

SESSION KEYS *ELECTRIC* **W**



Be inspired. Make music.

 **e** instruments

User Manual

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Welcome to Session Keys Electric W

Thank you for choosing Session Keys Electric W.

Session Keys is a series of highly expressive and versatile acoustic grand pianos and famous electric pianos that let you quickly achieve great results.

Session Keys Electric W provides much more than just the sound of a legendary electric piano. Captured from a carefully restored vintage Wurlitzer Piano, Electric W offers the direct unaltered line out signal, the distinctive amplified vintage piano sound as well as fascinating acoustic noises and resonances recorded via a unique microphone setup.

With it's unmatched flexibility, creative sound design possibilities and inventive musical tools, Session Keys Electric W has something special for everyone - resulting in a truly inspiring instrument.

We hope you enjoy using Session Keys Electric W and we would be delighted to hear your feedback and ideas!

Session Keys Electric W — Key Features

Session Keys Electric W provides you with many sound options.

- **Two different sample sets : Studio and Live**

Studio offers the original unaltered direct sound recorded from the line output through high-end pre-amps and converters.

Live gives you the distinctive sound of a Wurlitzer piano played via the internal speakers, captured with microphones.

- **The unique Pentamorph controller allows for morphing the piano's sound image from the standard characteristic sound into atmospheres that go far beyond the obvious and make it easy to create motions and soundscapes on the fly with just one knob.**
- **The Session Keys Animator turns notes or chords into authentic piano phrases while maintaining real-time controllability. You can use the Animator as an intuitive and inspiring tool to jam with piano performances covering a wide range of musical genres and styles. The flexible piano phrases always follow the harmonies you play.**
- **Session Keys Smart Chord mode provides a completely new and inventive way to play the piano and add a new depth of musical expression. Full chords or Animator songs can be played either via pad controller or one or two keys on your keyboard.**
- **The Piano section contains a 2-band Equalizer, the Pentamorph controller, Dynamic Response and Crunch controls.**
- **A Tonality section provides detailed control of all piano sound aspects including resonance, Reeds volume, envelope, mechanical noise, such as pedal, key and release noise, and reverse sample volume.**
- **The Effects section features six effects; Tremolo, Chorus, Phaser, Compressor, Delay and Reverb plus an amplifier with Gain, Bass, Mid, Treble and Master controls.**

About Kontakt / Kontakt Player

Session Keys Electric W is an Instrument powered by KONTAKT; you will, therefore, need to have KONTAKT or the free KONTAKT PLAYER installed on your computer in order to use Session Keys. Refer to the KONTAKT / KONTAKT PLAYER documentation to learn how to load and configure KONTAKT Instruments.

Installation

This guide shows you how to download and install your new music creation tool.

The Native Access Application

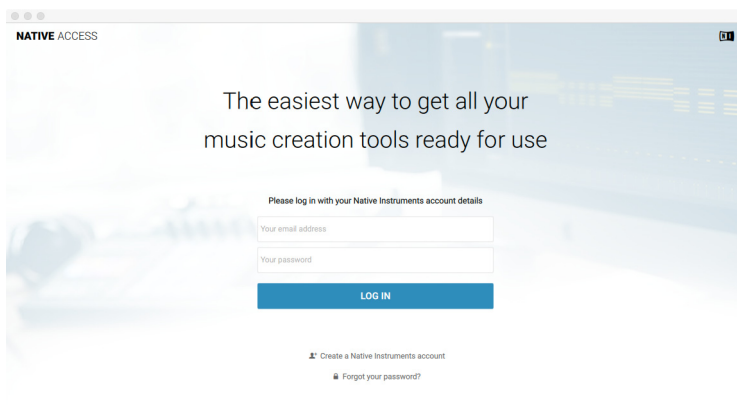
Downloading and installation as well as activation and updating are all conveniently managed using the Native Access application.

If Native Access is not already installed on your computer, please download its Installer from

<https://www.native-instruments.com/en/specials/native-access/>

The Installer comes as a compressed zip file.

- When download is complete, double-click the zip file to decompress its content. Then double-click the installer to install Native Access on your computer.
- When Native Access has been installed, open it and log into your Native Instruments account or create one by clicking “Create a Native Instruments account” at the bottom of the window.



When you have logged into your Native Instruments account, the Native Access main window appears.

- Click “Add a serial” at the top left, enter your Serial Number, and then click ADD SERIAL to complete the Registration. You will find the serial number of your purchased product in your order confirmation email.

NATIVE ACCESS

⊕ Add a serial **1**

Software

Not installed 48

Available updates 3

Installed products

ADD A SERIAL **2**

If your purchase came with a serial number, enter it here to receive the associated products and product updates.

00000 - 00000 - 00000 - 00000 - 00000

[Where can I find my serial number?](#)

By registering new products, you agree with the [EULA](#).

Cancel **⊕ ADD SERIAL** **3**

- Once the Registration process is complete, you will see a Thank You message and your product(s) will appear in the “Not Installed” window.

NATIVE ACCESS

⊕ Add a serial

Software

Not installed 48

Available updates 3

Installed products

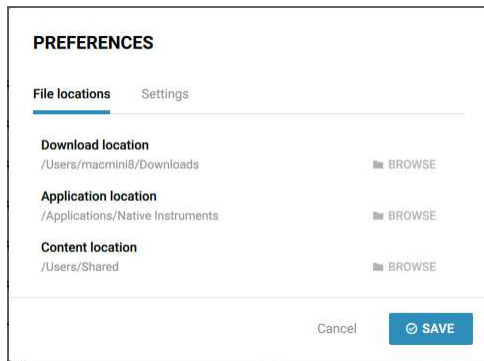
Software > Not Installed

NOT INSTALLED

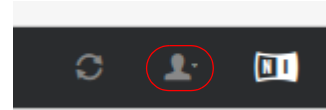
INSTALL ALL

Product	Version	Size	Status
Abbey Road 50s Drummer	1.2.0	7.85 GB	INSTALLING
Downloading 21 minutes remaining - 120 MB of 7.85 GB			
Abbey Road 60s Drummer	1.3.0	6.31 GB	INSTALL
Abbey Road 70s Drummer	1.3.0	6.53 GB	INSTALL
Abbey Road 80s Drummer	1.3.0	7.91 GB	INSTALL
Abbey Road Modern Drummer	1.3.0	7.30 GB	INSTALL
Abbey Road Vintage Drummer	1.3.0	7.10 GB	INSTALL
Absynth 5	5.3.1	2.28 GB	INSTALL
Action Strikes	1.2.0	3.10 GB	INSTALL
Balinese Gamelan	1.2.0	2.02 GB	INSTALL
Battery 4	4.1.6	432 MB	INSTALL

Installing the purchased Product(s)



The first time you click “Install” to the right of a product listed in the “Not Installed” window, or click “Install All”, a dialog appears where you can select your Installation Preferences. You can also access this dialog by selecting it in the user settings menu, located at the top right hand corner of the window.



Download location	This is where the application installer(s) and content will be stored before they are installed by Native Access.
Application location	This is where Native Access will install your e-instruments (and Native Instruments) application(s). This will usually be the Program Files folder on your Windows PC or the Applications folder on your Mac.
Content location	This is where Native Access will install the samples that your applications will use.

Native Access will now begin downloading your product(s). A blue bar below the product(s) displays the progress of the download. Once downloaded, Native Access will automatically begin to install your product(s).

Session Keys Controls

This chapter introduces you to Session Keys' specific controls, which are part of the Instrument within your Kontakt / Kontakt Player software.



The Kontakt Instrument Header

To learn how to operate the Instrument Header's controls, please refer to the documentation of your Kontakt or Kontakt Player software.

Basic Control Types

Session Keys includes six basic types of controls:

Buttons

These can have different shapes (e.g. "LED", rectangular, text or other) and are all toggles — click once to turn on, again to turn off. When actuated, buttons, button frames or text change color which reflects the new state.

