

SONUSCORE



MANUAL



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1. Introduction

Welcome to Sonuscore's NORDIC SPHERES, a Kontakt instrument that creates vast, frozen soundscapes and musical spheres using a combination of rich, sound effects content, granular synthesis, and percussive sounds. We worked with Mats Lundgren and Amina Hocine from Sweden-based **Pole Position Production** to create a treasure trove of rich tonal and non-tonal audio from a wealth of creative sources. Mats' recordings combined with our layering and arpeggiator possibilities have created a truly inspirational instrument.

2. Installation And Setup

Before you can create music with NORDIC SPHERES, you will have to install and set up the necessary software. Follow these instructions to get started:

2.1 Installing NORDIC SPHERES

On the Sonuscore website, download the product in the form of a .zip file. If you are new to our site, you must first create a user account, to do so visit our registration page: <https://sonuscore.com/my-account/>

1. Fill in the application form.
2. Create a Sonuscore account.
3. Login to your Sonuscore Account.
4. Go to "My Account" and open the "Downloads" menu.
5. Copy the serial number of NORDIC SPHERES and go to Native Instruments' "Native Access".
6. In Native Access, click on „Add a serial“ and paste your serial number. Then you will see NORDIC SPHERES under „Not Installed“. To Install the product, click on "Install".

2.2 Loading NORDIC SPHERES Via Kontakt

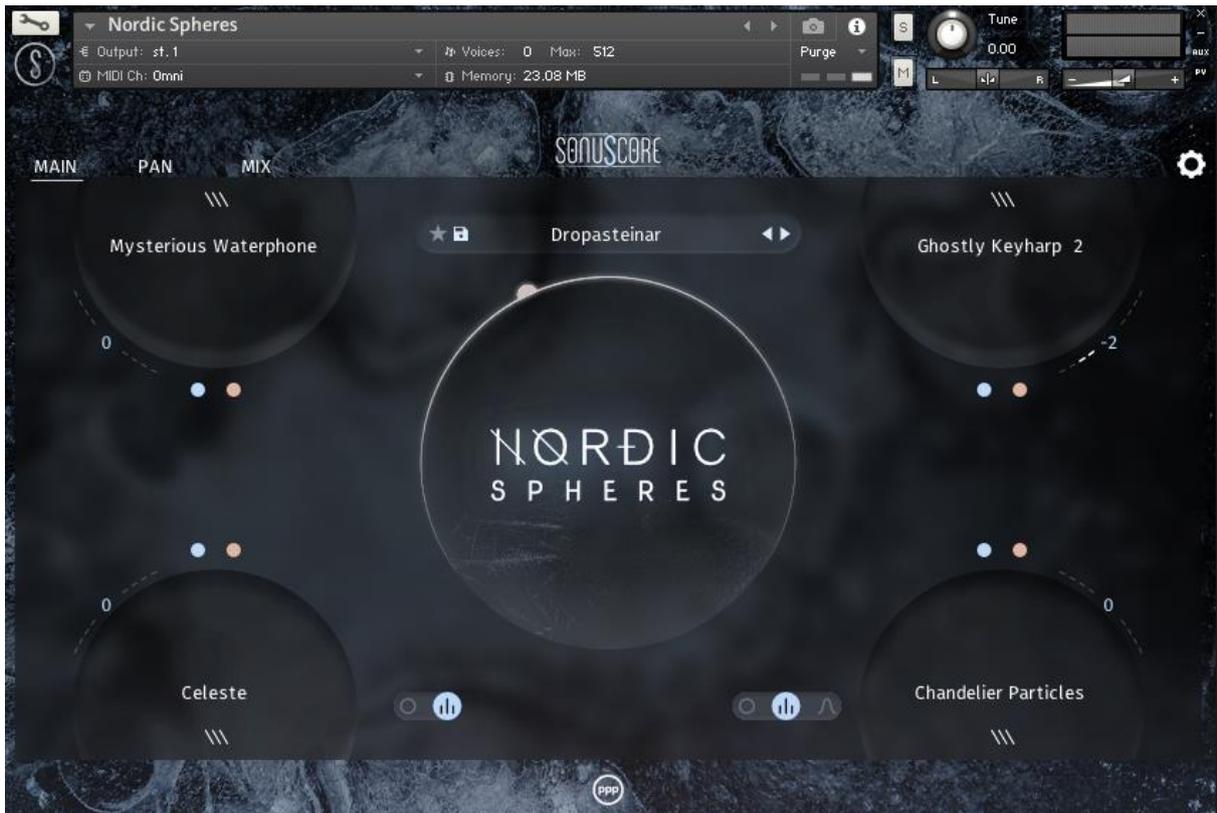
NORDIC SPHERES is not an independent plug-in, so you will first need to open an instance of KONTAKT or KONTAKT PLAYER before you can start playing.

1. Open KONTAKT as a plug-in in your host software (DAW), or as a stand-alone application.
2. Locate NORDIC SPHERES in the Browser, on the left side of the user interface.
3. Click Instruments to open the product's content.
4. Double-click the NORDIC SPHERES.nki file to load the instrument.

