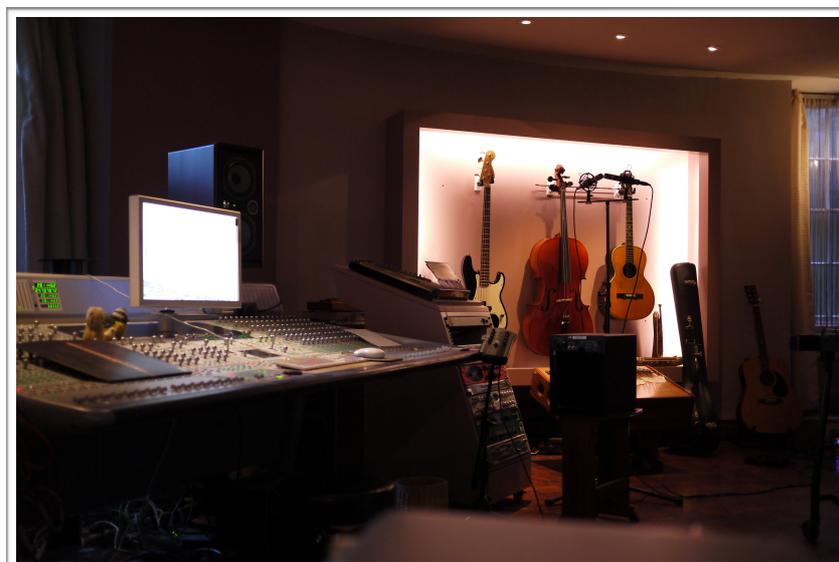


venerable JAMMER KSP script from the ground up, in order to accommodate Imogen's desire for DAW sync and a swing parameter. It is all the better for it.

The sonic stamp of Imogen's life extends beyond her voice and instruments in *Box Of Tricks* - the acoustics of the atmospheric Roundhouse were also sampled for IRs, and can be used as reverbs on all the instruments - the dry studio ambience, the impressive multi-floor staircase, which sounds great on the drum-kit, and the truly unique 'runaround' - a spooky service passage that runs in a kind of tunnel all the way around the house. All places that Imogen has grown-up with and developed her own sound inside.



The final result - the complete *Box Of Tricks* collection - is a completely unique instrument library. Greater than the sum of its parts, its sonic breadth is matched only by its depth character and pure sense of fun. As a well-rounded palette for composition, it is truly special.



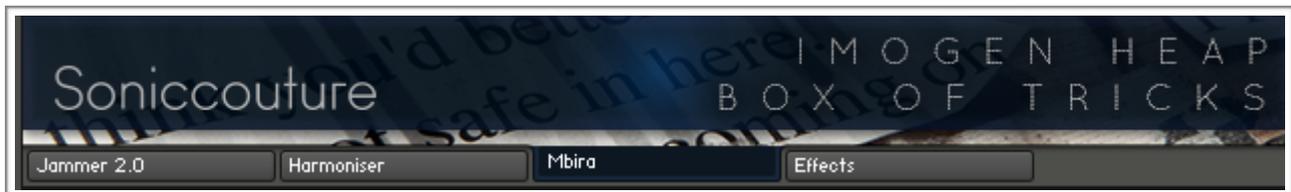
THE KONTAKT INSTRUMENTS



You can hover your mouse over any control in this library to get information about its function if you have the Kontakt Info pane activated.

There are thirteen Kontakt Instruments in this library, which share many similarities. Three of them are “drum kit” style instruments, in which each MIDI note plays a different sound. These are the **Cocktail Kit**, the **Voice and Body Percussion Kit**, and the **Waterphone** kit. The other ten instruments are pitched instruments in which you can play a melody or chords and have a similar sound across all the keys.

All instruments include several tabs, at the bottom, which may include **Jammer**,

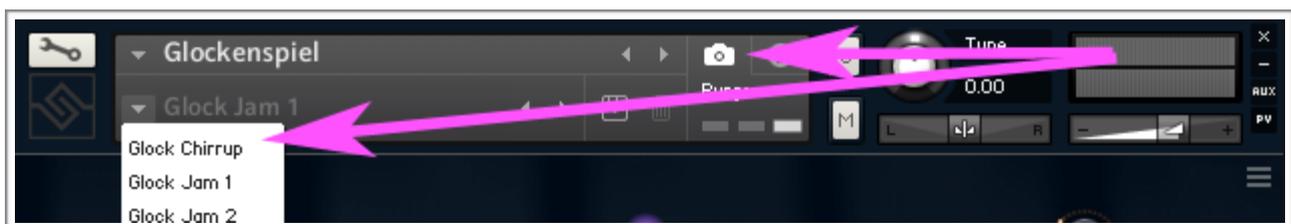


Harmoniser, **Euclidean Beats**, **Effects**, as well as the name of the instrument itself.

