

Soniccouture

Kora



user guide

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ABOUT THE KORA

From Wikipedia



The kora is built from gourd, cut in half and covered with cow skin to make a resonator with a long hardwood neck. The skin is supported by two handles that run underneath it. It has 21 strings, each of which plays a different note. These strings are supported by a notched, double free-standing bridge.[3] The kora doesn't fit into any one category of musical instrument, but rather several, and must be classified as a "double-bridge-harp-lute." The strings run in two divided ranks, characteristic of a double harp. They do not end in a soundboard but are instead held in notches on a bridge, classifying it as a bridge harp. The strings originate from a string arm or neck and cross a bridge directly supported by a resonating chamber, also making it a lute.

The sound of a kora resembles that of a harp, though when played in the traditional style it bears resemblance to a guitar played using the flamenco or Delta blues technique of plucking polyrhythmic patterns with both hands (using the remaining fingers to secure the instrument by holding the hand posts on either side of the strings). Ostinato riffs ("kumbengo") and improvised solo runs ("birimintingo") are played at the same time by skilled players.

Our kora was made in Burkina-Faso and has 21 strings.



TECHNICAL DETAILS

3,780 samples at 96kHz

4 channels (stereo microphone and stereo contact)

6 GB library = 2.8 GB NCW compressed

Main articulation 40 velocity

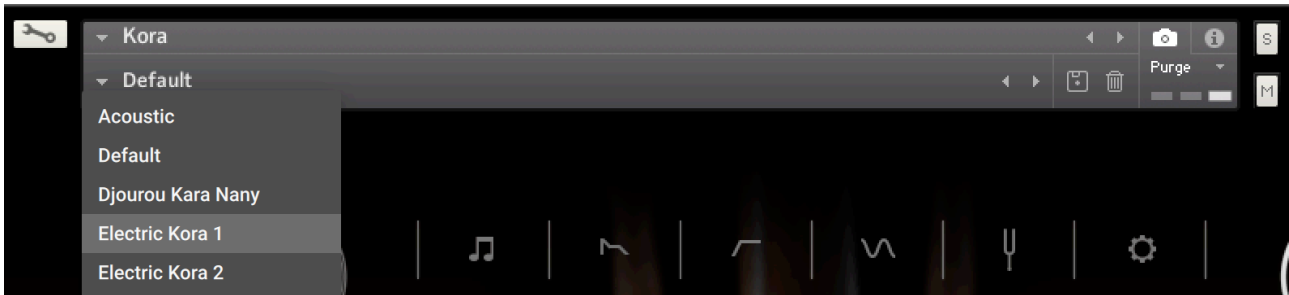
Release damps 25 velocity

Mute 'detero' Accent articulation 25 velocity



THE KONTAKT INSTRUMENTS

SNAPSHOTS

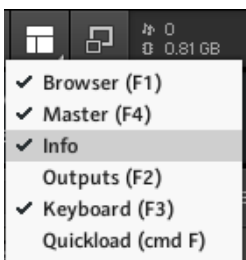


Kontakt stores presets as Snapshots, and you can use these to save your own setups or load presets we've made.

If the Snapshot menu doesn't appear, be sure to click on the small Camera Icon at the far right of the title bar (see above).

BUILT-IN HELP

THIS IS REALLY USEFUL!

