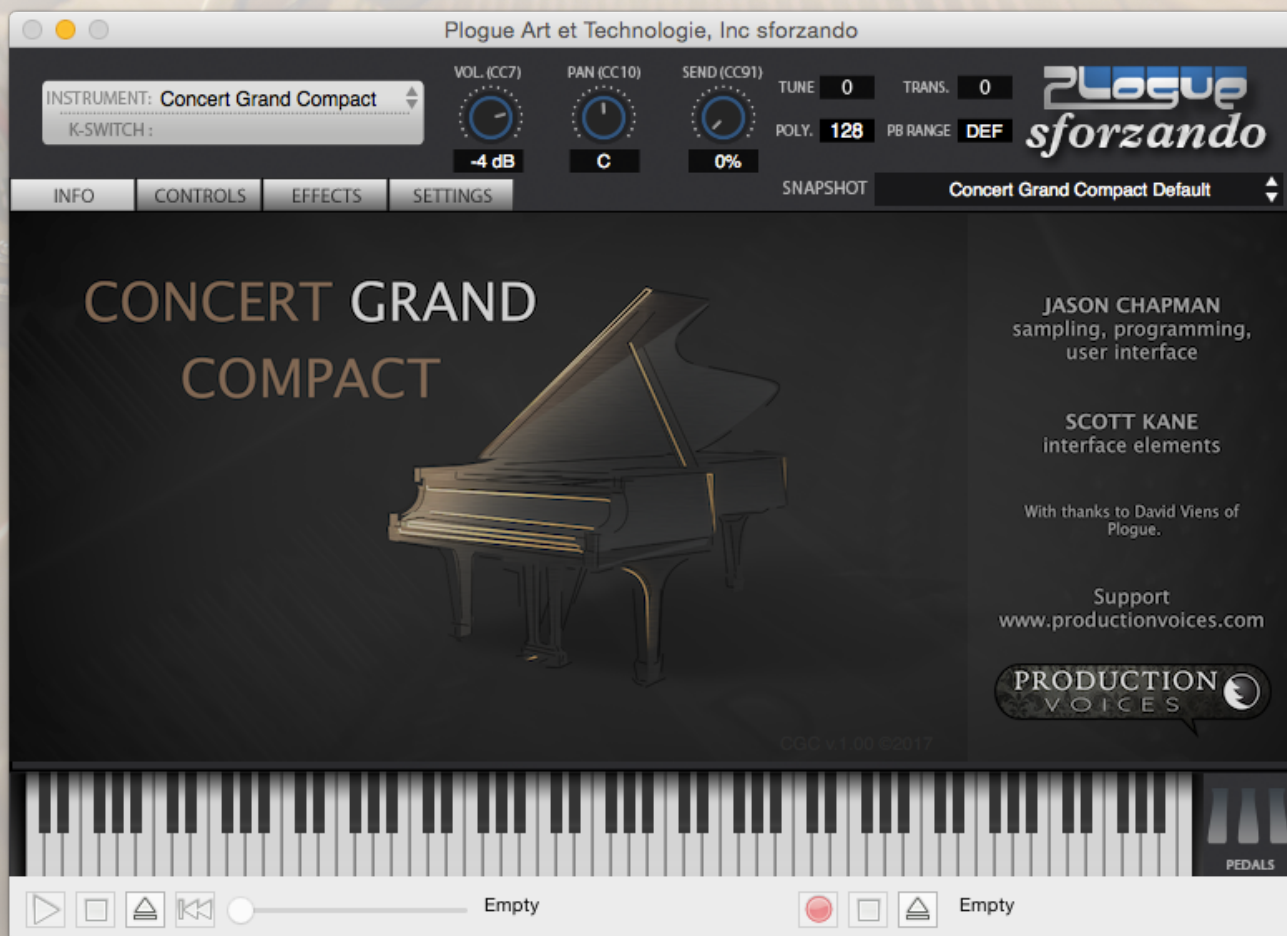


CONCERT GRAND COMPACT

for sforzando



User Manual

Concert Grand Compact User Manual

Description

Concert Grand Compact is a high-quality piano sample library sampled from a Steinway D grand piano in a world-class recording studio. Formatted for the FREE Plogue sforzando player, Concert Grand Compact uses the same samples as the Outside Tube microphone perspective from the larger Concert Grand for Kontakt. Concert Grand Compact is approximately 11 GB* in size before lossless FLAC compression containing 2812 samples!