Most of these panels look identical on all the instruments, the only one that really changes is the Instrument panel itself, which is slightly adapted to the controls needed for each instrument. The Instrument panel also looks very different in the drum kit presets, so lets first look at the INSTRUMENT PANEL in it's two basic configurations.

SNAPSHOTS

If you've installed the Snapshots, remember that there always some example presets in the Snapshots menu in main Kontakt title bar. Click on the little camera icon, and the snapshot menu will appear beneath the instrument title.



To install the snapshots, see the installation section of this guide. You can also save your own snapshots, it saves having many NKIs and they load instantly.



THE INSTRUMENT PANEL 1

Ten of the instruments (Array Mbira, Boom Whackers, Cello, Glockenspiel, Marxophone, Shruti Box, Tongue Drum, Vibraphone, Vocal Pad, and Whirly Tubes) have an instrument panel similar to this:



Here the first four knobs on the left are the envelope controls (**A**ttack, **D**ecay, **S**ustain, **R**elease), and if you click the small **FEG** switch to the right of those you will see the ADSR controls for the filter envelope.

The central constellation of knobs are all filter parameters, with the large red **FREQ** knob in the middle for the cutoff frequency. Above that you have a bypass switch and a drop down menu to select filter types. And clockwise from there you have filter **RES**onance, **VEL**ocity depth, **ENV**elope depth, and a High Pass Filter control.

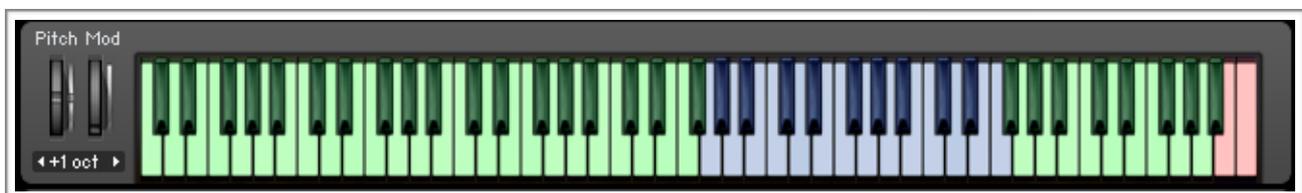
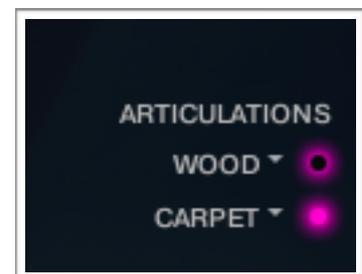


OPTIONS MENU: At the very top right there is a drop down menu that will contain preferences available for that instrument. This might include the option to turn on/off round robins, or to extend the natural pitch range of the instrument.



AUTOPAN: Below the preference menu are two knobs that control the AutoPanner. The larger is the Auto Pan depth, and the smaller is the Autopan RATE. The Rate can be set to synchronise to the host tempo or absolute time using the tiny drop down menu below the word RATE (a tiny arrow).

ARTICULATIONS: If there are any articulations available in the instrument, these will be found at the bottom right of the Instrument Panel. Articulations can be changed by either clicking on the select button beside the articulation name, or by using the assigned keyswitches for each articulation. The keyswitches are assigned using the drop down menu at the right of the articulation name. The keyswitches will appear RED on the built-in Kontakt keyboard.



Keys coloured blue usually represent the original note range of the instrument, and green keys those which are available but pitched beyond the natural range of the instrument.



SPECIALISED CONTROLS

Each instrument has one or two extra controls, specific to its particular operation:



Some instruments have a **REVERSE** knob at the bottom left. This reverses the sound, as you might expect. Many reverse sounds are exactly one second long to make synchronisation with your song a bit easier.

VELOCITY: Some instruments have a Velocity to Volume knob, which allows you to adjust the velocity response of the amplitude of the sound.



