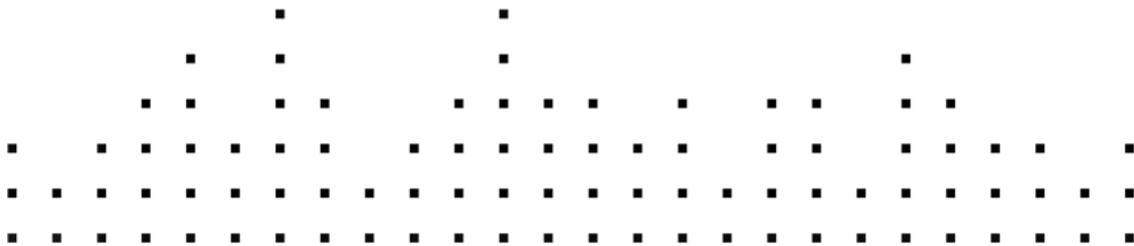




# KONTAKT 5

Getting Started



The information in this document is subject to change without notice and does not represent a commitment on the part of Native Instruments GmbH. The software described by this document is subject to a License Agreement and may not be copied to other media. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced or otherwise transmitted or recorded, for any purpose, without prior written permission by Native Instruments GmbH, hereinafter referred to as Native Instruments.

“Native Instruments”, “NI” and associated logos are (registered) trademarks of Native Instruments GmbH.

Mac, Mac OS, GarageBand, Logic, iTunes and iPod are registered trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

Windows, Windows Vista and DirectSound are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

All other trade marks are the property of their respective owners and use of them does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement by them.

Document authored by: Adam Hanley

Document version: 1.0 (06/2011)

Special thanks to the Beta Test Team, who were invaluable not just in tracking down bugs, but in making this a better product.

---

**Germany**

Native Instruments GmbH  
Schlesische Str. 28  
D-10997 Berlin  
Germany  
[www.native-instruments.de](http://www.native-instruments.de)

**USA**

Native Instruments North America, Inc.  
5631 Hollywood Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90028  
USA  
[www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com)



© Native Instruments GmbH, 2011. All rights reserved.

---

---

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome to KONTAKT 5</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1	What is KONTAKT? .....	6
1.2	The KONTAKT Documentation .....	6
1.2.1	About this Getting Started Guide .....	6
1.2.2	Other Documentation .....	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Setup</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1	Using KONTAKT as a Stand-alone Application .....	8
2.1.1	Audio Configuration .....	10
2.1.2	Latency Optimization .....	11
2.1.3	MIDI Configuration .....	12
2.2	Using KONTAKT as a Plug-in .....	13
<b>3</b>	<b>User Interface</b> .....	<b>14</b>
3.1	Main Control Panel .....	15
3.2	The Rack .....	16
3.3	Browser .....	17
3.3.1	Files Tab .....	18
3.3.2	Libraries Tab .....	20
3.4	Info Pane .....	21
3.5	On-Screen Keyboard .....	22
<b>4</b>	<b>First Steps in KONTAKT</b> .....	<b>24</b>
4.1	Finding and Loading Instruments .....	24
4.1.1	Using the Libraries Tab .....	25
4.1.2	Using the Files Tab .....	27
4.2	Playing Instruments .....	28
4.3	Combining Instruments into Multis .....	29
4.4	Setting Basic Instrument Parameters .....	30

---

4.4.1	Setting Audio and MIDI Ports .....	31
4.4.2	Adjusting Volume and Panning .....	32
4.4.3	Using Mute and Solo .....	33
4.4.4	Performance Views .....	33
<b>5</b>	<b>What's Next? .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Troubleshooting .....</b>	<b>36</b>
6.1	Instrument Receives MIDI Data, but no Sound is Audible .....	36
6.2	Instrument Does not Receive MIDI Data .....	37

# 1 Welcome to KONTAKT 5

We at Native Instruments would like to thank you for purchasing KONTAKT – it's because of customers like you that we can continue developing ground-breaking music software. We hope that this Getting Started guide, along with the Application Reference provided in electronic form, will provide you with all the information you need to make use of KONTAKT 5's features to their full capacity.

## 1.1 What is KONTAKT?

Simply put, KONTAKT is one of the leading sampling solutions in the audio industry. As such, it allows you to play back and process audio samples – but that doesn't even begin to convey the full range of its capabilities. With KONTAKT, you can create sophisticated sample-based virtual instruments, process their audio signals with powerful DSP effects, build complex performance setups with extensive modulation routings, and not least gain access to a huge number of third-party sample libraries. And it's easy, too – KONTAKT's user interface lets you fully concentrate on the sections that are relevant to the task at hand, while not getting tangled up in other technicalities.

## 1.2 The KONTAKT Documentation

KONTAKT comes with a number of diverse documentation resources, both in printed and electronic form. We won't suggest you should go ahead and read through all of them right now, but you might want to get an overview of what's there. That way, whenever you're stuck at some point, you'll know where to look for help.

### 1.2.1 About this Getting Started Guide

The purpose of this Getting Started document is to guide you through the basic steps of setting up KONTAKT and to get you acquainted with the fundamental aspects of its user interface. After reading it, you should be able to start KONTAKT both in stand-alone mode and as a plug-in in your sequencer, find, load and play sounds, and know your way around the user interface. Because of this, we recommend that you take the time to read this guide in its entirety.

## 1.2.2 Other Documentation

We have prepared a wealth of information about all aspects of KONTAKT, most of which you can find in the form of PDF documents within the KONTAKT installation directory on your hard drive.



When you're using KONTAKT as a stand-alone application, you can access the documentation items listed below via the [Help](#) menu. This menu can be found at the top of the application window (Windows) or the Mac OS X Finder, respectively. Otherwise, just locate the installation directory on your workspace and open the files with a PDF reader of your choice.

In addition to this guide, KONTAKT 5 comes with the following documents:

- The **Application Reference** is the most important documentation resource. It provides thorough descriptions of all user interface elements, options, tools, editors, and sound processing modules of KONTAKT. You can use it both as a reference manual and a thorough guide to working with the application.
- The **Library Manual** lists and describes the contents of the extensive library of ready-to-play instruments that comes with KONTAKT.
- The **KSP Reference Manual** documents the built-in scripting language, which allows Instrument creators to embed scripts that can dynamically alter MIDI data and parameters in their patches. As such, it's targeted towards advanced users.

## 2 Setup

Once the installation process has finished, you should find the KONTAKT 5 application directory on your hard drive. It contains the KONTAKT 5 stand-alone application, and the documentation resources as described in the previous chapter.