Thanks to sforzando's ARIA Engine, the performance and sound quality of Concert Grand Compact rivals that of Concert Grand LE, the Kontakt version, with the same settings applied! Concert Grand Compact is Concert Grand LE's Outside microphone perspective for the sforzando player.

Concert Grand Compact is ideal for Studio Production, Stage Production, Film Score Production, Live Performance and more!

Instrument Features

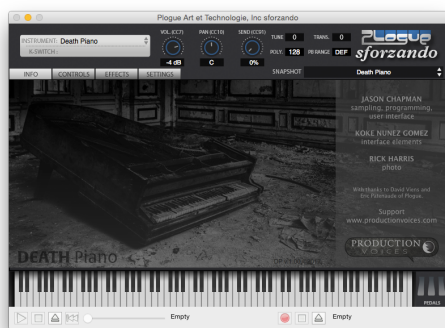
- Neumann "Golden" M149 tube microphone perspective just outside the piano lid
- 24 bit 96k source sampling rate reduced to 16 bit 44.1k using Goodhertz conversion
- Round-robin pedal noise samples with normal and loud settings
- Sampled key up mechanical noises from the actual keyboard action
- Sympathetic Resonance with on/off and volume controls
- Sostenuto pedaling
- Recorded at world-Class Toronto studio through classic Neve console
- Burl Mothership boutique-quality A/D converters used
- Premium API microphone preamps used
- 12 - 15* velocities pedal up samples (selected from over 20 sampled velocities)
- 12 - 14* velocities pedal down samples (selected from over 20 sampled velocities)
- 8* velocities release samples (selected from 16 sampled velocities)
- Ultrafast loading
- Extremely memory efficient thanks to lossless FLAC compression

Note from the Developer

Concert Grand Compact is sampled from a Steinway D that just came off tour with a famous Canadian artist (his initials are B.A. for those guessing). The piano was in great shape, but was used enough to have a character of its own. This piano had some mechanical noises from the hammer mechanism that were louder than the Yamaha C7

that I am used to. My guess is that the longer strings and quick action required a little more effort from the mechanism. The sound is not percussive as much as it is a refined and balanced sound. The Model D is the first choice usually for sampled pianos as it is the “typical” piano sound most associate with piano. Yet, our sampling philosophy was not to get the perfect Model D sound, but rather to capture the heart and character of the instrument we had in front of us. The perfect piano sample requires removing parts of the sound and taming elements while bringing out other parts of the sound with processing such as EQ and compression. This was all keep to a minimum for this sampled instrument resulting in flaws revealed like an actress removing her makeup. Why sample a piano for perfection when character is more appealing? The signal-path of the sampling process combined with this grand instrument is what makes sampling unique. We got to capture one particular piano at one point in time and the resulting audio photograph is a pleasure to use and play. We used Neumann M149 tube condenser microphones just outside the open piano with API mic preamps all running through a classic Neve console into Burl converters. These mics are over \$10,000 USD for the pair and sound every bit as impressive. Concert Grand Compact comes from the larger Concert Grand that uses 9 microphone perspectives, one of which is an ambisonics microphone for 3D sound.

Concert Grand Compact joins three other (with hopefully more to come) Production Voices libraries for sforzando!



Death Piano for sforzando is sound design piano library of tortured piano samples.

Production Grand Compact for sforzando is a sampled Yamaha C7 grand piano.

Estate Grand for sforzando is a sampled Kawai GS-60 near 7' grand piano.

Concert Grand has been an labour of love and I am so pleased to be able to share it with you and other performers, producers, songwriters and composers.