SLIM: Many instruments have a SLIM control, which is a feature that Imogen suggested that we find very useful. SLIM is basically a key tracking EQ that removes the fundamental frequency of the instrument, giving the sound a lighter feel and focusing your attention on the higher, character-defining overtones. This often makes the instrument easier to place in a mix.

PRESSURE: The SHRUTI BOX has a PRESSURE controller. This is a Spectral Modelled instrument that greatly benefits from real time control of the wind pressure. (Sustained wind samples can quickly sound very artificial without real time control.)

Adjusting DRIFT amount and RATE can also introduce some automatic pressure variation.





The MARXOPHONE has several different keyboard MAP modes.

There are soft strummed samples separate from the keyed bouncing samples. In the Kontakt instrument you can set the MAP to be either in SPLIT mode (in which the strummed chords are to the left of the keyboard and the melody section to the right), or to have only the MELODY section or only the CHORD section.

The STRUM control let's you set the direction and speed of the automatic CHORD strum.

The MBIRA also has a STRUM control which allows you to set the speed and direction of the automatic strum. In this instrument you can also set the velocity above which to activate the strum.



The WHIRLY TUBES have a special control that allows you to switch the overtone or HARMONIC sounding in real time. This is a lot of fun and is similar to what happens when you swing the Whirly Tubes around your head in real life. It does however require a lot of polyphony and CPU, so you can turn it off using the LED above the control if you don't need it.



THE INSTRUMENT PANEL 2: KITS

Three of the instruments (Cocktail Kit, Vocal Kit, and Waterphone) are drum kit instruments and have an instrument panel like this:



Each key in the drum kit can be adjusted independently! You will generally see the settings for the most recent key you've played (e.g. C1 KICK MUTED in the screen above).



Select by MIDI: This switch can be turned off if you need to, but we recommend leaving it on otherwise. When this is on, the controls keep updating to the notes you play, so if you want to edit a key you can keep repeating that key and adjusting controls to hear what you are doing.





If you want to **EDIT ALL** the keys at once, you can select EDIT ALL (red button at the top right), and any changes you make will happen to all the keys at once. Be very careful with this control though!



SOLO: Only the currently selected sound will play.



FOCUS: Map the currently selected sound across the entire keyboard, in case you wanted to play a melody with a bell percussion sound for instance.

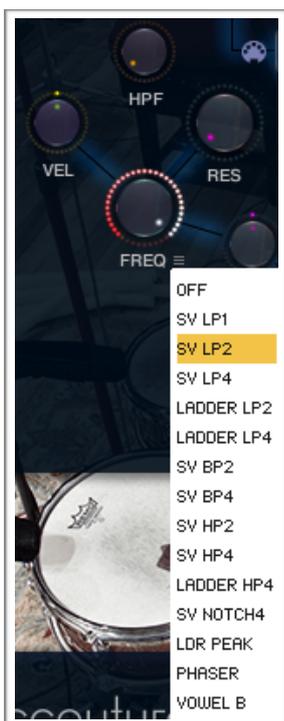
FILTERS, PITCH, ENVELOPES

The knob arrangement might look a bit odd, but basically the left branch are filter controls and the right branch are pitch and other controls.

On the left branch you have control of the Filter FREQUency, VELOCITY depth, High Pass Filter, and RESonance.

You can also use the drop down menu to choose a different filter type for each key if you like. *All these controls can be set independently for each key / sound in the drum kit.*

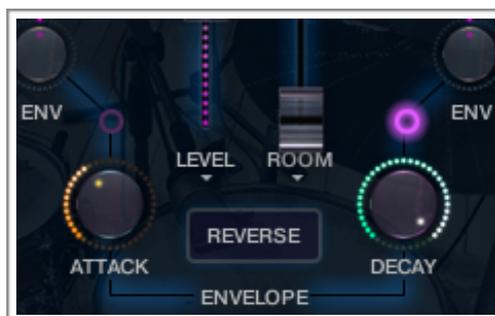
The ENV knob adjust the envelope depth to the Filter cutoff.



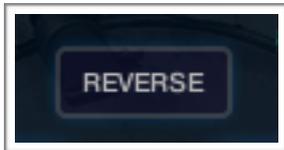
Envelope settings for drum kits are just ATTACK and DECAY, and located at the very bottom of the layout. By default these adjust the ATTACK and DECAY of the amplitude envelope, but there are two other envelopes available to the drum kits.