Selector Switches

Selector switches also come in different shapes and forms and are used to select one or several options. Click the desired option to select it.

Some program sections contain special selector switch types:

- **The Phrase selector in the Animator (looks like an octave of piano keys)** — click any of the "white" keys to select one of the available piano phrases.
- **The Tempo selector in the Animator** lets you select one of three available playback speeds (standard, half time, double time).
- **The pentagon-shaped Pentamorph in the Piano section** lets you select one of its five options by clicking on the corresponding name. You can also seamlessly morph between options by dragging the white button up or down like a vertically aligned fader.
- **When Smart Chord is On and you are assigning smart chords to keys or pads on your keyboard in the Smart Chord section dialog**, you can make multiple selections; i.e. choose to select a bass note, one of two inversions and a modifier.

Knobs

- To "turn" a knob, click on it and drag up to move the knob setting clockwise, or down to move it counter-clockwise.

Knobs can be fine-tuned by holding down your computer keyboard's [Shift] key as you turn the knob.
[Ctrl] + Click (Mac: [Cmd] + Click) resets a knob to its default value

Faders

Session Keys has two faders:

- **A horizontal fader, located under the heading Dynamic in the Animator**, used to determine the effect of key velocity versus pitch bend control in order to control the dynamics of the Animator phrases.
- Click between the two arrow head tips and drag horizontally.
- **The Pentamorph in the Piano section.**
- Click on the center of the pentagon shape and drag vertically to change its current setting. Alternatively, drag the white fader handle up or down.

Drop-Down Menus

These menus can usually be recognized by a small downward pointing arrow.

- **To access a drop-down menu's entries, click on the menu. A list holding several entries drops down. To select one of the entries, move the mouse to the corresponding entry so that it gets highlighted, then release the mouse button.**

The Instrument takes whatever action you have requested, then closes the menu.

Session Keys Electric W — Quick Overview

Session Keys Electric W can be used for real time performance as well as for production and sequencing work. It offers two differently recorded sample sets – Live and Studio – and all additional controls for shaping the instrument sound. When you change to the other sample set, the background view will change but controls remain identical for both sample sets. These are described in detail on the following pages.

Session Keys Electric W with Live samples selected

Sound section. This is where you create, name and load your own Sound presets

Tonality & Effects buttons. Clicking one of these opens its dedicated pop-up dialog where you can edit the respective parameters. The combined Tonality & Effects settings can be named, saved and opened as Sound presets

To select one of the two sample sets available, click on one of these two **Sample Set buttons**.

Animator & Piano tabs (Piano tab view visible). Click a tab to open the respective section for direct use or editing.

Smart Chord section. Here you can activate, set up and use the Smart Chord function.

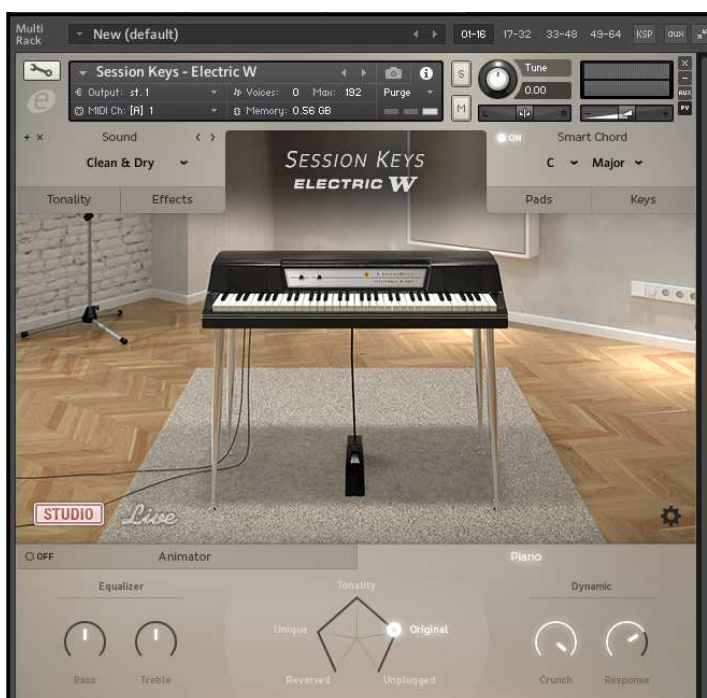
Pads & Keys buttons. With Smart Chord active, each of these buttons opens a dialog where you can set up and assign it to Pads and Keys on your hardware controller.

Settings button. Click to open the Settings pop-up, where you can set up basic functions such as tuning and velocity curve as well as activate the silent key function.



Pentamorph fader and buttons (in Piano section)

Click one of the five names to switch to the respective sounds or click in the pentagon shape and drag up-/downwards to morph between the sounds.



Session Keys Electric W with studio samples selected



Using the functions in the Session Keys Electric W window you can:

- Select the desired sample set – Studio or Live – by clicking on one of the two corresponding icons in the lower left corner of the piano picture, see [page 10](#).
- Determine the tuning type and pitch as well as the desired velocity curve and other functions in the Settings dialog that appears when you click the cogwheel icon in the lower right corner of the piano picture, see [page 11](#).
- Control all tonality aspects that you can set up in the Tonality pop-up which appears when you click the Tonality button in the Sound section, located in the upper left of the window, see [page 13](#). Tonality parameters include resonance volume, reeds volume, envelope attack and decay, pedal, key and release noise and the volume of reverse samples.
- Control all effect and amp settings in the Effects pop-up which appears when you click the Effects button in the Sound section, located in the upper left of the window, see [page 16](#). Here you can activate/deactivate and set up the parameters of the following included effect units: tremolo, chorus, phaser, amp, compressor, delay and convolution reverb.
- Set up the overall dynamic response in the Piano tab section that appears when you click the Piano tab in the lower right part of the window, see [page 9](#). Here you can also use the Pentamorph fader and buttons (see [page 9](#)) to select or set up a blend of sound types and use the equalizer for filtering.
- Save (and later load) all Tonality and Effects, Equalizer, Pentamorph and Dynamic settings as a Sound preset using the controls in the Sound section, located in the top left corner of the window, see [page 13](#).
- Assign a root note and a chord map (gender or mode) to a key or pad on your controller keyboard and use the Smart Chord function to play harmonically correct chords by pressing a key or pad, see [page 24](#). You can also play different chord inversions as well as certain interval notes by pressing additional keys or pads.
- Use the unique Animator that contains pre-programmed yet very flexible and usable electric piano phrases in various styles. These phrases are grouped as songs that contain different phrases for intro, verse, choruses, bridge and ending, which you can apply using your own chords. All Animator setup parameters become available when you click on the Animator tab in the lower left part of the window. As with all other parameters in this list, these are described in detail in their own manual section, see [page 29](#).

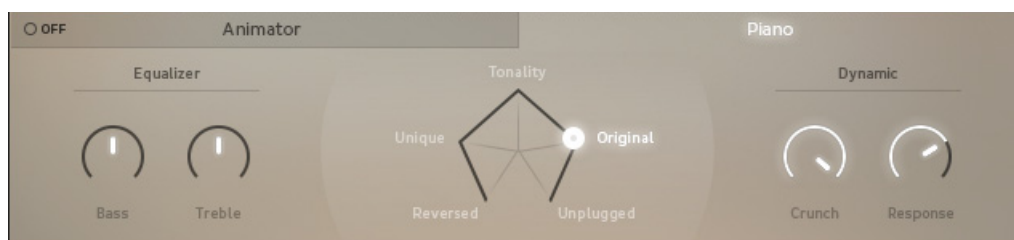
Piano Section

The Piano section is located at the bottom of the window.

→ To open it, click the **Piano tab** located at the lower right of the window.

From left to right, the Piano section hosts three functions that can greatly impact your sound:

- **The Bass and Treble knobs of the equalizer**
- **The Pentamorph fader and buttons**
- **A Crunch and a Dynamic Response knob**



Piano section

Equalizer

This lets you decrease or increase the levels of low and high frequencies in the piano sound to your liking.