Jason Chapman
Lead Designer
Production Voices

Support

Contact us by email: support@productionvoices.com

Credits

Concept, Editing, Sampling, Programming, UI: Jason Chapman
Graphic User Interface Elements: Scott Kane
Recording Engineer: Dajaun Martineau
Assistant Engineer: Milan Sarkadi

www.productionvoices.com

System Requirements

Minimum System

Plogue sforzando or Aria Player required.
Plogue sforzando is available for FREE here:
<http://www.plogue.com/products/sforzando/>

Concert Grand Compact Minimum Requirements:
Multi-core Intel i3, i5, i7 or better recommended
8 GB RAM
64 bit operating system (Mac OS X or Windows)
4 GB of hard drive space for compressed samples.
7200 rpm or better non-system hard drive

Note: Concert Grand Compact will not perform as expected on systems not meeting the minimum requirements.

Recommended System

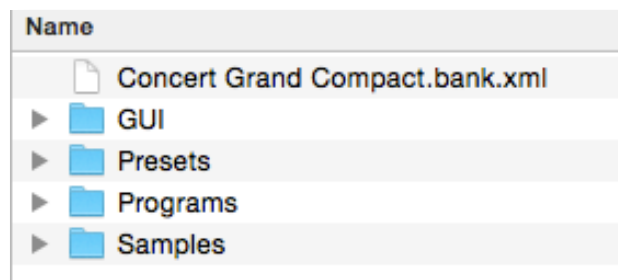
16 GB RAM or more.
Fast hard drive: 7200 rpm, RAID or SSD.
Multi-core Intel i5 processor or better.
64 bit operating system and plugin host.

Getting Started

Installing Concert Grand Compact for sforzando

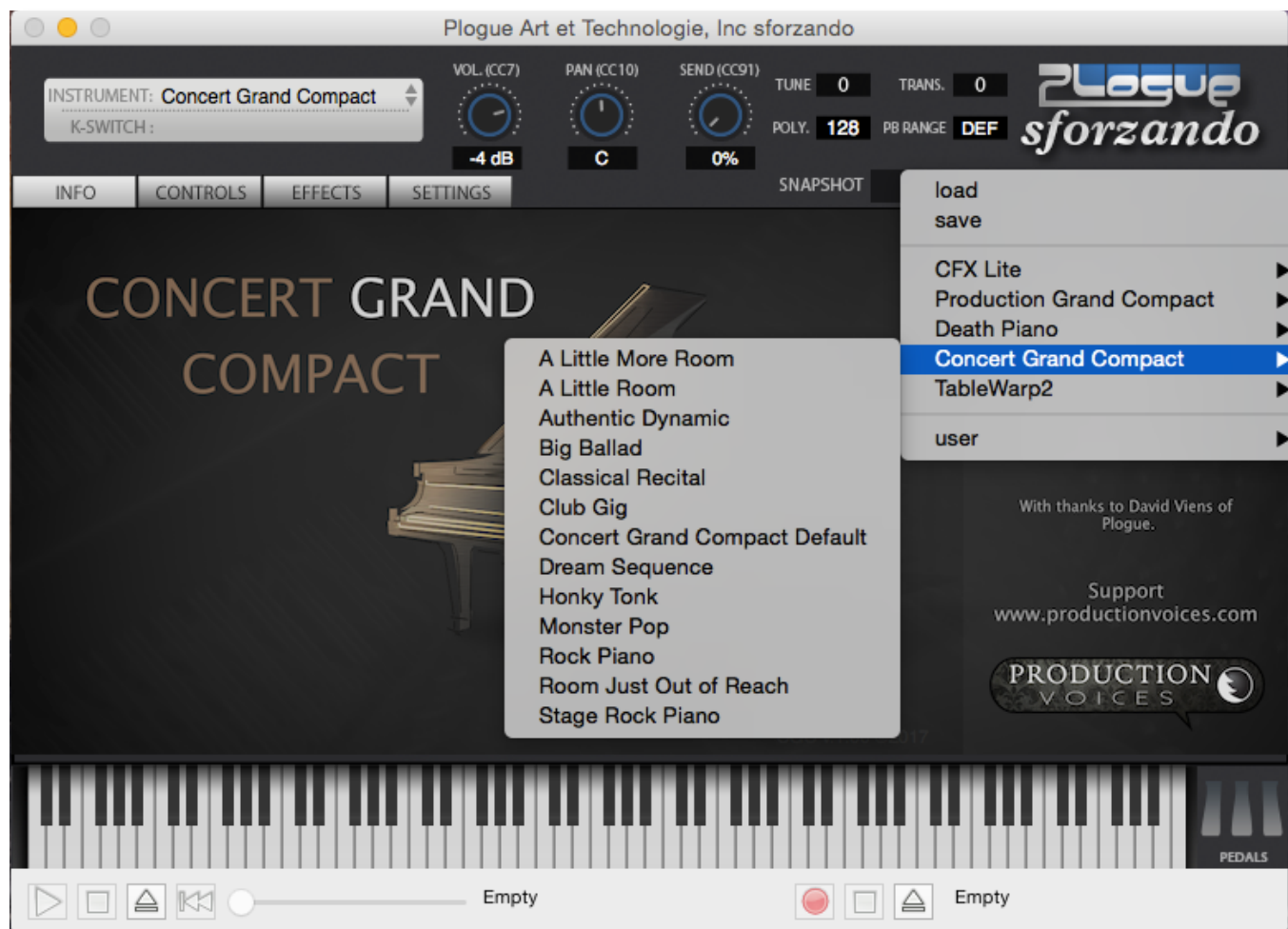
Installation of Concert Grand Compact for sforzando is fairly straightforward:

1. Download and install sforzando: <http://www.plogue.com/products/sforzando/>
2. Download Concert Grand Compact for sforzando and unzip.
3. Place the “Concert Grand Compact for sforzando” folder on the drive that you wish to run it from. Any fast hard drive will work. If available, we recommend an SSD solid state drive for best performance.
4. Launch sforzando.
5. Drag the “Concert Grand Compact.bank.xml” file from within the “Concert Grand Compact for sforzando” folder onto sforzando. This registers your purchase with sforzando and puts the presets into sforzando.



Loading Concert Grand Compact Presets

Once Concert Grand Compact for sforzando is installed, the presets will show up under the **SNAPSHOT** menu.



Suggested Starting Preset: *Concert Grand Compact Default.*

A Little More Room – Balanced piano sound with prominent room reverb.

A Little Room – Balanced piano sound with some room reverb.

Authentic Dynamic – All piano options on and set to be dynamic and close to a real piano.

Big Ballad – Best for pop music, this preset includes reverb and Tape Saturation for a bold sound.

Classical Recital – Full Touch Response and piano mechanical noises combined with hall reverb.

Club Gig – Lounge-like ambience to get that club vibe!

Concert Grand Compact Default – Factory initialized preset set to best overall sound for most playing styles.

Dream Sequence – Film score setting with lots of long dreamy reverb.

Honky Tonk – Detuned piano for that classic honky tonk piano sound.

Monster Pop – Loud piano with a compression from the Tape Saturation and a hint of ambience. Perfect for pop songs.

Rock Piano – Loud slightly detuned piano with some Tape Saturation perfect for banging out chords.

Room Just Out of Reach – Piano in a smaller room with less width sounding just out of reach of the listener.

Stage Rock Piano – Loud slightly detuned piano with some Saturation. Slightly different than Rock Piano preset.

Note: Presets are subject to change as Concert Grand Compact is expanded and enhanced.

Laptop touring musicians will find that Concert Grand Compact works great on stage and loads fast!

Recommended Plogue sforzando Settings Before Loading

Note: These recommended settings are only needed for loading from the **INSTRUMENT** menu. If you load from the **SNAPSHOT** menu, the settings are set automatically for you!

