Signature Grand

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing Signature Grand! This quickstart guide will lead you through the basics of installing/loading the instrument and give you an overview of the features.

"Signature Grand" is a Model D 9-foot Concert Grand sampled in a beautiful hall/scoring stage. The instrument naturally excels in film and classical applications, but the user is able to craft the sound to be suitable to nearly any style of playing.

Features:

● More than 2500 samples in 24 Bit
● All 88 keys individually sampled in 10 dynamic levels
● Two microphone perspectives (Close and Room)
● Multi-velocity adjustable mechanical noises
● Authentically modeled una corda (soft pedal) samples
● Sympathetic String Resonance with real overtones
● True repedaling and half-pedaling
● User controllable microphone/recording noise and player noises
● Adjustable releases to control early reflections and ambiance
● Over 60 presets designed by Emmy Award-winning composer, Garth Neustadter

Installation

After unzipping the download file, copy the entire "SSS Signature Grand" folder to your sample directory. Make sure you keep the folder structure as it is, so that the Kontakt instrument can find its samples. Within Kontakt, under the "Files" tab, navigate to the "SSS Signature Grand" folder and open the "Signature Grand.nki" instrument patch found within the "Instruments" folder. This patch contains both CLOSE and ROOM microphone perspectives.

It is highly recommended that you use a solid state drive to host this library. The library has been designed to work best at a buffer size of 256 or higher. The latency of most soundcards will most closely match the real-world mechanical latency of a grand piano at a buffer size of 256. If you experience pops or clicks, you most likely need to raise your buffer, use a faster hard drive, or raise the voice count in Kontakt.

Main Performance View

Upon loading, you will see "Signature Grand" in its main performance view, including volume controls for both "Close" and "Room" Mic perspectives. Additionally, there are basic controls for the overall playing response of the instrument, which we will discuss later.

The Close and Room Microphones are designed to be "phase aligned," just as they were coherently recorded in the space. The "direct" control represents all of the "direct," immediate sound as recorded by the microphones and the "releases" control represents various releases including damper releases, mechanical releases, and the beautiful "early reflections" of the hall. These releases are at the heart of what makes our instrument sound so natural, "alive," and three-dimensional. By default, the "LINK" button is enabled, which allows the direct and release volume to be adjusted simultaneously. By disabling the "LINK" button, you can independently adjust the "releases" to create a dryer or more reverberant space.

The best sonic results are always achieved with some degree of mix between the close and room microphone perspectives. It is not recommended to rely solely on only one of the perspectives.

The "Response" section features controls to adjust the overall velocity response and release speed of the instrument.

The remaing parameters of the instrument can be accessed by clicking on the "Settings" button in the upper-right corner.

Main Settings View

Upon clicking on the "Settings" button, you will find access to various parameters controlling mechanical noises, resonances, and performance parameters. Note that the volumes of all of these parameters are routed through the main "Close Mics" and "Room Mics" bus volume controls.

Velocity Curve

Allows the user to create a custom velocity curve to fit their performance style or controller. Alternatively, the user can also "draw" a custom velocity curve directly onto the velocity graph. Coupled with "Velocity Offset," these are the most important controls in achieving a natural playing response.

Velocity Offset

Allows the overall velocity input of the controller to be raised or lowered.

Key Noise

Encompasses the entire release mechanism noise (damper return) of the key.

Player Noise

Adds various "player" performance noises including breathing and subtle movement. "Regularity" adjusts how often such noises occur.

Room Tone

Adjusts the room tone/microphone noise of the recording space. This feature is not triggered by any "note on" or "note off" activities; it is continuous. This allows the user to automate fade-in or fade-out noise in their DAW, similar to a live recording.

Pedal Noises

Adjusts the volume of all mechanical pedal noises.

Repedal

Play a loud staccato note. After you strike and release the key, very quickly engage the sustain pedal. Although you are not sustaining the "actual" note, a small amount of resonance is still captured by the sustain pedal because the damper has not fully silenced the string from resonating.

Half-pedal

When enabled, half-pedaling allows the user to modify the sustained sound by partially releasing the sustain pedal. Note that half-pedaling requires a continuous sustain pedal.

Resonance

With the sustain pedal released, silently press and hold a single key on the piano. While you are holding the key, strike a loud staccato note one octave below the held note. Because the held note is an overtone of the struck note, it will resonate and "ring" because the key's damper is not engaged. Similar in function to "dry sympathetic resonance," this control also affects the amount of sympathetic resonance heard when the pedal is depressed. Naturally sampled sympathetic resonance (overtones of other strings resonating) combine to create a richer, more complex sound.

Perspective

Controls the microphone "recording perspective" of the sound field. Note that most classical and film recordings are recorded from "audience" perspective, while many jazz and pop setups favor "player" perspective.
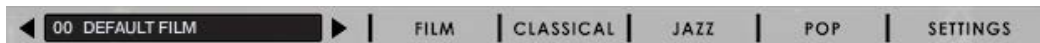
Stereo Width

Adjusts the overall "stereo width" of the sound field, ranging from mono (left) to natural (middle) to wide (right).

Glenn Mode

In the spirit of certain legendary pianists, adds an imperfect vocal "double" to melodic material above middle C.

Presets

◀ | 00 DEFAULT FILM | ▶ | FILM | CLASSICAL | JAZZ | POP | SETTINGS

In collaboration with Emmy Award-winning composer, Garth Neustadter, we have created over 60 presets that are inspired by many of the most iconic recording spaces and pianos, both modern and classic. In addition to the controls the user is able to access, many other parameters have been adjusted to model the sonic characteristics of both the pianos and spaces that these presets have been modeled after.

Noise

Finally, a word concerning noise. One of the greatest challenges inherent in sampling is noise management. Specifically in creating a piano, one must consider that every note struck multiplies the noise-floor, so it is easy for noise to build up quickly. In designing this library, we utilized state-of-the-art noise reduction, but were careful to preserve as much high-frequency detail as possible. Under normal playing circumstances, noise build-up should not be a problem, and should be similar to commercial recordings recorded in a large hall or recording stage. Certain circumstances will certainly amplify the noise more, such as using a compressor on the signal, or playing long sustained passages with many notes at low velocity, without clearing the pedal.

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