On **Windows**, the KONTAKT 5 application directory can be found here (provided no custom installation path was selected during installation):

*C:\Program Files\Native Instruments\Kontakt 5*

On **Mac OS X**, the KONTAKT 5 application directory can be found here (provided no custom installation path was selected during installation):

*Mac HD:/Applications/Native Instruments/Kontakt 5*

Before you start KONTAKT for the first time, it's worth explaining that it has two fundamentally different modes of operation:

- You can run KONTAKT as a 'normal' application, in which case it will behave like any other program on your computer – we refer to this as the stand-alone version in the documentation.
- Alternatively, use KONTAKT as a plug-in within your sequencer or DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) application.

The most important difference between these modes concerns the way in which KONTAKT handles MIDI and audio streams. In stand-alone operation, KONTAKT will address your MIDI and audio hardware directly (which may require you to specify some details about your hardware and drivers), while in the case of using KONTAKT as a plug-in, these will be taken care of by the sequencer host application. The following sections will explain both modes in more detail.

### 2.1 Using KONTAKT as a Stand-alone Application

When you launch the KONTAKT 5 application, KONTAKT will start as a stand-alone program that provides its own application menu, just like any other application on your computer. In this mode, KONTAKT will receive MIDI data from one or more ports of a MIDI interface and send audio signals directly to your audio interface. This can be very useful if you don't need the additional functionality of a full-blown sequencer environment for your task at hand, for instance when you're using KONTAKT as a live performance instrument

or as a sampling host on a computer dedicated to sample playback. Also, when you're creating or editing complex sample libraries yourself, using the stand-alone version is often easier than opening KONTAKT in a sequencer.

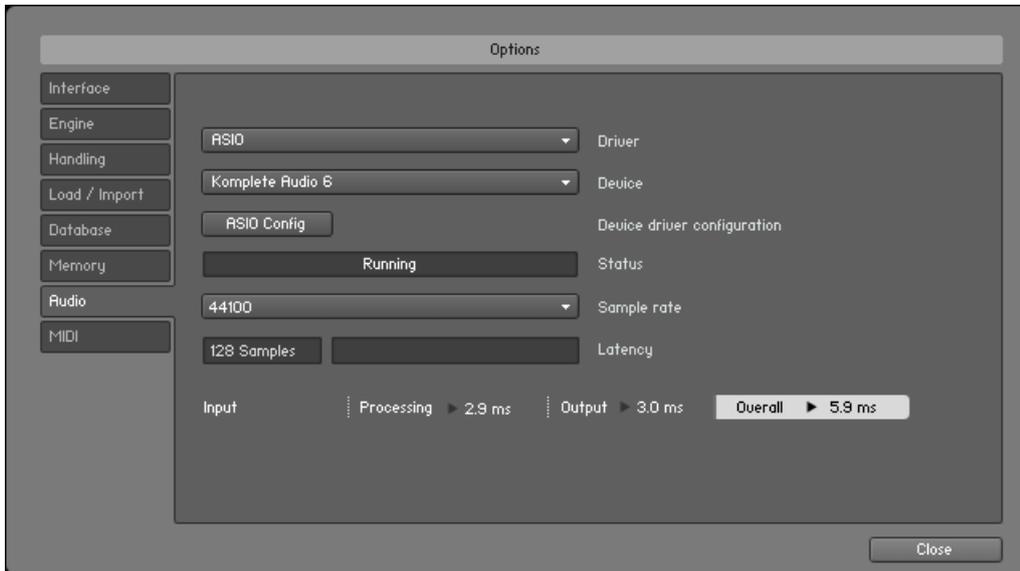


Click the Options button to open the Options dialog.

When you start KONTAKT in stand-alone mode for the first time, both audio and MIDI will need to be configured. In order to make KONTAKT receive MIDI notes from your keyboard and play sound in response, you'll first have to tell it which hardware it should use. This is done via the Options dialog, which should appear automatically upon the first start. You can also open this dialog at any time by clicking on the [Options](#) button at the top of the main window. This is the central place for configuring all aspects of KONTAKT's user interface and its sample playback engine. In this chapter, we'll only describe the [Audio](#) and [MIDI](#) tabs at the bottom; you can find thorough explanations of the other options in the KONTAKT Application Reference.

## 2.1.1 Audio Configuration

On the **Audio** tab of the Options dialog, you can specify which audio device KONTAKT should use for playback and adjust global playback parameters.



Audio tab of the Options dialog.

The dialog provides the following options:

- **Driver:** With this drop-down menu, you can select which of your operating system's device driver architectures KONTAKT should use. Most professional audio devices provide ASIO (Windows) or CoreAudio (Mac OS X) drivers.
- **Device:** This menu lists all connected audio interfaces that match the driver architecture chosen above. Select the audio interface that you'd like to use for playback here.
- **Device driver configuration:** On Windows, clicking this button will open your audio device's driver options window, thus allowing you to access settings such as the audio buffer size (latency). If this button is active, the **Latency** slider in KONTAKT's Audio options (see below) is unavailable. On Mac OS X, the **ASIO Config** button is not present.

- **Sample rate:** This drop-down menu allows you to set the global playback sample rate at which KONTAKT will operate. Common values are 44100 Hz for music and 48000 Hz for film production. Note that this doesn't have anything to do with the sampling rate at which your samples have been recorded – if the playback rate doesn't match a sample's recording rate, KONTAKT will handle all necessary conversion steps transparently for you.
- **Latency:** Displays the size of the audio playback buffer in samples. If, on Windows, the selected audio interface does not come with its own driver control panel, a slider that lets you adjust the audio playback buffer is present next to the latency display. For these devices, as well as on Mac OS X, use the slider to adjust the audio playback buffer, and, thus, the audio latency. Small values will shorten the delay between pressing a key and hearing the resulting sound (this is called latency), but may cause drop-outs and stuttering when playing a lot of voices at the same time. Conversely, setting this to a higher value will make playback more reliable at the cost of more latency.

### 2.1.2 Latency Optimization

The load that typical digital audio calculations generate on your processor is often not constant and predictable; parameter changes, additional voices or other processes can all cause momentary peaks in the load, which can result in drop-outs or other audio artifacts if not properly compensated for. That's why audio programs don't send the audio signals they generate directly to the hardware, but write them to a short buffer in memory instead, whose contents are in turn being sent to the actual hardware. This concept allows the program to bridge short irregularities in the stream calculation and thus be more resistant to processing peaks.