Bass and Treble Knobs

- Turn the **Bass** and/or **Treble** knob to the left to decrease the corresponding frequency range.
- Turn the **Bass** and/or **Treble** knob to the right to increase the corresponding frequency range.

Pentamorph Fader & Buttons

The Pentamorph is a powerful tool in pentagon-shape that lets you very quickly and radically change your sound. It consists of five switches and a fader. The fader can be used to morph between the available sounds and Tonality settings.



Pentamorph fader & buttons

Each corner of the pentagon shape is named. These names are switches.

- If you click on one of the names, the white round fader handle will directly jump to the respective corner of the pentagon shape and the corresponding setting will be used:

Reversed	Only the reverse samples are used.
Unique	Reverse and mechanics samples (pedal, key and release noise) are used.
Tonicity	The original samples and all settings in the Tonality dialog (including reverse samples) are used
Original	The original samples and all settings in the Tonality dialog (without reverse samples) are used
Unplugged	Only samples of the sounds that the reeds create when you play without amplification as well as the mechanics samples (pedal, key and release noise) are used.

! Note: The audio volume of reverse, noise and reed samples can be controlled in the Tonality dialog!

Using the Pentamorph Fader

- If you click somewhere within the pentagon shape or on the fader handle and drag up- or downwards, the fader handle will move along the pentagon sides and the sound will morph accordingly.

Dynamic

The two controls in this section help you control dynamics.

Crunch Knob

As the name implies, turning up the Crunch knob lets you add the famous Wurlitzer crunch to the piano sound. Crunch sound occurred in the original Wurlitzer when the player hit the keys with more force.

Response Knob

The Dynamic Response knob is used to control the overall dynamic volume response of the piano. Usually, a musician will want to use the full dynamic range of the instrument. But in certain situations limiting it may be useful. For example, if you want to prevent a signal surpassing a certain maximum output level during recording, limiting the dynamic response may be a solution.

- **The more you turn up the Dynamic Response knob, the larger the available dynamic range.**
 - **The more you turn down the knob, the smaller the available dynamic range**
- To set dynamic range, click the Dynamic Response knob and drag up- or downwards.

Selecting a Sample Set

In the lower left corner of the piano picture, you can switch between the two available sample sets Studio and Live. These were created with different instrument and microphone setups; utilizing the sound output from the respective output options and several other places in the piano for complete capture of reeds, instrument body, key, damper and pedal noise.

- **The combined recorded Studio samples give you the complete sound of an otherwise unprocessed Wurlitzer piano. The unaltered sound was recorded directly from the piano's line output through high-end pre-amps and converters. Session Keys lets you easily tweak the individual sound components so that they match your personal sound preferences, see [page 14](#) and [page 16](#).**
- To switch to the Studio sample set, click the Studio button.



The Studio button (on the left) has been activated.

- **The Live samples were recorded via microphones and provide the unmistakable warm vintage character produced by the Wurlitzer's internal speakers. The resulting sample set gives you the distinctive character of this instrument.**
- To switch to the Livesample set, click the Live button.



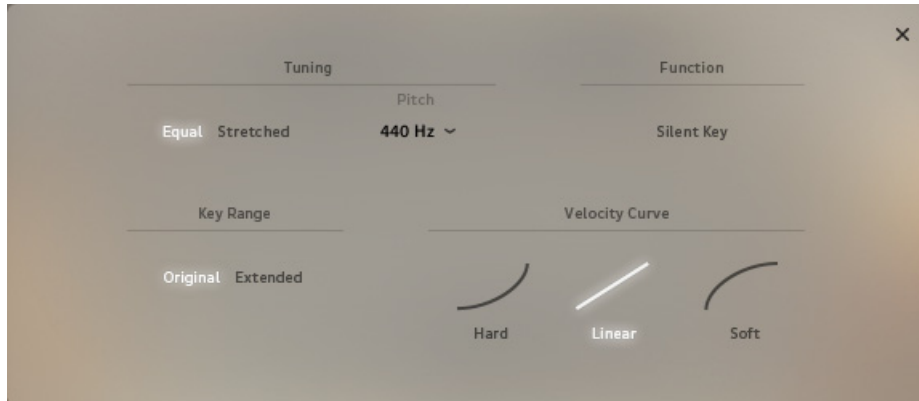
The Live button (on the right) has been activated.

Settings Pop-Up Dialog

This dialog is used for a number of basic settings. It will appear when you click the Settings button (the small cogwheel icon) in the lower right corner of the piano picture:



Clicking the Settings button...



...opens the Settings pop-up dialog.

Tuning

In this section, you can switch tuning between Equal and Stretched.

- **“Equal” stands for equal temperament tuning, where each pair of adjacent notes has an identical frequency ratio. In many cases, this will be the tuning of choice when you simultaneously use a synthesizer.**
- **“Stretched” stands for a tuning method for stringed musical instruments that attempts to accommodate the natural inharmonicity of their vibrating elements.**

→ **Click Equal or Stretched to select the desired tuning.**

The currently selected option is shown in white.

Pitch Pop-up Menu



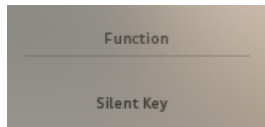
Pitch pop-up menu

The Tuning section is also where you can change the standard concert pitch (A = 440 Hz), if necessary/desired.

→ **Click the downward pointing arrow head next to the currently set pitch to open a drop-down menu where you can select one of the available options.**

Silent Key Function

The Silent Key section is located in the Function part of the Settings pop-up dialog.

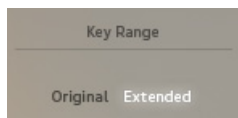


- When you activate Silent Key, you can softly press and hold down one or several keys and prevent the (virtual) hammers touching the (virtual) reeds.
- To activate the function, click its name so that it lights up.

Key Range

Most original Wurlitzer pianos have a keyboard range of 64 notes or 5¼ octaves. The range starts from A one octave above the lowest note of a standard 88-note piano and ends with the C one octave below its highest note.

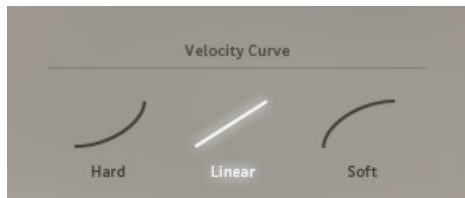
Session Keys Electric W offers both a 64 note key range and an 88-note key range:



- Click Original to use the original 64-note key range.
- Click Extended to get a standard 88-note key range.

Velocity Curve

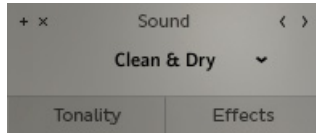
If your controller keyboard supports velocity, you can use these three switches to determine how Session Keys reacts to the velocity that you apply when pressing the keys on your keyboard. Three options – Hard, Linear and Soft – are available and should be self-explanatory.



- To activate the desired velocity curve, click it so that it lights up.

Sound Section

This section, located top left in the Session Keys window, lets you set up tonality and effects and name, save or load these settings as a “Sound”. The two buttons at the bottom let you open the Tonality and Effects pop-up dialogs, where you can control all tonality aspects and effect settings.



The Sound section

All functions available in the Sound section are described in the following paragraphs.

Sound Preset Handling

All the settings that you make in the Tonality and Effects pop-up dialogs can be saved as a Sound preset.

Creating a Sound Preset

1. **Open the Tonality pop-up dialog by clicking its button and set up its parameters as you like.**
2. **Open the Effects pop-up dialog by clicking its button and set up its parameters.**
3. **Click the small “+” switch in the upper left corner of the Sound section.**

The Sound preset name line will show “Enter Name” followed by two buttons.

4. **Select “Enter Name”, type in a new name and click the small “OK” button.**

If you have changed your mind and want to start from scratch, use the “X” button to the left of the “OK” button to delete the preset.