2.3 „Nordic Spheres.nki“

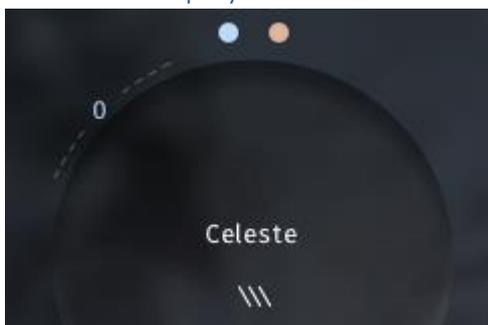
The designed source sounds are the core of the sound of Nordic Spheres. You can load up to four sounds into independent slots which can be transposed and modulated in different ways. Two of the slots offer basic arpeggiator functionality, while the other two house our new granular engine.

3. Main Page



The Main Page gives you access to the four slots of Nordic Spheres. You can access all controls to edit your preset, load new instruments, or choose different presets. The two slots at the top utilize our new granular engine. The two slots at the bottom have basic arpeggiator functionality.

3.1 Slot Display



Each slot is represented by a spherical space where you can access all parameters of the respective slot.

3.2 Solo / Mute



Each slot has a control to solo (blue) and mute (red) the sound.

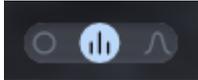
Shortcut: „Ctrl+Click/Cmd+Click“ will solo one slot and mute all the others. Even if there are multiple activated solo buttons

3.3 Octave Shift



Close to each sphere is the octave shift control. By clicking and dragging up or down you can transpose the instrument in the slot one or multiple octaves up or down.

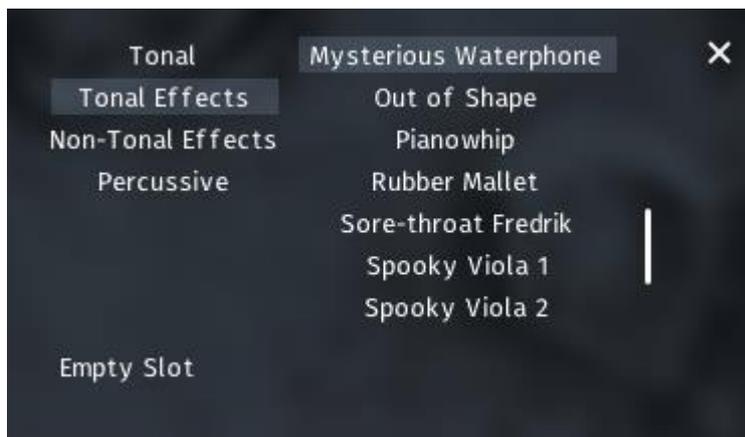
3.4 Engine Selection



The two slots at the bottom can be used with an arpeggiator, an envelope, or no engine at all. Use the engine selection to switch between the three.

IMPORTANT: Not all source sounds can be used with the envelope engine. The respective switch will not be displayed in those cases.

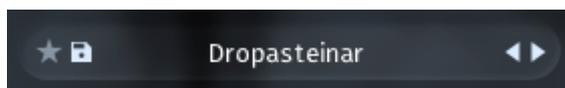
3.5 Sound Browser



By clicking on the name of a sound, a browser will guide you through the selection of all the available sounds for the slot. The two granular slots (top) and the two engine slots (bottom) have different sets of categories and source sounds.

To exit the browser click on the X on the upper right. „Empty Slot“ will remove any sound from the chosen slot.

3.6 Preset Browser



Right in the middle of the main page you will find the enhanced preset strip with controls for changing, loading and saving presets. The arrow buttons to the right of the strip allow for quickly skipping through the filtered preset selection. To the left you will find a star icon for marking your favorite presets as well as the preset save control providing easy access to the user preset functionality of NORDIC SPHERES that lets you save, delete and add or edit tags of newly created presets. By clicking on the title of the currently selected preset, you will enter the preset browser.

The Preset Browser contains 26 tags to help you filter all presets by different characteristics and keywords as well as an option to scroll through the filtered selection. To simplify the search the tags are organized into different categories:



Category: These tags can be used to search for presets in the context of the various preset categories. In addition, your presets are stored under the User Presets tag. This category can be used to additively filter for multiple tags. The other categories contain the following attributes:

Spheres are atmospheric pads.

Pulses contain very basic rhythmical patterns.

Animated presets are the most complex presets. They make use of all engine capabilities to create complex atmospheres and arrangements.

Tone: Search for presets that are tonal or non-tonal; more SFX like. Only one tone can be selected simultaneously.