Of course, this “safety net” comes at a price – the buffering causes a delay, known as latency, between the triggering of a note and the actual sound. This delay gets longer with increasing buffer sizes. Hence, it's vital to tune the buffer size in order to find a good compromise between latency and playback reliability. The optimal value depends on such diverse factors as your CPU, memory and hard disk access times, your audio hardware and drivers, and your operating system environment.

In order to find the optimal buffer size for your system, we recommend that you do the following:

1. Begin by setting the **latency to a** value between 384 and 512 samples.

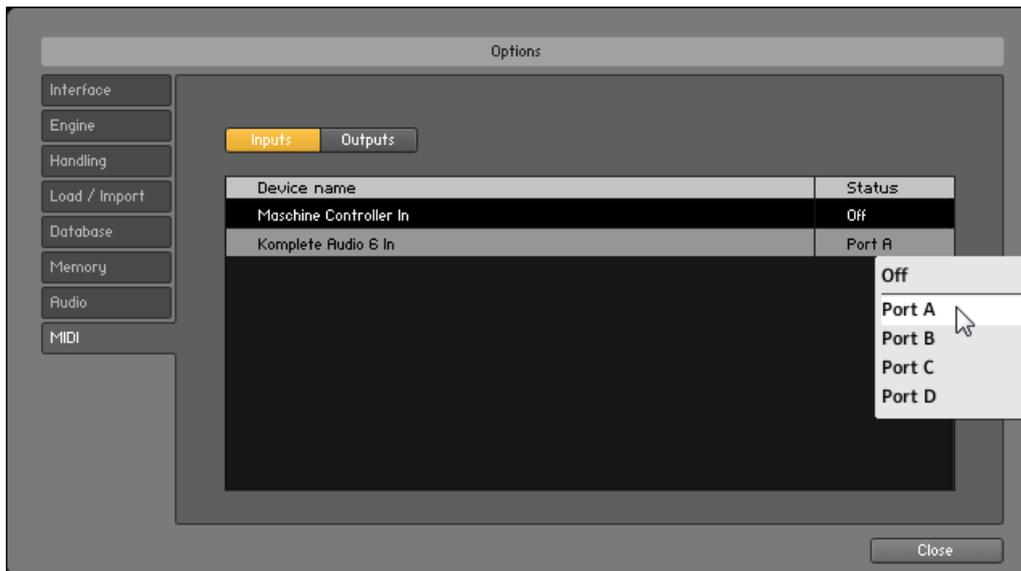
2. Gradually decrease the value during your normal work.
3. When you begin to notice drop-outs, increase the buffer again by a small amount. This setting should suit your current setup.



Generally, it's a good idea to have as few other applications as possible running in the background when working with audio software. Also, if you can't get below a certain buffer size without getting drop-outs, consult the documentation of your audio hardware to find out whether you can access it via an alternative driver architecture, as some architectures allow more efficient low-level access to the hardware than others.

### 2.1.3 MIDI Configuration

The **MIDI** tab of the Options dialog provides a list of all MIDI inputs and outputs that have been found on your system. These are ports of physical MIDI interfaces connected to your computer, but also any virtual MIDI ports that may be provided by drivers or other applications to facilitate inter-application MIDI communication.



Selecting a MIDI port in the MIDI tab of the Options dialog.

In order to make KONTAKT respond to MIDI data from the outside, you'll have to enable one or more ports that appear in the inputs list of the **MIDI** tab.

1. Make sure the **Inputs** button is highlighted and identify the port(s) that you intend to use for MIDI input in the list.
2. If the **Status** field on the right side of an entry reads *Off*, click on that value and assign one of the MIDI port identifiers (A-D). This enables the respective port, which will later be identified by the selected letter throughout the user interface.

## 2.2 Using KONTAKT as a Plug-in

The plug-in version allows you to use KONTAKT inside any audio and MIDI recording program that is capable of hosting VST, AU, or RTAS plug-in instruments. That way, you can run multiple instances of KONTAKT side-by-side along with your other sound generators and effect plug-ins, trigger them with the data of MIDI tracks from within your sequencer, and directly feed their audio output into the signal flow of your recording program's virtual mixer.

Depending on your operating system and choices upon installation, KONTAKT is available in VST, Audio Units, and RTAS plug-in formats. Refer to the documentation of your sequencer to find out which of these formats you can use. If you have enabled the appropriate format at installation time, KONTAKT 5 should appear in the plug-in selection list inside your sequencer. If it doesn't, run the installer again from the installation DVD and make sure the appropriate plug-in is marked for installation.



The way in which virtual instrument plug-ins are integrated into the workflow very much depends on your sequencer; consult its documentation to find out how to instantiate and work with the KONTAKT plug-in.

### 3 User Interface

Once KONTAKT has been properly configured, you'll be greeted by its main window. This is the central workspace in which you can find and manage files, create and open Instruments, combine them into Multi setups, and delve into the inner workings of their sound structures.



The main KONTAKT interface, still empty.

The main window is subdivided into a number of sections, each of which incorporates functions for carrying out a specific group of tasks. In the following sections, we'll briefly explain the interface parts that are used for loading and playing instruments with KONTAKT; for a much more thorough description of all aspects of the user interface, please refer to the Application Reference.

## 3.1 Main Control Panel

At the top of the KONTAKT window, you'll find a row of 9 squared buttons. This is called the Main Control Panel. As the name implies, it provides access to a range of essential control functions; some of the buttons toggle the visibility of certain parts of the user interface, others open drop-down menus or dialogs that give access to further commands and options. What follows is a short description of what each button does, from left to right; please refer to the Application Reference for detailed information about the functions of the Main Control Panel.



The Main Control Panel at the top of the window provides access to various essential features and dialogs.

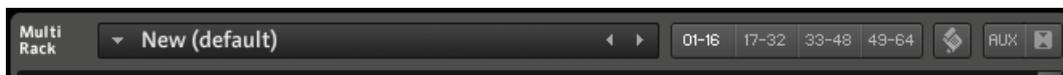
- **Browse:** Toggles the visibility of the [Browser](#) section, which is the vertical bar on the left side of the main window. If you know that you won't need the functions of the [Browser](#) for a longer period of time, you can save desktop space by hiding it. The [Browser](#) is explained in section [↑3.3, Browser](#) of this guide and in the Application Reference.
- **Master:** Toggles the visibility of the [Master Editor](#), where you can adjust various global parameters such as overall volume, tempo, an internal metronome or master tuning.
- **Info:** Toggles the visibility of the [Info Pane](#), which will appear at the bottom of the window. The [Info Pane](#) is explained in section [↑3.4, Info Pane](#) of this guide.
- **Output:** Toggles the visibility of the [Outputs](#) section, which will appear at the bottom of the window. Here you can configure KONTAKT's internal audio channels, adjust output levels, and add global insert and send effects.
- **Keub:** Toggles the visibility of the [On-Screen Keyboard](#), which is explained in section [↑3.5, On-Screen Keyboard](#) of this manual.
- **Quick:** Toggles the visibility of the Quick-Load browser, more information for which can be found in the Application Reference.