Loading a Sound Preset

Two methods are available to load a Sound preset. You can either:

1. **Open the Preset drop-down menu by clicking the downward pointing arrow head.**
2. **Select a preset in the drop-down menu by clicking on its name.**

or:

- **Use the two horizontal arrow heads in the upper right corner of the Sound section to directly select the previous or next setup preset.**

By clicking several times you can sequentially step through the preset list as it is shown in the drop-down menu.

Deleting a Sound Preset

Factory presets can not be deleted. For all other presets, two methods are available to delete a Sound preset.

- **To delete the currently selected preset, click the small “X” button in the top left corner of the Sound section.**
- **To discard a Sound preset that you have just created but not yet saved, click the “X” button to the left of the “OK” button.**

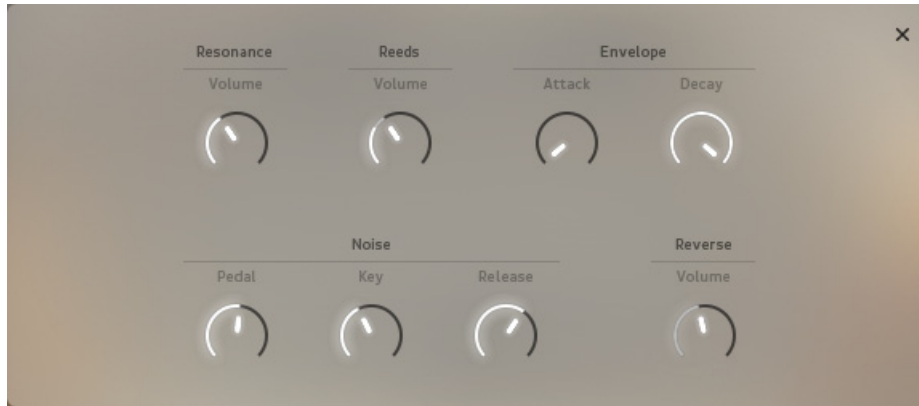
! Please note that you can not undo deleting a Sound preset!

Tonality Pop-up Dialog

→ Click the **Tonality** button in the **Sound** section to open the **Tonality pop-up dialog**.

The Tonality pop-up dialog is a powerful tool to set up parameters that greatly influence the Session Keys sound. In conjunction with the devices available in the Effects pop-up dialog and the Pentamorph in the Piano section, you can create and quickly access everything from a naturally sounding Wurlitzer piano to weird other-worldly sounds of strange beauty.

→ To turn a knob, click and drag up- or downwards, as usual.



Tonality pop-up dialog

Resonance Volume

You can use the Resonance knob to define the level of harmonic resonance that occurs when you play with pedal down. Use your ears and hear what happens when you apply the Pentamorph Fader in the Piano section, see [page 9](#).

Reeds Volume

The sound of the original Wurlitzer piano is produced as follows:

- When the player plays a key on the keyboard, a felt hammer strikes a metal reed.
- An electrostatic pickup picks up the vibration and induces an electric current in much the same way as a guitar pickup.

The Reeds Volume knob lets you set up the volume of the acoustic (unamplified) sound of the hammer hitting the reed. This does e.g. have an effect on what's audible, when you set the Pentamorph to "Unplugged".

→ To set up reed volume, click the **Volume** knob and drag up- or downwards.

Envelope

These two knobs can be used to set up the shape of the sample envelope curve.

Attack Knob

- Turning up the **Attack** knob will gradually remove the attack phase and "fade in" the sound of the keys you play.

Decay Knob

- Fully turning up the **Decay** knob will let the samples sound out with their normal decay (providing you press the key for as long as necessary or use the sustain pedal). Gradually turning this knob downwards will shorten the decay phase.

Noise

This section holds three knobs that you can use to individually control the level of noise created by using the pedal or pressing and releasing the keys. These real-world sounds are an integral part of the complete Wurlitzer piano sound. They have also been sampled separately and you can apply them as desired.

Pedal, Key and Release Knobs

→ To set up the level of the respective noise type, click its knob and drag up or downwards.

Finding the “normal” level for these sounds is easy. But you can also try out setting noise parameters to fairly extreme values and maybe use the Cathedral reverb in the Effects section, see [page 23](#). Then activate the sustain pedal in the Piano section or – if you happen to have one – use your hardware sustain pedal and hear what happens.

Reverse Volume Knob

Many Session Keys samples have also been included as reverse samples. These can be applied or removed in the most simple manner; by turning the Reverse volume knob up or down. We recommend that you experiment with this knob (in conjunction with the other Tonality knobs) to find the desired sound for the project at hand.

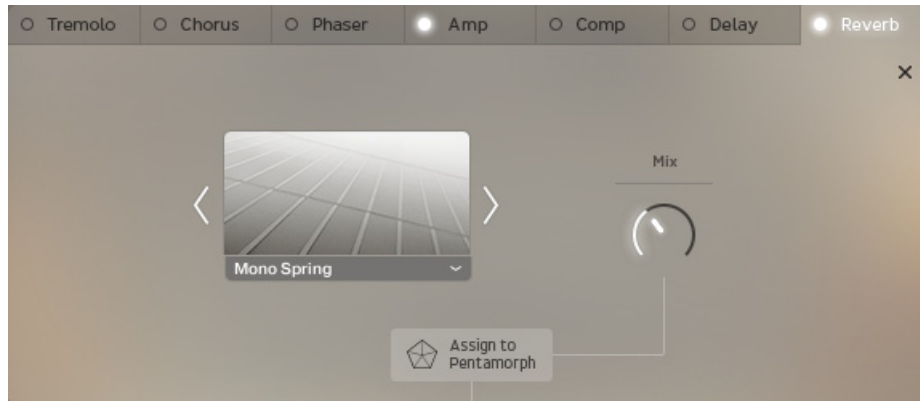
Effects Pop-Up Dialog

→ Click the **Effects** button in the **Sound** section to open the **Effects pop-up dialog**.

If you had the Tonality pop-up open before, you do not need to close it; simply clicking on Effects will do.

The Effects pop-up dialog contains a number of sound processing and effect tools to shape your Session Keys sound. All effects are daisy-chained from left to right. Inactive effects are bypassed. Where applicable, effects provide a Mix button. This lets you mix the signal arriving at the effect's input with the signal processed by the effect. This mix is then passed to the next effect in the chain or to Session Keys' main outputs.

→ To display an effect, click its tab. To activate or deactivate it, click the respective **On/Off** button.



Effects pop-up dialog with Reverb as well as Amp active and the Reverb user interface visible.

Assign to Pentamorph

Five of the seven available effects can individually be assigned to the Pentamorph. If you do this, certain parameters of the respective effect(s) will automatically change when you use the Pentamorph fader or buttons. The Pentamorph is described on [page 9](#).

→ Click the respective **Assign to Pentamorph** button to activate this function for an effect.

Tremolo

This effect generates variations in amplitude (level) and stereo panorama position of the sound. Tremolo and auto-panning can either run in sync or with a definable offset.



Speed Section

The controls in this section of the Tremolo user interface are used to set up tremolo speed, stereo panorama position change speed as well as the audible mix of both.

Tremolo Knob

The Tremolo knob is used to control tremolo speed. The more you turn it up, the faster the resulting tremolo.

- **To set up tremolo speed, click the Tremolo knob and drag up or downwards.**

The currently set value will be displayed under the knob when you use it.

Mix Fader

The bipolar Mix fader (looks like two horizontally arranged triangles) lets you set up a level ratio between the tremolo and auto-panning signals.

- **By clicking and dragging horizontally inside this fader you can determine the degree to which tremolo and/or auto-panning are audible in the output signal.**

In the default center position (triangles are empty), tremolo and auto-panning contribute evenly to the output signal.
If you drag the fader fully to the left (left triangle filled white), only tremolo will be audible.
If you drag the fader fully to the right (right triangle filled white), only auto-panning will be audible.