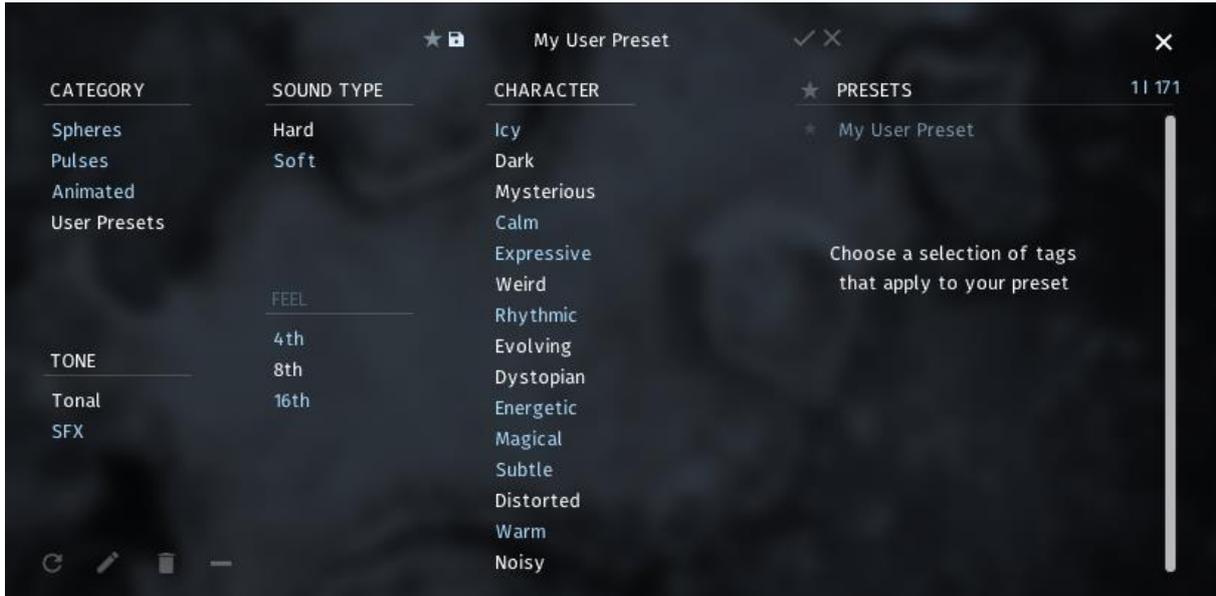
Sound Type: Use these tags to filter between more aggressive and softer presets.

Feel: The feel category allows for searching presets with 4th, 8th, and 16th focus.

Character: In order to quickly find suitable themes for your score, you can narrow down your search further in this category using various types of characteristics.

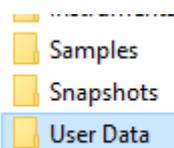
The Clear button (-) in the lower section of the preset browser will reset your tag selection allowing you to start over. To exit the preset browser, click on the X on the top right corner or double click your selected preset.

3.6.1 User Presets



NORDIC SPHERES has a simple solution to save, organize and share User Presets. A User Preset can be saved or edited from the Main Page as well as from the Preset Browser. On both pages this is achieved by clicking on the “save” icon next to the “favorite” icon. This opens the Preset Save dialog, which provides you with the option to make your own tag selection for easier retrieval of the preset in the browser later on. The saving process can then be completed by pressing the checkmark button. Once you have selected a User Preset in the Browser, you can of course still modify the Tags or Engine settings. Simply select the menu items Edit (Pencil) or Save. To free up space in the browser, you can also delete your own presets using the Delete (trash can) menu item.

The individual user presets are saved as single *.nka files into the User Data-folder under the installation path you chose in Native Access. Since each preset is accessible as a single file, it is easy to transfer and share them between multiple systems.

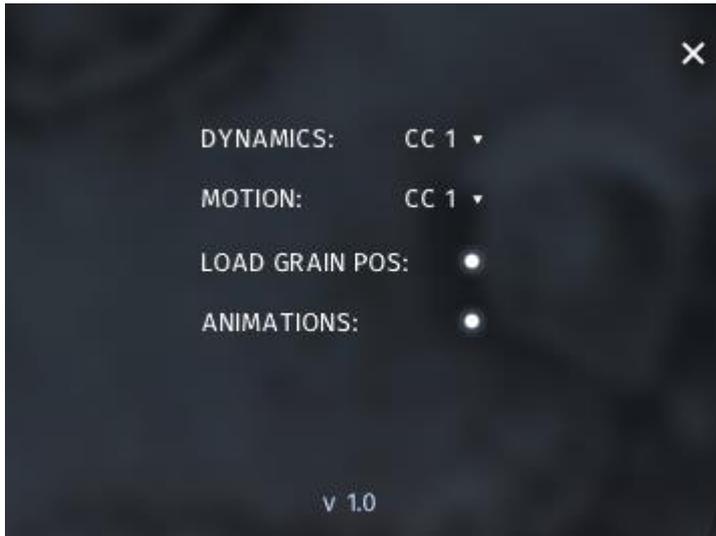


If you want to transfer presets between systems or share them with other users, simply copy the *.nka-files of your choosing into the instruments User Data-folder on the other system.