If you click on the purple LED above the word ATTACK (leading towards the filter section), the the ATTACK and DECAY are for the filter envelope.

If you click on the purple LED above the word DECAY (leading towards the pitch section) then the ATTACK and DECAY are for the pitch envelope.



LEVEL + ROOM: The two faders in the middle are level faders, the left one is the main gain of the dry sample. If there are room samples for that drum sound, the second fader will adjust the room sample level.



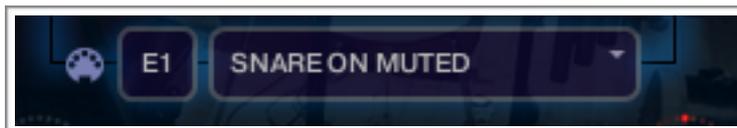
REVERSE: This will reverse the drum sound on that key. Unlike the melodic instruments reversed drums are not fixed to a specific length, so you need to sync the reverse sound in your song independently for each reversed drum.

The right branch of knobs control **PITCH**, **PAN**, **VELOCITY** sensitivity (to amplitude), and **FX Send** (which is a send to the **SPACE** effect found on the **EFFECTS** tab.)

There is also an **ENV depth** to set the amount of pitch envelope depth to pitch.



EDITING DRUM KEY LAYOUT



If you want to change the keyboard layout of a drum kit, you can assign any of the sounds to the note displayed by using the pull down menu of the sound name.

For example, if you click on the area **SNARE ON MUTED** in this example you would be provided with a drop down menu of all available sounds. You will then choose which sound is assigned to the note **E1**. The sound currently on **E1** (**SNARE ON MUTED**) will then be assigned to key previously occupied by the new sound you choose (you always swap).

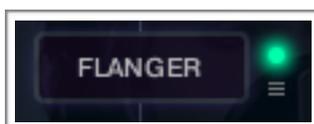


THE EFFECTS PANEL



MULTI FX: here you can assign six insert effects in order from top to bottom.

The parameters for the currently selected effect appear on the far left, and you can choose which effect you're editing with the buttons on the right.



To the right of the selection buttons you can see LEDs to turn the effect on or off, and a small menu icon which allows you to choose which effect is in that "block".

This means you can put the effects in any order you like.



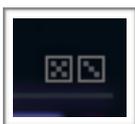
There are 17 insert effects available in the insert block drop down menus. These are:

CHORUS
PHASER
FLANGER
DELAY
SATURATION
DISTORTION
LOFI
SKREAMER
FILTER
TAPE SATURATION
CABINET
ROTATOR
COMPRESSOR
LIMITER
EQUALISER
STEREO
REVERB

Each of these have controls specific to the effect.

N.B. You cannot have the same effect in two different effect blocks; if you choose an effect that is already in another effect block, the two effects will simply swap positions.

All effect parameters can be automated, and all parameters are retained even if the effect is not currently being used.



MAGIC DICE: The dice icon at the top of the insert effect blocks chooses a random set of effects.



THE SPACE MODULE

The SPACE section on the right of the screen is a convolution reverb.

There are controls over the MIX level, and High Pass and Low Pass filters of the reverb. The Space processor can be switched ON or OFF using the glow-dot in the top left corner.

Select which preset / convolution IR to use with the drop down menu icon.

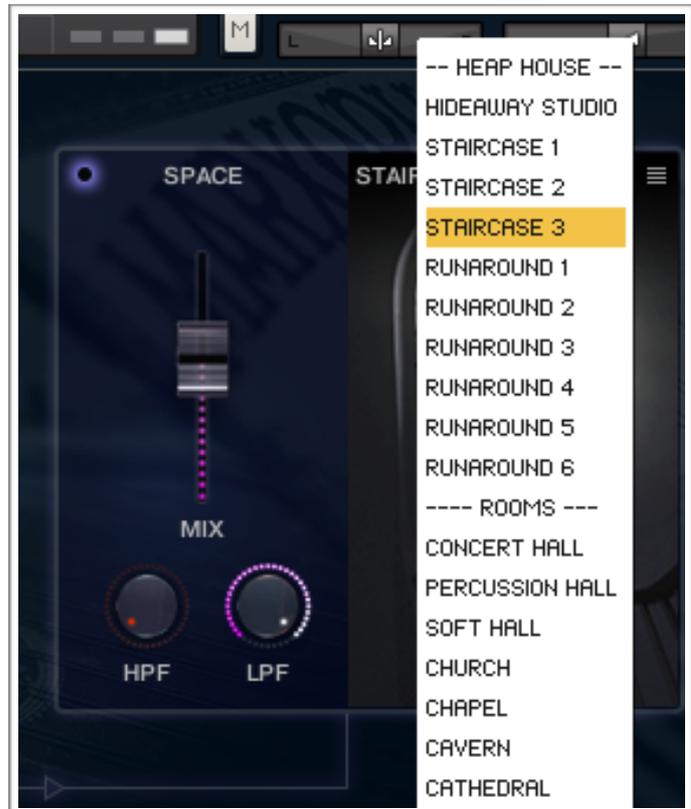
The first section of IRs are impulse responses of Imogen Heaps spectacular Roundhouse:

HIDEAWAY STUDIO: a dry studio recording room, where Imogen mainly records her instruments.

STAIRCASE: The grand spiral staircase that runs up the centre of the house.

THE RUNAROUND: a kind of service passage that encircles the round house, also quite reverberant and unusual.

Below that in the menu are some of Soniccuture's standard library impulse responses that we've collected over the years, some **ROOMS** and some **SFX** we're fond of.



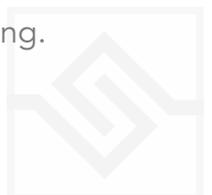


THE HARMONISER PANEL

A simple harmoniser script based on an NI script. The script is **OFF** if the power switch by it's title at the top left is off.

The first row of knobs turns on and sets the scale position of a harmonic 'voice'. In this case "0" is OFF and "1" is the first scale degree or root note. Thus a triad in this system is 1, 3, 5, 0, 0 if the scale is not Chromatic.

The second row of knobs allows you to set a Velocity offset for each voice, as well as an Octave offset for each voice. To swap between Velocity and Octave you need to pull down the menu on the word Octave or Velocity. At the bottom you can set the scale and root note so that the harmoniser can calculate the correct harmonisation for your song.



THE JAMMER PANEL



The Jammer is a kind of generative arpeggiator that can create interesting parts from your input notes. A long standing Soniccuture tool, Imogen added her ideas to make this version for *Box Of Tricks*.

The Jammer is only active if the power switch at the top left is turned ON.

There are five sections to the Jammer:

- 1 The centre Preset Jam Wheel. This includes the STORE menu and number above it.
- 2 The Offset Control section, 5 upper knobs on the right.
- 3 The EVOLVE section, 5 lower knobs on the right.
- 4 The note select SCALE section, to the left.
- 5 The MIDI RECORDER, below the SCALE section.



1. PRESET JAM WHEEL

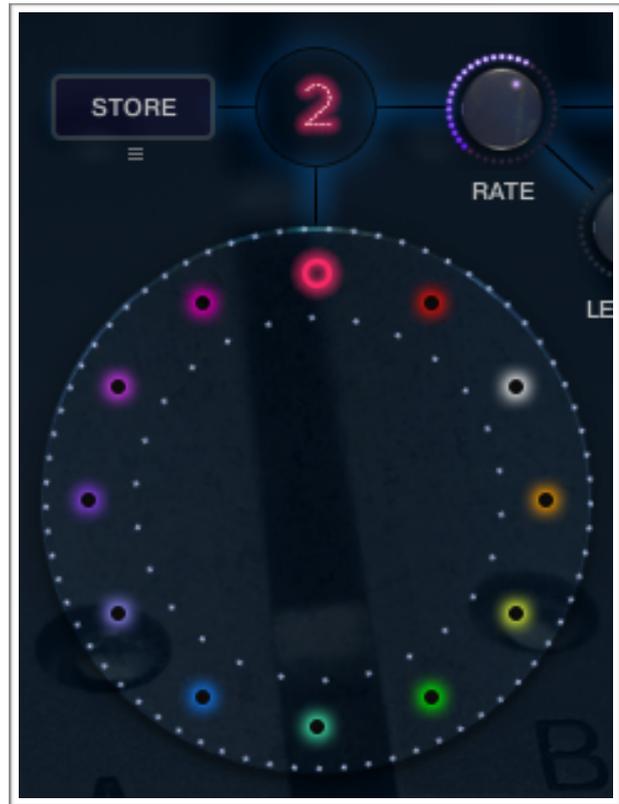
This big colourful wheel essentially stores 12 Jammer presets. These are numbered 1-12 and can be changed by dragging the big wheel or the numbers themselves. If you turn on the Jammer, and hold down some notes on your keyboard, you should be able to hear the arpeggiator working, and as you drag this big wheel the arpeggiated pattern will change. (You can see the other knobs updating to display the currently chosen preset as you move the big wheel.)