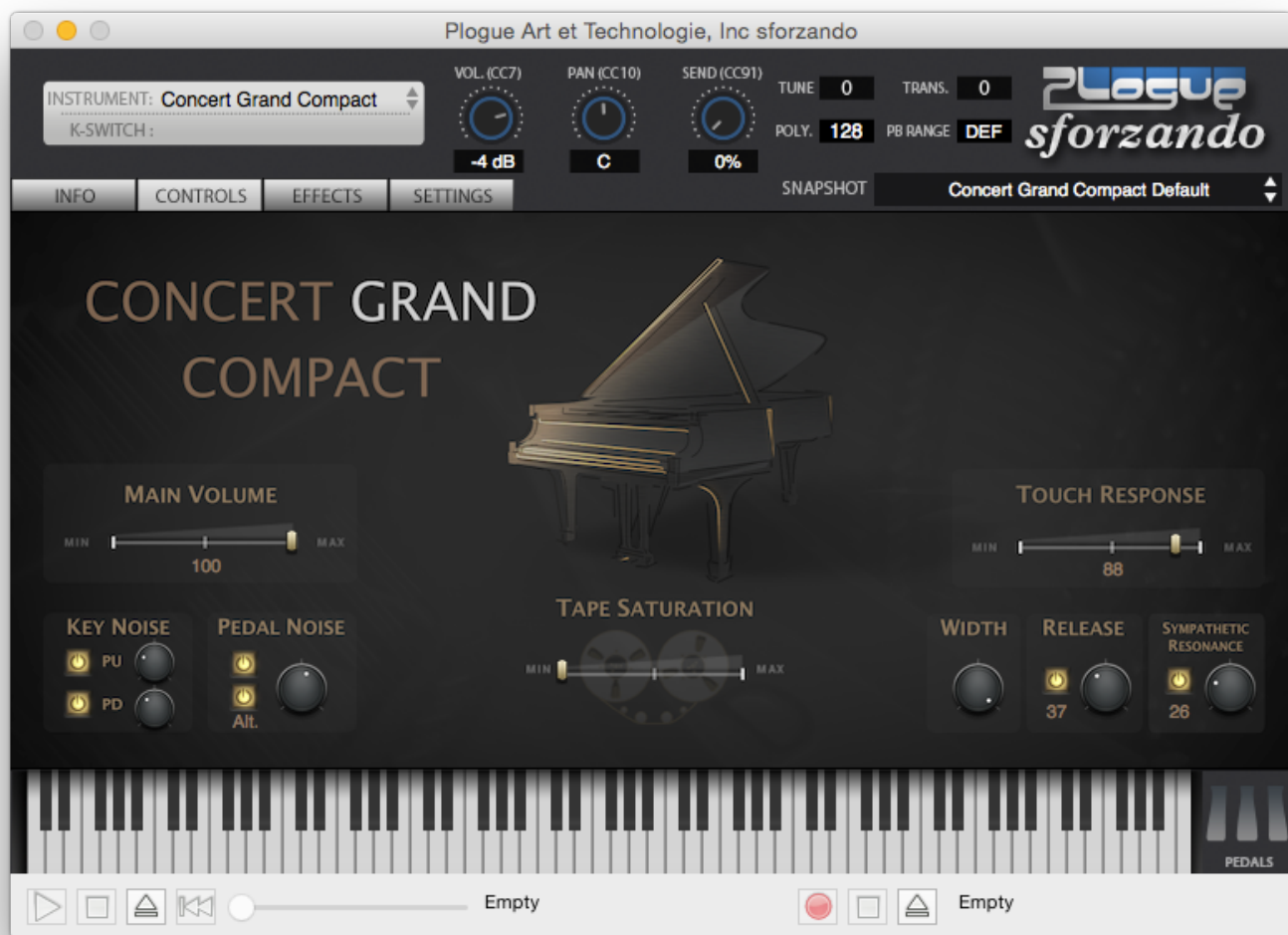


Before loading Concert Grand Compact, set the following recommended settings:

1. Select the “SETTINGS” tab.
2. Set POLY. To 128.
3. Set “Max Engine RAM Allocation” to 1 GB (2 GB suggested). This can be set lower on systems that have less RAM, but performance will be affected.
4. Set “Inst. Disk Pre-Caching” to 64 kB. This will load 64 kB of every sample into RAM as a buffer before streaming the samples from the hard drive.

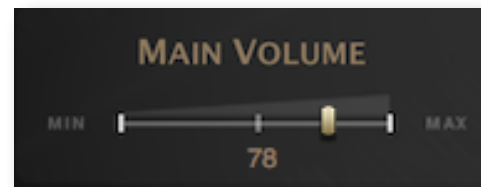
Note: Concert Grand Compact is quite “compact” and will run on fast systems with the default sforzando settings. The above settings are for optimized performance.