- **Files:** Opens a drop-down menu that consists of various commands for loading, saving and managing KONTAKT files, such as Instruments, Banks and Multis.
- **Options:** Opens the Options dialog, where you can adjust a wide range of preferences that pertain to the user interface and the sample playback engine of KONTAKT.
- **Purge:** Opens a drop-down menu of options related to the purge facility, which allows you to temporarily unload samples from memory that are currently not in use.

## 3.2 The Rack

The Rack is the part of KONTAKT's user interface that takes up the most screen space; it's the large area below the Main Control Panel. Whenever you add an Instrument, either by creating a new one or by loading an existing one, it will appear in the form of a horizontal header here. As the name suggests, the Rack is designed to resemble a stack of 19" studio equipment; that is, any additional Instruments will appear alongside the headers that are already there. This way, you can easily load up to 64 Instruments (distributed across pages of 16 each) at the same time into a KONTAKT instance. Such a combination of Instruments is called a Multi, and you can save and recall it just like an Instrument.

When you first start KONTAKT, the Rack will be just an empty space, indicating that no Instruments are currently loaded. In order to properly utilize KONTAKT, you'll need to either load an Instrument, create a new one, or open a Multi. Chapter [↑4.1, Finding and Loading Instruments](#) of this guide explains how you find and load existing Instruments on your hard disk.



The Rack header controls.

On top of the Rack, you'll find a row of user controls; most of these don't actually change anything in your Multi, but affect which kinds of information will be visible in the Rack. Next to a text line that shows the name of your currently loaded Multi, there are four page buttons that allow you to navigate to one of the Rack pages of 16 Instruments each.



It should be noted that this section only covers what we call the Multi Instrument mode of the Rack, which is the default when you're starting up KONTAKT. There's another mode, called Edit, in which the Rack will display the internal structure of an Instrument as a stack of various editors. As long as you're using KONTAKT as an instrument player only, you don't need to concern yourself with the Edit mode; as usual, it's explained in its entirety in the Application Reference.

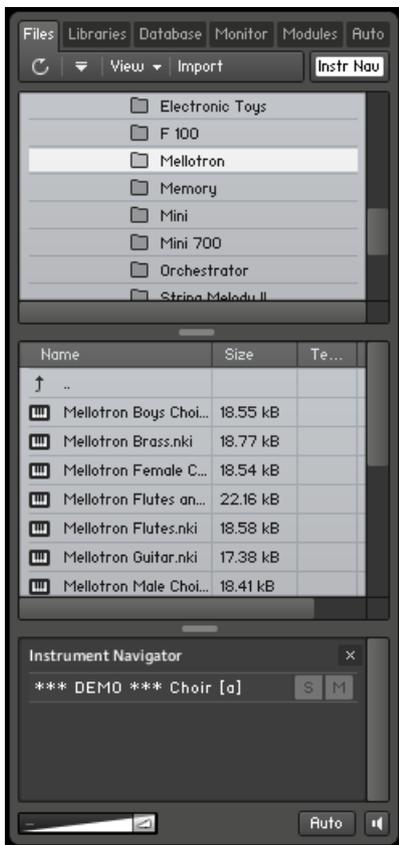
### 3.3 Browser

The Browser is the vertical pane on the left side of the window; if you don't see it, click on the [Browse](#) button in the Main Control Panel to make it visible. The main purpose of the Browser is to gather functions that let you organize and browse any number of KONTAKT-relevant files in a variety of different ways. Among other things, you can use it to navigate through your file system in order to locate and load objects, access the KONTAKT libraries installed on your hard disk in a quick and intuitive manner, import sampler programs from third-party formats, and access KONTAKT's powerful Database.

The functions provided by the Browser are spread across a number of sections and subsections that you can access via the tabs on its top. In this guide, we'll limit ourselves to brief explanations of the [Files](#) and [Libraries](#) tabs, which offer access to your file system and your collection of KONTAKT libraries, respectively. All other functions of the Browser are described in detail within the respective chapter of the Application Reference.

### 3.3.1 Files Tab

When you click on the **Files** tab, the Browser will switch to a two- or possibly three-pane view (the third pane at the bottom can be switched on and off). This tab allows you to navigate through your file system in a tree-based view; this kind of navigation is similar to the file browsing of your operating system.



Files tab of the Browser. From top to bottom, you can see the Container Pane, the Objects Pane, and the Instrument Navigator.

The topmost pane, called the Container Pane, and the one just below it always operate in unison. As its name suggests, the Container Pane displays the items in your file system that contain other objects – such as volumes and directories – within a hierarchical tree view. When KONTAKT finds other containers (such as subdirectories) in one of these entries, a small icon will appear next to its name. A plus sign (“+”) indicates that the sub-contents are currently hidden from view; click on it to “fold out” the container and access its contents. That way, you can quickly navigate to any directory on your hard disk.



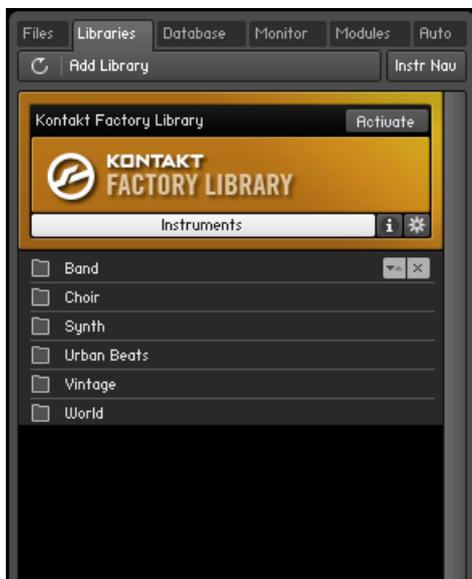
By clicking the plus signs next to the folder icons, you can quickly browse your computer's file system.

