



Soniccouture

Guzheng User Guide

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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 **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

- 3 articulations: right hand, left hand, harmonics (finger picks)
- 24 bit 44.1 kHz stereo sampling
- 2 GB library over 11,000 samples
- 10 velocity levels per note, with 3 round robin layers



THE GUZHENG



The Guzheng (古筝) is a traditional Chinese instrument dating from the Qin dynasty (c. 200 BC). It is the ancestor of the Japanese *Koto* as well as several other zither-like instruments found across east Asia.

A modern Guzheng typically has 21 strings over movable bridges, and steel strings wound with nylon, although ancient instruments used silk strings. These are mounted on a large resonant half-tube box made of wu-tong wood, and the instrument is typically about 1.7m long. The strings are tuned by both moving the bridges and by adjusting tuning pegs.

The Guzheng is tuned to a pentatonic scale (5 notes per octave), thereby giving it a four octave range. In modern times the tuning has been standardized to D, E, F#, A, and B. Other notes are created by bending the strings behind the bridge with the left hand.

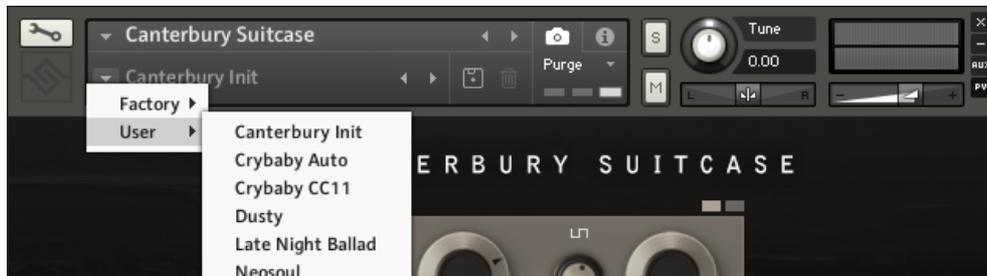
Generally the notes are plucked with the right hand, on which the player wears tortoise-shell finger-picks. The left hand is usually bare, but sometimes used to pluck accompanying notes as well as providing pitch bend and vibrato effects behind the bridge. Sometimes virtuoso performers will use finger picks on both hands.

Other playing techniques include tremolo (very fast repeated notes), harmonics, and sweeping glissandos.