Pan Offset Knob

The bipolar Pan Offset button lets you set up a speed offset between tremolo and auto-panning speeds.

- **When you set Pan Offset to its 12 o'clock position (default), tremolo and auto-panning run with the same speed.**
The currently set value ratio will be displayed under the knob when you use it.
- Quick reminder: [Ctrl] + Click (Mac: [Cmd] + Click) resets a knob or fader to its default value
- **Turn the knob to the left to gradually slow down auto-panning speed.**
- **Turn the knob to the right to gradually increase auto-panning speed.**
The currently set value will be displayed under the knob when you use it.

Retrigger Button

- **If you activate this function by clicking on it so that it lights up, tremolo and pan offset will be started anew each time you play a new note or chord.**
Tremolo will now start with its attack phase and pan offset will always start at the same side of the stereo panorama. This prevents tremolo starts at an amplitude low position, which would sound like a fade-in and panorama position jumps.
- **If you deactivate this function, tremolo may start at a low amplitude position which - depending on the set Depth value - may produce a more or less strong fade-in effect.**
This is how an analog electric piano tremolo would work.
- To get a fully controllable chord/note fade-in, try using the Attack parameter in the Tonality pop-up dialog instead.

Tempo Sync Button

- **Click on Tempo Sync - which lights up when active - to synchronize tremolo and auto-panning to the tempo set in Kontakt's Master Editor. Clicking again will deactivate this function.**

Depth Knob

Depth controls both the amplitudes of tremolo and auto-panning. Using this knob will therefore have a simultaneous effect on both.

- **Turn the knob up to increase amplitude steepness or turn it down to decrease it.**
The currently set percentage value will be displayed under the knob when you use it.

Shape Knob

The Shape knob and its waveform buttons are used to select any of three available amplitude waveforms. Using the buttons you can directly select any of the available waveforms. Using the knob you can also seamlessly select any in-between position and thus fine-tune the effect according to your requirements.

- **Click on the desired waveform to select it or turn up the buttons for in-between positions, where parts of two waveforms are used.**

Chorus

A chorus creates phase- and time-modulated copies of the original input signal, which results in a very rich sound. Session Keys Electric W' chorus has the following controls:



Depth Knob

This knob is used to control the depth of the modulation curve.

- Turn this knob up fully for full modulation.
- Turn it completely down for no modulation.

! Attention: If Depth is turned down completely, the other knobs in Chorus will have no effect.

Speed Knob

You can use this knob to control the modulation speed of the chorus effect.

- The further you turn up the knob, the quicker the modulation speed.

Phase Knob

Phase is used to increasingly shift the phase of the copied signals and thereby create an even richer sounding result.

- The further you turn up this knob, the stronger the effect.

Mix Knob

Using the Mix knob, you can define the proportion to which the input signal arriving at the Chorus input and the processed Chorus signal contribute to the Chorus output signal. In other words:

- If you turn Mix down fully, the signal that arrived at the Chorus input will be passed through unprocessed.
- If you turn Mix up fully, only the processed signal will be passed to the effect's output.
- Turn the Mix knob up to create a mix of processed and unprocessed signals.

Phaser

A phaser is a phase modulating filter effect. It splits the original input signal into two different signal paths. The signal on one of these remains unchanged, the other signal is processed by a number of all-pass filter stages. This filter type does preserve the signal's amplitude but alters its phase. When the filtered and unfiltered signals from both paths are mixed again internally, their peaks and troughs arrive at a different time, which causes different degrees of signal addition or cancellation.



Depth Knob

This knob is used to control the depth of the modulation curve.

- Turn this knob up fully for full modulation.
- Turn it completely down for no modulation.

! Attention: If Depth is turned down completely, the other knobs in Phaser will have no effect.

Speed Knob

You can use this knob to control the modulation speed of the phaser effect.

- The further you turn up the knob, the quicker the modulation speed.

Phase Knob

Phase is used to increasingly shift the phase of the signal.

- The further you turn up this knob, the stronger the effect. Depth and Speed settings also impact effect strength.

Feedback Knob

Turning up this knob will feed the filtered signal back to the all-pass filter stages which creates additional modulation.

- The further you turn up the knob, the stronger the effect.

Mix Knob

Using the Mix knob, you can define the proportion to which the input signal arriving at the Phaser input and the processed Phaser signal contribute to the Phaser output signal. In other words:

- If you turn Mix down fully, the signal that arrived at the Phaser input will be passed through unprocessed.
- If you turn Mix up fully, only the processed signal will be passed to the effect's output.
- Turn the Mix knob up to create a mix of processed and unprocessed signals.

Amp



This amplifier emulation lets you adjust the following parameters:

Gain Knob

You can use this knob to adjust the input gain and thereby create or prevent distortion.

→ **The further you turn up this knob, the higher the input gain level.**

Bass, Mid and Treble Knobs

Use these knobs to control the level of the respective frequency bands.

→ **The further you turn up one of these knobs, the higher the level of the respective frequency band.**

Master Knob

Use this knob to control the signal level output at the Amp's output stage.

! Use with care, especially when you have cranked up the input gain!

→ **The further you turn up this knob, the higher the output level.**

Compressor

Session Keys also features a compressor unit that you can use to control the dynamics of the resulting sound. A compressor narrows the dynamic range of an audio signal. It does this by reducing the level of loud signal peaks. As a result (and when you make up for the loss in output level by increasing output volume using the MakeUp knob) the level of quieter signal parts will be increased compared to the louder peaks.



The Session Keys compressor has six knobs.

→ **Click the respective knob and drag up- or downwards to set the desired values.**

Current values will be displayed below the knob as soon as you click or change its value.

Threshold Knob

This is used to set the level in dB above which compression sets in. All level peaks below the set threshold level pass unaffected.

Ratio Knob

This determines the amount of gain reduction. It is set as a ratio value, hence the name. For example, if a signal peak exceeds the set Threshold level by 4dB and ratio is set to 4:1, the compressor output signal will only exceed the threshold level by 1dB and the gain level will be reduced by 3dB.

Attack Knob

Use this knob to define the time it takes for the compressor to reach the set ratio value.

Release Knob

Using the Release knob, you can define the time it takes the compressor to increase the level to the set ratio again (alternatively 0dB), after the input signal has fallen under the threshold level.

MakeUp Knob

Applying compression reduces the level of the signal. Use this knob to add gain at this stage.

Mix Knob

Using the Mix knob, you can define the proportion to which the input signal arriving at the Compressor input and the compressed signal contribute to the Compressor output signal. In other words:

- **If you turn Mix down fully, the signal that arrived at the Compressor input will be passed through unprocessed.**
- **If you turn Mix up fully, only the compressed signal will be passed to the effect's output.**

→ **Use the Mix knob to create a mix of processed and unprocessed signals.**

Delay

The Delay unit can be used to add echo to your piano sound. The unit has four knobs.

→ **Click the respective knob and drag up or downwards to set the desired values.**

! Please note: The Delay unit is always synchronized to the tempo set in your host application.



Time Knob

The Time knob is used to set the desired echo repeat time.

Damping Knob

The Damping knob is used to increasingly dampen the treble frequencies in the repeated echoes.

Feedback Knob

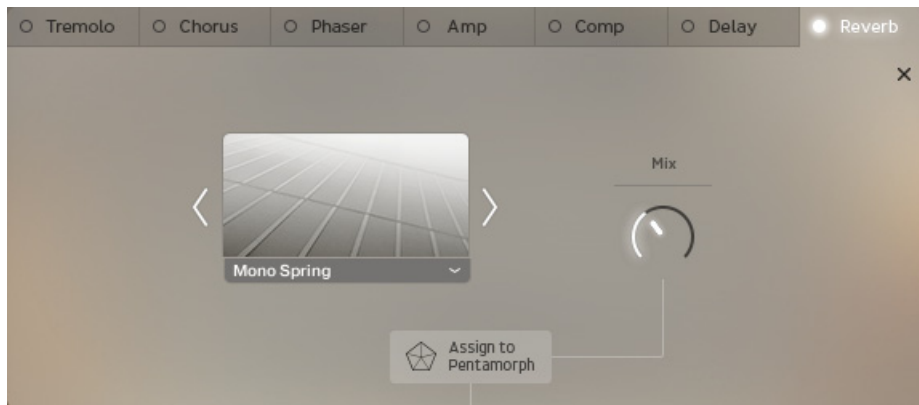
The Feedback knob is used to adjust how long the echoes are repeated.