Once you've located a directory with files that are relevant to KONTAKT (such as Instruments), highlight it by clicking on its name in the Container Pane. The pane below it, called the Object Pane, will now display the files in that particular directory as a flat list. If this list is longer than the pane, just click and drag the scrollbar on its right side to scroll down. Once you've found what you've been looking for, either double-click the file or click and drag it over into the Rack in order to load it into KONTAKT.

As mentioned, you may notice a third section below the Container Pane and Object Pane; if not, you can show it by clicking the [Instr Nav](#) button in the upper right corner of the tab. This pane is called the [Instrument Navigator](#) and offers a handy overview list of all Instruments in your current Multi. Clicking on an entry jumps directly to that Instrument's header within the Rack. Using the [S](#) and [M](#) buttons, you can quickly toggle the solo and mute status of Instruments; these are explained in section [↑4.4.3, Using Mute and Solo](#) of this guide.

### 3.3.2 Libraries Tab

The [Libraries](#) tab of the Browser provides an immediate and intuitive way of accessing your collection of commercial KONTAKT-based libraries that are installed on your hard disk. This includes the sound library distributed with KONTAKT 5, as well as any third-party libraries in KONTAKT or KONTAKT PLAYER format.



You can access the KONTAKT sound library via the Libraries tab of the Browser.

In contrast to the [Files](#) tab, where you have to know where to look for the files that you want to load, the [Libraries](#) tab shows all installed libraries in a flat, easily accessible list – regardless of where they are located on your hard disk.

1. To access the contents of the KONTAKT library, just click on the [Instruments](#) button on its header; its directory structure will then show up below the header. You can navigate through the contents in the same way you do in the panes of the [Files](#) tab, the only difference being that in this case, both subdirectories and loadable objects appear in the same list.
2. Once you have found the Instrument or Multi you wish to load, double-click on it or drag it into an empty space in the Rack.

## 3.4 Info Pane

The Info Pane is a text bar at the bottom of the main window; if you don't see it, click on the [Info](#) button in the Main Control Panel. The purpose of the Info Pane is to provide you with a short description of whatever your mouse cursor is currently pointing at; whenever you're not sure what a specific button, knob or other element of the user interface does, just point your mouse at it and read the description that shows up in the Info Pane below the Rack.



The Info Pane provides helpful descriptions of KONTAKT's user interface elements.

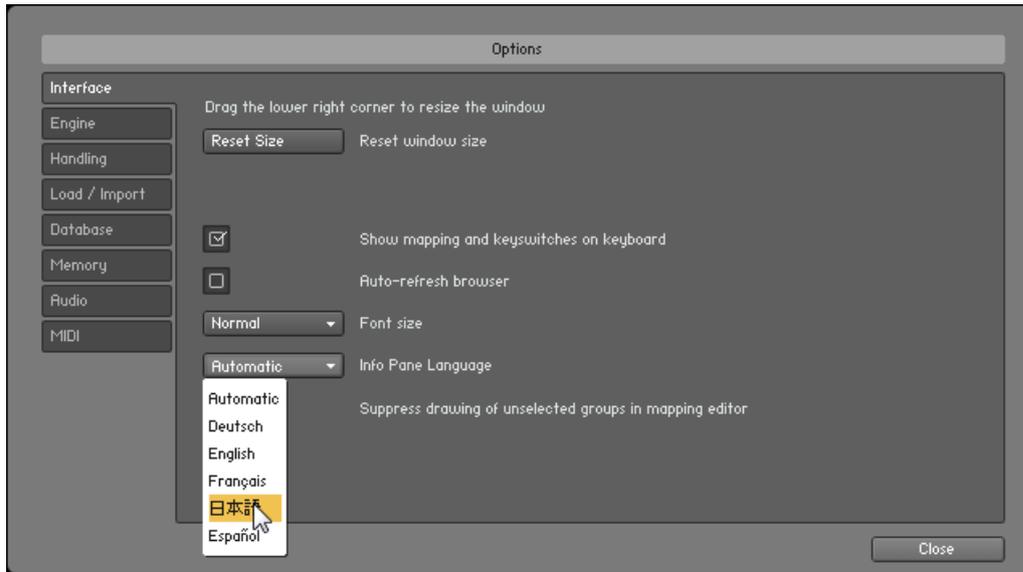
Provided that the Browser is visible as well, the Info Pane will be separated into two sections. In addition to the user interface descriptions, it will also display various details about the item that's currently selected in the Object Pane of the Browser, if any.

### Switching the Info Pane Display Language

Info Pane texts are available in English, German, Japanese, French, and Spanish. If your operating system is using one of these languages, KONTAKT will detect this and set the Info Pane language according to the language of your operating system. If your operating system is using another language, the Info Pane will be set to English. Alternatively, you can manually switch the Info Pane to a language of your choice:

1. Open the [Options](#) dialog by clicking the [Options](#) button in KONTAKT's header bar.
2. Select the [Interface](#) tab.

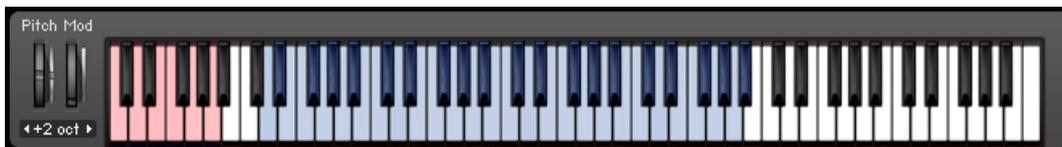
3. In the Interface view, select the language of your choice from the [Info Pane Language](#) menu.



4. Close the dialog by clicking the [Close](#) button.
5. Quit and restart KONTAKT.  
→ The Info Pane will now display texts in the language you have selected.

## 3.5 On-Screen Keyboard

The On-Screen Keyboard appears just below the Rack when you click on the [Keyb](#) button in the Main Control Panel.



The On-Screen Keyboard displays incoming MIDI notes and the key range of the selected Instrument.

This virtual piano keyboard offers several functions, the most obvious of which is that you can trigger notes by clicking on its keys. This is the equivalent of pressing a key on your master keyboard. The notes will be sent to the Instrument that's currently selected in the Rack (just click on an Instrument Header to select it), or to the topmost one if none is selected. Conversely, when you play notes on your MIDI keyboard, you'll notice that they're being mirrored on the On-Screen Keyboard; this is an easy way to ensure that KONTAKT correctly receives MIDI data from the outside.

