

ZITHERGEIST

HYBRID ZITHER INSTRUMENT



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Introduction

Zithergeist is a Kontakt library based on unconventional stringed instruments recorded in unconventional ways.

We have meticulously sampled note by note a number of atypical instruments like miniharps, mandolin of unknown origins and even an Apulian zither, known as 'pasta-cutting guitar', a guitar-resembling tool from the Southern province of Apulia (Italy), traditionally used to extrude pasta filaments from raw dough.

The recorded instruments feature multiple articulations, from finger plucks to hammered and muted effects, obtained experimenting with a variety of metallic objects applied to the strings. Moreover, each individual note can be mixed with 4 different layers of cinematic sound effects, derived from the same instrument and 'tuned' to the corresponding note. The result is an highly detailed, versatile instrument (up to 13 velocity levels per note/articulation and 4 round robins); you can play it as a realistic emulation of acoustic instruments and use it at the same time as a powerful, variegated tool to design your own sound effects. Zithergeist is a unique instrument for cinematic composition: whether you want to create minimal dark melodies or heavenly arpeggios, piercing high frequency tones or emotional chord progressions, cinematic droning effects, eastern-reminiscent melodies or adrenalinic rhythmical sequences, Zithergeist offers you an arsenal of instruments and editing possibilities.

Zithergeist comes with an arpeggiator, a string editor, a sound effects editor and a convolution reverb with hundreds of impulse responses (IRs) to further colour and sculpt the sound: with dozens of presets for each instrument, you can take instant inspiration and make your own presets on the fly.

Zithergeist also features 3 Kontakt instruments based on synthetic string sounds, created with a variety of physical modelling techniques, to blur the line between the acoustic and digital realm and offer further creative possibilities.

Zithergeist includes a separate set of Kontakt instruments purely focused on cinematic sound effects obtained by experimenting on the source instruments with bows and self-built mallets (500+ SFX 96 kHz - 24 bit)

SECTION 1 – Acoustic & Synthetic Strings



Articulations

Zithergeist features a variety of articulations for both the acoustic instruments as for the synthetic string instruments. The available articulations are **Plucked**, **Hammered** and **Muted** for MiniHarp and Unknown Mandolin (acoustic instruments) and **Plucked** and **Hammered** for Cotton Attack, Metal Vowel and Nylon String (synthetic instruments)

It is possible to switch from one articulation to another by using the keyswitches highlighted in red on the virtual keyboard.

C1 – Plucked ↔ Hammered articulation keyswitch.

D1 – Plucked/Hammered ↔ Muted articulation keyswitch

It is possible to switch between the articulations regardless of the editor screens that you've currently selected (SFX, String or Arp). Moreover, you can still use the keyswitches when the arpeggiator is activated (please see later section).

SFX Editor

For each instrument, both acoustic and synthetic, Zithergeist features a layer of sound effects (different for each instrument) that can be mixed with the notes. Each sound effect is tuned to the corresponding note, independently from the selected articulations. The sound effects are organized in 4 cyclic round robins, so that each time a note is played, a different sound effect is cyclically triggered to create more intricacy and variability.

Vol	Controls the volume of the SFX layer
Oct	Controls the pitch of the SFX samples by using a 1 octave step. Range is ± 3 octaves
LFO rate	Controls the rate of the LFO applied to the SFX volume. Range is 4 th to 32 th .
LFO Amount	Controls the amount of the LFO applied to the SFX. Knob set to the extreme left corresponds to no LFO applied
Shape	Controls the shape of the LFO.

String editor



The string editor features a number of editing functions like strings unison, detune, attack and sustain.

Unison

Unison allows you to trigger multiple samples of the same note simultaneously. You can adjust the number of simultaneous notes, the time gap between them, their mutual detuning and how they are spaced in the stereo image.

Gap	Controls the time gap between the notes when Strings > 1 . Instead of triggering multiple samples of the same note at once, a gap is put between them to give a 'strumming' effect
Detune	Controls the detune between the notes when Strings > 1.
Stereo	Controls the panning of the individual triggered notes when Strings > 1
Strings	Controls the number of notes that are triggered simultaneously. Range is 1 to 8

Tip: experiment with the Detune in Unison to create synth-like droning pads.

Detune

Detune allows you to apply a pitch drop to the triggered notes. You can control the amount of the pitch decrease as its length in time

Amount	Controls the amount of the pitch decrease applied to the notes
Time	Controls how long is the pitch decrease

Transient

Attack	Controls the attack of the note
Sustain	Controls the sustain of the note

Random bounce

When enabled, the instrument randomly switches from Plucked to Hammered articulation. Please note that you won't be able to listen the effect of Random Bounce if you're using the Muted articulation.