THE KONTAKT INSTRUMENT

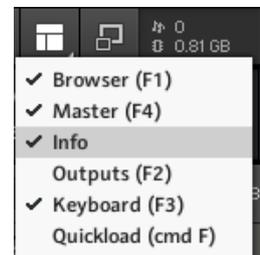
SNAPSHOTS



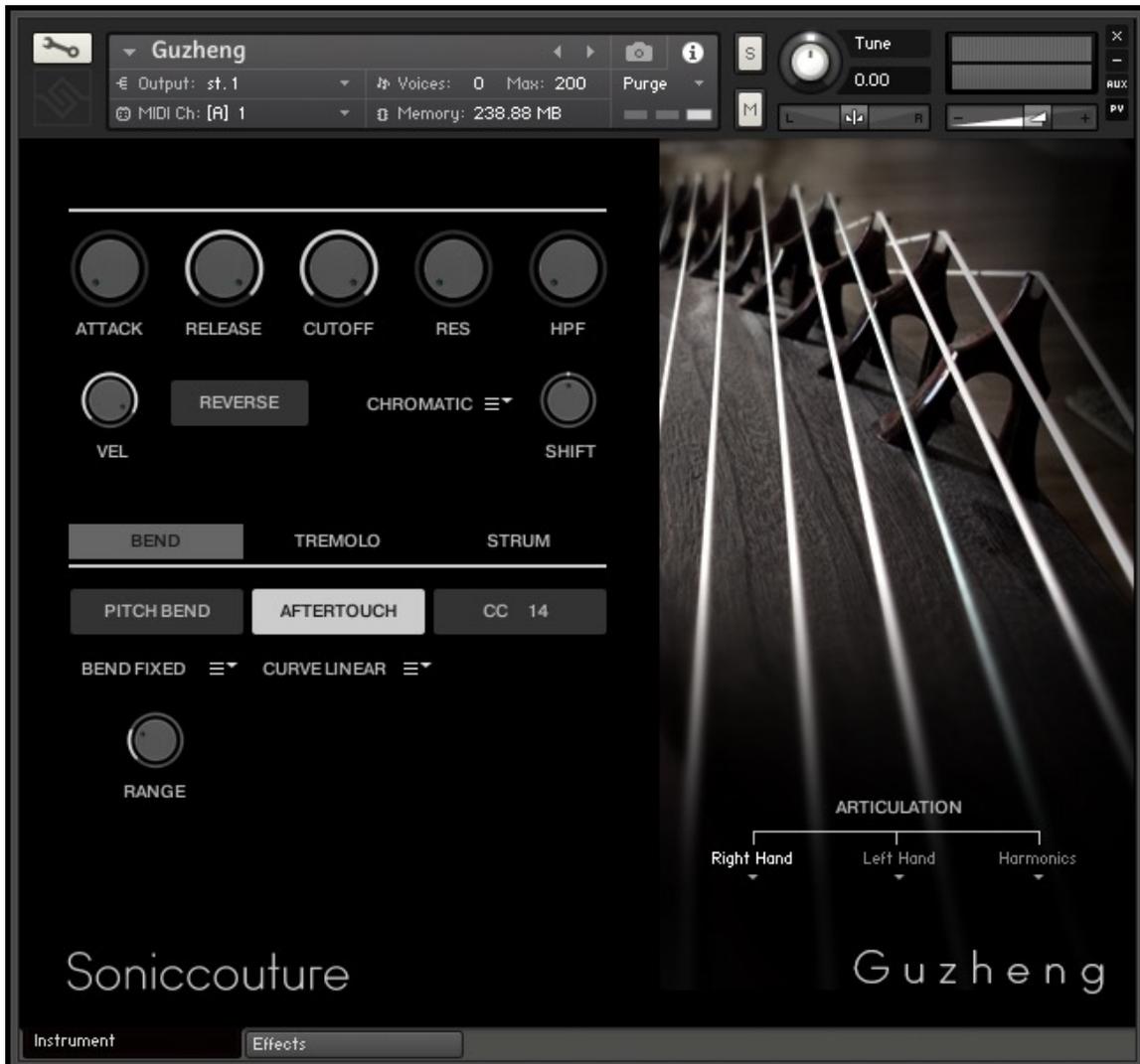
Kontakt stores presets as Snapshots, and we've provided a selection of different Rhodes sounds here as Snapshots. To access them, click the 'camera' icon at the top of the Kontakt window and you'll see a drop down menu. The Factory section contains the ones we've made, and your own will be stored in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

BUILT-IN HELP

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



THE MAIN PANEL



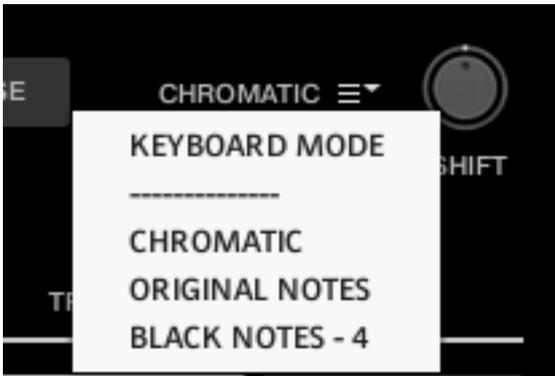
SHAPING CONTROLS

The upper knobs can be used to fine tune the shape and colour of the Guzheng:

- ATTACK: adjusts the speed of the start of the sound, from fast to slow
- RELEASE: adjusts how long the sound rings after the key is released
- CUTOFF: adjusts the frequency of the low-pass filter - lower values are darker
- RES: Emphasises the frequencies around the CUTOFF for a ringing sound
- HPF: A high-pass filter - this removes bass frequencies and thins the sound.
- VEL: adjusts the Velocity response - how loud the sound gets with a key press
- REVERSE: plays a reversed version of the sound



MAPPING DROPDOWN



Although the Guzheng has only 5 notes per octave, we have mapped these notes so that their ranges are expanded to fill in the notes between. If you play in “Chromatic” mode, all the notes will be available.

If you want to be more purist, and are aiming for a very natural Guzheng sound, you might want to try one of the other two modes. “Original Notes” mode only allows D, E, F#, A, and B to be played... which are the original Guzheng strings. On a real Guzheng all other notes are created using a pitch bend method (which we’ll get to in a minute).

The last Keyboard Mode is called “Black Notes -4”. Since there are five notes in the octave in a Guzheng, it’s sometimes easier to play on the black notes of your keyboard. “Black Notes -4” transposes incoming notes so that F# plays D, G# plays E, etc, so you can play the original notes of the Guzheng only, but by using the black keys. This is especially useful when you’re trying to play glissandos.

Finally, there is a Shift knob. This transposes your incoming MIDI so you can play Original Notes, or Black Notes -4, but in another key.



