

# PragueSounds Solo Strings 2.0 User Guide v1.0

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Thank you for purchasing PragueSounds Solo Strings 2.0 sample library!

A considerable part of the user guide is located and included within the library itself – each GUI element and function features real-time help and description displayed in the Kontakt info pane when you move the mouse pointer to a specific GUI point. Some functions and principles, however, need to be explained in more detail.

## Installation

After downloading the .rar file, you can extract it to any directory you desire. It already contains all the necessary directories and files to run the library. After extracting the files you do not need to activate or import the library in any way, it is immediately ready for full use.

The sample library patches are stored in the directories \Instruments\2.0\MEDIUM ..\CLOSE and ..\VC+FAR+AMB. However, the 1.0 directory, which contains the old original 1.0 version of the library, separated from the new 2.0 version, is also present there. Due to the fact that many users upgraded from the 1.0 version, it may come handy having both versions at the same location when working with music projects created using the old version. It is also useable if you want to quickly access any specific separate layer of any existing patch. However, in general, we recommend using **only** the new 2.0 patches, as their sound (even of all the non-legato programs) has been vastly improved in comparison to the 1.0 version.

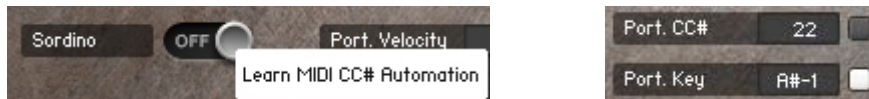


## Overview

After loading any patch, for example 'Violin (MEDIUM).nki', you can see the available articulations in the GUI. However, these usually do not represent all the available articulations for most patches – black triangle arrow on the left to an articulation name indicates that there is another alternative articulation present in the slot, which can be activated by clicking on the arrow and selected from the dropdown menu, or via CC# automation – the Learn MIDI function can be started by right-clicking on the black triangle arrow.



The 'Learn MIDI CC# Automation' function is available for most knobs, sliders and switches in the GUI. It is activated by right-clicking on a specific point – knob etc. If the learn function is available for an item, 'Learn MIDI CC# Automation' menu appears. In some cases, the CC# learn function and along with it, all the keyswitch learn functions, are activated by clicking on the grey square to the right of the menu item.



The 'Basic' and 'Basic Smooth' articulations offer full control of vibrato/non-vibrato smooth crossfading, handled by the NV-Vib slider, manually or via MIDI automation.



The slider has no effect on other articulations. As an alternative, the 'NV2Vibrato' articulation is available, which can achieve a slightly similar effect; however, it has the NV-Vib transitions fully sampled so they cannot be changed or controlled in any way. They may sound very nice in certain articulation-optimized musical passages, however, they are not nearly as flexible as the 'Basic' articulation with full NV-Vib control.

## Freeing up memory

To free up more RAM, any unused articulation can be purged from the memory by clicking the box with its name. Clicking it again will reload the articulation in the memory.

### **Volume, velocity, dynamic layers**

One of most crucial features is the dynamic/volume response, or – simply said – a function determining which parameters will control the loudness of the sound of an instrument that is being played back, as well as the switching between the dynamic layers. It is controlled by 'CC1 - Volume' and 'CC1 - Layers' buttons, situated in both 'Long' and 'Short' GUI sections.



The options work in the following way:

#### **CC1 Volume – ON, CC1 Layers – OFF**

= volume is controlled by CC#1, dynamic layers are controlled by velocity

#### **CC1 Volume – OFF, CC1 Layers – ON**

= volume is controlled by velocity, dynamic layers are controlled by CC#1

#### **CC1 Volume – ON, CC1 Layers – ON**

= both volume and dynamic layers are controlled by CC#1

#### **CC1 Volume – OFF, CC1 Layers – OFF**

= both volume and dynamic layers are controlled by velocity, CC#1 has no effect

The library features 3 types of long articulation programs:

- 1) Basic – utilizing p, mf, f dynamic layers and 2 additional types of 'fast' accents
- 2) 1- and 2-dynamic layer single articulations
- 3) Combined articulation programs

The 'CC1 Volume' and 'CC1 Layers' switches have some exceptions in their behaviour depending on the type of the currently operated patch.

(1) Because the 'Basic' patches always smoothly crossfade between the p, mf, f layers, the p, mf, f dynamics are always controlled by the CC#1 and not by the velocity, no matter how you set the 'CC1 Layers' button. 'CC1 Layers' setting in 'Basic' patches controls the fast accents as follows:

Let's assume the 'CC1 Volume' and 'CC1 Layers' buttons are set to default (Volume=ON, Layers=OFF, recommended for 'Basic' patches), the velocity then controls the fast accents in the following way:

Vel. **0 - 74**: No fast accents, only the 'Basic' (p, mf, f) articulation is played back

Vel. **75 - 104**: 'Fast' accent is activated and layered with the 'Basic' articulation

Vel. **105 - 127**: 'Fastest' accent is activated and layered with the 'Basic' articulation

If you set 'CC1 Layers' to 'ON', the fast accents are controlled by the CC#1 instead of the velocity.

