

SITAR NATION

Classical Instruments of India

An Impact Soundworks Sample Library for Kontakt™

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Recorded by **Alec Henninger**

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The screenshot displays the Kontakt software interface with four instrument patches stacked vertically. Each patch includes a 'new' button, a key signature icon, and a 'Purge' button. The 'SITAR - MAIN PATCH' is set to Output: st. 1, Midi Ch: [A] 1, and Memory: 32.70 MB. The 'SITAR - MORDENT' is set to Output: st. 1, Midi Ch: [A] 1, and Memory: 6.68 MB. The 'TABLA AND BAYA' is set to Output: st. 1, Midi Ch: [A] 2, and Memory: 34.73 MB. The 'STRING CONSTRUCTOR' is set to Output: st. 1, Midi Ch: [A] 3, and Memory: 13.95 MB. Each patch has a 'Tune' knob set to 0.00 and a 'Midi' button. Below the patches, there are two sets of panning controls: 'Baya Panning' with a 'bayaPan' knob at -184, and 'Tabla Panning' with a 'tablaPan' knob at 184. The 'STRING CONSTRUCTOR' patch has 'Set Timbre' (100) and 'Set Ambience' (9) knobs, with options 'Or use CC 5' and 'Or use CC 3' below them. The interface features a decorative background with a crescent moon, a dome, and floral patterns.

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 comes with 16 main patches and 2 multis, covering a variety of important playing techniques for all four instruments. All of these sounds can be loaded from up to three positions: close, room, and ambient. 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 and 2 multis 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.

All samples are 24-bit, stereo, 44.1 kHz.

INSTALLATION

To install the ***Sitar Nation*** library, just move the “Sitar Nation” folder from the content DVD to a directory of your choosing. This folder should contain six subfolders: Ambient, Close, FX, MIDI Grooves, Room and UI. The Ambient, Close, FX and Room folders contain various .NKI and .NKM files and all but Ambient also have further subfolders with audio content. The MIDI Grooves folder has its own subfolder structure to organize a set of .MID format drum groove files, while the UI folder holds the .TGA files used for the graphical skins within Kontakt.

Patches from ***Sitar Nation*** are loaded and used simply by opening an instance of Kontakt 2 (or higher) and loading the .NKI instrument or .NKM multi file you wish to play. There is no authorization or registration required. To use the MIDI groove files, drag and drop the .MID file you wish to load on to a MIDI track within your sequencer that is set to the appropriate Tabla, Baya, or Tabla&Baya patch. If you load grooves from the “Tabla” folder, for example, you must drag it on to a track using **Tabla – Main Patch (RH)** or **Tabla and Baya**.

All audio content for this library is “unlocked” and editable in WAV format! To access the content, browse to the Close, Room, or FX folder, then open up one of the subfolders, such as “Tambura – Main Patch Samples.” However, be aware that if you rename, rearrange or destructively edit files while they are in the same directory location, this may create problems in the NKI files or cause them to not load properly. If this occurs, you can always copy the original library files from your content DVD.

PATCHES DESCRIPTION

All non-FX patches are available from three positions: close (c), room (r), and ambient (a). To select which position you want to use, just load an .nki instrument or .nkm multi file from the appropriately named folder.

Note that all patches from the Ambient folder have a knob labeled “**Set Ambience**” which controls the level of distance and wetness in the sound when increased. The spatial effects are provided through Kontakt’s built in Reverb, Delay and Phaser units. When set to 0, there is no wetness in the sound. You can automate this control using MIDI **CC3**.

C3 = Middle C

Sitar – Main Patch – Contains the standard plucking of a sitar with four velocity levels and three round robins, extending across the instrument’s entire range (**C1-A4**). Lower velocities are struck with the thumb, and higher ones use a metal thumb pick. This patch should be loaded on the same MIDI channel as the **Sitar – Chikari**, **Sitar - Releases** and **Sitar – Mordent** patches for a full representation of the instrument’s core playing techniques.

The modwheel (CC1) acts as a switch between normal playing on this patch and the **Sitar – Mordent** articulation.

Sitar – Releases – This patch consists of a variety of fret and string noise samples that are randomly triggered at the end of notes while playing **Sitar – Main Patch** (as long as they are loaded on the same MIDI channel.) These are very useful in adding realism to performances.