The STORE button stores all of the Jammer settings (except LATCH) into the currently selected Preset number.

The little menu below STORE allows you to import and export entire Jam Wheel setups, so you can copy them from one instrument to another. There are some example Wheel setups in the Data folder in your Box of Tricks folder. You can also use this menu to copy a pattern from one preset to another.

Note that you don't have to stop playing to change presets with the Jam Wheel. Also, if you want to automate the Jam Wheel you can right click on the number at the top and assign it any CC you like.

When you adjust other parameters in the Jammer, the Preset is not updated unless you hit STORE again.



2. THE OFFSET CONTROLS

These five knobs set the main **RATE**, **LENGTH**, **MODE**, **SWING**, and **VELOCITY** masters of the current Jammer preset.

RATE is always sync to tempo, and is therefore set as a rhythmic value between 1/32nd and 1/4 note. The Jammer will chase the tempo of your DAW if Kontakt is being used as a plugin or use the tempo set as the master BPM if in standalone mode.



The **MODE** control tells the Jammer which basic method to use in choosing notes to play. The default Jammer mode is **RANDOM**, which means that at each step the Jammer will randomly choose a note from those currently held down, so will continue playing held notes in random order. You can also choose other **MODES** such as **UP**, **DOWN**, and **UP/DOWN...** which are like traditional arpeggiators where the Jammer will play the held notes in order.

In general, Jammer plays notes of duration equal to the value set in **RATE**, but you can choose to make these notes longer or shorter using the **LENGTH** master control.

In general Jammer plays notes at the velocity they were played by you, but you can choose to play notes harder or softer using the **VELO** master control.

Finally, you can tell Jammer to **SWING** the rhythm using the **SWING** control. This essentially moves every second beat a certain amount late. Swing will also chase the bar line positions if used in a DAW, so that downbeats are tight and offbeats are swung.

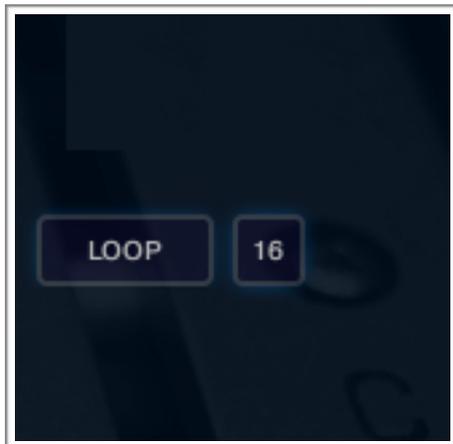
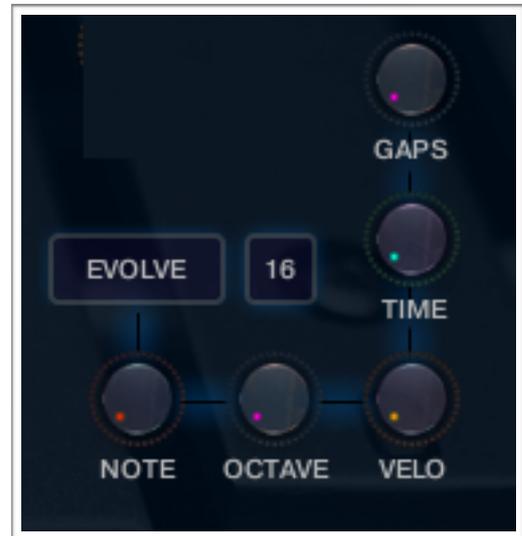


3. THE EVOLVE SECTION

This section is the heart of the Jammer's generative algorithm. Earlier versions of the Jammer (in other Soniccouture products), were essentially just the EVOLVE section.

The five knobs at the bottom right only appear if the Jammer is in EVOLVE mode.

The 5 EVOLVE knobs introduce randomness to the five parameters for which they are named. NOTE randomises the pitch of the note chosen, OCTAVE randomises the octave. VELO randomises the velocity of the note. TIME randomises the timing of the chosen note, and GAPS randomly turns some notes off, creating GAPS or rests.