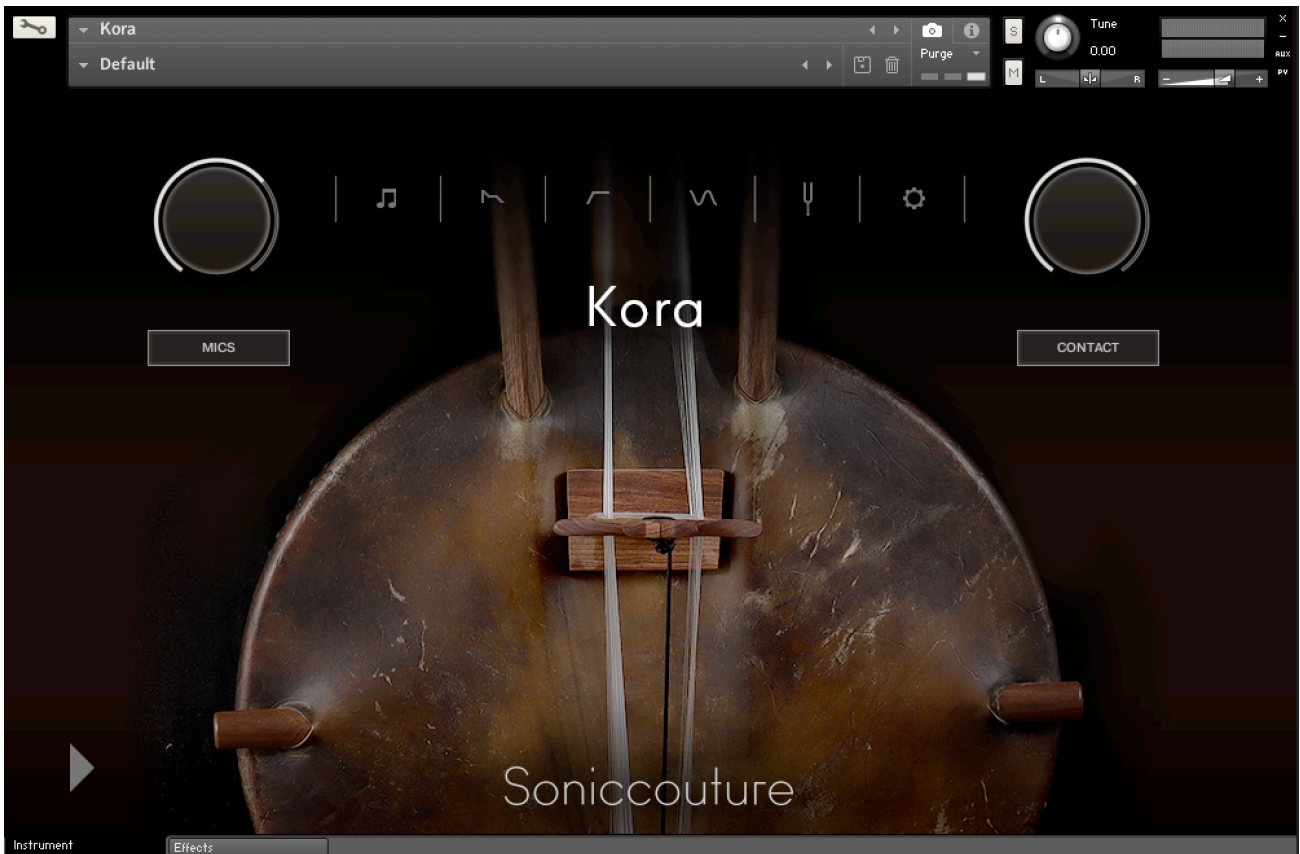


If you activate the Info pane in Kontakt, you can hover over any control in the instrument and a short note will appear in the Info pane at the bottom describing what that control does.



OVERVIEW

The Kora has two large knobs with switches beneath on the main page. These control the levels (and sample loading) of the two main signals; the Mics on the left, and the Contact Mic on the right. Kora is often played through amplification, so the contact mic is very useful for this kind of application.



In the centre is a row of icons. These open the various edit pages:



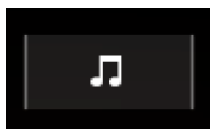
These six switches open five different parameter editors. From left to right they are: MIDI Player, Amp Envelope, Filter, LFO, Tuning, and Options.



DETERO or MUTE NOTES

One characteristic technique of advanced kora playing is the use of accented notes, or “detero”, in which the player plucks and then damps the same string suddenly with the finger or thumb nail, causing a buzzy kind of mute sound. This articulation is engaged with a keyswitch, which defaults to C1 on our instrument, but can be changed in the Options menu to a high C or a high A, above the range of the instrument, if you prefer.

