



An Impact Soundworks Sample Library for Kontakt

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Version 2.0 – Updated May 8th, 2017

ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION

We came up with the idea for Sitar Nation: Classical Instruments of India in mid-2007, after noticing that despite the growing popularity of ethnic instrument libraries, few products sampled non-Western instruments with a level of depth expected from a modern sample library. We spoke with numerous composers and producers who were unhappy with the current offering of ethnic instrument samples which only provided an "overview" of sounds and lacked the detail necessary to provide realistic solo performances.

The sitar, tampura, tabla and baya were chosen for our library not only because these instruments have remained a foundation of Indian classical music for centuries, but also because they have even permeated Western music since the 50s and 60s. Sitar Nation is the first library to capture these instruments with a level of detail and realism normally reserved for violins and pianos, allowing the composer to control and play these beautiful sounds without relying on excessive programming.

The library covers a variety of important playing techniques for all four instruments. All of these sounds can be loaded from two mic positions. This, combined with extensive sampling, allows you to carefully reproduce authentic sounds OR simply add flourishes of flavor to your compositions with a minimum of time spent.

Also included with Sitar Nation is a set of 15 FX patches which take the core audio content into new directions using both pre-rendered offline processing and effects/programming within Kontakt. The result is a wide variety of highly useful sounds, from drones and percussion to chimes, pads and keyboards

VERSION 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Sitar Nation is our second-oldest library, and while the sample quality and range of articulations is still outstanding, we felt that its UI and patches could use a total re-design for better usability and convenience. In Version 2.0, we've updated Koto Nation with all of our latest tools like Total Articulation Control Technology (TACT) allowing you to create totally custom mapping and triggering setups, along with easy microtuning, mixing, and FX, all in a single patch per instrument.

INSTALLATION

To install the library, first ensure that you have downloaded the Sitar Nation RAR file. Then, simply extract it to the directory of your choosing. It will create a "Sitar Nation" folder in that directory containing the library and all of its components.

Patches from Koto Nation are loaded and used simply by opening an instance of Kontakt 5 (or higher) and loading the instrument you wish to play. There is no authorization or registration required.

INSTRUMENT AND ARTICULATION DETAIL

As you play this library, treat it as a 'living' instrument. We went out of our way to carefully edit each individual sample so that the plectrum attacks, crucial to the realism of sitar playing, were not lost. So, we encourage you to play parts live on your keyboard to get a feel for each patch. If you must sequence/quantize, you should anticipate notes by 20-50ms (depending on the patch.) This offset can be adjusted in the **Articulations** tab on a per-articulation basis.

Note that all articulations can be **re-mapped**. Please see the TACT section for more details!

Sitar – Sustain and Chikari

Standard plucking of the sitar with four velocity (dynamic) levels and three round robins. Lower velocities are struck with the thumb, higher ones use a metal thumb pick. At **C5** and above, you will trigger the **Chikari** strings – these quick rhythmic strummed resonate with three velocity layers and three round robins per layer.

Sitar – Mordents

A rapidly-thumbed 'turn', bending the melodic string up and back down a half step.

Sitar – WT Bend

A whole tone bend up to the played note.

Sitar – Tremolo

Repeated strumming of the string using the plectrum.

Sitar – Phrases

Short phrases and turns ending on a single note.

Sitar – Glissandos

Three types of glissandos (very fast, standard, slow) with both minor and major versions.

Tambura – Sustains

Meditative, hypnotic, and droning sustained notes.

Tabla and Baya

A range of percussive articulations for each of these hand drums. The Baya is a 10-inch drum that produces lower pitched hits – we recorded 9 velocities and 3 RRs per layer. The Tabla is a 6-inch drum accompanying the baya, whose distinctive sound you will immediately recognize!

The **Baya** is played with the left hand, while the **Tabla** is played using the right hand.