Finally, provided that your current Multi contains any Instruments, a range of consecutive keys will be colored blue; this indicates the playable key range of the currently selected (or topmost) Instrument. Key-switches (keys that change the behavior of the Instrument) will be marked in red.

## 4 First Steps in KONTAKT

Now that you're familiar with the fundamental parts of KONTAKT's user interface, it's time to get practical. In the following sections, we'll provide you with step-by-step instructions for some common tasks, such as loading and playing Instruments, combining them into Multis, and adjusting their basic playback parameters. After reading this chapter, you should be able to make full use of KONTAKT as a player for existing sample libraries.

The obvious choice for following the instructions presented here are Instruments from KONTAKT's own sound library, as they consistently take advantage of features that we added in recent versions (such as Performance Views, which will be explained in section [↑4.4.4, Performance Views](#)). However, you can just as well use any other library in KONTAKT or KONTAKT PLAYER format that's installed on your hard disk.

Please make sure you start with an empty Multi when following the instructions in this chapter; if required, use the *Reset multi* command from the [Files](#) menu in the Main Control Panel to remove all Instruments from your KONTAKT instance.

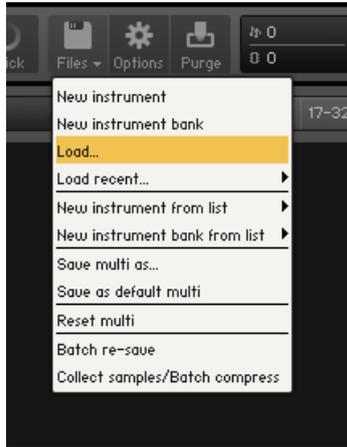
### 4.1 Finding and Loading Instruments

KONTAKT offers you a number of different tools that let you keep track of your installed sampling libraries and their contents. Ultimately, they all have the same purpose: to let you locate and use any item you're looking for as quickly as possible.

The [Files](#) tab of the Browser is a tree-based file system navigator that you can use to traverse the directory structure of your system volumes, browse the contents of any directory, quickly listen to samples, and select KONTAKT items for loading.

- The [Libraries](#) tab offers a more streamlined and intuitive way of accessing commercial libraries in KONTAKT format.
- The [Database](#) is a very powerful tool for managing large collections of Instruments, Samples, Multis and Banks in a non-linear fashion. It allows you to tag your items with freely definable attributes and rapidly filter your whole collection by means of keywords and attributes.

- The *Load* command that you can find in the [Files](#) menu of the [Main Control Panel](#) will open a traditional file selector dialog that you should find familiar from other applications.



We'll limit the scope of this section to the first two options: The *Files* and *Libraries* tabs of the Browser. In order to find out more about the other tools mentioned, refer to the Application Reference.

### 4.1.1 Using the Libraries Tab

Make sure the Browser is visible on the left side of the main window. If it's not, click on the button labeled [Browse](#) in the Main Control Panel.



Toggle the visibility of the Browser with the Browse button in the Main Control Panel.

1. Click on the [Libraries](#) tab at the top of the Browser. A list of headers should appear; these identify the KONTAKT libraries installed on your hard disk. At the very least, you should see a header titled [KONTAKT FACTORY LIBRARY](#), which represents the sound library distributed with KONTAKT; if the library is not installed, you might want to re-run the installer from the KONTAKT DVDs and make sure it is enabled for installation.

2. Choose a library and click the [Browse](#) button at the bottom of its header. Below the header, a list of this library's contents will open.



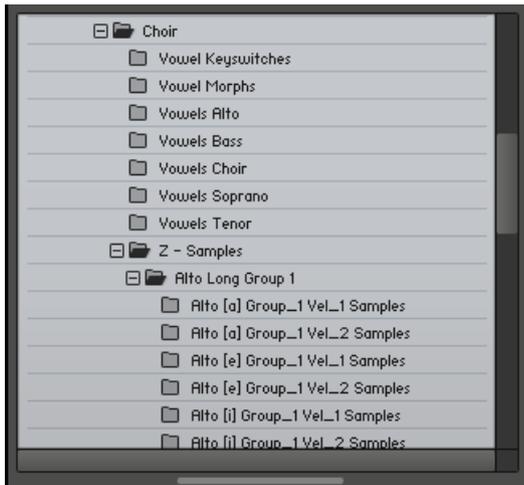
3. Subfolders, which are marked with a folder icon next to their name, can be opened by double-clicking on them; to get back to the parent folder, click on the first entry of the list, which is marked with an arrow.
4. Once you've found an Instrument (whose filename will end with .nki) that you'd like to load, either double-click on its name or click and drag it into the [Rack](#). An [Instrument Header](#) with that Instrument's name and some controls will appear in the [Rack](#), indicating that the Instrument has been successfully loaded and is ready for playing.



If a dialog titled “Samples Missing” appears when you try to load the Instrument, it means that KONTAKT cannot find some or all of that instrument's samples for some reason. In this case, either click on [Abort Loading](#) and retry the process with a different Instrument, or read the section about this dialog in the Application Reference to find out how to solve the problem.

## 4.1.2 Using the Files Tab

Not all kinds of Instruments are accessible via the [Libraries](#) tab. For example, Instruments that were created by you or another user, libraries that were converted into KONTAKT format, and files that are saved in foreign sampler formats won't appear in the list. In those cases, you'll have to tell KONTAKT where it can find the Instruments in question, which is what the [Files](#) tab of the Browser is for. Once again, make sure the Browser is visible; if not, click on the [Browse](#) button in the Main Control Panel.



The Container Pane displays volumes and directories of your file system as a tree structure.

The upper pane displays the structure of your file system as a hierarchical tree view. Originating from a “root” entry titled `<workspace>`, it contains the logical volumes (including hard disks, removable media and network volumes) in your system, as well as their respective directory trees.

1. Successively open these containers, either by double-clicking their names or the “+” sign next to them, in order to traverse down your file system until you've located the directory that contains the Instrument you'd like to load. Select that directory by

clicking on its name. The Objects Pane displays the contents of the volume or directory selected in the pane above it.



