Rosewood Grand

User Guide

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Preface

Thank you for purchasing the Rosewood Grand sample library! This grand piano features well over 40,000 samples, totaling 55.4 gigabytes (compressed to 23.3 GB using the loss-less NCW audio format) of 24-bit samples, powered by the free KONTAKT Player.

We developed this library in collaboration with Rosewood Recording Company, one of Utah's most venerable recording institutions. Rosewood Recording Company is also the home of a pristine Yamaha C7 grand piano, the subject of this sample library. The project was exciting to collaborate on because we've both noticed many deficiencies in tone and playability of existing piano sample libraries. It was crucial to capture the proper response of a real piano, including elements such as damper ambience, sympathetic resonance, hammer noises, and various pedaling nuances.

Guy Randle, the owner and lead engineer at Rosewood Recording Company, has spent years developing and refining the piano tone, carefully selecting mics and fine-tuning mic positions to highlight the rich, organic body of the piano. Guy writes: *"I've had this piano in the studio for over twenty years now, so I've had quite a while to get to know it. I spent about a year looking for just the right instrument to replace my previous nine foot grand. I chased down every interesting piano ad I came across and brought mics and a recorder to check out the most likely candidates. Then I would take the tape back to the studio and see how it sounded through monitors. I finally found this C7 that had that certain sonic something and brought it home to Rosewood. Over the last number of years I've developed a method of recording it that emphasizes the richness, sustain and harmonics of this great instrument."*

Achieving Realism

Although a piano’s playability seems straight-forward to emulate, there are actually many aspects that generally get overlooked in other piano libraries.

For example, when pressing the sustain pedal, all the dampers are lifted, allowing the entirety of the piano’s strings to freely resonate. This acts like a natural reverb effect, adding a noticeable layer of lush depth to the piano’s tone.

Some virtual pianos imitate this by recording one set of sustain samples with the sustain pedal up and another with the pedal down. The problem with this approach is that it requires the sustain pedal to be pressed *before* playing notes to determine which sample set to use. It doesn't allow you to press the sustain pedal after playing notes, or release the pedal during sustained notes either.

We used a proprietary technique to isolate and capture just the sound of the damper ambience in order to realistically emulate this important characteristic of the piano. While we were at it, we also included support for half pedaling and slow pedal releases, provided that you use a continuous MIDI sustain pedal, meaning that it outputs a smooth gradient in values between 0 and 127 instead of acting like a simple on/off switch.

What's Under the Hood?

Rosewood Grand has 12 dynamics in all its sample sets apart from the felt piano set, which has 8 dynamics.

We found that the lowest dynamics on the felt piano didn't have enough momentum to cause the strings to ring, and higher than a certain dynamic didn't make any difference to the tone or loudness of the notes, hence opting to record slightly fewer velocity layers.

We've spent a lot of time making Rosewood Grand as detailed and realistic as possible, combining masterful recording techniques with cutting-edge technology. We hope you enjoy Rosewood Grand and that it becomes your new go-to virtual piano!

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 Rosewood Grand. 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 Rosewood Grand, 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 Rosewood Grand‘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 "Rosewood Grand" 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 li-

braries you own, and find the listing for Rosewood Grand. After clicking on the "Instruments" button, double-click on the "Rosewood Grand.nki" instrument.

After the instrument finishes loading, you’re ready to play Rosewood Grand!

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.

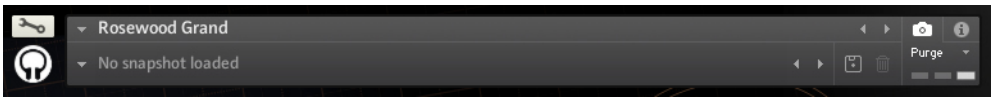
The next step in organizing your sample libraries is in KONTAKT itself. One of the benefits of storing your sample libraries all in the same place is that it makes finding them faster when manually loading them. For KONTAKT Player instruments such as this one, the "Libraries" panel acts as a useful shortcut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

Factory Presets

Rosewood Grand uses Kontakt's snapshot preset system to manage factory and user presets. This offers a convenient way to navigate through presets one-by-one, or access a dropdown list of all the available presets. It also integrates nicely with the Native Komplete Standard, which gives you access to the presets through the Komplete Kontrol software as well as hardware such as the Kontrol S-Series keyboards and Maschine.

You can access the snapshots from the header portion of the instrument's interface, which is directly above the instrument’s interface.