The techniques for each, from bottom of the range to top, are:

Muted palm stroke in the center of the drum (*te*)
Pitched stroke on the edge of the drum (*di*)

Muted stroke using two fingers (*nat*)

Partially-muted stroke in the center of the drum, slightly pitched (*tin*)

Pitched open strike in the center of the drum (*tun*)

USER INTERFACE



The new Sitar Nation UI has many useful features. Starting in the bottom left, we have:

Vel Sens: Velocity Sensitivity. Increasing this slider makes the volume of all notes more sensitive to MIDI velocity. This does not affect the recording triggered; for example, low velocity always triggers a low dynamic recording.

Vibrato: Increases the amount of generated instrument vibrato. (This is separate from the Vibrato articulation, which is pre-recorded vibrato.)

In the **Upper Middle** area we have the mic mixer.

Power Buttons: Enables or disables a mic position. Disabling a mic will purge it from RAM.

VOL (Red / Outer Circle): Controls volume of the mic.

PAN (Black / Inner Circle): Controls pan position of the mic.

Tuning: Coarse (Red / Outer): Controls tuning +/- 12 semitones.

Fine (Black/Inner): Controls tuning +/- 100 cents (1 semitone)

Sitar Nation includes an ADSR volume envelope which can be used to shape each articulation. Select the articulation envelope you want to edit from the **Dropdown Menu** ("Sustain" by default).

HPF/LPF: Moving these controls horizontally will change the amount of high pass and low pass filtering on the sound of the instrument.

Microtuning Table: Each “bar” of this table controls the tuning of one note in a scale. You can select the root note using the **upper left** menu, or use a tuning preset from the **lower left** menu.

FX RACK



The “Effects” tab lets you use some handy built-in FX units such as a parametric 4-band EQ, analog-modeled compressor, synced delay, and convolution reverb!

Clicking the * button next to each effect will randomize the FX settings; holding shift and clicking will reset all knobs to normal.

TACT – TOTAL ARTICULATION CONTROL TECHNOLOGY

The Concept

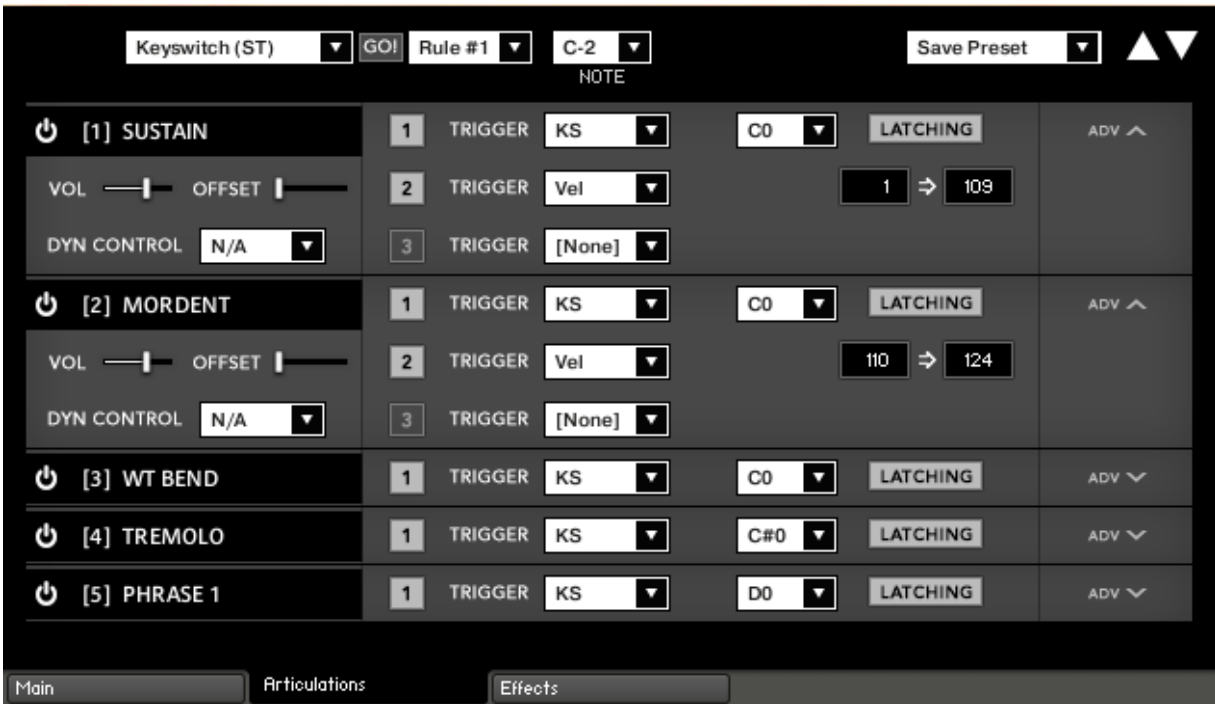
TACT is a modular, scalable system designed to create a consistent plug-and-play performance experience in Impact Soundworks virtual instrument products. It manages articulations with up to 3 triggering types, volume and offset control, and independently controlled legato toggles when applicable. Current supported trigger sources are note range, velocity range, CC range (on any CC# from 1 to 127), keyswitches (latching or non-latching, independently chosen per articulation), and sustain pedal up/down.