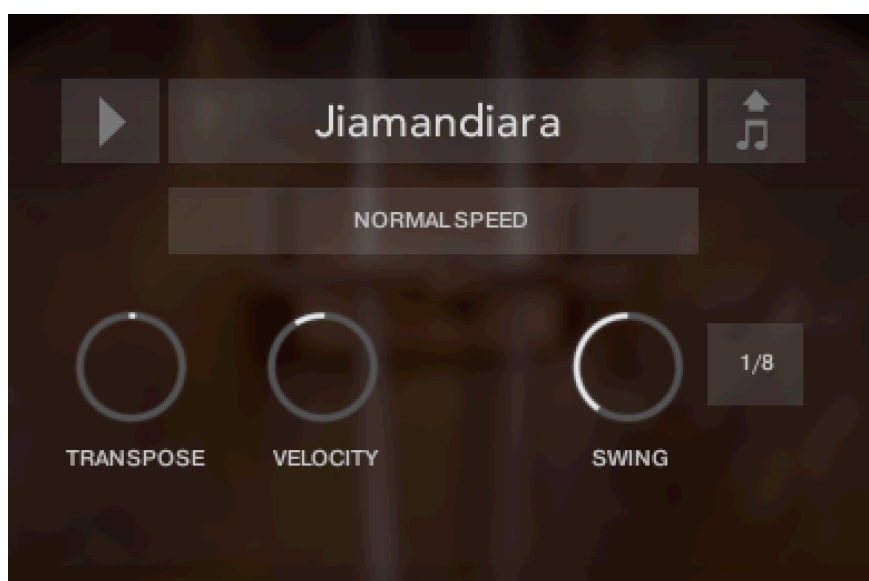




MIDI PLAYER - "KUMBENGO"

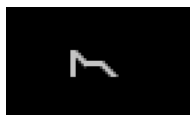
The MIDI Player provides some basic Kora basslines or accompaniments, called "Kumbengo". This is what the Kora player plays with his thumbs, while playing the melody or improvising above with his fingers.

The bassline is activated with the PLAY icon on the bottom left of all windows. If you engage this, you can start or stop with your DAW afterwards and it will stay in sync.



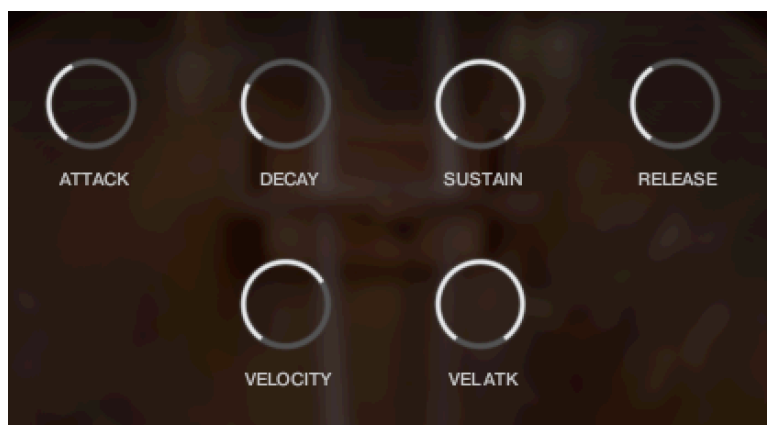
In the centre you can choose from 20 different kumbengo with the drop down menu. Change the speed, transposition, velocity and swing amounts. You can drag the MIDI out to your DAW using the MIDI Drag button to the right of the current MIDI file name.





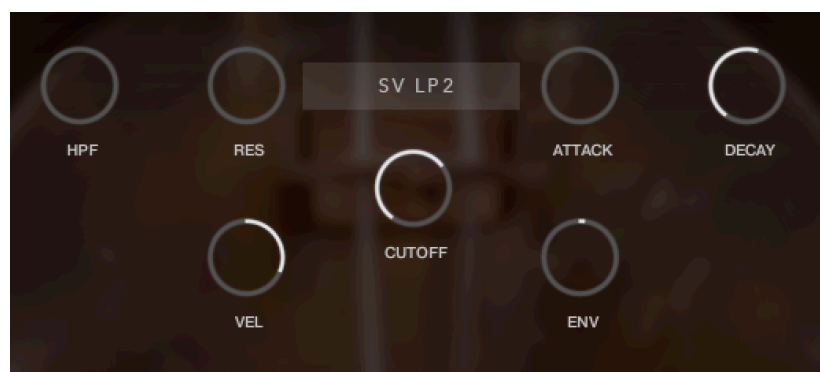
AMP ENVELOPE SECTION

The ENVELOPE tab gives you control of the ADSR Amplitude envelope. VEL ATK is a velocity to attack time modulator... when raised, the attack time is increased at higher velocities. VELOCITY is a control for the velocity depth to volume.



