

PREPARED PIANO STABS

PAIN PIANO





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Introduction

Pain Piano is a sound design Kontakt library based on **prepared piano experiments**. We had the privilege to have access to Mitilini Pianoforti, an astonishing piano boutique in Naples (Southern Italy), where we have recorded a large collection of pianos including Mornington & Weston, a Collard from the 19th century, an old saloon-piano (Pumatico) and even a piano harmonium, a one of a kind instrument combining a traditional piano with an harmonium apparatus.

All of these instruments have been meticulously recorded by experimenting with a variety of objects on the strings to explore the endless sonic possibilities of the piano: snare tails, metallic sticks, screws, aluminium sheets, large cardboard panels have been used to carve out an unique horror SFX instrument that will set your cinematic productions apart. Horrific timbres, eerie atonal tones, stinging notes and hair-raising stabs are only a small part of the sounds you will find in Pain Piano.

Pain piano is for the composer of music for pictures looking for unique sounds to enrich his composition and drive the audience attention in an easy and intuitive way. Whether you're looking for dark, low atonal slams, tonal elements, old detuned piano notes, bowed piano strings or obsessive rhythms, the sounds and the multifunctional Kontakt instruments in Pain Piano got you covered.

Pain Piano also features a Piano Smasher functionality that allows you to create endless new sounds by randomizing the original samples: you can create cluster and tonal elements, transitions, dark impacts and many other useful cinematic effects. You can even choose which weapon to use to virtually smash the piano (hammer, katana and dynamite) and experiment with the different sound signatures corresponding to each one!

Pain Piano features also a large set of tempo synced loops (130+) , that can be individually or globally tuned to a specific root key.

Pain Piano includes a Convolution Reverb module featuring 120+ IRs (Impulse Responses) to further sculpt the sound and create your own, unique effects.

Pain Piano includes a total of 400+ high resolution, royalty free sounds (.wav 96 kHz, 24 bit) plus 8 Kontakt Instruments.

Kontakt Instruments: SAMPLE PANEL



Pain Piano features 8 Kontakt instruments that allow you to individually manipulate the samples: each sample featured in the instrument can be independently edited by adjusting the controls on the UI reported in the figure above.

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 updated to the current ones.

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

- Typology of samples in the instruments

Here's the list of Kontakt instruments you will find in Pain Piano and the corresponding samples featured in each one of them:

01 – STABS & CLUSTERS	Atonal, clusters, cinematic slams. Mostly high impact sounds with a dark, undefinable timbre
02 – TONAL STABS	Tonal samples in a specific root key and with different prepared piano configurations (different object to prepare the piano)
03 – TONAL STABS	Tonal samples in a specific root key and with different prepared piano configurations (different object to prepare the piano)
04 – GHOSTLY PIANO	Tonal samples in a specific root key mostly sampled from saloon pianos and very old pianos.
05 – BOWED PIANO	Tonal samples in a specific root key, obtained by bowing the piano string with a cello horsehair.
06 – RIPPED STRINGS	Atonal samples obtained by sliding a variety of objects (chains, snare tails, iron sticks etc) along the strings.
07 – TEMPO SYNC LOOPS	Tempo synched loops in a specific key
08 – TEMPO SYNC LOOPS	Tempo synched loops in a specific key

Instruments 02, 03, 04, 05, 07 and 08 feature **tonal samples**; tonal samples are meant as sounds whose root key is clearly perceivable and that be can heard as ‘notes’, rather than sound effects. In these instruments, each sampled is tuned to match the corresponding key, so the samples on C are tuned to C, the ones on D tuned to D and so on. Don’t expect a perfect chromatic organization of the samples along the keyboard: this means that although the samples are mapped consistently with the corresponding root key, the chromatic distances between one octave and the following/preceding one are not as you’d expect from a conventional library. This is because, although being ‘notes’, these sounds have been recorded by heavily experimenting with altering the timbre of the piano, so a lot of overtones and ‘alterations’ occurred and ‘polluted’ (in a positive way!) the original, clean timbre of the note. To summarize, just bear in mind that when you press E2 or E3 in the aforementioned instruments, you’ll hear a sound that is rooted on E, but not necessarily sounding perfectly E2 or E3.

IMPORTANT: You’re totally free to alter the value of the pitch for each sample by using the pitch knob from the UI, however by doing this you will change the original tuning of the samples and their consistent mapping according with their original root note and the corresponding keys on the virtual keyboard. You can restore the proper tuning by using control+click (cmd+click on Mac) on the Pitch knob, however keep in mind that restoring the pitch for all the individual samples can be tedious. We recommend to save your custom settings as a new instrument.

Instruments 01 and 06 feature mostly atonal samples and, generally, sounds where the root note is not clearly perceivable. Here you can go freely with altering the pitch of the samples as there’s no tuning or consistent mapping involved that you need to keep preserved.

- *Global Pitch Mode*

Global Pitch Mode is activated by pressing the button GLOBAL located in the upper right corner of the Sample Panel.



When activated, Global Pitch allows to control the pitch of every sample in the instrument simultaneously. Therefore, changing the value of the pitch for the current sample, will affect the pitch for any other sample in the instrument.

Global Pitch acts differently depending of which one of the 8 Kontakt Instruments you’re using. For instruments 02, 03, 04, 05, 07 and 08, Global Pitch **tunes the sample to a specific root key** (C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B). In facts, as these instruments feature tonal samples, where the fundamental frequency is clearly perceivable, it is possible to **simultaneously tune all the samples** to a root key of your choice.

Moreover, when Global Pitch is activated, an Octave Shifter slider appears on the left: this allows you to shift the tuning of -2 to +2 octaves from the root key you've set.