Name	Size	Te...	Date
↑ ..			
 Acid Tube Bass.nki	16.28 kB		25/08/2009
 Catchy Filter Bass....	16.89 kB		25/08/2009
 Classic Flute Lead.nki	16.25 kB		25/08/2009
 Dirty Saw Lead.nki	16.88 kB		25/08/2009
 In Your Face Bass.nki	16.97 kB		25/08/2009
 Innocent Lead.nki	16.92 kB		25/08/2009
 Loaded Tube Bass 1...	17.69 kB		25/08/2009
 Loaded Tube Bass ...	16.98 kB		25/08/2009
 Melody Lead.nki	16.94 kB		25/08/2009
 Metallic Lead.nki	16.95 kB		25/08/2009
 Naive Synth Lead.nki	16.31 kB		25/08/2009

2. KONTAKT will now list the loadable files in the chosen directory within the pane below. If the list is longer than the height of the pane, you can either resize the pane by clicking and dragging the separator bar at its top, or scroll the list by dragging the scrollbar on its right side.
3. Load an Instrument by double-clicking on its name or by clicking and dragging its entry from the list into the Rack.

→ The Instrument will be loaded and will subsequently show up in KONTAKT's Rack.

## 4.2 Playing Instruments

Once KONTAKT has successfully loaded the Instrument, it appears as a horizontal Instrument Header within the Rack, which indicates that it's ready for playing. If you have a master keyboard connected to your computer, play a few keys now. Provided that you're playing in the correct key range of your Instrument, and you have set up your audio and MIDI devices correctly, you should hear its sound now.



In case you're using KONTAKT as a plug-in within your sequencer, you may need to put the corresponding instrument track into "record" or "monitor" mode first.

## 4.3 Combining Instruments into Multis

Of course, you're not limited to playing only one Instrument at a time. Following the steps described above, you can go ahead and add more Instruments – up to 64 in total – to each KONTAKT instance. This allows you to build complex multi-timbral setups (by setting the Instruments to receive their data from different MIDI channels via the [Midi Ch](#) drop-down menu), or create layers of Instruments that respond in unison (by setting them to the same MIDI channel).



A KONTAKT Multi in action.

Such a combination of Instruments is called a Multi, and once you have created one that you'd like to re-use at a later point, you can save it on your hard disk with the *Save Multi* command that you can find in the **Files** drop-down menu. Multi files have an `.nkm` file extension; they show up in the Objects Pane of the Browser's **Files** tab, so you can load them just like simple Instruments.

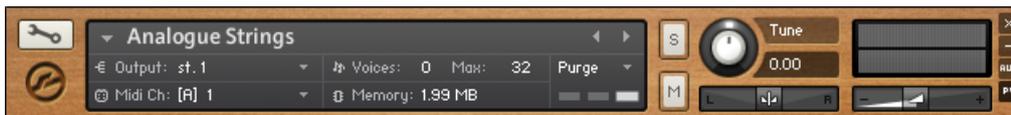


You can save and recall Multis just like Instruments.

## 4.4 Setting Basic Instrument Parameters

Each Instrument Header provides a set of controls that allow you to adjust some basic parameters which affect that Instrument's MIDI and audio routing, playback volume, panning position and tuning. KONTAKT will save and recall these settings along with the Multi data.

If you're building a multi-timbral setup of Instruments, you can use these controls to create a sub-mix inside KONTAKT, which takes place before the final audio is being sent out to the audio interface or host application.



Instrument Header in maximized view.

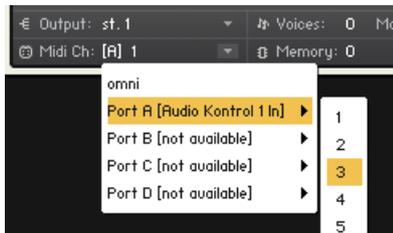
Note that the following sections refer to Instrument Headers in their default, maximized state that you can see above; they can also be switched into a minimized state that hides most of their parameters in order to save vertical space in the Rack. If any or all of the Instrument Headers in your Multi appear condensed, click the double-arrow icon on the right side of the Rack header once or twice until they're all expanded to their default view.



Maximize all Instrument Headers by clicking the Size Toggle button in the Rack header once or twice.

#### 4.4.1 Setting Audio and MIDI Ports

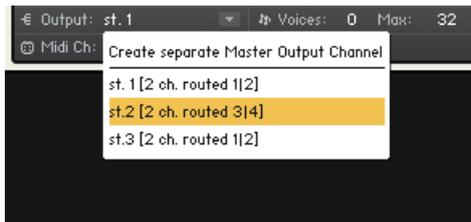
We already touched this topic briefly in the previous sections: In order to make an Instrument respond to incoming MIDI data, you'll have to tell KONTAKT on which MIDI input port and channel it should “listen” for that data. You can select both the port and the channel with the drop-down menu that appears when you click on the [Midi Ch](#) value in the Instrument Header. KONTAKT designates the available MIDI ports with the letters that you assigned to them in the Options dialog, as explained in section [↑2.1.3, MIDI Configuration](#).



Assign a MIDI input to your Instrument with the Midi Ch drop-down menu.

Similarly to the input MIDI channel, each Instrument also needs an audio output channel assignment. This specifies to which of KONTAKT's own mixer channels the output signal of that Instrument will be routed. You can change the audio output by clicking on the [Output](#) value in the Instrument Header. The available choices depend on the configuration of

the **Outputs** section in your KONTAKT instance; in other words, they don't refer to physical audio outputs per se. For more information about KONTAKT's internal audio routing, refer to chapter 14 of the Application Reference, which covers the **Outputs** Section.



Assign an audio output to your Instrument with the Output drop-down menu.

#### 4.4.2 Adjusting Volume and Panning

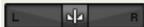
You can set the playback volume and stereo panorama position for each Instrument in your Multi independently. This is useful for creating a sub-mix inside your KONTAKT instance; if multiple Instruments are being routed to the same audio output at the same time, there's no way to change their respective volumes or panorama positions independently from outside KONTAKT.

► In order to change the playback volume of an Instrument, click and drag the horizontal Instrument volume slider on the right side of its Instrument Header, just below the level meter.



Be careful when you're increasing the volume and keep an eye on the peak level meter above the slider; if it hits the right border in loud passages, the level is set too high, which will cause clipping artifacts in the audio output.

- The Panorama slider is positioned to the left of the Instrument volume slider.



► Click and drag the Panorama slider horizontally to place the Instrument's signal within the stereo panorama. At its center position, the signal is played back with no change; setting it all the way to the left (value 100L) will make the signal disappear entirely from the right channel, and vice versa.

### 4.4.3 Using Mute and Solo

When you're working on an arrangement or a Multi, it's often helpful to temporarily exclude certain Instruments from the mix, or to isolate a single element for making better judgments. You can do this with the buttons labeled **S** (Solo) and **M** (Mute) in the Instrument Header.

Clicking on the Mute button will exclude the signal of an Instrument from the mix; as a reminder, the button will be highlighted. Click on the button again to switch the signal back into the mix.