Mix Knob

→ **Click the Mix knob and drag up- or downwards to set the desired ratio between unprocessed (dry) and processed (wet) signals.**

When the Mix knob is fully turned down, no delay will be audible, when it is fully turned up, the maximum number of delays will be audible.

Reverb



You can add reverb to your piano sound; Session Keys has a built-in high-quality reverberation unit with a great number of reverb presets.

Selecting a preset

- Click the small downward pointing arrow head below the graphics to open a drop-down menu where you can select one of many available Reverb types. As an alternative, you can click the bigger left and right pointing arrow heads to step through the entries in the pop-up menu without having to open it.

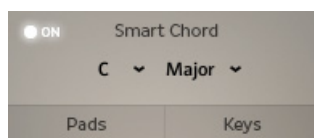
Mix Knob

- Click the Mix knob and drag up- or downwards to set the desired ratio between dry and wet signals.
When the Mix knob is fully turned down, no reverb will be audible, when it is fully turned up, only the reverb (wet) signal is audible.
- Note, that the output level will increase when you apply reverb.

Smart Chord Section

The Smart Chord section is located in the top right corner of the window. Smart Chord lets you play musically correct chords by pressing one or more keys or pads on your external MIDI controller keyboard or Pad controller unit such as Native Instruments' Maschine. Smart Chords can also be used by clicking the keys or pads in the Keys and Pads pop-up dialogs. It works like this:

- **You select a root note and chord map from the two drop-down menus in the Smart Chord section.**
- **The chords defined by root note and chord map will automatically be assigned to the ("white") keys/pads on-screen and on your controller keyboard/pad controller, starting with the C key or the lower left pad.**
If you select "F" as root note and "major" as gender, pressing the C key on your keyboard will create an F major chord.
- **Then you can play the resulting chords by either pressing the respective key or pad on your external key or pad controller or by clicking the respective key or pad in the Keys or Pads pop-up dialogs.**
- **By additionally pressing one or more dedicated modifier key(s) or pad(s), you can add a root or fifth bass note and interval notes or use chord inversions.**
- **MIDI Learn is used to assign the pads on a hardware pad controller to the corresponding Smart Chord pads, see [page 28](#).**



→ **To activate or deactivate the Smart Chord function, click its On/Off button.**

The two buttons at the bottom of the Smart Chord section are used to open the Pads and Keys pop-up dialogs. The options offered by these dialogs are described on [page 27](#) and [page 25](#).

Selecting Root Note and Chord Map

Selecting a root note and a chord map automatically determines the chords that Smart Chord will create. For example, if you select the C scale and one of the available chord maps and then press the keys C, D, E, F, G, A and B (without activating an interval note) Smart Chord will create the following chords:

Keyboard key played	Chord created with key set to C major	Chord created with key set to C minor	Chord created with key set to C dom 7	Chord created with key set to C Dorian
C	C major	C minor	C major	C minor
D	D minor	D minor	D minor	D minor
E	E minor	Eb	E dim	Eb
F	F major	F minor	F major	F major
G	G major	G minor	G minor	G minor
A	A minor	Ab	A minor	A dim
B	B dim	Bb	Bb	A#

→ **To select a root note and a chord map, open the drop-down menus in the Smart Chord section and select the desired menu entries.**

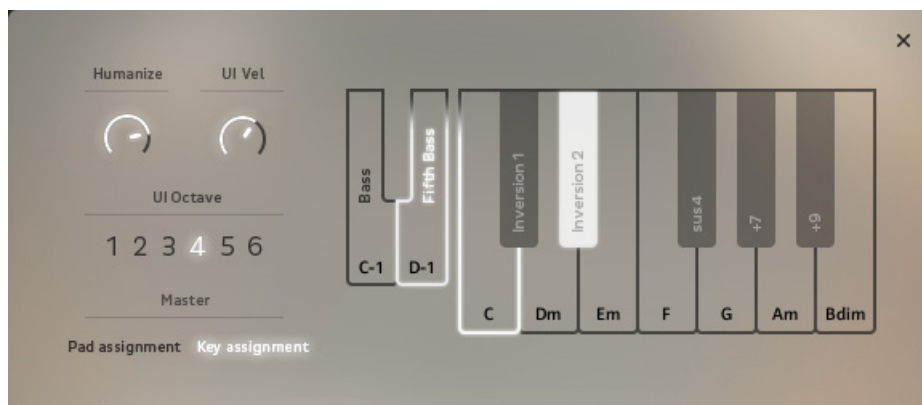
The root note that you select is assigned to the C key on your controller keyboard.

- **By clicking/playing one of the black keys or respective pads on the screen or your keyboard or pad controller, you can play chord inversions and/or add interval notes such as sus2, sus4, +7 and +9 and add a root or fifth bass note.**

! The MIDI Learn function lets you assign Smart Chord pads to your external pad controller hardware. Find more information on [page 28](#).

Keys Pop-Up Dialog

→ Click the Keys button to open the Keys pop-up dialog.



Keys pop-up dialog

Key Octave

The entire right half of this dialog is occupied by an octave of keys. It shows the smart chords that were automatically assigned to the “white” piano keys when you selected the root note and chord map in the Smart Chord section drop-down menus.

- You can now either play these chords by clicking the desired key or pressing the corresponding key/pad on your external controller hardware.
- Additionally selecting one or more “black” modifier keys on-screen or pressing them on your external hardware controller lets you play chord inversions and add interval and bass notes.
Selected (and played) keys/pads get a white frame on-screen.

! You can also use Smart Chords to control the Animator, see [page 32](#)!

Additional Bass Note Keys

You can add bass notes to all smart chords. Two smaller keys named Bass and Fifth Bass are displayed to the left of the key octave in the Key pop-up dialog.

- If you select one of these keys so that its frame gets highlighted, the selected bass note type will be added to all chords that you play using the Smart Chord function.
- Click the desired bass note type to activate or deactivate it.
Activating one of the two options deactivates the other.
- You can also trigger bass notes manually. Bass and fifth bass are assigned to the keys C-1 and D-1 on your external keyboard or to the two right pads in the second pad line on your pad controller.

Humanize & UI Velocity

These two knobs are available both in the Keys and Pads pop-up dialogs.

Humanize Knob

- When the Humanize knob is fully turned down, all notes in a smart chord are triggered simultaneously. Depending on the situation this may or may not be desired as you might perceive it as “machine-like”.
- Turning up the Humanize knob introduces slight random delays between the individual notes within the chord, as would happen when a human player would play it.
- Click and drag the Humanize button up- or downwards to set the desired value.

UI Vel(ocity)Knob

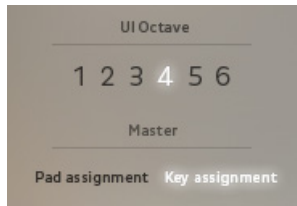
The User Interface knob lets you set the velocity value that is applied, when you play chords by clicking on keys or pads in the Keys and Pads pop-up dialogs.

→ **Click and drag the UI Vel button up- or downwards to set the desired value.**

UI Octave Selector

If you want to play smart chords by clicking on the keys in the Keys pop-up dialog, you can apply the Octave selector to choose the octave Smart Chord should use.

→ **Select one of the available seven octaves by clicking the respective number so that it gets highlighted.**



User interface Octave selector and Master switches

Master Switches

The chords assigned to keys on your keyboard and to pads on your pad controller may be different, depending on what you have set up using the MIDI Learn function, see [page 28](#).