TACT is designed to manage user mapping schemes and facilitate experimentation to create the best performance setups for users very quickly and easily. Extra features include:

- A **conflict detection algorithm**, which cross references articulations through their 3 rules and detects if the articulations will trigger under the same input. It will then highlight the articulations in red so the user can observe and resolve the conflict.
- A crown-jewel convenience feature called “**Automap**”, which allows users to quickly lay out, build, and audition structured mapping schemes.
- A utility to **save and load mapping presets** within a sample library. This allows them to create schemes that suit them for different purposes, such as live performance or efficient DAW sequencing. These presets can also be shared with other users, as they are stored as .nka files.

Impact Soundworks looks forward to providing customers a very consistent and reliable experience in the future using TACT in our new virtual instruments!

Articulations



The main screen of the interface shows a list of articulations. Each articulation shows its name, a **power button** to purge it from memory, its first triggering rule, and an **ADV button**.

Pressing **ADV** will expand the articulation to show its 3 rules, as well as other controls like volume, offset, and dynamic control. For legato-applicable articulations, they may allow disabling legato. If expanded articulations make the list exceed the window height, **scroll buttons** will appear on the top right. Holding shift while clicking these scroll buttons will scroll **3 rows at a time**.

The **numbered squares** to the left of each rule are **toggle states** for the rules. If turned off, a rule is not factored into the system's evaluation logic. If all 3 are turned off, the articulation will never play. Note that setting an articulation rule's trigger type to [None] is equivalent to turning the rule off.

Each trigger type can **only be used once per articulation**. If a trigger type is used in a rule, it can't be used for other rules. This is not true of the [None] type, however. Each articulation will preserve its parameters for each rule type, and even if that rule is set to [None]. For example, if you set a keyswitch to B1, then set it to [None], then enable a keyswitch in another rule, it will remember B1 automatically. This is convenient for re-ordering rules for visual organizational purposes.

Each articulation can be selected/highlighted by clicking on its name. This is important for the Automap feature.

Keyboard Shortcuts:

- Holding control, alt, or shift on the ADV will **expand all articulations** at once.
- Holding control, alt, or shift on the keyswitch rule "LATCHING" button will **set all keyswitch rules** to the same latching designation (latching or non-latching).
- Holding alt while moving the volume or offset sliders will **move them simultaneously** across all articulations to the same value.
- Holding shift or alt while scrolling will scroll by 3 rows (a full expanded articulation) instead of 1.

Automap

Automap works by selecting a list of articulations by clicking their names (activating the blue highlighting to the left), selecting a scheme, such as "CC Split Range", configuring any parameters associated with that scheme (such as for CC Split, which CC# for it to work on), setting the rule # to apply the new mapping on, and the "GO" which executes the automap.