FILTER

On the FILTER tab you can control the filter CUTOFF frequency, as well as choose the filter type with a drop down menu. Here you can also control the RESONANCE of the filter, the ENV depth, the High Pass Filter cutoff, and the VELOCITY to filter cutoff depth.



The Attack and Decay controls for the Filter envelope are on this same tab.

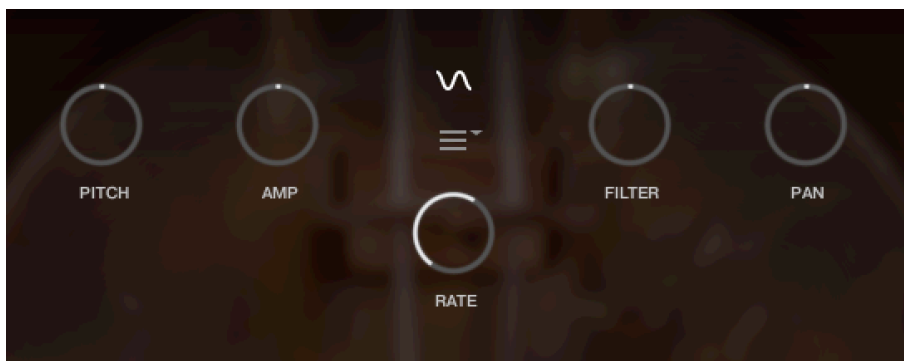




LFO

This LFO tab lets you control the LFO RATE, as well as the depth of modulation to the PITCH, AMPLitude, FILTER cutoff or PAN.

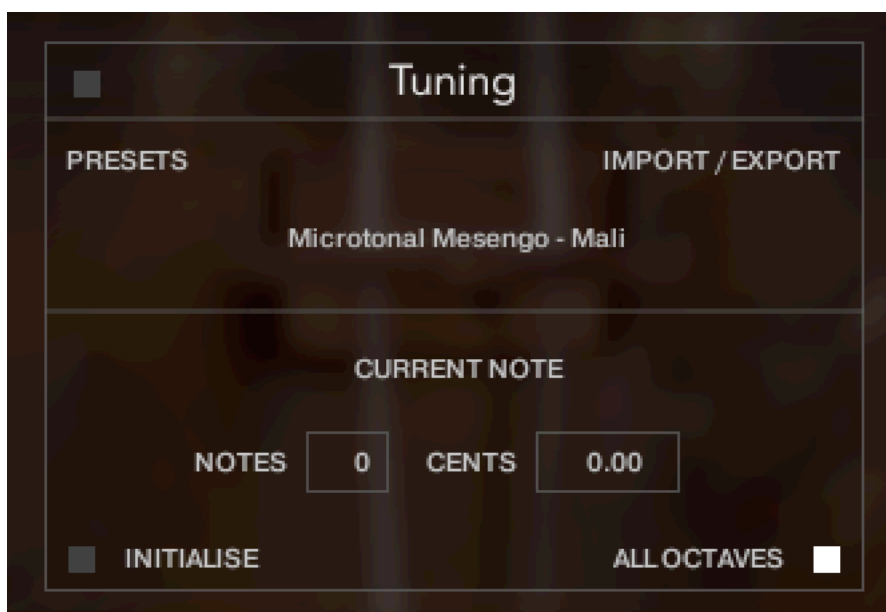
There are two menus beside the large RATE knob. One of these lets you set the LFO WAVEFORM, and the other lets you set LFO Sync options.





TUNING

In this editor you can enable microtuning. You can either create your own, or choose one of the presets from the menu on the left. You can import or export tunings using the menu on the right. All Soniccouture microtuning instruments share this same tuning format and you can use a tool at [Scale Workshop](#) to create tunings in Soniccouture format if you like.