Similarly, when you click on the Solo button, all other Instruments in your Multi will be muted, so you'll hear the one you selected in isolation. You can also put multiple Instruments into solo mode; in that case, the mute status of the remaining Instruments will persist until you have switched off the last active Solo button.



Use the Solo (S) and Mute (M) buttons to switch Instruments into Solo and Mute mode.

### 4.4.4 Performance Views

Performance Views are customized user interfaces, created by instrument creators in order to provide you with a set of controls that perfectly matches an instrument's functions and overall character. These customized user interfaces are set up and controlled from KONTAKT's scripting language and offer direct access to certain Instrument-specific parameters, ranging from simple sound and effect settings all the way to complex multi-dimensional editors or purpose-built sequencers and arpeggiators. All Instruments in the sound library come with their own customized interface; just load any of them to get an idea of what is possible. The Performance View of an Instrument will appear just below its standard Instrument Header in the Rack and can be toggled with the button labeled **PV** on its right side.

► If you don't see the Performance View panel, click on the **PV** button.



If an Instrument Header doesn't have a **PV** button, the Instrument does not provide a Performance View.



Performance View of an Instrument.

The actual appearance of a Performance View will entirely depend on the Instrument. Usually, the parameters offered should be self-explanatory from the musical context of the Instrument. If in doubt, hover over the control to see if it offers help via the Info Pane, or refer to the documentation of your sample library. More information on the Performance View controls of KONTAKT's included library can be found in the provided Library Documentation PDF file.

---

## 5 What's Next?

We hope this guide did help you along your first steps with KONTAKT. You can already do a lot with the insights you gained from the preceding chapters, but of course, the real power of KONTAKT comes into play as soon as you start editing or creating Instruments yourself. It's not as complicated as it may sound, either – if you have created your own patches on a synthesizer or sampler at some point, chances are you'll have no problems getting to grips with the inner workings of a KONTAKT Instrument.

If KONTAKT is your first encounter with sampling, we recommend that you start out by examining and modifying some ready-made Instruments, either from the supplied KONTAKT library or from other third-party libraries, before attempting to create your own Instruments from scratch. That way, you'll quickly get a feeling for how to structure samples in Groups, create modulation routings that make sense, adjust playback parameters, and use the internal effect modules to their full capacity.

Obviously, we also recommend that you use the Application Reference as the first stop whenever you are not sure how to do something in KONTAKT.

Even if you currently have no interest in editing your own Instruments, it's a good idea to at least skim through the Application Reference. A lot of the finer points of KONTAKT's facilities haven't been touched in this guide for sake of brevity. For example, the Database chapter will be immensely helpful if you need to keep track of large amounts of Instruments, Multis or Samples. Also, KONTAKT can import a huge number of third-party sampler formats; it can even read CDs and other media from a number of hardware samplers. You can find out more about this facility in the Browser chapter of the Application Reference.

Last but by no means least, it's always a good idea to pay a visit to our website, [www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com). Among other things, you'll find a comprehensive and regularly updated knowledge base there. Also, when you're really stuck at some point, our friendly and helpful KONTAKT user forum is an invaluable resource of advice.

## 6 Troubleshooting

If an Instrument you have loaded into KONTAKT's Rack doesn't seem to respond, there are a few things you can check to make sure your MIDI and audio setups are working correctly. In a first step, you should try to determine whether the problem is related to the MIDI or the audio part of the chain.

### 6.1 Instrument Receives MIDI Data, but no Sound is Audible

Observe the **small MIDI jack icon** next to the [Midi Ch](#) label in the Instrument Header:



The MIDI jack icon should light up on incoming MIDI data.

If it lights up when you press a key on your master keyboard, the Instrument correctly receives the incoming MIDI data. In this case, check the following things:

- If the **peak level meters on the right side of the Instrument Header** show some activity when you press a key, the Instrument already generates sound; if you don't hear anything, the signal gets lost somewhere between KONTAKT's internal output routing and your monitor speakers. Make sure your audio interface is turned on and that you're listening to the right output channels.
- If you're using KONTAKT in stand-alone mode, make sure that you have **correctly set up your audio interface** in the Options dialog. This process is explained in section [↑2.1.1, Audio Configuration](#) of this guide.
- If you're using KONTAKT as a plug-in, find out whether your sequencer or DAW application gets any audio signal back from KONTAKT by observing the host application's level meters. If it doesn't, you might have to **configure KONTAKT's audio routing to work with your sequencer** first; this process is explained in the [Outputs](#) section chapter of the Application Reference.
- If the level meters in the Instrument Header show no sign of activity when you press a key, open the On-Screen Keyboard by clicking on the [Keyb](#) button in the [Main Control Panel](#). On it, you should see a range of keys with a blue tint; this is the **active key range of the Instrument**. Make sure the notes you play are within that range.

- If you still don't hear anything despite the Instrument receiving your MIDI data, it might be that this particular **Instrument requires some other action in order to generate sound**; this may be the case with some specially scripted Instruments, or with Instruments that offer some kind of expression control via continuous MIDI controllers. Refer to the documentation of your sample library or try out a different Instrument.

## 6.2 Instrument Does not Receive MIDI Data

If the small MIDI jack icon next to the [Midi Ch](#) label doesn't light up when you press a key on your master keyboard, the Instrument is not receiving your MIDI data. Here are some possible solutions:

- Check whether **your master keyboard is turned on** and the MIDI or USB cable that connects it to the computer is correctly plugged in.
- Make sure the value displayed next to the [Midi Ch](#) label in the [Instrument Header](#) **matches the port that your master keyboard is connected to**, and the MIDI channel on which it is sending data.
- The ports of your MIDI interface are designated with letters (starting with A), with each port having 16 different channels. In a lot of cases, the correct channel will be A 1, which is the default; however, it's entirely possible that your master keyboard is connected to a different MIDI port or sending on a different channel. In that case, click on the value displayed here and **select the matching port and channel** from the drop-down menu that appears.



- If you're using KONTAKT in stand-alone mode, make sure that **your MIDI hardware options are correctly set** in the Options dialog. This process is described in section [↑2.1.1, Audio Configuration](#) of this guide.
- If you're using KONTAKT as a plug-in within your sequencer or DAW application, make sure that the sequencer is configured to **forward incoming MIDI data to your KONTAKT instance**. For this, you may have to put the respective instrument track into “record” or “monitor” mode. Refer to the documentation of your sequencer to find out how to set it up for playing virtual instruments.