Sitar – Mordent – A rapidly thumbed ‘turn’, bending the melodic string up and back down a half step. This was recorded three times per note and can be played on any note within the sitar’s melodic range (**C1-A4**).

*** Important: This patch should be used on the same MIDI channel as **Sitar – Main Patch**. Use the modwheel (CC1) at higher values to activate the mordent patch.

Mordent Notation



Sitar – Chikari – Quick rhythmic strums across the sitar’s *chikari* strings, recorded with three velocity layers and three round robins per layer. All strums consist of three notes spaced a fourth and fifth apart, such as D-A-D or C-F-C. This patch is intended to be loaded on the same MIDI channel as the **Sitar – Main Patch** and as such is playable in the **C5-B5** range.

Sitar – Chikari Slow – Modified version of the normal chikari patch, suitable for softer rhythmic drones.

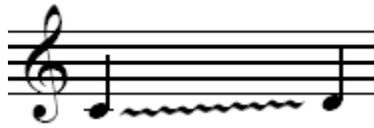
Sitar – Tremolos – Fingered tremolos played at an even tempo from **D2 to A4**. There are no velocity layers for this patch, but it is still velocity sensitive. For full expressive control, use the modwheel (CC1), which controls volume and brightness. Release samples are automatically included in this patch.

Sitar – Tremolos (leg) – Similar to the normal tremolo patch, but uses a custom Kontakt script for realistic legato playing. This is a monophonic (one voice) patch. The “**Time**” knob controls the time it takes to glide from one note to another when playing legato, while the “**Amount**” knob controls the depth of the legato effect; greater Amount values will result in a more exaggerating slurring or gliding effect. For best results, use the modwheel to control volume/brightness and load the patch **Sitar – TremolosRLS** on the same MIDI channel.

Sitar – TremolosRLS – Fret and string noise samples triggered at the end of a note. This should be loaded with the above **Sitar – Tremolos (leg)** patch.

Sitar – WT Bends – A whole tone bend starting from a pitch one whole tone below the note that was actually played. All bends were recorded at three velocity layers from the range **D2 to A4**.

Wholetone Bend Notation



Sitar – Phrases (KS) – A selection of five common articulations & phrases, played and mapped at different pitches. The different phrases are selected using keys in a lower octave of the keyboard, and the playable range for all phrases is F2 to F4. See below for the notation of each phrase.

Phrase 1 (C1 to select)



Phrase 2 (D1 to select)



Phrase 3 (E1 to select)



Phrase 4 (F1 to select)



Phrase 5 (G1 to select)



Sitar – Phrases (leg) (KS) – Similar to the normal keyswitched phrase patch, but with a Kontakt script implemented for realistic legato playing. This patch is monophonic (one-voice) - use the “**legTime**” knob to change the time it takes to glide from one note to another, and the “**legAmount**” knob to change the depth of the legato effect: eg. when legAmount is set to a high value, the gliding between notes will be very pronounced, whereas at low values, it will be very subtle. Lastly, the “**RandomArt**” button, when activated, will trigger a random phrase on each played note.

Sitar – Glissandos (KS) – A variety of discrete glissandos played on the sitar at multiple pitches and speeds and in both major and minor.

C1: Switches all glissandos to very fast playing speed (default.)

D1: Switches all glissandos to 'standard' playing speed.

E1: Switches all glissandos to 'slow' playing speed.

G#2-G3: Major glissandos – note played determines key.

G#3-G4: Minor glissandos – note played determines key.

Tambura – Main Patch – Contains traditional plucking of the tambura, an instrument often used to accompany the sitar. This patch achieves the traditional low drone sound very easily, occupying the **C1 to G5** range. Multiple velocity layers were recorded as well as three round robins per note.

Baya – Main Patch (LH) – A highly playable, 10-inch drum meant to be played with the tabla for lower pitched hits. All strokes have nine velocity layers and three round robins per layer. This patch is meant to be played with the left hand on the keyboard, using the white OR black notes from **A1-B2**.