If you click on the EVOLVE button here you will see the title changes to LOOP and the controls disappear.

LOOP: in this mode the Jammer simply loops the last few values it generated while it was in EVOLVE mode.

The number of steps to loop is set beside the LOOP switch, 16 in the screen shot. You can set this very short to hear a very obvious looping pattern.

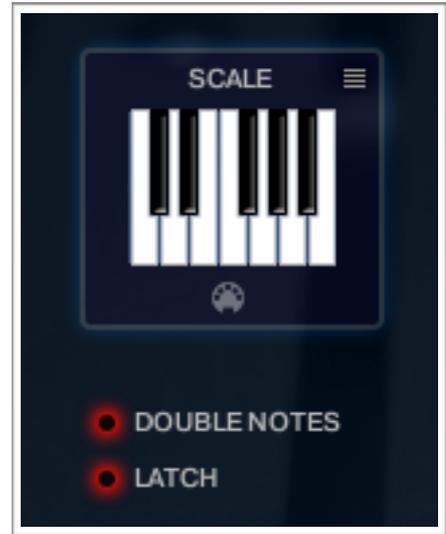
Often a LOOP pattern is more musically useful, because we hear the repetition in it as musically logical (even if it was generated by random choices). It is interesting to hold a chord, set the LOOP length shortish (say, 8), and click between EVOLVE and LOOP while listening to what happens while you hold down a simple chord.



4. THE NOTE SELECTION AND SCALE SECTION

This section controls which notes the Jammer 'allows' in its output. There is a drop-down menu that lets you choose some preset scales, but you can also simply just click on each note on the small keyboard to allow or disallow that pitch in the Jammer output.

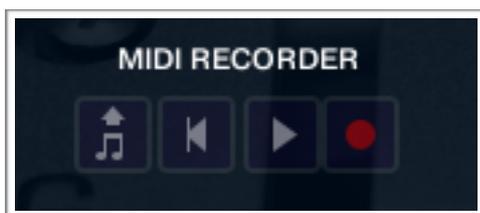
MIDI: The symbol below the keyboard lets you play the notes you want to include. It will enter **LEARN** mode until you click it again.



DOUBLE NOTES tells the Jammer to play two notes on every rhythmic step.

LATCH will latch recently played notes so you don't have to keep them held down on the keyboard forever.

5. THE MIDI RECORDER SECTION



This section is a simple MIDI recorder. It's handy if you are playing with the Jammer and ideas happen that you want to keep for use later. Of course you can store the Jammer preset as well, but perhaps you've found an interesting chord progression and it's working well and you simply want to record the MIDI for use later... this is what the MIDI RECORDER is for. You simply control it like a sequencer, RECORD, PLAY, and REWIND.



DRAG AND DROP MIDI FILE: Click on the far left control to drag the MIDI file out into your DAW or onto your desktop.

N.B. Nothing in the MIDI RECORDER is saved in the Presets or the Instrument.



A BASIC JAMMER TUTORIAL

Setup : Set the Jammer to an Initialised state.

You can load the Init Wheel from the Data folder if you like, or simply set the Scale to ALL NOTES, and Command (CTRL) click each of the 10 knobs. Set the EVOLVE / LOOP length to 8 and put it in EVOLVE mode. Turn DOUBLE NOTES off, and make sure the Jammer power switch is ON.

Now play and hold a simple chord.

Play a major chord, say C, E, and G and hold that chord with one hand or else click on LATCH. You should hear the Jammer repeating those notes randomly every 16th note.

Now bring the NOTE control up. Suddenly you should hear the Jammer playing other notes than the ones you played. NOTE tells the Jammer to add or subtract semitones from the given pool of notes. Move NOTE back to 0.

Bring the OCTAVE control up. You should hear the Jammer adding octaves occasionally (randomly) to the input notes. OCTAVES are only added, whereas NOTES are added and subtracted.

Now bring both the NOTE and OCTAVE controls up, you should hear a pretty random crazy bunch of notes that don't make much sense. Use the SCALE drop down menu to choose something other than ALL NOTES, perhaps C MAJOR. Now you should hear the random notes are slightly less crazy, because the Jammer is forcing all the selections to the nearest note within that scale.

If you reduce the note selection even further, say to D, F, and A, by clicking all the others off, the Jammer now can only randomise things on the notes of a D minor chord.