When you have copied new presets into the User Data-folder, the instrument needs to scan the presets in order for them to show up in the browser. To allow that, open a fresh instance of NORDIC SPHERES and navigate to the preset browser page. Click the “Refresh” button in the lower section to start the scan process. The instrument will now scan and update the preset database including your new presets.



3.7 Global Settings



At the top right corner you can find the little button that brings you to the global control settings.

Dynamics: In this menu you can choose between three standard MIDI-Controllers (CC1, CC2 and CC11) to control the overall dynamics of the engine. This control is used for scaling the velocity and envelope values of the engine modules and also for direct control of unassigned sustained articulations. By default this function is assigned to the mod wheel (CC1).

Motion: In this menu you can choose between three standard MIDI-Controllers (CC1, CC2 and CC11) to control the motion engine. By default this function is assigned to the mod wheel (CC1).

Load Grain Pos: This feature lets you choose the initial position of the grain position markers, whenever you load a new grain sample into the grain slots. This can either be a predefined position (Control ON) that makes the sound usable in an instant or the start and end of the sample (Control OFF) so that you can explore the whole sample at first, before you set your own positions. By default this feature is on.

Animations: You can use this button to turn the slot animations ON / OFF. This is especially useful to spare you some CPU power.

3.8 Keyboard Ranges



With our engine we provide an easy way to play several sounds with different keyranges combined. The blue keycolor indicates the playable keys of the loaded sounds. The coloring considers the current octave shifts. It does not take any arpeggiator settings into consideration.

4. Engine Page

Each slot has its own Engine Page, where you can make detailed adjustments to the sound and its playback behaviour. It offers you access to the properties of granular and arpeggiator engines, as well as the slot's FX chain. To open the Engine Page of a slot, you need to click on the three striped button within the slot's sphere on the Main Page.



4.1 Granular Engine



The Engine Page of the two grain slots (top) shows the granular engine.

Sound Browser: The top center of the engine page shows the name of the currently loaded source sound. Clicking on the name or the three-striped menu icon next to it brings you back to the Main Page and opens the Sound Browser, where you can change the source sound of this slot.

Wavetable Display: The upper half of the granular engine shows you the waveform of the currently loaded source sound. This helps you to set the position markers for this sound. It also shows the current playback position within the waveform, whenever you play a note.

Position Markers: The playback position within the sample morphs between the two position markers (red and blue), that are shown within the wavetable display.. Responsible for the exact morph position is the sequencer underneath. You can move the position markers via “click and drag”.

Density: Choose the amount of grains, that should be triggered per second. Depending on the setting of the Density Sync, this can either be the exact amount, or a trigger interval based on the host tempo.

Density Sync: At the top right corner of the density control, you can switch the density between the exact amount of grains per second and trigger intervals, that are synchronized to the tempo of the host application (KONTAKT, DAW, ...).

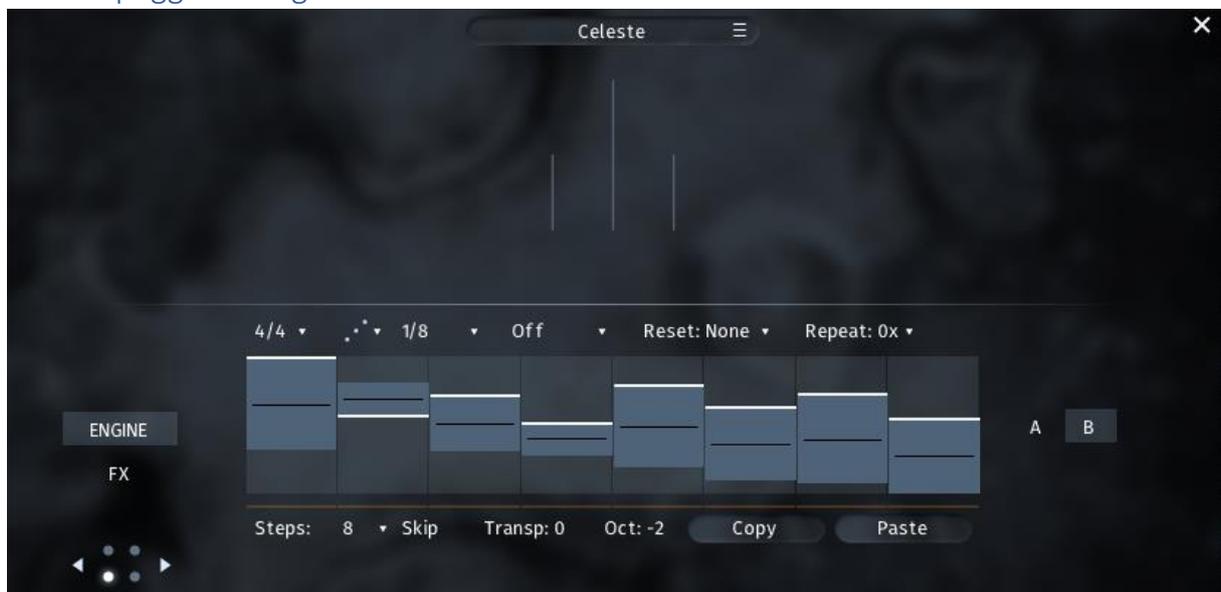
Random Position: Use this control (RAND POS) to set the amount of randomization, that should be applied to the start position of each grain. Triggering all grains from the exact same position within the sample (0% Randomization) will cause the machine gun effect. To avoid this, increase the randomization.