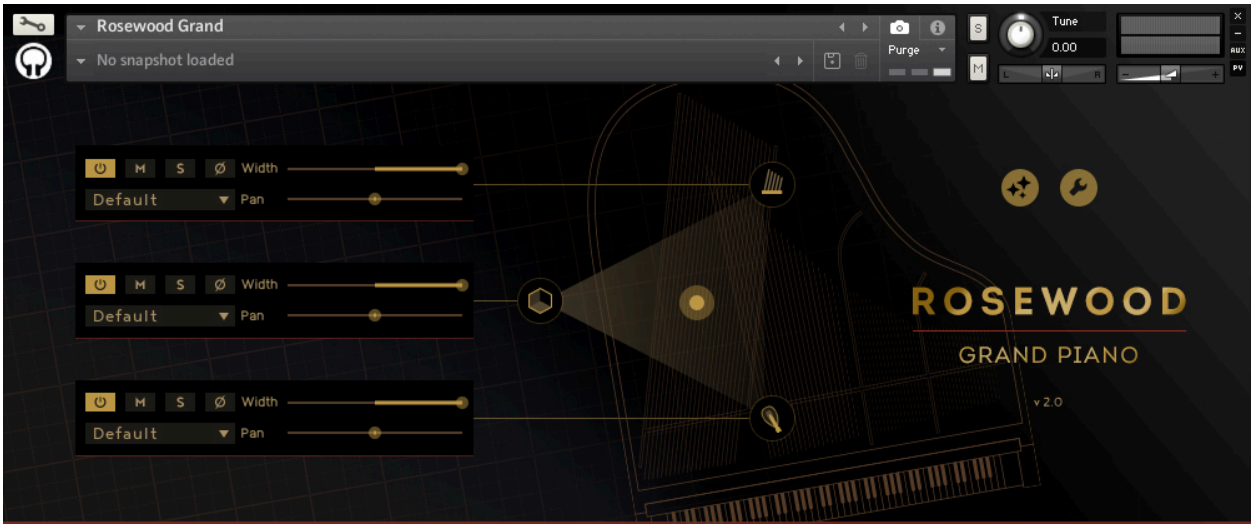
Kontakt’s snapshot preset system

In order to see the snapshot controls as shown in the picture above, the camera icon needs to be selected (as opposed to the "i" icon, which is for accessing the audio and MIDI settings and other instrument-related options). In the snapshot preset panel, you can click on the downward-pointing arrow button to the left of the snapshot name to open a dropdown menu of all the presets available. You can also audition the presets one-by-one by using the left and right arrow buttons to the right of the snapshot name.

When you first open the instrument, there isn't a snapshot loaded, which is why it shows "No snapshot loaded". Without a snapshot preset loaded, the instrument is in its default, initialized state.

You can store your own user presets using the disk icon button. Once you've created your own user preset(s), they will be present in the snapshot dropdown menu alongside the factory presets for easy and convenient access.

Interface Overview



Rosewood Grand's interface provides an assortment of controls for adjusting the piano's tone and playability to your taste.

On the left side of the main interface there are controls for each of the available mic channels, while the triangular blend pad in the center of the interface provides quick and convenient control over the mix between these signals.

At the top right side of the interface, there are buttons to navigate to two other sections of controls: one area for adjusting effects for the final polish on the piano sound, and a settings area for configuring more advanced options.

If you happen to be using a Komplete Kontrol keyboard or other NKS Ready MIDI controller such as the Maschine, you can access these interface controls directly from the MIDI controller. That way you have instant, convenient access to Rosewood Grand's parameters without needing to navigate through and interact with its interface from your computer.

Main

Blend Pad

The triangular pad in the center of the interface lets you adjust the mix between the three mic signals. That way you can conveniently adjust the blend between them while the instrument automatically maintains their overall volume level.

Channel

Each mic signal has an assortment of controls to further adjust its sound. Here is a description of the controls you get for each signal:

Power - Enables and disables the mic signal, which in turn loads or unloads the associated samples from memory. If you aren't using a certain mic signal, disabling it with this control will help conserve memory, not to mention reduce polyphony usage.

Mute - Mutes the mic signal, silencing it while keeping the samples still loaded in memory.

Solo - Solos the mic signal so that you can hear the isolated signal.

Polarity - Allows you to invert the signal's polarity. When mixed with other signals, this can radically change the tone of the piano due to certain frequency cancellations that occur when mixing signals of opposite polarity.