Concert Grand Compact Controls



Main Volume:

MAX is the ideal Main Volume slider position with the exception of using Tape Saturation, which may require the Main Volume to be reduced. The slider moved to MAX at the right represents unity gain or 0.0 dB. This is where the fader is neither adding nor subtracting volume from the sound.



Main volume can also be controlled with MIDI CC#22.

Sympathetic Resonance on/off and volume:

Sympathetic Resonance is the harmonic ringing of a held note caused by the strike of another note that is within the harmonic series of the held note that naturally occurs on a piano. Wow, that last statement is technically right, but not very helpful if you don't know what it is! For example, if you play and hold C2, the C below middle-C and then strike and release middle-C, that note strike will cause C2, the held note, to vibrate at the frequency of C3! When C2 is released, the sympathetic resonance will stop.

Concert Grand Compact uses samples to emulate sympathetic resonance.

Sympathetic Resonance can increase the voice count and polyphony which results in higher disk load and increased CPU load. To save resources, Concert Grand Compact 1.0 only has octaves and 5ths above a note up to the 3rd octave as sympathetic resonances.

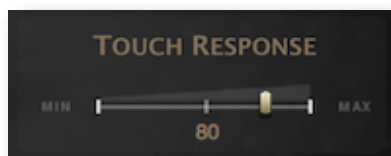
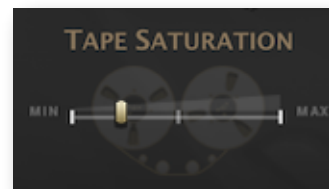
Sympathetic Resonance can add warmth and realism to Concert Grand, but at the expense of both increased cpu and voice count! For solo piano work it is suggested to turn it on, but perhaps advisable to turn it off in busy arrangements where the resonance is likely to be masked (not heard).



Width: Width controls the stereo balance. Full left is mono where both left and right channels sum to the center. Full right keeps the left and right channels separated for true stereo sound.

Reducing the Width can help the piano samples sound more distant and more realistic when reverb is applied. Full Width gives a more intimate at the piano sound. In some sound recordings with other instruments, a wide piano sound may not blend well in the mix. Reducing the width can help “sit” the piano in the mix.

Tape Saturation: Tape Saturation results in a compressed louder sound that can morph quickly into distortion. Tape Saturation is actually just simulated drive that causes harmonic distortion (the good kind). Keep levels low for best results.



Touch Response is the dynamic range determined by velocity. Touch Response determines how Concert Grand Compact adjusts the sample volumes to incoming velocity. At 100%, Concert Grand Compact will respond exactly like it was sampled. Some users may find this too dynamic. 90% is about where most of the presets are set to. Setting Touch Response too low will result in the low velocities sounding noisy and louder than is natural on a “real” piano.

Mechanical Noises:

Key Noise: Key Noise controls the volume of the keyboard action sound as a key is released (The hammer returning). This key noise has no musical tone; it is just the key mechanism noise. PU controls the on/off and key noise volume for when the sustain pedal is up (off). PD controls the on/off and key noise volume for when the sustain pedal is down (on). With PD on, the key noise is only triggered when the sustain pedal is down and a key is released, for example. This is a subtle sound, but it adds that extra



touch of realism. You might be asking: “Why have separate controls for pedal up and pedal down?” This gives added control to the mechanism noise and can help based on playing style.

In a busy production or song, the Key Noise may not be heard. Turn off Key Noise to save polyphony.



Pedal Noise: Sustain damper pedal mechanical noise.

The pedal noise controls the volume of the sound of the foot depressing and releasing the sustain pedal. Here the dampers activate the strings in the piano and then stop the strings with a subtle thud sound when released.

There is an on/off button for the pedal noise. Some playing situations may require the pedal noises to be turned off or down. Using lots of reverb usually requires pedal noise and other mechanical sounds to be reduced or turned off.

Most workstation keyboards do not have pedal noise, but it is one of the easiest ways to add realism to your sampled piano.