THE MODULATION TABS



BEND

If you've listened to any real Guzheng playing, you'll notice how frequently the strings are bent by the players' left hand. It's done to create pitches not available on the open strings, to create vibrato, and for bend effects (sometimes reminiscent of slide guitar). This is a very characteristic aspect of its sound, so we've implemented a page to allow you to do this in various ways.

First of all, our Pitch Bend affects the last note played only. This way, the other ringing strings won't change pitch as you bend the most recent note. (Physically, a player can only bend one or two strings at once anyway, and of course, the pitch can only go up, not down.)

You can control the Pitch Bend with the Pitch Bend Wheel, a MIDI Controller of your choice, OR (if you're using the Aftertouch Multi) Aftertouch. We like Aftertouch because it feels very much like pushing a real Guzheng string.

You can adjust the Bend Curve. This might depend on your keyboard controller... as some keyboards have an Aftertouch that is very sensitive. Using the Curve menu you can change the response of the Pitch Bend from Linear to a tougher exponential curve, to a very tough exponential curve. See what feels best on your keyboard.



Finally, there are two ways of deciding the Pitch Bend range. The Bend Note menu lets you choose between “Fixed” and “Scale”. If you set this to “Fixed”, you will see a knob that gives you a range in semitones. This is like normal pitch bend range we’re used to on other instruments.

If you set the Pitch Bend Note to “Scale” however, you are presented with a series of buttons representing each possible note on the keyboard. In this mode, the pitch bend range can be different for each input note, as these buttons represent the destination pitch. So, selecting only the notes of the key you want to play in, your pitch bend will always bend up to another note in that key (ie. regardless of the input note it will bend until it reaches the next selected pitch in this set). This can make it much easier to bend notes in real time, but have the result stay in key.

TREMOLO

Another characteristic technique of Guzheng playing is tremolo. Virtuoso players are able to repeat notes very quickly with just their right thumb, while continuing other parts with the remaining fingers and left hand.

This page allows you to set up a tremolo behaviour that can be turned on or off with a key or a controller.

The basic speed of the Tremolo is set by a drop down menu and related to the tempo of Kontakt or your sequencer. Below that, the “Trem Key” and “Trem CC” define the note and controller that will turn the tremolo on or off. Trem CC defaults to the sustain pedal, since a Guzheng usually rings freely and is not damped.

There is also a “Trem Mod” CC, which is a MIDI controller you can set to adjust the tremolo in real time. This is set to 41 by default, but you can set it to anything you find convenient.

When the Trem Mod CC is brought up from zero, three things can change: velocity, tuning, and speed. You set the amount of the modulation for each of these with Knobs to the left under “Modulation Depth Parameters”.



Above those, you have the same three Knobs but for randomizing those same parameters (velocity, tuning, and speed). The randomizing is unrelated to the Trem Mod CC, and will happen all the time when the tremolo is engaged.

The “On/Off” button at the bottom right of this page is just to show you the current state.