Pad Assignment and Key Assignment Switches

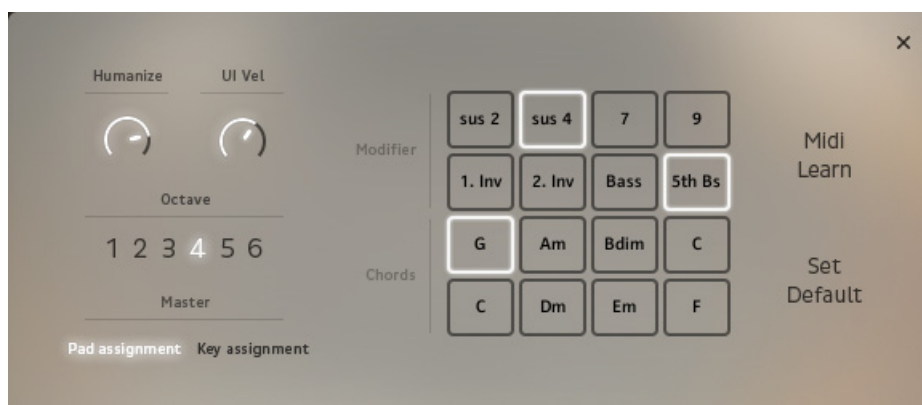
You can use these two Master switches to toggle between the two setups.

→ **Click Pad assignment or Key assignment to switch to the desired setup.**

The currently selected assignment will be highlighted.

Pads Pop-Up Dialog

→ Click the Pads button to open the Pads pop-up dialog.



Pads pop-up dialog

Pad Block

The entire right half of this dialog is occupied by a pad block with 16 pads. The lower eight pads show the smart chords that were automatically assigned to them when you selected the root note and chord map in the Smart Chord section drop-down menus. The upper eight pads are used for chord modifiers (sus2, sus4, 7th, 9th), chord inversions and the selected bass note.

- You can now either play chords by clicking the desired pad or pressing a key/pad on your external controller hardware.
- Additionally selecting one or more modifier pads on-screen or by pressing them on your external hardware controller lets you play chord inversions and/or add interval and bass notes. Selected (and played) keys/pads get a white frame on-screen.

Bass Note Pads

You can add bass notes to all smart chords. Two pads named Bass and 5th Bass are displayed in the pad block.

- If you select one of these pads so that its frame gets highlighted, the selected bass note type will be added to all chords that you play using the Smart Chord function.
- Click the desired bass note type to activate or deactivate it.
Activating one of the two options deactivates the other.
- You can also trigger bass notes manually. By default, bass and fifth bass are assigned to the two right pads in the second pad line on your pad controller. You can change this using the MIDI Learn function, see [page 28](#).

Humanize & UI Velocity

These two knobs are available in the Pads and Keys pop-up dialogs.

Humanize Knob

- When the Humanize knob is fully turned down, all notes in a smart chord are triggered simultaneously. Depending on the situation this may or may not be desired as you might perceive it as “machine-like”.
 - Turning up the Humanize knob introduces slight random delays between the individual notes within the chord, as would happen when a human player would play it.
- Click and drag the Humanize button up- or downwards to set the desired value.

UI Vel(ocity) Knob

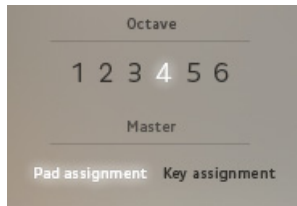
The UI (User Interface) knob lets you set the velocity value that is applied, when you play chords by clicking on keys or pads in the Pads and Keys pop-up dialogs.

- Click and drag the UI Vel button up- or downwards to set the desired value.

Octave Selector

This lets you select an octave for smart chords that you play both by clicking on the pads in the Pads pop-up dialog or by pressing pads on your external hardware.

→ **Select one of the available seven octaves by clicking the respective number so that it gets highlighted.**



User interface Octave selector and Master switches

Master Switches

The chords assigned to pads on your pad controller and to keys on your keyboard may be different, depending on what you have set up using the MIDI Learn function, see below.

Pad Assignment and Key Assignment Switches

You can use these two buttons to toggle between the two setups.

→ **Click Pad assignment or Key assignment to switch to the desired setup.**

The currently selected assignment will be highlighted.

MIDI Learn Button

Use this function in the Pads pop-up dialog to assign the available Smart chords, bass and interval notes as well as chord inversions to pads on your external hardware controller.

1. Activate MIDI Learn by clicking it so that it gets highlighted.

The frame of the upper left of the pads (sus2) starts to flash

2. Now press the pad on your external hardware to which you want to assign sus2.

3. The frame of the next pad (sus4) starts to flash indicating that you can now assign sus4 to the next pad on your external hardware.

4. Repeat the process for all 16 pads.

The MIDI Learn procedure will only be complete when all pads have been assigned and the last pad has stopped flashing.

! Please note: To be able to use your pad controller hardware, you must activate the Pad assignment switch so that it gets highlighted.

5. If you want to keep your settings, save the NKI.

Set Default Button

If you have used the MIDI Learn function to configure your Pad controller according to your own preferences, but wish to go back to the default settings, you can use the Set Default button. It lets you reset Pad assignment to the original factory settings.

→ **Click Set Default to do this.**

Note that this can not be undone, unless you have saved your changes in the NKI and can load them again.

Animator

The Animator is an adaptable MIDI piano phrase player. It contains pre-programmed piano phrases in various styles, grouped as songs, which you can utilize using your own chords. Styles from different songs can be combined and saved as new songs.

→ **To open the Animator section, click the Animator tab located in the lower left of the window.**

When you do this, the default song will also automatically be opened.

→ **To activate the Animator, click the On/Off button in the Animator tab so that it lights up.**

Song section. Here you can load, name, store, add and delete Animator songs and assign the current Sound preset to the current song

Browser. If you double click a MIDI phrase here, it will be assigned to the selected “white” key in the phrase selector

Phrase selector. Here you can select phrases for direct use or replacement.



Animator

Animator — Quick Overview

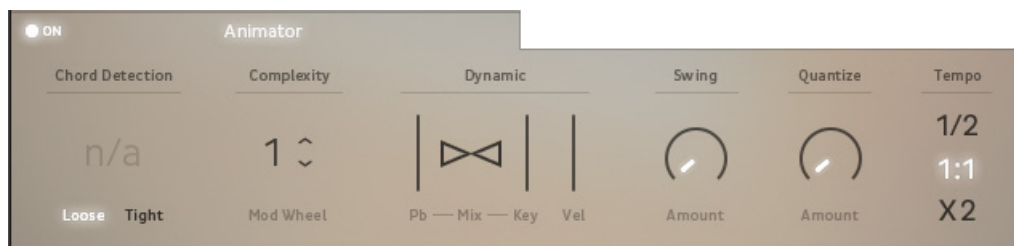
All Animator parameters are visible at a glance.

Animator Section Top End Elements

The top end of the Animator section contains the following elements:

- The + symbol lets you add a new song, see [page 30](#).
- The x symbol lets you delete the currently selected song, see [page 31](#).
- The chain symbol lets you assign the current Sound preset to a song, see [“Creating a New Animator Song” on page 30](#).
- The downward pointing arrow head lets you open the Song drop-down menu where you can load one of the available songs.
- The phrase selector (the “white” keys in the vertically aligned keyboard octave) contains the individual piano phrases of a song. To utilize the play characteristics of a piano phrase, select one of the keys and play chords on your external keyboard, see [“Phrase Selector” on page 31](#).
- The browser next to the phrase selector lets you browse for and select individual piano phrases from other songs for assignment to the currently selected key in the phrase selector. This also lets you assemble your own songs, see [“The Browser” on page 31](#).