The Mod-Wheel controls the pedal noises as follows:

When the modulation wheel (MIDI CC#1) is less than 63, the pedal noises cycle through the louder more aggressive variations of both pedal up and pedal down noises.

When the mod wheel has a value of 64 or greater, the softer pedal noises are triggered. These are the modest casual samples from “regular” pedal usage.

Pedal Noise Alt On/Off: This simply is the same as turning the modulation wheel to 127 to choose the softer pedal noises. With Alt. Off, the louder pedal noises will sound when the damper is depressed.

Pedal Noise Tips:

Busy mixes, such as songs with many instruments, may mask the pedal noise. In this case, Pedal Noise can be turned off to save voice count.

On solo or sparse arrangements, consider increasing the pedal noise to give an intimate sound.

Release: Key Release is the volume control for samples triggered when a key is released or the pedal is let up when a note was sustaining from the pedal, but no key is held. This is the sound of the dampers stopping the piano string from ringing.

The key releases give a realistic sound to the stopping of a note that just isn’t achievable with ADSR release envelopes. Users can vary how loud they like the key release samples. The longer you sustain a note in isolation, the more likely it is that you will hear the key release when a key is released.



All of the mechanical noises can add up to create an authentic piano sound that will surpass (and in many cases, blow away) most current keyboard workstations or digital pianos.

Performance Optimizations

Disk Issues

If you have a slow hard drive but plenty of RAM, set the Max RAM to 2 GB and set the Inst. Disk Pre-Caching as high as possible on the Settings tab of sforzando. This will load the entire Concert Grand Compact into RAM bypassing the slow hard drive. With any luck, Concert Grand Compact will no longer have disk issues and will likely be able to play many notes at once.