The title bar is a switch that turns the microtuning function on or off.

There is a menu of some typical historic keyboard tunings at the top left, and the import/export menu on the top right.

In the middle is displayed the current TUNE KEY, the key that is currently being edited. You can adjust the NOTES (semitone) or CENTS offset of this key.

If ALL OCTAVES is checked (at the bottom right) then all instances of that key will change together... this is very useful if you're designing a scale that repeats at the octave, which many of course do.

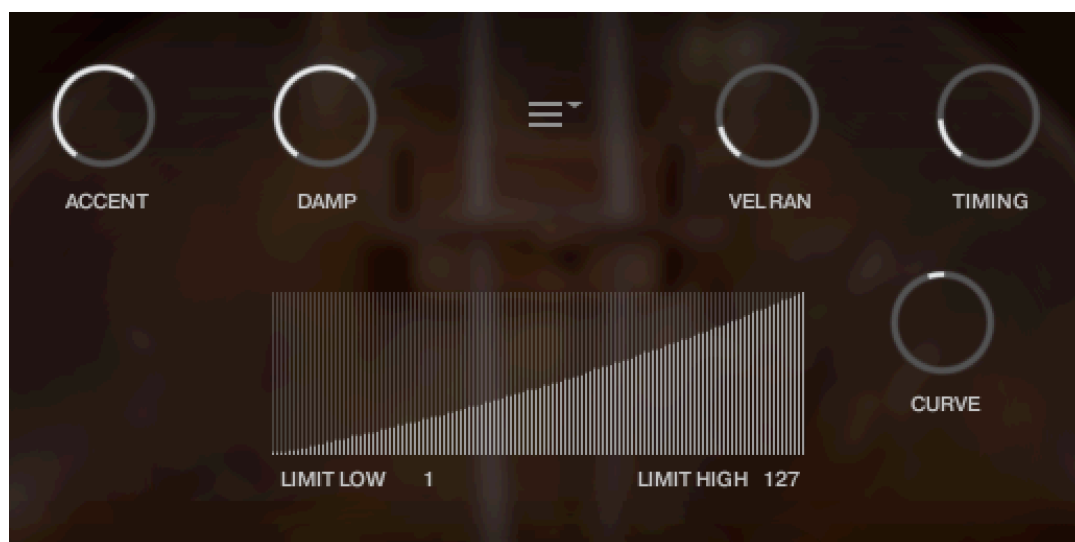
INITIALISE will set the microtuning to nominal, no offsets for any notes.



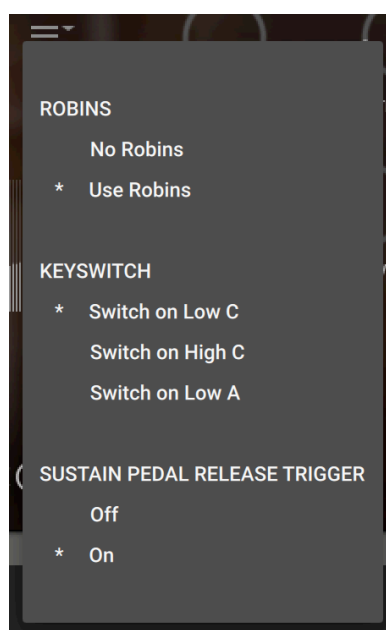


OPTIONS

In this editor you can adjust the ACCENT mute level (which is activated using the keyswitch, default on C1). You can also adjust the level of the DAMP samples, heard on key off. And there is velocity RANdom, random TIMING, and velocity CURVE controls.



The menu in the middle allows you to enable or disable the round robins, choose whether to show the keyswitches to engage the mute at the Low C, High C, or High A positions. You can set whether the sustain pedal will trigger the key release samples (finger noise).



EFFECTS

The EFFECTS panel is divided into 5 sections.



Insert Effects

Equaliser

Stereo

Saturation

Space



THE INSERT EFFECTS

Here you can choose up to 3 insert effects. The effect is enabled with the square power switch to the left of its name at the top of the tab, and the appropriate controls will appear below when its tab is selected.

You can select from a list of effects using the menu to the right of the effect name in the tab.