Tip: you might want to use this effect to create more interesting, unpredictable melodies.

Arpeggiator



Zithergeist features a monophonic arpeggiator which you can use with every articulation. You can program the Arpeggiator by using a graphic table where you can adjust the 'intensity' of the notes within the sequence. The velocity of the incoming notes (the ones you play from your keyboard) is used as the reference value in comparison of which the slider sets the intensity of the notes within the sequence.

Tip: try to use the arpeggiator with the muted articulation of the acoustic instruments to obtain eerie, cinematic sequences to evoke the sound of a ticking clock or create an anxiogenous rhythmical cue

Repeat	Controls how many times the same note is repeated within the sequence
Rate	Controls the resolution of the arpeggiated sequence
Swing	Controls the amount of swing in the sequence
Octave	Controls the number of octaves the same note is progressively transposed along the sequence
Steps	The number of steps in the sequence
Note order menu	Controls the sequential order in which the incoming notes are arpeggiated.
Arp On	Activates the arpeggiator
SFX Off	Prevents the samples in the SFX layer to be arpeggiated.

Convolution



Zithergeist features a Convolution module to further colour and sculpt the sound of the instruments. Very briefly, convolution is a sophisticated mathematical process that allows you to filter a sound within another one. It's very frequently used to carefully reproduce the acoustic reverberation of real environments (rooms, halls etc) or even hardware reverb units (spring reverbs, digital reverbs etc). However, by experimenting with the choice of the audio files used as IRs (Impulse Responses), it is possible to get creative with sound design and produce unusual effects. The convolution samples (IRs) used in Zithergeist fall under this umbrella: you can experiment by selecting more than 120 experimental samples, which have been divided in two categories, *texture* and *rhythm*. Moreover, you can use the convolution samples even outside of Kontakt, loading them in your favourite convolution reverb (please see Section 3).

Predelay	Controls the pre-delay of the convolution effect
Size	Controls the 'size' of the convolution sample; in Kontakt, this corresponds to a non-linear stretching of the sampler
HPF	Controls the high-pass filter applied to the convolution sample
LPF	Controls the low-pass filter applied to the convolution sample
Wet	Controls the amount of the applied Reverb
Texture switch	Shows the textural convolution samples within the menu
Rhythm switch	Shows the rhythmical convolution samples within the menu

Tip 1: try to adjust the Size on a rhythmical convolution sample to obtain interesting subtle rhythms

Tip 2: be careful with the Wet knob! Convolution could create unpleasant resonances at high volume. When exploring the convolution samples, always start with low Wet and increase the value little by little. We also recommend to experiment with HPF and LPF to get rid of unwanted resonances.

SECTION 2 - Cinematic SFX Instruments



Zithergeist features 8 separate Kontakt instruments focused solely on cinematic samples. These instruments are different from the Acoustic and Synthetic ones, they're are meant as a separate sound design tool to manipulate the designed cinematic SFX included in the library.

These instruments allow you to individually manipulate the samples, you can adjust the controls on the UI independently for each sample featured in the instrument.

Every time you play a sample, the corresponding waveform is displayed at the centre of the UI and all the controls of Sample Offset, Envelope, Filter, Pitch and Volume are update to the current ones.

The cinematic SFX instruments in Zithergeist feature the same Convolution module of the Acoustic and Synthetic instruments, please refer to previous sections for a complete description.

A,H,D,S,R	Controls the volume envelope for each sample
HPF	Controls the high-pass filter applied to the current sample
LPF	Controls the low-pass filter applied to the current sample
RES	Controls the filter resonance applied to the current sample
HPF/LPF switch	Sets the filter LFO to the HPF or LPF
LFO Rate	Controls the rate of the filter LFO
LFO Amount	Controls the amount of the filter LFO
Shape	Sets the shape of the filter LFO
Pitch	Controls the pitch of the current sample
Vol	Controls the volume of the current sample