STRUM

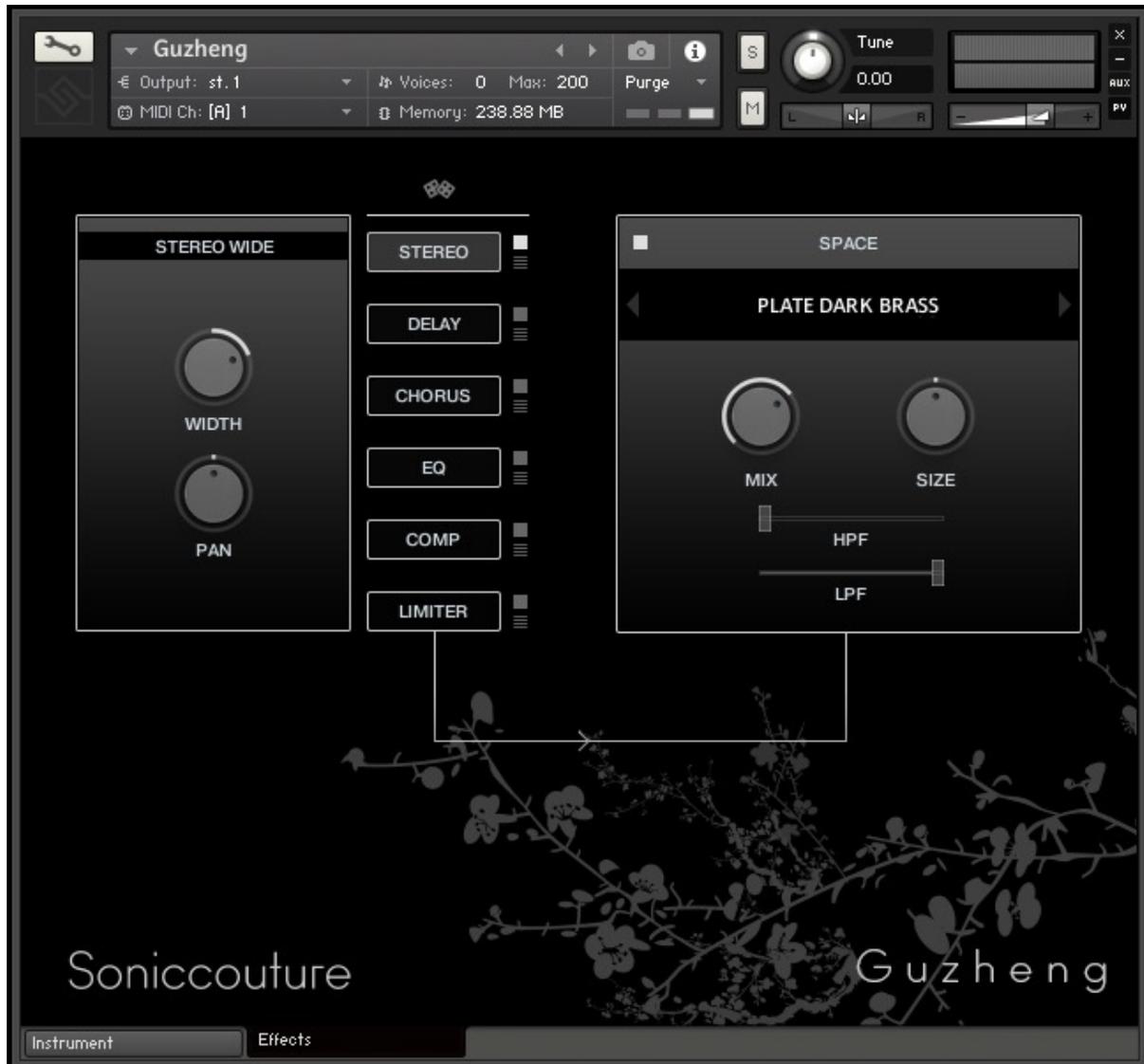
On this page you can assign a controller (defaults to CC 1, the Mod Wheel) that will strum the entire Guzheng. You can set the “Low” and “High” limits of the sweep, and the selected notes to be included in the sweep (the default is the normal Guzheng open strings).

The sweep takes its velocity from the last played MIDI note it received, however you can also control the Maximum velocity allowed (“Max Vel”) and introduce some random velocity (“Rand Vel”) to the sweep. The randomness is always subtracted from the starting velocity, and this helps give some realism to the glissando.

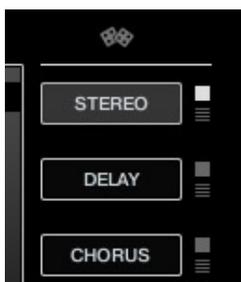
The “Invert” button changes the direction of the controller, and the “Display” knob does nothing more than show you where the controller is currently.



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.



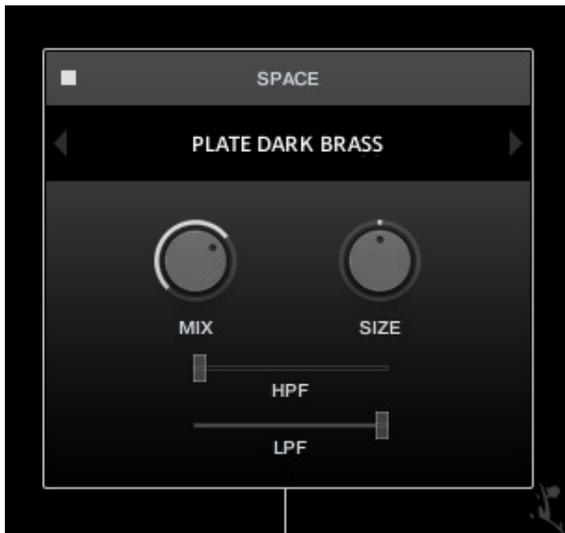
The INSERT effects are selected by the large button displaying their name, and the selected insert's controls will appear to its left. The small square switch to the select button's right turns the effect on or off, and the menu below that lets you choose a different type of effect.



INSERT effects are in order of top to bottom. If you select an existing effect with the menu, 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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