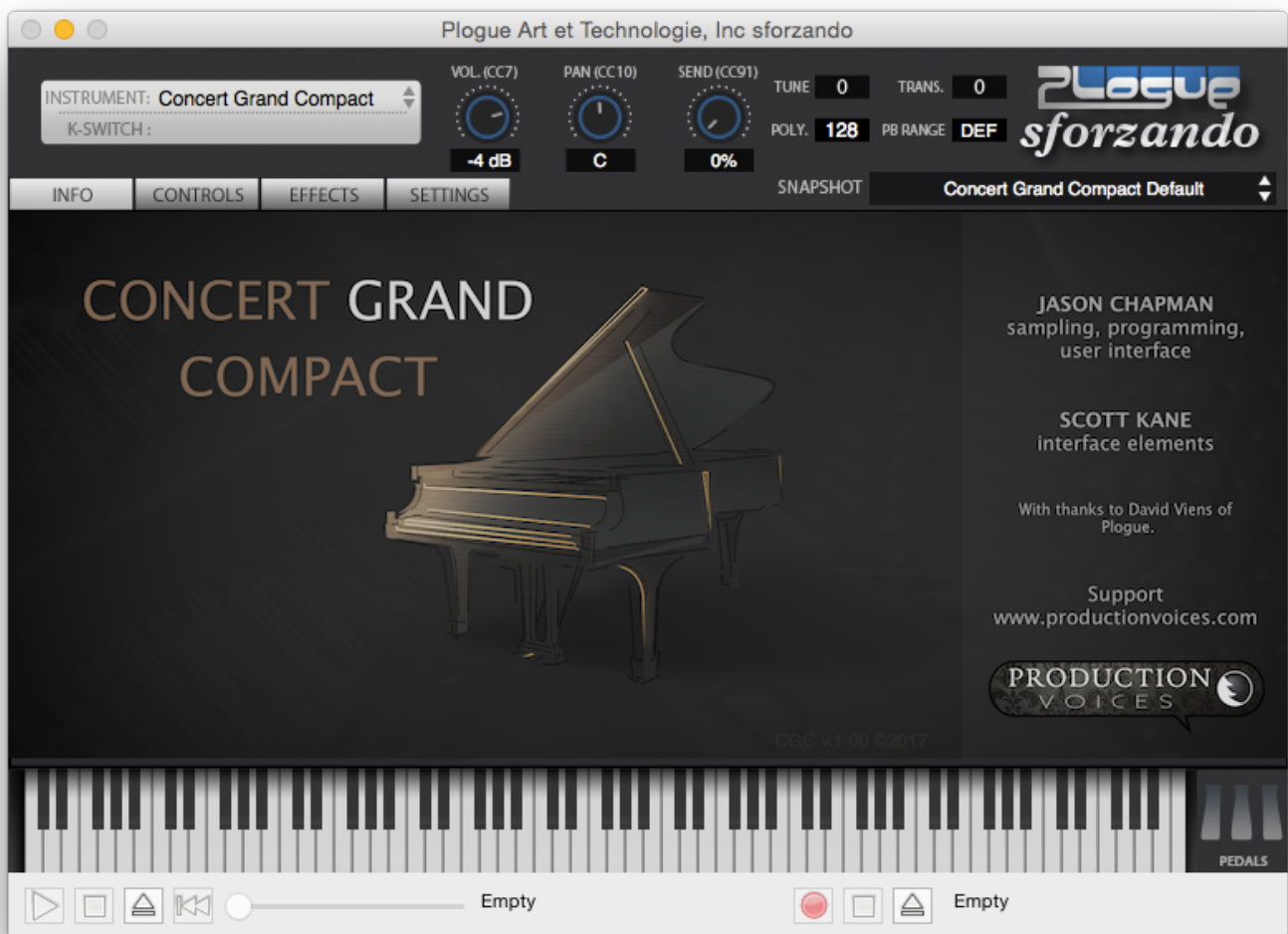
Memory Saving

If memory is scarce but your running a solid state drive (SSD) and a fast CPU, try leaving the default sforzando settings, or reduce the Inst Disk Pre-Caching and the Max Engine RAM Allocator. Concert Grand Compact can run with under 200 MB of RAM with a fast drive for streaming.

Miscellaneous

Release Versions

Concert Grand Compact Version 1.0 – Initial Release



The sampling session for Concert Grand Compact consisted of 24 bit 96k samples that were converted to 44.1k using the GoodHertz conversion. Concert Grand Compact uses both 16 bit samples for sustained notes and 24 bit samples for mechanical and pedal samples.

MIDI Control Numbers

Concert Grand Compact controls have MIDI Control Numbers assigned to them as shown below. These are preset and cannot be changed. These controls can all be used live on a controller or sequenced in a DAW. Note that Touch Response, Saturation and Width are out of the range of conventional MIDI, but still can be automated in a DAW.

MIDI CC#22=Main Volume

MIDI CC#24=Sympathetic Resonance Vol

MIDI CC#34=Sympathetic Resonance On/Off

MIDI CC#40=Ped Noise Vol

MIDI CC#41=Key Up PD Vol

MIDI CC#42=Release Vol

MIDI CC#43=Key Up PU Vol

MIDI CC#50=Ped Noise On/Off

MIDI CC#51=Key Up PD On/Off

MIDI CC#52=Release on/off

MIDI CC#53=Key Up PU On/Off

MIDI CC#59=Touch Response

MIDI CC#300=Saturation

MIDI CC#301=Width

Concert Grand Compact Strengths

Concert Grand Compact loads fast, uses very little memory and contains the same Outside microphone samples as Concert Grand LE. It has a nice balanced sound suitable for many playing styles. Sampled from a 9' Steinway D piano, the tone is balanced without bright overtones like the Yamaha C7. The Steinway D has plenty of mechanical noises naturally present with a bit of metallic bite on the attack of notes. The Steinway D is a fixture in many concert halls and is one of the most requested pianos by performers.

Concert Grand Compact Known Issues

Concert Grand Compact does have plenty of hammer thump in the samples and mechanical noise. Don't say we didn't warn you! The piano is not perfect from top to bottom. Some octaves have a little more bump and thump noises and more key release volume. This all adds up for an authentic concert grand experience. For classical works, consider turning down the width and adding a bit of reverb. For jazz and pop, you may want a that intimate in your face forward sound from full width and little reverb.

License Agreement

Concert Grand Compact is licensed, not sold, to the end user. Users may have up to two installs.

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*Specifications subject to change. Sample sizes are for reference only and may differ slightly depending on how drives are formatted.

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