

Evolution Clawhammer Banjo



User Guide

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Preface

Thank you for purchasing the Evolution Clawhammer Banjo sample library! This folk-style banjo sample library features 6.5 gigabytes (compressed to 2.9 GB using the lossless NCW audio format) of 24-bit samples, powered by KONTAKT's extensive scripting engine.

We developed this library in collaboration with Rosewood Recording Company, one of Utah's most venerable recording studios. Guy Randle, the owner and recording engineer at Rosewood Recording Company, incorporates a lot of analog audio equipment when recording, including a Neotek analog console, tube preamps, vintage compressors, and other classic analog gear.

For the sampling session, Guy Randle brought in the versatile multi-instrumentalist Ryan Tilby.

Known for his broad palette of sounds and styles, Ryan Tilby has performed at Telluride, Merlefest, FanFest, RockyGrass, and countless of other festivals throughout the United States, as well as having toured Europe multiple times. His music has been featured on Duck Dynasty, the Discovery Channel, and on Outdoor Photo Adventures. Ryan Tilby also offers remote recording services for clients around the world needing guitar, banjo, bass, mandolin, and ukulele tracks.

Achieving Realism

Emulating a banjo is a complex task because there are so many articulations and techniques to cover when it comes to single note lines, strumming, and picking patterns. In addition to the wide collection of sampled articulations, we also used Kontakt's scripting to make certain techniques more dynamic. For example, we used a combinations of samples and scripting to generate slides that can be played between notes at any speed. Similarly, rather than recording samples of strummed chords, we included a powerful strumming pattern system that generates realistic strummed chords and picking patterns from individual samples.



Many aspects are also physically modeled. This includes tonal modeling, incorporated in the pick position control, since the location of where the string is picked affects the timbre and attack of the banjo's tone.

Legato is an important element in banjo playing, whether playing slides or simply fretting a different note without plucking it, achieving what are known as hammer-ons and pull-offs--the first being to an upward legato interval and the latter referring to a downward interval.

Another important factor that we included is string resonance. Sometimes open strings or their harmonics will resonate with the currently ringing note. This resonance adds additional depth and nuance to the tone of the banjo. Of course, as with many of the features in Evolution Clawhammer Banjo, the amount and decay of the string resonance is adjustable.

What's Under the Hood?

At its core, Evolution Clawhammer Banjo has over 11,400 samples, recorded in 24-bit at 44.1kHz. You get three dynamics and four round-robin, with each string being recorded individually.

Evolution Clawhammer Banjo comes with a robust effects engine with which you can get production ready tones. That way it isn't reliant on an external effects plugins, although you have the option to bypass the built-in effects to use your own plugins. The included effects include EQ, compressor, countless types of reverb, and much more.

Evolution Clawhammer Banjo includes many specific articulations designed to replicate the clawhammer style of playing: clawhammer sustains, thumb plucks, muted fingernail strums, and everything you need for replicating that unique sound. Beyond that, the instrument has fingerstyle sustains, natural harmonics, and special effects such as string slaps as well as some of the noises that happen when the thumb taps or brushes against the head of the banjo. There are also MIDI articulations for instant techniques such as grace notes, buzz trills, slides (velocity-based and tempo-synced), octaves, and power-chords.

All these articulations are available in our custom mapping system, which allows you to set how you want the different playing techniques to be triggered. For example, you can



assign articulations to velocity ranges, MIDI CCs, or even custom latching and non-latching keyswitches.

By emphasizing realism and playability, we want playing Evolution Clawhammer Banjo to give you the same excitement and inspiration as playing a real banjo, not to mention provide the ability to recreate the distinctive clawhammer banjo playing technique.

We at Orange Tree Samples hope you enjoy this extensively sampled banjo library!



Installation

Step 1: Extract the ZIP File

The first thing you need to do after downloading the ZIP file from your account on the Orange Tree Samples website is to extract Evolution Clawhammer Banjo. Both Windows and macOS can natively extract ZIP files without requiring other software. The entire library is self-contained within this ZIP file, so you can always move the folder afterward to relocate the library anywhere you like.

Step 2: Activate Through Native Access

After the library has been extracted, it needs to be activated using the Native Access application.

Run Native Access and log into your Native Instruments account, registering an account if necessary. Next, click the "Add a serial" button and enter your serial number for Evolution Clawhammer Banjo, which can be found in your order confirmation email as well as in your account on the Orange Tree Samples website.

Afterward, click the "Locate" button next to Evolution Clawhammer Banjo's listing in Native Access and then click the "Choose a location" button, which lets you browse to the library's folder. That way Native Access knows where you've installed the library. In this case, you'll need to select the main "Evolution Clawhammer Banjo" folder.

Note: If you ever move the library's folder after it's been activated, you'll need to re-open Native Access to update its records about where the library's folder is located. Afterward, Native Access automatically relays this information to software like KONTAKT, Komplete Kontrol, and Maschine.

Step 3: Load in KONTAKT

Next, launch the KONTAKT plugin or standalone application. On the left side of KONTAKT's window, navigate to the "Libraries" tab, which lists all the KONTAKT Player libraries you own, and find the listing for Evolution Clawhammer Banjo. After clicking on



the "Instruments" button, double-click on the "Evolution Clawhammer Banjo.nki" instrument.

After the instrument finishes loading, you're ready to play Evolution Clawhammer Banjo!