ADSR Curve: To the right of the Wavetable Display you will find four controls to set the parameters Attack (ATK), Decay (DEC), Sustain (SUS), and Release (REL) of the ADSR Curve, that belongs to the grain Engine.

Sequencer: The lower half of the Grain Engine shows the sequencer, that morphs the playback position between the red and the blue position marker. The bottom of the sequencer represents the red position marker. The top of the sequencer represents the blue position marker. The higher you set the value of a step of the sequence, the closer the playback position will be to the blue position marker. The control functionalities of the sequencer are identical to those of the Envelope Engine. Read chapter 2.2.3. to get further information on how to set the sequence.

Clip to Perc: Some source sounds are based on percussion recordings and may contain rhythmical patterns. Those sounds show the button >>>Clip To Perc<<< above the sequencer. Clicking the button will synchronize all steps of both sequences to the position of the percussion hit, that is closest to their current position. This feature takes the current setting of the position markers into consideration.

4.2 Arpeggiator Engine



The Engine Page of the two engine slots (bottom) will show the Arpeggiator Engine, if you have chosen the Arpeggiator on the Main Page.

The arpeggiator consists of two main elements, the general controls and the rhythm stepper. While the general controls help controlling the note repertoire out of the played notes, the rhythm stepper helps arranging them in a recurring rhythmical sequence.

Sound Browser: The top center of the engine page shows the name of the currently loaded source sound. Clicking on the name or the three-striped menu icon next to it brings you back to the Main Page and opens the Sound Browser, where you can change the source sound of this slot.

Time Signature: Selects the time signature of the pattern. The selected time signature will affect the reset function, and also the stepper resolution.

Order: Determines the order, in which the played notes will be arpeggiated. All (Chord) will trigger all played notes in the respective rhythm.

Rate: In the arpeggiator-modules it is possible to select even values and three different kinds of triplets as the arpeggiator-rate. If a triplet-rate is selected, the rhythm stepper will adjust the number of steps accordingly. This way, the rhythm stepper will always cover an amount of steps that makes sense within the selected time signature.



Note Selection: Selects whether or not all played notes should be heard in this particular module. The different options allow to only play the lowest, highest or middle notes of a played chord. This can be used to prevent a muddy bass section and orchestrate chords carefully with multiple sounds.

Bar Reset: If „Reset: 1 bar“ is selected in the dropdown menu, the arpeggio will repeat its pattern after one measure of the selected time signature. „Reset: 2 bars“ lets the pattern repeat after two measures. This prevents a random displacement of the note pattern over time.

Repeat: Repeats every note one or multiple time before moving on to the next one.

Steps: Adjusts the amount of steps within the selected time signature.

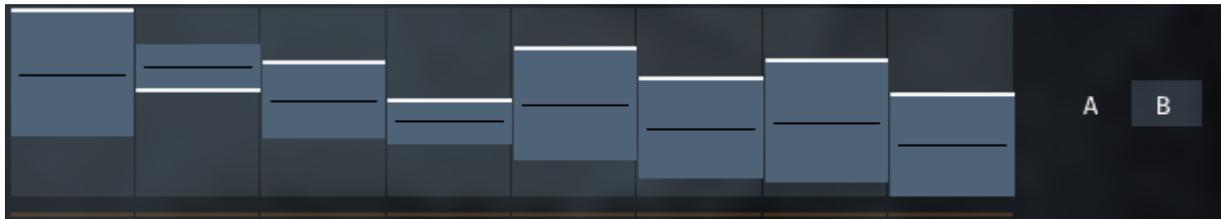
Skip: Steps with the value 0 will be skipped and the respective note will sound at the next active step.

Transpose: Transposes the whole pattern one or multiple semitones up or down.

Octave: Repeats the played notes after the first turn one or two octaves above or below.

Copy/Paste: COPY and PASTE the step pattern from one module to another.

Rhythm Step-Sequencer:



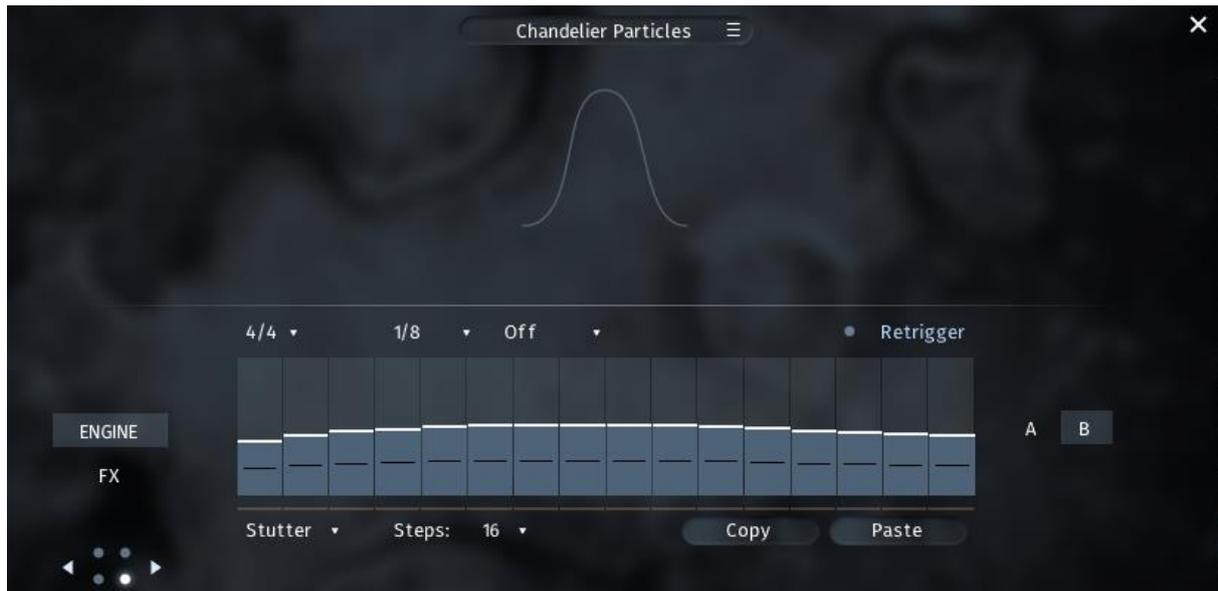
Create your own rhythm for the arpeggiator. Click to set single step values. Click and drag to draw multiple step values. Right-click and drag to draw a straight line. Use the modulation wheel to control the dynamic of the rhythm.

A: Click on the **A** to view and adjust the lowest mod wheel position.

B: Click on the **B** to view and adjust the highest mod wheel position.

Shortcut: Use „Alt+Click“ to adjust all values simultaneously.

4.3 Envelope/Stutter Engine



The Engine Page of the two engine slots (bottom) will show the Envelope Engine, if you have chosen the Envelope on the Main Page.

The envelope allows you to set a recurring dynamic shape to sustained notes. The centerpiece is the envelope shape, which can be drawn freely by left-clicking and dragging the mouse. By right-clicking and dragging the mouse you can draw a straight line. A number of additional controls allow you to adjust the envelope to suit your needs.

IMPORTANT: The basic controls of the sequencer of the Grain Engine work in the same way, as the controls of the Envelope/Stutter Engine. To read more about the effects of the sequencer on the grain engine, go to chapter 2.2.1.

Sound Browser: The top center of the engine page shows the name of the currently loaded source sound. Clicking on the name or the three-striped menu icon next to it brings you back to the Main Page and opens the Sound Browser, where you can change the source sound of this slot.

Time Signature: Sets the time signature, which directly correlates with the duration of the envelope.

Bar Length/Rate: In the envelope module you can select the BAR LENGTH until the module repeats. In the stutter module it is possible to select even values and three different kinds of triplets as the RATE.

Note Selection: Selects whether or not all played notes should be heard in this particular module. The different options allow to only play the lowest, highest or middle notes of a played chord. This can be used to prevent a muddy bass section and orchestrate chords carefully with multiple instruments. **IMPORTANT:** Note Selection is not available for the grain engine sequencer.

Retrigger On/Off: If turned on, the sustained note will be triggered again at the beginning of each turn. If turned off, the note will continue in a constant loop. **IMPORTANT:** Retrigger is not available for the grain engine sequencer.

Envelope/Stutter: At the bottom left you can choose between the STUTTER effect and the traditional ENVELOPE. With the STUTTER effect you can create more drastic dynamic changes. Resulting in a more aggressive stuttering sound.

Steps: Set the amount of STEPS for envelope.

Copy/Paste: COPY and PASTE the step pattern from one module to another.

A: Click on the **A** to view and adjust the lowest mod wheel position.

B: Click on the **B** to view and adjust the highest mod wheel position.

Shortcut: Use „Alt + Click“ to adjust all values simultaneously.

4.4 FX Tab



The Engine Page of a slot also contains its FX chain. You can access it by clicking on the >>>FX<<< button at the lower left of the page.

Some FX parameters have a >>>Motion<<< button under the control. When activated, the mod wheel will control this parameter and move between the min and max value. The reverse button will reverse the movement. For more information go to chapter **3. Motion Engine**.

4.4.1 Grain Size / Envelope



The first FX tab houses the Grain Size for the Grain Engines or the Envelope for Oneshots and Sustains, used in the Arpeggiator and Envelope Engines.

Attack: Set the attack time or the grain fade-in time in ms.

Decay: Set the decay time or the grain fade-out time in ms.

4.4.2 Equalizer



EQ On/Off: Click on the dot next to >>>EQ<<< to switch the EQ on or off.