SECTION 3 – Files and folder organization

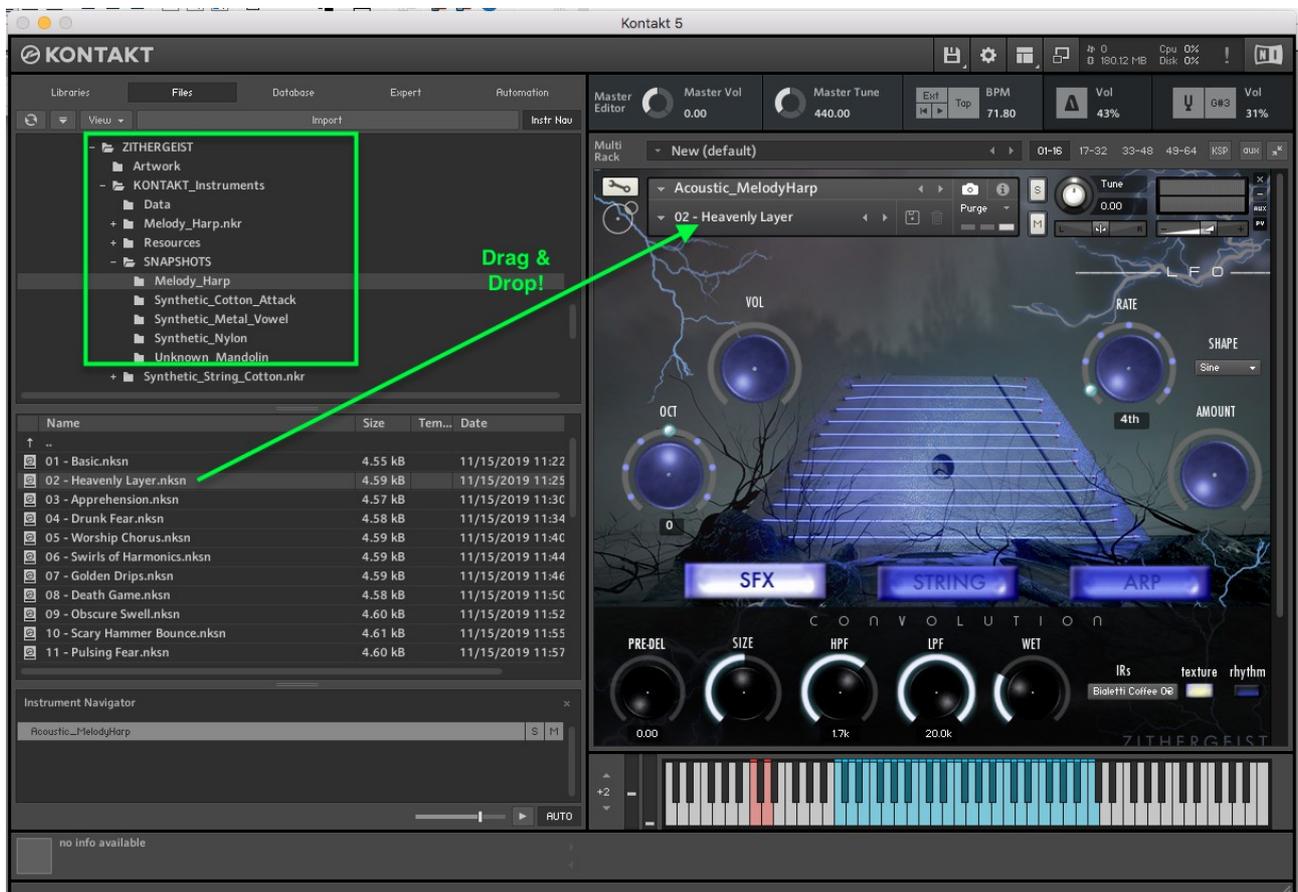
Even outside of Kontakt, you can access ALL the audio samples in Zithergeist. Please refer to the following table.

Acoustic Instruments samples (notes and sfx)	ZITHERGEIST → KONTAKT_Instruments → Zither
Cinematic SFX samples	ZITHERGEIST → ZITHERGEIST_SFX Samples_96kHz_24bit
Kontakt Instruments	ZITHERGEIST → KONTAKT_Instruments
Impulse Responses (IRs)	ZITHERGEIST → KONTAKT_Instruments → Resources → ir_samples
Snapshots	ZITHERGEIST → KONTAKT_Instruments → SNAPSHOTS

Loading and saving Snapshots

A number of presets (also known as Kontakt snapshots) are available for the Acoustic and Synthetic Kontakt instruments in Zithergeist. In order to use them, you need to manually drag and drop the snapshot .nksm files from the Kontakt browser to the UI. You won't find the snapshots from the snapshots browser, you need to locate them manually from the browser and drag them on the instrument UI. Please refer to the following file path:

ZITHERGEIST → KONTAKT_Instruments → SNAPSHOTS



Saving your own snapshots: if you want to save your own snapshots, Kontakt automatically creates a folder (corresponding to the instrument you are using) in following location:

Users → YourUserName → Documents → Native Instruments → User Content → Kontakt → Zithergeist → InstrumentName (Melody_Harp, Unknown Mandolin etc)

In this way, your own snapshots will appear in the snapshot browser. If you prefer to have them in the Zithergeist folder, you need to manually copy and paste them.