For instruments 01 and 06, which are composed of atonal samples, Global Pitch will allow to globally change the relative pitch of the samples in the range -36 to +36 semitones. For example, if the Global Pitch knob is set to +11, all the samples will be pitch shifted of +11 semitones from each value set in the UI.



It is important to highlight that for ALL the instruments, the amount of pitch shift in Global Pitch mode is RELATIVE to the value set in the UI when Global Pitch is off. Therefore, when Global Pitch is deactivated, the pitch of each sample is restored to the initial UI setting.

Kontakt Instruments: PIANO SMASH



SMASH is a utility to create a virtually endless number of new sounds from the original ones, by using a randomization functionality. Just give it a try by pressing the big round button on the right (the one under the “Smash it!” text): the button lights up and you will hear an aggressive stab effect given by a number of random samples that are played simultaneously (they’ll show highlighted in red on the virtual keyboard). The button light slowly fades out and you’re ready to fire another stab of random notes.

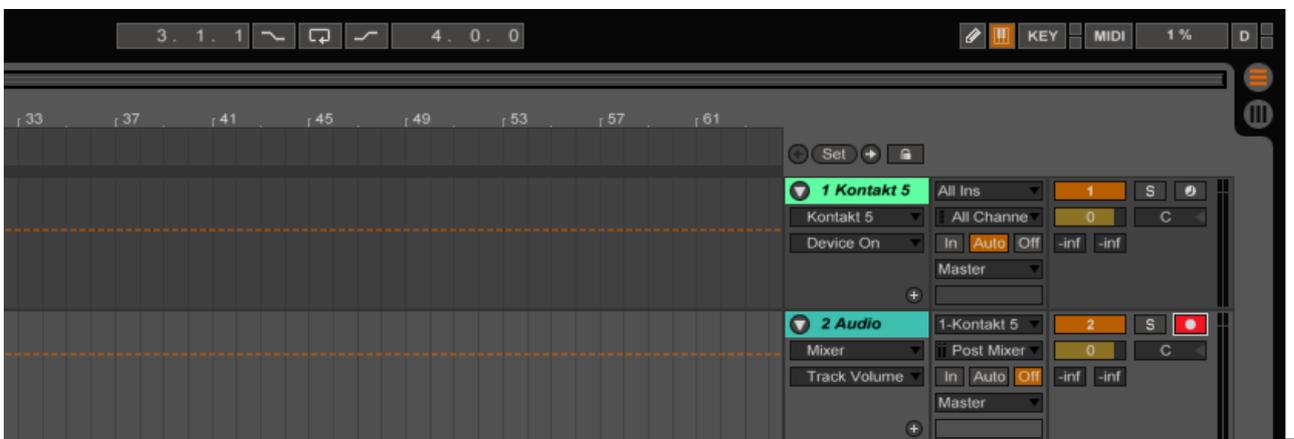
The two knobs labeled as “Brutality” and “Weirdness” regulate some parameters of this random notes selection. In particular, Brutality regulates the **number of notes played simultaneously** in the stab (from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 10), whereas Weirdness sets the **amount of randomization of the pitch and pan for each triggered sample**. This means that if Weirdness is set to 0, the random samples are triggered with the same pitch value set in the UI. As Weirdness increases, each of this samples is pitched and panned in a random way at each stab. This functionality can be particularly good to obtain horror clusters, detuned samples and organic impacts.

However, if you set your instrument in GLOBAL PITCH MODE, all the random samples will be played in the selected root key, so you’ll hear a tonal stab (for the tonal instruments), in other words a sound with a well defined pitch. This can be very interesting if you need a powerful element that fits the tonality of the track you’re working on.

On the left side of the screen, right under the text “Choose your weapon”, you can select three different tools to virtually smash the piano: **hammer** (default), **katana** and **dynamite**. Hammer produces sharp, aggressive sounds with a strong attack. Katana produces something more similar to a transition/whoosh, whereas dynamite creates long, dark explosion sounds.

Obviously nothing of this has been done in our recording sessions! There’s a number of effects/settings that activate or deactivate in background according to the weapon you select that will produce a different kind of sound according with the weapon.

Given the random nature of SMASH, we recommend using it this way: select an audio track in your DAW project and **set it to receive the audio input from the MIDI track where you have Kontakt with Pain Piano**. Hit record and have fun smashing the piano in different ways: you’ll end up with a long audio file of new sounds that you can subsequently trim and save in your custom sounds folder.



SMASH is meant as a straightforward sound design tool to have fun while creating endless combinations of sounds.

We encourage you to experiment with different settings of the Octave Shift in Global Pitch Mode when smashing the piano, you’ll end up with an incredible lot of new original sounds!

- *Tempo synced loops*

Instruments 07 and 08 feature a collection of tempo synced loops that have been recorded by playing rhythms in a variety of ways. Subtle rhythms played with drum sticks on muted strings, syncopated bowed rhythms, atonal rhythms obtained by putting chains on the strings, you will find a lot of unusual and interesting rhythmic material.

All of this loops are tempo synced in Kontakt, so they will automatically stretch up/down to adjust to the master tempo in you DAW. Most of such loops are in a specific key, so the instrument is exactly the same as for instruments 02, 03, 04 and 05. Here you can take full advantage of the Global Pitch Mode by tuning all the loops to the same root key and overlap them, playing them against each other and combining them in several ways.

You can also try the SMASH function in Global Pitch and you end up with a huge number of new interesting loops.

Convolution

Pain Piano 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 Pain Piano 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.

Pre-delay	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.