LC Freq: Set the frequency of the Low Cut Filter.

LC Res: Set the resonance of the Low Cut Filter.

LC Order: Use the order menu below the frequency knob to set the steepness of the Low Cut Slope from 1st to 4th order.

Mid Freq: Set the frequency of the Bell Filter.

Mid Q: Set the quality/slope of the Bell Filter.

Mid Gain: Set the gain of the Bell Filter.

HC Freq: Set the frequency of the High Cut Filter.

HC Res: Set the resonance of the High Cut Filter.

HC Order: Use the order menu below the frequency knob to set the steepness of the High Cut Slope from 1st to 4th order.

4.4.3 Saturation



Saturation On/Off: Click on the dot next to >>>SAT<<< to switch the Saturation on or off.

Type Selection: Use the dropdown menu at the top right of the tab to choose between six different types of Saturation and distortion.

Gain: Adjust the gain of the Saturation effect.

Tone: Adjust the tone of the Saturation effect. Only supported by three of the six types.

4.4.4 Chorus



Chorus On/Off: Click on the dot next to >>>CHORUS<<< to witch the Chorus on or off.

Depth: Adjust the depth of the Chorus effect.

Speed: Adjust the frequency of the Chorus effect.

Phase: Adjust the phase offset of the Chorus effect.

Mix: Adjust the mix between the dry signal and the wet Chorus signal.

4.4.5 Tremolo



Tremolo On/Off: Click on the dot next to >>>TREM<<< to witch the Tremolo on or off.

Frequency: Adjust the frequency of the Tremolo effect.

Depth: Adjust the depth/intensity of the Tremolo effect.

5. Mix Page



On the Mixer Page you can adjust the balance and sound of the different slots and apply master effects.

5.1 Channel Strip

The name of the loaded sound is displayed on the very top of every channel strip.

Delay: Sets the send level to the master delay. Use the motion button to activate the Motion Engine for the delay.

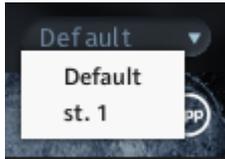
Reverb: Sets the send-level to the master reverb. With this control the amount of reverb on each sound can be adjusted. If set to $-\infty$ dB, the master reverb will not affect this slot at all.

Pan: Moves this sound further to the left/right in the stereo field.

Note: If you use the Pan Engine on this channel the PAN setting on the mix page will have no effect.

Fader: Turns the volume of the slot up or down. „Ctrl+Click/Cmd+Click“ to reset the value to 0dB.

5.1.1 Output Routing



On the mixer page there is a dropdown menu below the channel strip of every instrument slot that assigns specific Kontakt outputs to that particular slot.

If no outputs are displayed, you can create, rename and assign new outputs in the Outputs-Menu of Kontakt (F2). They will be available immediately in the dropdown menu of our mixer page. Consult the documentation of Kontakt 6 and your DAW to learn, how to implement multi-timbral instruments within your particular audio software.

Please note: Even though the dry signals will be split to the separate outputs, the send-reverb/delay will remain on the default channel, as splitting the reverb/delay would be very taxing on your CPU. For best results, we suggest to use this feature with the internal convolution reverb/delay turned off, and add a master reverb/delay in the DAW.

5.2 Master FX



Compressor: Adjust the dynamics of the instrument by setting the threshold of the compressor and adjust the makeup gain to the right.

Delay: This is the master delay effect. You can choose from over twenty high quality presets and adjust them with the Time, Feedback and Hi Cut controls. Use the mix control to adjust the return level of the delay.

Reverb: This is the master reverb with high quality reverbs from different legendary effect processors

and impulse responses. You can choose a reverb category in the menu on the left: IRC, Room, Hall or Plate. Each category has several presets that you can select in the right hand dropdown menu. Use the mix knob to adjust the send return level of the reverb.

6. Motion Engine



At the heart of our effects lies our MOTION ENGINE that adds movement and depth to the presets. Beneath almost all of the available effects you can find the motion button. When activated the corresponding parameter is controllable with the mod wheel or one of the two other controllers.

Min Value: The red number on the left of the bar sets the minimal value of the selected effect parameter for the MOTION ENGINE. This is the value reached at the lowest position of the mod wheel. Click and drag with the left mouse button to adjust this parameter.