Width - This slider lets you adjust the stereo width of the signal. At 100%, the width is at its as-recorded value, while reducing it to 0% condenses the signal to mono. Negative values reverse the stereo image, swapping the left and right channels.

The piano is naturally mixed at the player's perspective, with the lowest keys naturally panned toward the left while the highest keys are toward the right. When reversing the stereo image, the lowest keys will end up sounding on the right side and the highest on the left instead.

Pan - Adjusts the panning of the mic signal.

Output - This menu allows you to send the instrument's mic signal directly out an alternate audio output. That way you can make the raw signals available to your DAW to process individually using your own effects plugins.

Bear in mind that the options on this dropdown menu don't reference the Kontakt plugin's audio output channels directly, but relate to Kontakt's internal output routing. In order to set up your own audio output configuration, you will need to display Kontakt's output panel first in order to create an internal output that routes to the desired audio output channel in your DAW. Please refer to Kontakt's own documentation for more specific details on how to use the output panel.

Effects

Feedback Compressor

Modelled after a legendary feedback compressor known for its bright and punchy sound, this effect lets you level out the highest peaks of the piano's signal, effectively amplifying and lengthening the perceived sustain of the instrument.

Depending on how you configure the compressor, it can provide a squashed sound for styles that demand a more percussive piano tone, or a gentle and subtle dynamic leveling for bringing out the nuances and richness of the piano's sustain.

Ratio - Controls the ratio of compression that happens when the signal exceeds the currently set threshold. Low values provide a subtle amount of compression, while high values will more aggressively and audibly compress the audio.

Input - Adjusts the input gain into the feedback compressor. Because feedback compressors operate by comparing the input gain with the output signal, a higher input gain will result in more compression overall. In traditional compressors, this is the equivalent of lowering the threshold.

Gain - Adjusts the makeup gain, allowing you to compensate for the gain reduction resulting from the compression.

Mix - Allows you to mix between the dry and compressed signal to emulate parallel compression.

Attack - Adjusts the compressor's attack time, which is the speed at which the compressor reacts and begins to compress the signal. Short attack times result in the transients becoming quickly squashed, while high attack times allow more of the unaffected transient through.

Release - Adjusts the compressor's release time, or how quickly the effect ceases to compress the signal. A short release time will typically add a slight swell in volume to the sustain as the compressor quickly recovers after flattening the initial attack of the signal.

Equalizer

This is a four-band equalizer modeled after a legendary console EQ.

Frequency - Sets the frequency of the EQ band.

Gain - Controls the amount of boost / cut.

Mode - This toggles the highest and lowest bands between a peak and bell shape.

Q - Adjusts the bandwidth / quality of the band, measured in octaves.

Convolution

Evolution Rosewood Grand includes a large collection of convolution reverb impulse responses to choose between.

Type - Chooses between various available reverb types, from legendary vintage reverb units to modern hardware reverbs.

Preset - Selects the preset within the currently selected reverb type.

Pre-delay - Allows you to add pre-delay to the reverb signal. Adding a small amount of pre-delay can help keep the transients in the dry signal clean.

Mix - Adjusts the mix between the dry and wet signals. When set to 0%, any reverb is completely silent while at 100% only the wet reverb sound is audible.

Size - Lengthens or shortens the decay length of the reverb.

HP/LP Filter - Allows you to highpass and lowpass the reverb signal by dragging the left and right handles on the filter slider.

Depending on the reverb unit and preset, increasing the highpass filter to attenuate the low frequencies can be helpful in reducing any muddiness. Furthermore, you can use the lowpass filter to reduce any high frequencies that create any airy/ringy reverberation, if undesirable.

Settings

Sample Set

Tuned: In this sample set, we tuned the piano's unisons as closely as possible, giving you a pristine, pure tone.

Bloom: For this sample set, the piano's unisons were slightly detuned. While the central pitches are still in tune, this introduces slightly more oscillation in the piano's unisons.

Felt (Room): The felt piano sample set uses a piece of felt between the hammers and strings, giving the tone a softer, muffled tone. Because this reduces the volume of the sustained notes, the hammers and other mechanical noises are more apparent.

Felt (Underneath): This variation of the felt sample set exchanges the room mic signal with a mic position underneath the piano for an even warmer, darker tone.

Original: This sample set uses the samples from the original Rosewood Grand library. That way you can get the same sound from the original version, but with the benefits of the new interface, improved playability and other features.