The effects are in routing order from left to right, and are before the EQ and other effects on this panel.

You can only select each type of effect once, if you select an effect already in use, then the position of those effects will be swapped.

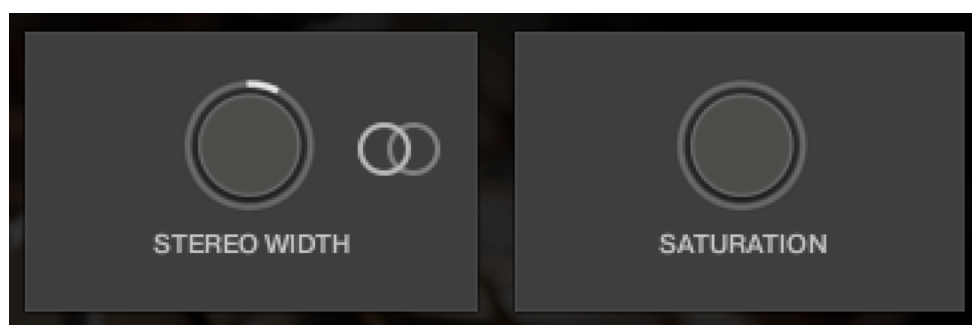


EQUALISER

This is a fairly obvious four band parametric EQ. The fader on the far right is the output level from the EQ.



Note that BELL and SHELF are drop down menus, you can choose either for the top and bottom bands. You can enable or disable the EQ with the power switch at the top left.



STEREO AND SATURATION

Here you can adjust the STEREO WIDTH (the natural recording is nominal at 12 o'clock). Moving the control left narrows the width, and to the right increases it.

There is a stereo SWAP feature, enabled with the symbol:

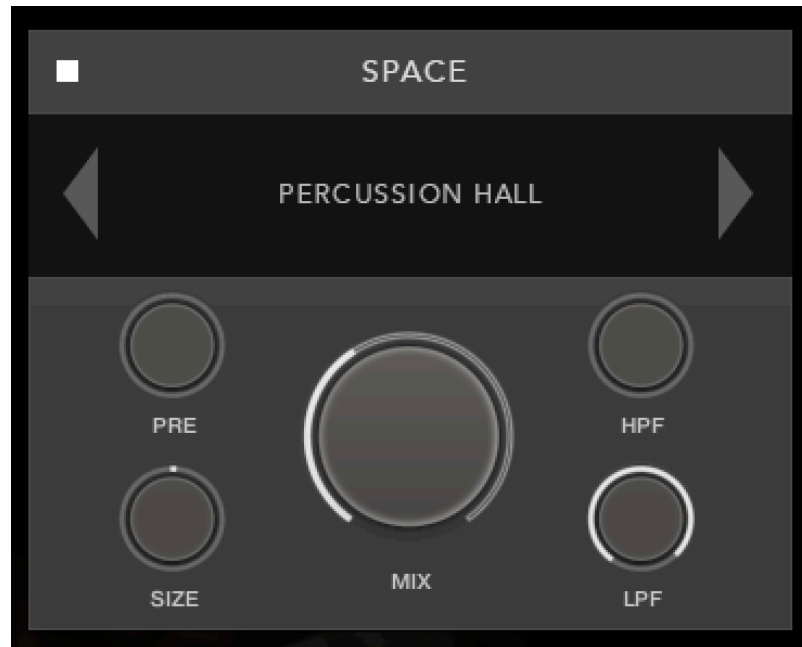


SATURATION will adjust the SATURATION effect.



SPACE

This is the convolution reverb section. In the middle there is a drop down menu with a selection of our impulse responses.



As usual, the power switch is at the top left.

The controls below are the PREDELAY, the convolution impulse SIZE, a High Pass and Low Pass Filter, as well as the return MIX level on the large central knob.



SUPPORT

If you have any problems or questions relating to the use of this product, please feel free to contact us. You can email us at :

<http://www.soniccouture.com/en/support/>

We will always endeavour to reply to any enquiry within 24 hours. We are based in the UK, so please bear in mind differences in time zones.

While you are waiting, you will find lots of answers to common questions in our FAQ.



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