Now turn EVOLVE off so that LOOP 8 loops. Now you've captured a short pattern that starts to sound more musical.

Note that you haven't captured the exact notes, just the pattern. If you change the input notes, you'll get a different result, even with LOOP on.



THE EUCLIDEAN BEATS PANEL



Two of the drum kits have the **EUCLIDEAN BEATS** generator. Euclidean Beats are a way of thinking about rhythm that has become popular in the last few years.

Essentially the basic idea is to take a number of **STEPS** (say a bar of 16) and evenly distribute a number of **HITS** within those steps. If you use 16 **STEPS** and evenly distribute 4 **HITS**, you get a very basic 4 beat bar, since the most even way to divide 4 **HITS** in 16 **STEPS** is to put one **HIT** every 4 **STEPS**. So far so disco.

It gets more interesting when the numbers are less even. For example, 3 **HITS** in 8 **STEPS** gives you a nice funky rhythm that's quite commonly heard in a lot of different musical styles.



Another thing you can then do to those STEPS is SHIFT their position. The default is always to start with a HIT, so the first HIT will typically occur on STEP 0. However if you SHIFT the STEPS earlier or later you get a slightly different rhythm, even though might be built on from same basic ratio of 3 HITS to 8 STEPS.

SHIFTING is hard to hear on a single part, but when there is more than one part playing it becomes very obvious since the parts play off against each other.

Let's have a look at the EUCLIDEAN BEATS panel and see how it works. You can find a nice example in the Cocktail Kit preset in Box of Tricks.

In the top centre is a wheel with a PLAY control in the middle of it. Clicking on this PLAY control starts the beat pattern. Clicking again on it will stop the beat pattern.



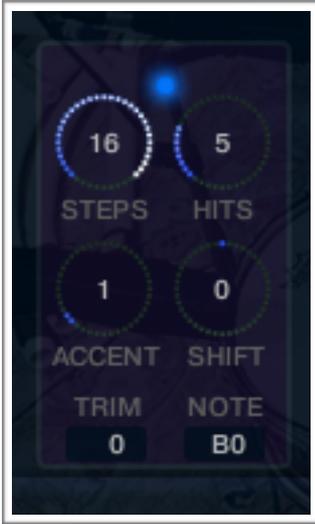
In concentric circles around this PLAY button is a representation of the current beat. These cannot be clicked or moved directly with the mouse, but give you a visual display of the beat created by the current setup.

To the right of the Euclid pattern wheel are three main controls for RATE, SWING, and LOOP. RATE is the sync note value (from 1/4 note to 1/32 note), and is always calculated in relation to the host tempo. SWING adds a shuffle to the beat.

LOOP forces the pattern to restart after a certain number of steps. This might not be obvious at first, but you potentially have a pattern with odd numbered steps need several



years before the sequence repeats at the beginning again. To force those kind of things into a usable musical time-frame you can set the LOOP as you like. (Yes, you can also set LOOP to NEVER if you don't like to dance.)



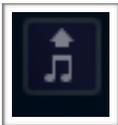
Below the main Euclid pattern wheel are six similar panels with four knobs each. These define the parts of your pattern. They are each turned on or off with the LED at the top middle of the section.

Here you set the number of STEPS, HITS, SHIFT, and ACCENT for that part of the pattern, as well as the velocity TRIM and output NOTE below. (This one to the left is set to output B0)

So the STEPS sets the length of the pattern, as it were, and the HITS the number of times to strike that drum during those STEPS. You cannot alter how those HITS are distributed within the STEPS, they are always evenly distributed (Euclid's algorithm!). You can however SHIFT the position earlier or later with the SHIFT knob.

ACCENT lets you add a certain number of accents to the hits. And yes, ACCENTS are evenly distributed among the HITS using the same algorithm used to distribute the HITS among the STEPS (Euclid again!).

It seems like a simple system, but as you can have up to six of these patterns live at once, the resulting rhythms can be quite complex.



You can drag the MIDI out to your sequencer using the MIDI drag button at the top right.

If you'd like to read more about Euclidean beats and why they're interesting, Google *Godfried Toussaint*, he wrote an original paper that started the fad some years ago.



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 :

support@soniccouture.com

We will always endeavour to reply to any enquiry within 12 hours. We are based in the UK, so please bear in mind differences in time zones.



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