Velocity

Curve - You can use this X/Y pad to emphasize or de-emphasize certain dynamics, adjusting the dynamic response of the library to suit your preferences. By moving the curve toward the upper left corner, you can create a convex velocity response that favors the loud velocity samples. Conversely, moving the curve toward the bottom right corner results in a concave velocity response, which emphasizes the soft velocities.

Low limit - This limits the low end of the velocities, which is particularly useful in the felt piano sample set in case you want to remove the softest dynamics that don't have much sustain.

High limit - This sets a limit to the high velocities, which is useful if you want to prevent the piano from reaching higher dynamics.

Dynamic range - You can adjust the dynamic range of the piano. At 100%, the natural dynamic range of the piano is represented. Lowering the dynamic range essentially acts like a natural compressor, flattening out the piano's volume response. At 0%, the very softest dynamic is essentially the same loudness as the very loudest dynamic.

Preset menu - We've provided an assortment of presets available through this menu.

Save - This allows you to export your current velocity settings as an ".nka" file, which is useful if you have specific settings that you need to recall later.

Load - You can use this option to load your ".nka" velocity setting presets.

Levels

Pedal noise - Adjusts the volume of the sustain pedal press and release noises.

Hammer release - Adjusts the volume of the hammer release noises, which happen when lifting a key. These sounds occur despite whether or not the sustain pedal is held, just like on a real piano. When quickly repeating a key, the hammer noise is omitted, emulating the double-escapement action on real pianos.

Release samples - Adjusts the volume of the release samples that happen when releasing keys or lifting the sustain pedal, causing the piano's dampers to mute the ringing strings.

Damper ambience - Adjusts the volume of the damper ambience when the sustain pedal is pressed. When the sustain pedal is pressed, all the dampers on the piano get lifted, allowing all the strings to freely resonate. Almost like a natural reverb, this results in a noticeably fuller, more reverberant sound when the sustain pedal is pressed.

Sympathetic resonance - Adjusts the volume of the sympathetic resonance that happens between multiple held keys. For solo piano, or exposed piano parts you might find that the sympathetic resonance adds a layer of realism and richness to the sound of the piano, but in the mix with other instruments

Noise floor - Adjusts the volume of the noise floor. Although all the samples in Rosewood Grand have been meticulously denoised, this setting allows you to add back a monophonic, static amount of noise in the background. Unlike noise that's part of the samples,

this does not add up when playing simultaneous notes, so it sounds much more like a real piano recording in that respect. While subtle, this addition can become more audible when using aggressive compression or boosting the high frequencies.

Miscellaneous

Timbre control - Changes the timbre of the piano by borrowing and stretching neighboring samples to either provide a darker or brighter timbre. The values of this control correspond with the number of semitones this sample borrowing approach uses.

Pre-roll adjust - The samples are trimmed as tightly to the initial transient as possible, resulting in a very instantaneous response. This control allows you to reintroduce a static amount of preroll that happens before the main transient of each note. That way very subtle sounds like key press noises and hammer motion can be preserved, at the expense of a small, but consistent amount of latency.

Stretch tuning - This allows you to apply a desired amount of the Railsback curve, wherein low notes are intentionally tuned flat while high notes are tuned sharp in order to counteract the inharmonicity of the overtones on the piano, resulting in a more vibrant tone.

Sustain Pedal

On/off center - This is only applicable when using a sustain pedal that outputs a continuous MIDI signal, meaning rather than being a simple on/off switch, it’s able to output any value between 0 and 127 depending on how far the pedal is pressed. This control lets you set the center point at which the sustain pedal gets activated.

Tightness curve - Also only applicable when using a continuous sustain pedal, you can adjust the tightness of the sustain pedal. At 100%, the sustain pedal is instantly activated and deactivated without any half pedaling. As you decrease the tightness, there’s a wider range of values around the on/off center for half pedaling and slow pedal releases.

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Credits

Greg Schlaepfer
Production, scripting

Guy Randle
Engineering, mixing

Hannes Pasqualini / Papernoise
Interface design

Elan Hickler / Soundemote
Scripting, audio tools, sample processing

Chris Mortensen
Sample processing

Special thanks to:

Oriana Schlaepfer, Kristen Randle, Peter DeLegge

Contact

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Email: support@orangetreesamples.com

Website: orangetreesamples.com

Social:

orangetreesamples.com/facebook

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