KONTAKT Sample Library Organization

As your collection of KONTAKT libraries expands, it's important to keep them organized. For example, keep them all within a main "KONTAKT Sample Libraries" folder rather than scattered around your hard drive. Backing up the installation files for your sample libraries is also a good idea, although you'll always be able to re-download the library from your account on the Orange Tree Samples website if necessary.

The next step in organizing your sample libraries is in KONTAKT itself. One of the benefits of storing your sample libraries all in the same place is that it makes finding them faster when manually loading them. For KONTAKT Player instruments such as this one, the "Libraries" panel acts as a useful shortcut to access your libraries. However, bear in mind that this section is limited to KONTAKT Player libraries only.

Another convenient way to access your KONTAKT libraries is by adding them to the Quick Load panel. This allows you to create shortcuts to your libraries, sorted into any folder/subfolder arrangement you wish. The Quick Load panel can be quickly accessed with a single right-click in any empty area of the multi-rack (the large portion of KONTAKT's interface that displays the loaded instruments), or by clicking on the "Quickload" option available in KONTAKT's panel menu (the icon of three small rectangles in the top center of the interface). To load an instrument from the Quick Load panel, simply double-click on the patch you wish to load, or drag it into KONTAKT's multi-rack.



Clawhammer Guide

The clawhammer playing approach to banjo predates the three-fingered banjo picking style popularized by Earl Scruggs. Fundamentally, clawhammer involves leveraging your thumb to pluck strings along with strumming the strings with the back of your fingernails. The thumb is primarily responsible for playing the drone string, but at times alternates plucking another string, a technique known as drop thumb.

The role of the thumb in clawhammer technique

If you want to emulate the thumb playing strings beyond the drone string, using the “Clawhammer Thumb Sustain” articulation will add to the authenticity of your banjo track. Strings played with the thumb have an audibly mellower, rounder attack. The most convenient way to add this articulation when needed would be to assign it to a custom non-latching keyswitch. That way you can momentarily select the thumb sustain for the specific notes when needed.

Useful performance effects

Something that adds to the percussive sound of clawhammer playing is the way that the player’s thumb forcefully comes back to rest on the drone string, loudly muting the string. This sound is embodied in the drone string’s release samples, so for the most part this effect gets naturally added to your clawhammer banjo part.

Sometimes the thumb will even make contact with the head of the banjo, further emphasizing the sound of the string getting percussively muted. We’ve included a set of performance effects dedicated to this sound which can be layered in, to your taste. The performance effect keys are mapped above the main playing range, which you can trigger at the same time as releasing the drone string note to emulate this effect.

Another performance effect that can be useful to layer in is the sound of the fingers brushing against the head of the banjo. Because the strumming portion of the clawhammer technique, sometimes called frailing, generally is angled downward and not just across the strings like the way a guitar is strummed, often the backs of the player’s fingernails will overshoot and hit or brush the banjo head.



While not imperative, adding in these percussive noises can really heighten the authenticity of your clawhammer banjo track.

Fingerstyle playing

If you simply want the mellow, organic sound of the open back folk banjo without the additional clawhammer sound, we've included fingerstyle articulations as well. When playing arpeggios or three-finger banjo rolls, using the fingerstyle articulations would be a more appropriate choice than using the clawhammer articulations.

Tuning the drone string

Because the drone string is such a constant, we recommend choosing a tuning that will work with as many of the chords you want to play as well as enabling the setting that makes the drone string included in any chord voicing.

Noteworthy settings

Enabling the "Prioritize open strings" setting is recommended. With this option enabled, the open strings are always available to play even when playing at a higher fretting position. The keys that correlate with the open strings depend on the banjo's tuning, of course, but by default they are D2, G2, B3 and D3.

Enabling the "Open string legato" setting can be helpful for achieving clawhammer parts that combine chordal and melodic playing. This setting allows you to easily play pull offs to open strings and hammer ons out of open strings, both of which are idiomatic to banjo playing.

To better emulate the banjo's limited polyphony, you may want to set the "String mode" option to "monophonic". However, when using this string mode, you have to be more mindful of the current fretting position that's being used, and potentially rely on the manual string selection keyswitches in instances where you need to ensure that two notes will get played harmonically instead of as legato.



Evolution Engine

For detailed information about working with this instrument's interface and all its capabilities, please refer to the separate Evolution Engine documentation, available from the product download page or in the downloads area of your account.

Because all the Evolution instruments use the same interface and workflow, we opted for it to have its own documentation rather than repeating the information for each Evolution-based instrument. The additional documentation for the Evolution Engine goes into detail about every control and its usage, as well as containing helpful tips.



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Credits

Greg Schlaepfer

Production, scripting, graphics

Guy Randle (Rosewood Recording Company)

Engineering, mixing

Ryan Tilby

Banjo performance

Elan Hickler

Sample processing

Chris Mortensen

Sample processing

Jackson Harris

Documentation formatting

Beta testing

James Michael Wolk, David Reinstein, Richard Penrose, Geert Bevin, Perry D'Armond, Blake Robinson, Frederic Moueza, Jani Kaataja, Bob Bergen, Bill Thompson, Alejandro Tiscornia, Jonathan Timpe, Patrick Fitzsimons, Andrew Silagy, Charlotte Partt, Joshua Cohen, Doug LeBow, Jason Castle, Tony Ostinato, Ben Horwood, Dave Francis, Kobi Rivlin, Keith Levenson, Aaron Fultz, Leandro Gardini, Jordan Gagne, Kevin Rolstad, Brian Brylow, Kristen Hirlinger

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Contact

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Email: support@orangetreesamples.com

Website: orangetreesamples.com

Social:

orangetreesamples.com/facebook

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