A1-B1: Downwards bend using the base of the palm (*ghe*)

C2-C#2: Open strike in the center of the drum (*ghe*)

D2-D#2: Slow upwards bend using the base of the palm (*ghe*)

E2-F#2: Fast upwards bend (*ghe*)

G2-G#2: Another fast upwards bend, starting at a higher pitch (*half ghe*)

A2-B2: Muted stroke with fingers (*ke*)

Tabla – Main Patch (RH) – The smaller, 6-inch drum that accompanies the baya and whose distinctive sound you will immediately recognize. All strokes have nine velocity layers and three round robins per layer. This patch is meant to be played with the right hand on the keyboard, using the white OR black notes from **C3-A#3**.

C3-C#3: Muted palm stroke in the center of the drum (*te*)

D3-E3: Pitched stroke on the edge of the drum (*di*)

F3-F#3: Muted stroke using two fingers (*nat*)

G3-G#3: Partially-muted stroke in the center of the drum, slightly pitched (*tin*)

A3-A#3: Pitched open strike in the center of the drum (*tun*)

Tabla and Baya – A combination of the Tabla and Baya patches.

(FX) Additive Morph – A keyboard sound resembling a synthesized piano or EP generated using FM/additive synthesis. Based on processed tampura samples and enhanced further with Kontakt 2 processing. This patch is playable across the entire key range.

(FX) Air Tampura – An airy sound with many overtones, created primarily from heavily granulizing and re-synthesizing tampura samples. Playable on all keys.

(FX) Air Tampura (RT) – A variation on the **Air Tampura** patch applying a release. For best results, play rhythmic staccatos.

(FX) Chikari Resonator – Highly dark and inharmonic droning originally derived from chikari strums. Best suited in the low range, but playable from **C1 – C4**.

(FX) Deep Chime – Pitched bell and chime-like sounds with metallic, inharmonic overtones. A lowpass filter is linked to velocity, so soft hits are darker while hard ones bring out upper harmonics. Playable from **C1 – C4**.

(FX) Electric Taraf (Multi) – Powerful, polyphonic lead patch that has a synthetic flavor, but also a very dynamic response to velocity.

(FX) Livewire Drone – An “electrified” set of pitched drones and vibrations with an aggressive, turbulent sound reminiscent of FM synthesis. This patch is playable from **A0 – C5** and is velocity-sensitive, with the ‘bite’ and distortion of the sound increasing at higher velocities.

(FX) Percussive Chime – A variation on the **Deep Chime** patch that is more suitable for standard playing and polyphony.

(FX) Shaped Kit – Heavily processed drum kit based on table and baya stroke that is ideal for electronic percussive parts and loops. This patch will change in tone at different velocity levels. See below for a list of hits.

B0-C1: Thick and aggressive kick/bass drum.

C#1-D#1: High-pitched rimshot or filler snare sound.

E1-F1: Dark, woody snare or strike sound.

F#1-G#1: Low-tuned hihat-like hit that opens up at higher velocities.

(FX) Shaped Kit Crushed – A modification of the **Shaped Kit** patch with further Kontakt processing: very gritty and lo-fi.

(FX) Soft ROMpler Sitar – An immediately playable sitar sound with attenuated harmonics modeled after the processing of hardware workstations and ROMplers. Playable from **C1 – C5**.

(FX) Soft Sitar – Modifies the **Sitar – Main** patch to include only the soft, thumbed plucks of the sitar at all velocity levels. Playable from **C1 – C5**.

(FX) String Constructor – Uses Kontakt scripting and processing to allow real-time morphing of the sitar's timbre. Use the "Set Timbre" knob or **CC5** to morph the sound, and the "Set Ambience" knob or **CC3** to control reverb level. Playable from **C1 – C5**.

(FX) Tabla Melodic – A marimba-like keyboard sound intended for normal polyphonic play, based on the pitched strokes of the table. Uses round robins, too! Playable from **C0 – C7**.

(FX) Trempad – Sitar tremolos manipulated into an infinitely sustaining, atmospheric pad. Use the modwheel (**CC1**) to lower and raise the low pass filter cutoff.

(FX) Twilight Air – Beautiful, soft poly/pad sound with a fast and airy attack followed by a subtle sustain.

(FX) Warp Field – Tonal drone/pad with intense movement and modulation. Playable from **C0 – C4**.

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

If you are experiencing difficulties with *Sitar Nation*, or would like to share any comments, questions, feedback, or experiences with the library (eg. projects you've used it on recently), please email support@impactsoundworks.com. We'd love to hear from you!

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