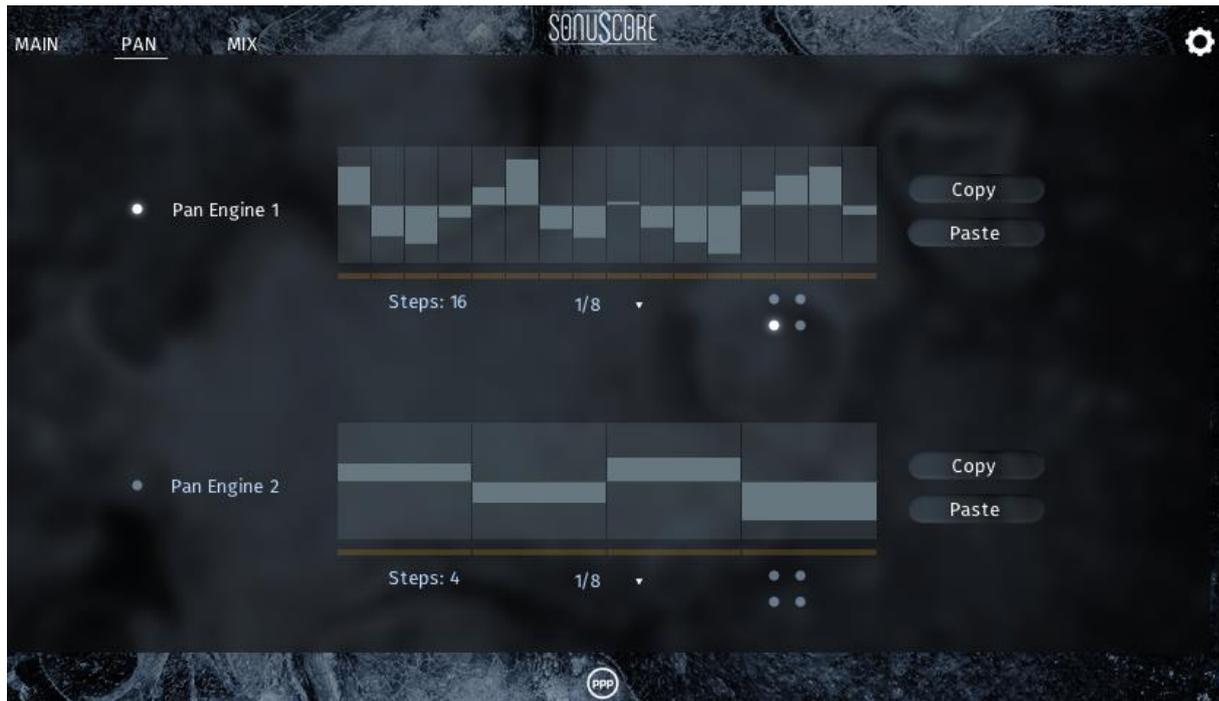
Max Value: The white number on the right of the bar sets the maximum value of the selected effect parameter for the MOTION ENGINE. This is the value reached at the highest position of the mod wheel. Click and drag with the left mouse button to adjust this parameter.

Motion Switch: Toggle the MOTION ENGINE on and off for this effect parameter.

Motion Reverse: This little button on the right of the MOTION SWITCH will reverse the min and max values. The max value is now reached at the lowest position of the mod wheel and the min value at the highest position.

Note: When the MOTION ENGINE is activated you can not set a fixed value for the effect. Instead use the MIN and MAX VALUE to adjust the range of the MOTION ENGINE.

7. Pan Engine



Another feature that greatly creates movement is our PAN ENGINE. Each preset has two different pan engines that each slot can be assigned to. The centerpiece is the panning shape that can be drawn freely by left-clicking and dragging the mouse. By right-clicking and dragging the mouse you can draw a straight line. A number of additional controls allow you to adjust the engine to suit your needs:

Pan Engine On/Off: Use the dot on the left of the engine name to turn the engine on and off.

Steps: Set the number of steps for the PAN ENGINE.

Rate: It is possible to select even values and three different kinds of triplets as the rate for the PAN ENGINE.

Slot: Select which instrument SLOT is controlled by the PAN ENGINE. You can assign each slot to one of the two PAN ENGINES.

Copy/Paste: COPY and PASTE the engine pattern from one module to another.

8. Credits

Developed by Sonuscore and Pole Position Production

Product Concept and Design: Mats Lundgren, Amina Hocine, Tilman Sillescu, Nico Dilz

Project Lead: Nico Dilz, Mats Lundgren

Sound Design: Mats Lundgren, Amina Hocine, Eric Thorsell, Niklas Olsson

Preset Design: Mats Lundgren, Amina Hocine, Jonas Schüsselin, Tilman Sillescu, Simon Schrenk, Nico Dilz, Matthias Meeh

Preset Naming: Mats Lundgren, Amina Hocine, Jonas Schüsselin, Nico Dilz, Matthias Meeh

KONTAKT Scripting: Nico Dilz, Jonas Meyer, Mathias Vatter

Sample Editing: Mats Lundgren, Amina Hocine

User Interface Design: Jannic Böhme

Quality Assurance: Mats Lundgren, Nico Dilz, Tilman Sillescu, Simon Schrenk, Jonas Meyer, Jonas Schüsselin

Artwork: Benedikt Huster, Jannic Böhme

Marketing: Benedikt Huster, Jannic Böhme, Felix Möbius, Nadja Demmler, Florian Tauchert, Shawn Basey, Louisa Wolf, Tobias Kunz, Max Lachmann, Magnus Reithner, Paul Virostek

Videos: Jannic Böhme, Nadja Demmler, Benedikt Huster, Felix Möbius

Additional Content: Gully Benediktsdottir, Mattias Olsson, Erik Klinga

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