Animator Section Bottom End Elements



From left to right, the bottom end of the Animator section contains the following elements:

- **The On/Off button lets you activate or deactivate the Animator.**
- **Chord detection displays the chord you currently play.**
- **The Loose and Tight buttons let you toggle between a long or short chord recognition time.**
- **The complexity of the Animator piano phrases can be increased or decreased by clicking the vertically aligned arrow head buttons in the Complexity section or by using the Modulation wheel on your external keyboard. Three complexity levels (1-3) are available.**
- **The Dynamic section lets you set up phrase dynamics control. The two dynamics triangles work like a bipolar fader: by clicking and dragging horizontally inside this Dynamic fader you can determine the degree to which dynamic is controlled by you using the Pitch Bend wheel and/or the velocity of your play.**

In the default center position (triangles are empty), dynamics can be controlled to an equal degree using both options.
Dragging the fader fully to the left (left triangle filled white) lets you control dynamics using the Pitch Bend wheel only.
Dragging the fader fully to the right (right triangle filled white) lets you control dynamics by the velocity of your play only.

- **Three velocity indicators reflect the currently applied velocity.**
- **The Swing knob lets you add a swing feel to rhythmically straight Animator piano phrases.**
- **The Quantize knob lets you continuously control Quantizing (i.e. positioning of individual notes to rhythmically correct positions within the bar).**
- **The Tempo section lets you set Animator phrase playback to half, normal or double tempo.**

Opening an Animator Song

When you open the Animator for the first time after loading Session Keys Electric W, it is opened with the default song. All additional factory songs (except for some special versions containing arpeggio triplets etc.) are visible both in the Song drop-down menu and in the browser.

! Please note: The Song drop-down menu is used to select complete songs with all piano phrases whereas the browser is used to select and assign individual phrases to your personal song version. You can not load a complete song from the browser in one go!

- **To open an Animator song, open the Song drop-down menu and select the desired song.**
All piano phrases of the Animator song are loaded into the phrase selector.

Creating a New Animator Song

New songs can be created based on phrases of available factory songs. You can assemble phrases as you like, save them as a new song and use them to play the chords of your own composition. Each pre-programmed song has different piano phrases for intro, verse, choruses, bridge and ending.

To add other phrases to an existing song or to the available Empty Factory preset, proceed as follows:

1. **In the phrase selector, select the phrase you want to replace.**
2. **Navigate to the new phrase in the browser and double click it, see [page 31](#).**
The new phrase will now replace the old one in the phrase selector.

3. Repeat until you're done.
4. Click the small + symbol in the top left corner of the Animator view.
The previous song name will be replaced by "Enter Name".
5. Name the new song by selecting "Enter Name" and typing in a new name.
6. To save the current Sound settings with the new song, make sure the links in the small chain icon are unbroken by clicking on the icon, if necessary.
7. Save the new song by clicking the small OK button.
It will now also appear in the Song drop down menu as a new Animator Song and can be selected at any time.

Deleting an Animator Song

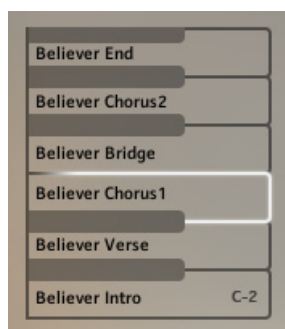
To delete one of your own Animator songs, proceed as follows:

1. Open the song you want to delete.
2. Click the small x button to delete the currently loaded song.
The song will immediately be removed from the phrase selector and from the Song drop-down menu.

! Please note: Factory songs can not be deleted.

Phrase Selector

When you load an Animator song from the Song drop-down menu, its phrases will be loaded into the phrase selector and you can select the desired piano phrase by clicking here or by using the keys of the C-2 octave as switches.



Phrase selector

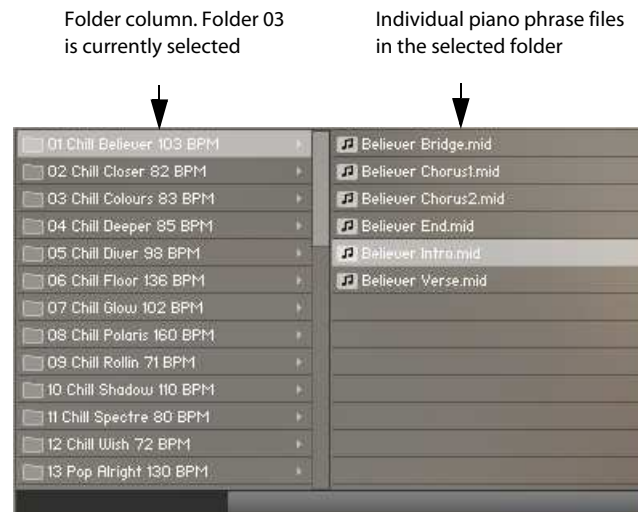
1. To select a phrase, click on it so that it gets selected. Alternatively, press one of the keys in the C-2 octave on your external keyboard controller.
A selected phrase has a white frame.
2. Play chords on the connected external MIDI keyboard.
3. Select another phrase etc.

! Please note that each Animator phrase contains three complexity levels which you can select by clicking the vertically aligned arrow head buttons in the Complexity section, see [page 30](#), or by using the Modulation wheel on your hardware controller keyboard.

The Browser

In the browser you can pick individual phrases from the available factory songs and load them into the phrase selector. You can also select individual Animator piano phrases from various other Animator songs and assign them to the currently loaded song or compile a new song by using the Empty Factory preset. You can save your phrase compilation under a new name and it becomes available on the Song drop-down menu, see ["Creating a New Animator Song" on page 30](#).

The column to the left in the browser shows all available factory songs as folders. Each folder contains up to six phrases. If you click a song folder, its phrases are displayed in the right browser column.



To assign a piano phrase file to one of the slots (keys) in the piano phrase selector, proceed as follows:

1. **Select the phrase slot in the phrase selector by clicking on it.**
The key graphic will get a white frame.
2. **In the browser, double click the desired piano phrase to assign to the selected slot.**

Animator Hints

Using Smart Chords as Animator input

If you have activated Smart Chords, see [page 24](#), you can play Animator phrases with one (or two or three) fingers only! The chords created by the Smart Chords function will then be used to play the currently selected Animator phrase.

- **If you want to use the plain chords provided by the selected Smart Chord's root note and chord map, you can do this by pressing one key or pad only!**
- **If you want to use an inversion or additional interval notes, you can do this by additionally pressing the corresponding key(s) or pad(s) on your external MIDI controller hardware.**

Using the Sustain Pedal

In Animator mode, you can use the sustain pedal to hold chord playback for as long as you wish. This can be very useful.

- **Press the desired chord, then press the sustain pedal and let go of the keys.**
The chord will continuously play back until you release the pedal.

Using independent Bass notes

When you play Animator phrases, you can freely change the bass note and the phrase playback will change accordingly. Try this:

1. **Play chords in the middle C octave**
2. **Now use the left hand to play additional singular bass keys and note how the bass changes in phrase playback.**

Playing Bass Keys below C2

If you use the Animator (without Smart Chords) and play a key below C2, you will only get the bass of the respective phrase, as the complete phrase would simply not sound right.

External Control

Using External Sequencer Automation

All knobs and faders in Session Keys can be controlled by external MIDI or host automation.

- **Simply open the KONTAKT automation window and drag the automation ID to the desired knob or fader.**
For further information on automation assignment please refer to the Kontakt manual.

Native Instruments NKS Integration

NKS is a standard by Native Instruments that lets you remote control all compatible software instruments from Native Instruments hardware, such as Komplete Kontrol keyboards or Maschine.

Session Keys Electric W ist fully compatible with Native Instruments' NKS technology.

All Session Keys parameters have been appropriately mapped onto the Komplete Hardware controllers, which facilitates your workflow in ways previously not available.

You can use the NKS Light Guide to directly and quickly control intelligent Session Keys functions such as the Animator and Smart Chord.

Animator Patterns can be changed easily using the Keyswitches that light up in red.

Animator Complexity and Dynamics can be controlled comfortably via the Komplete Keyboard's controllers.

Credits

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