*Note: Although you have the freedom of switching both 'CC1 Volume' and 'CC1 Layers' to 'ON' at the same time, there is not much logic in such a setting for 'Basic' patches, because besides the volume and the dynamic layers the fast accents, too, would simultaneously be controlled by CC#1, which would result in no possibility of handling them properly. Similarly, having both 'CC1 Volume' and 'CC1 Layers' switched 'OFF' would also result in the impossibility of controlling fast accents.*

(2) 2-dynamic layer articulations, namely the tremolo patches, smoothly crossfade between p and f layers, and as in the case of 'Basic' patches, the dynamic layers are always controlled by the CC#1, no matter how the 'CC1 Layers' button is set.

(3) Combined articulation programs (Lyrical/Expressive, Fast/Fastest) consist of two articulations instead of a single one to spare the amount of necessary MIDI/audio tracks. The two articulations are separated by velocity in the way illustrated on the example of a Lyr/Exp patch below:

Vel. **0 - 64**: Lyrical articulation

Vel. **65 - 127**: Expressive articulation

To reach the desired articulation in the full volume/velocity range is easy and it can be achieved with the following settings:

**CC1 Volume - ON, CC1 Layers - OFF**

or

**CC1 Volume - OFF, CC1 Layers - ON**

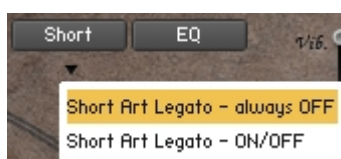
In the first setting, the CC#1 controls the volume, while the velocity controls which articulation is selected (Fast or Fastest for example). In the second setting, the articulation is selected by the CC#1 and the velocity controls the volume. Again, the settings ON+ON and OFF+OFF would not make much sense, as you would access the articulations only in their half volume/velocity range.

### **Legato keyswitch important note**

Pressing the legato keyswitch in the velocity range 0-64 results in the legato mode being switched off, while values 65-127 switch the legato on. This is much more useful than having the keyswitch simply on/off and prevents the legato from being set incorrectly at the start in case of repeatedly played sequences.

### **Legato and short articulations**

Legato can be enabled also for short articulations in the following menu:




It is ideal for semi-long articulations like Violin Staccato Long (MEDIUM), or for sound experiments.

### **Portamento time note**

To fine tune the portamento time constant in short, 0.05 intervals, hold down the Shift key, click and hold the mouse button with the pointer positioned on the number and move the mouse up or down. It offers much more flexibility than clicking the arrows, which changes the portamento time constant in 1.00 intervals.

### **Ensemble mode**

To enter the ensemble mode setup, click on the  symbol.

When setting up the number of players, one selected player means that the patch/program is in solo mode and the ensemble mode is currently inactive. Any selected value between 2 and 8 activates the scripted ensemble mode with the respective amount of players.

Note: The position of vertical rows has no impact on the functionality, they merely fulfill the purpose of illustration of the instrument's orchestral placement – e.g. violins activate the rows on the left, double basses the ones on the right.

Hint: To most effectively reduce the phasing effect, which sometimes occurs in the ensemble mode – besides decreasing the selected number of players – set the 'Detune' value to 0. Although this results in narrowing the 'ensemble' impression, it also reduces phasing. In many cases a compromise between the sense of spaciousness and a setting which does not produce too intrusive phasing is optimal; it also depends on the particular patch and articulation – while some are more prone to the phasing effect than others, some articulations sound good even with all 8 ensemble players selected.

### **Release time note**

The release time parameter also alters instruments in the legato mode. Because the legato is scripted, you can fine-tune the sound decay for all legato parts as well. It leaves the legato itself unaffected, while changing the character of a sound from short to a more ambient decay.

### **A note concerning double basses**

All double bass patches are transposed up by one octave on the keyboard – e.g. if you play the F1 note, a F0 tone is being played.

### **Bass Mini+Low MEDIUM patch exceptions**

Among other, this patch contains two double bass articulations with the lowest sampled tones situated below the E0 tone (transposed to E1 on the keyboard), ranging down to C0. These are 'Bass Martele Low' and 'Bass Smooth NV Low'. However, 'Non-Vibrato' articulations in the library are always activated with the GUI NV-Vib slider and are linked to

another vibrato articulation, so we recommend using the 'Bass Smooth Mini' articulation ('Smooth Mini' articulation is the 'Vib' part of the program, while 'Smooth NV Low' articulation is the 'NV' part) for these low tones (D#0-C0) only with the vibrato slider pulled to 100% NV, i.e. all the way down. Because the 'Smooth Mini' articulation, which is linked to the 'Non-Vibrato' does not have these low tones sampled and thus sounds artificially below the E0 tone. The 'Martele Low' articulation can also be used with these low tones without any limitations.