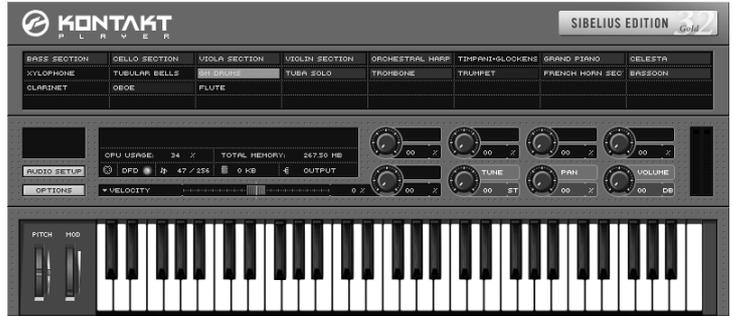# Getting the best out of Kontakt Player Gold

Kontakt Player Gold makes significant demands on the capabilities of your computer, and you will need to carefully adjust the settings in order to obtain the best results for your particular system.

This is a quick reference guide for how to change the necessary settings in Sibelius and the Kontakt Player. For further details, refer to **Kontakt Player** in Sibelius Reference.

How to change Kontakt Player settings

To see the Kontakt Player window, choose Window ▸ Kontakt Player:

- *Global voice limit* 47 / 256 *:* this determines the maximum number of notes Kontakt Player can play in total (i.e. for all slots) at once. To change it, click and drag up and downwards.

- *Use ECO instrument set:* click the Options button, switch on Use ECO instrument set, then click Close

- *Latency:* click the Audio Setup button, drag the Output Latency slider to the desired value, then click OK. If the Audio Setup window does not have a latency slider you may be able to access the sound card's settings directly by clicking the ASIO Config button on the right of the Audio Setup dialog.

- *Direct From Disk (DFD) streaming:* click the Options button, click DFD Active, then click Close. For more information on how to choose appropriate DFD options, see **Direct From Disk (DFD) options** below.

The other settings you may need to adjust are accessed by clicking the Kontakt Player Options button in Sibelius's Play ▸ Playback and Input Devices dialog:

- *Reverb:* switch off Use reverb to stop Kontakt Player using reverb – see below

- *Sharing slots:* switch on Use the same slot for identical sounds to make Sibelius assign staves which use the same sounds to the same slot in Kontakt Player

- *Limiting slots:* switch on Limit number of slots to set the maximum number of slots Kontakt Player can use simultaneously.

Direct From Disk (DFD) options

To change DFD options, click Options in Window ▸ Kontakt Player, then choose the desired setting from the Expert menu:

- **Normal**: use this setting if you have 512Mb of memory or less and want to play scores with not more than 64 streaming voices

- **High performance**: use this setting if you have 768Mb of memory or more in your computer

- **Large instruments**: use this setting if you have 768Mb of memory or more and want to play scores with many monophonic instruments

- **Small instruments**: use this setting if you want to play scores with only a few polyphonic instruments.

Once you have changed these settings, click the Apply button and then Close.

Reverb

Reverb makes heavy demands on your computer's CPU. When playing back larger scores (e.g. using more than 7–8 slots), you are recommended to switch off reverb. If CPU usage (as shown in the Kontakt Player window) is consistently above 70% during playback, you should definitely switch off reverb; consistently high CPU usage will lead to stuttering and distorted playback.

Which settings to change

To judge the best settings for a score, choose the most complex passage, or a passage in which you encounter playback problems, then try changing the settings, playing back that section again after each change to judge the improvement.

On both Windows and Mac, try changing the following settings, in this order:

- *Global voice limit:* reduce this to something much lower than the default; e.g. 32
- *Expert DFD present options:* see **Direct From Disk (DFD) options** above
- *Use ECO instrument set:* the ECO sounds require 30% less CPU power on average than the full instrument set
- *Increase latency:* this can reduce or eliminate stuttering or uneven playback

- *Share slots:* switch on **Use the same slot for identical sounds** to reduce the number of slots used overall
- *Switch off DFD:* you should only switch off DFD if you have a large amount of RAM in your computer (around 1Gb total RAM installed for Windows XP and Mac OS X).

- *Limit slots:* if sharing slots doesn't significantly reduce the number of used slots, try limiting them.

If you are using Mac OS X, refer to the table overleaf for recommended settings based on indicative computer specifications. You may need to adjust the settings further depending on the actual specification of your computer, or the complexity of the score you are playing.

Recommended settings for Mac OS X

The following table gives recommended settings for a large orchestral score on various typical computer specifications. The settings below were used to achieve acceptable-quality playback (i.e. no stuttering, minimal clicks and pops) of the **Film score** example score supplied with Sibelius 4 with Kontakt Player Gold. For less complex scores you could try less conservative settings, e.g. use the "full" instrument set or maybe switch reverb on.

Computer specifications					Kontakt Player / Sibelius settings				
CPU type	*CPU speed*	*Mac OS*	*RAM*	*Assigned RAM*	*Voices*	*ECO / Full*	*Latency*	*No. slots*	*DFD*
G3	333Mhz	OS 9.2	384Mb	250Mb	16	ECO	11ms	6–8	off
G4	400Mhz	OS 9.2	384Mb	250Mb	30	ECO	11ms	up to 18	off
		OS X 10.3		N/A	30	ECO	85ms	6–8	on
G4	733–867Mhz	OS 9.2	512Mb	300Mb	40	ECO	60ms	up to 18	off
		OS X 10.3		N/A	40	ECO	60ms	up to 18	on
		OS X 10.3		N/A	30	ECO	40ms	up to 18	on
G4	dual 1Ghz	OS 9.2	768Mb	550Mb	44	Full	11ms	up to 18	on
		OS 9.2	768Mb	250Mb	64	ECO	11ms	up to 18	on
		OS X 10.3	768Mb	N/A	48	Full	56ms	up to 18	on
G5	dual 2Ghz	OS X 10.3	1Gb	N/A	256	Full	24ms	up to 18	on

In all cases:

- Playback was through each computer's built-in sound hardware; no other sound hardware was used
- Reverb was switched off.

Determing the specification of your Mac

To find out how your Mac compares to the specifications listed above:

- On Mac OS X: choose **About This Mac** from the Apple menu. Your CPU speed, amount of RAM and OS version are listed here.
- On Mac OS 9: choose **Apple System Profiler** from the Apple menu. Your CPU speed, amount of RAM and OS version are listed on the **System Profile** page of the dialog that appears.

Determing the specification of your Windows computer

Right click on **My Computer** and select **Properties**. This lists your system information, CPU speed and amount of RAM.

If you are still having stuttering and distorted playback it may be down to the sound card and graphics card drivers. Go to the manufacturer's website of these devices and on their download pages will be the latest version of the drivers. Download these and install them.