Holding control, shift, or alt while selecting an articulation will select or deselect all articulations.

When automap is executed by pressing GO, the previous mappings will be preserved in memory. If the user wishes to undo the change, they can access the preset menu and hit "Undo Automap". Note that this will only work 1 time, as there is only 1 level of history.

When a new mapping is applied to an articulation via Automap, the associated rule is automatically turned on in every selected articulation. If an articulation already contained a rule with the relevant trigger type, that pre-existing rule will be cleared out first.

For all mapping schemes, especially splits, they are done ***in order of selection***, not visually ascending or descending order. For instance, if velocity split mapping was engaged on articulations ABCD that are selected in order CDBA, then articulation C will have the lowest velocity range, D will have the next lowest, and so on. Here is the list of currently implemented schemes:

Keyswitch (WT) - Will map selected articulations starting at the specified keyswitch, ascending by whole tones (2 half-steps).

Keyswitch (ST) - Will map selected articulations starting at the specified keyswitch, ascending by semi tones (1 half-step).

CC Split Range - Will map selected articulations on the specified CC# to ascending ranges that are even divisions of 1 to 127. For example, on articulations AB will map A to 1-64 and B to 65-127.

Velocity Split Range - Will map selected articulations to ascending velocity trigger ranges that are even divisions of 1 to 127. For example, on articulations AB will map A to 1-64 and B to 65-127.

In addition to the spanning schemes listed above, TACT also features "shared" schemes that apply the same rule to selected articulations:

Shared Keyswitch - Will map selected articulations to the specified keyswitch.

Shared CC Range - Will map selected articulations to the specified value range on the specified CC#.

Shared Vel. Range - Will map selected articulations to the specified velocity range.

Shared Key Range - Will map selected articulations to the specified key range.

Pedal Position - Will map selected articulations to the specified pedal position.

Clear Rule - Will "delete" whatever mapping exists in the selected articulations on the chosen rule (set them to [None]).

A combination of spanning schemes and shared schemes is the key to getting the most out of TACT. For example, in a string library, a user could set all short articulations to a "shared keyswitch" rule, and then have their second rule be a "CC Split Range". This way, they can switch to a general "shorts" keyswitch, and use their mod wheel to select the specific one. Another example is when the user has a satisfactory mapping scheme but would like to trigger legato using the sustain pedal; they can quickly use automap on the non-legato articulations to have them only trigger when the pedal is released.

Presets

TACT can save presets as .nka files. These files can even be shared with other users, provided they are using it with the same sample library.

To save a preset, simply open the preset dropdown menu and click "Save Preset". A dialog box will appear prompting you to name your scheme.

To load a preset, click "Load Preset". A dialog box will appear, and you can browse your computer to select your saved schemes.

A preset will completely load all articulation purge states, triggering rule data, legato toggles, offset values, and dynamic control mappings. A preset will not, however, save or load articulation volume values. This is done so that the sound and general tone is not affected if the user wishes to heavily experiment with performance mappings.

ABOUT THE SESSIONS

Sitar Nation was recorded at a high-end facility in Philadelphia, PA with Alec Henninger engineering all recording sessions over the course of several months. Our signal chain consisted of two Neumann TLM-103 microphones and an AKG C 414 B-XL (for room ambience) running through an API 3124+ mic preamp and finally into a Pro Tools HD system at 96khz.

TROUBLESHOOTING & FEEDBACK

Have you used **Sitar Nation** in a project recently? Got an awesome track you'd like to share? Drop us a line (admin@impactsoundworks.com) and we might post it on our website! Or, tell the world at our Facebook page here: <http://www.facebook.com/ImpactSoundworks>

We encourage all our users to share and promote their work. Word of mouth is the #1 way people find our samples, so it also helps us to produce more great libraries for you!

For any technical support issues regarding the library, don't hesitate to email support@impactsoundworks.com.

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