

# Koto Nation

CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF JAPAN

SERUM 2 · SFZ · WAV



## **Koto Nation - Serum 2 · SFZ · WAV**

An Impact Soundworks Instrument  
for Serum 2 and .sfz compatible plugins

*Instrument Version 1.0.0*

### **Product Manual**

# Introduction

We created **Koto Nation** out of a desire to see traditional Japanese instruments receive a deep, thorough sampling treatment, much like our acclaimed North Indian sample library Sitar Nation.

**Koto Nation** includes nearly 4,000 samples of high-fidelity recordings spanning a wide variety of both traditional and extended playing techniques. Given the popularity of the shakuhachi and taiko in many Western film soundtracks, we wanted to allow film composers, hobbyist producers, ethnomusicologists, anime fans, and everyone in-between access to these other classic instruments.

**Koto Nation - SFZ Version** is a slightly slimmed-down version of the Kontakt instrument of the same name; we have included an easy-to-install Serum 2 preset pack with both natural and designed patches for all instruments, as well as .sfz files - compatible with all SFZ players. You also have the option of downloading all of the samples in WAV format as a separate folder.

Thank you, and please enjoy **Koto Nation**!

— *The Team at Impact Soundworks*

# Installation

The process of installing **Koto Nation - SFZ Version** will differ slightly depending on what plugin you intend to use it with.

First, install [Pulse Downloader](#).

Open the Pulse Downloader app, and click the 'Add a Product' button. In the dialog box, paste in the Pulse product key you received in your order confirmation email; the format will look like this: xxxxxxxx-xxxx-xxxx-xxxx-xxxxxxxxxxxx (containing only lowercase letters and numbers). Select an installation destination, and Pulse will download **Koto Nation - SFZ Version**.

## The Installation Folder Structure

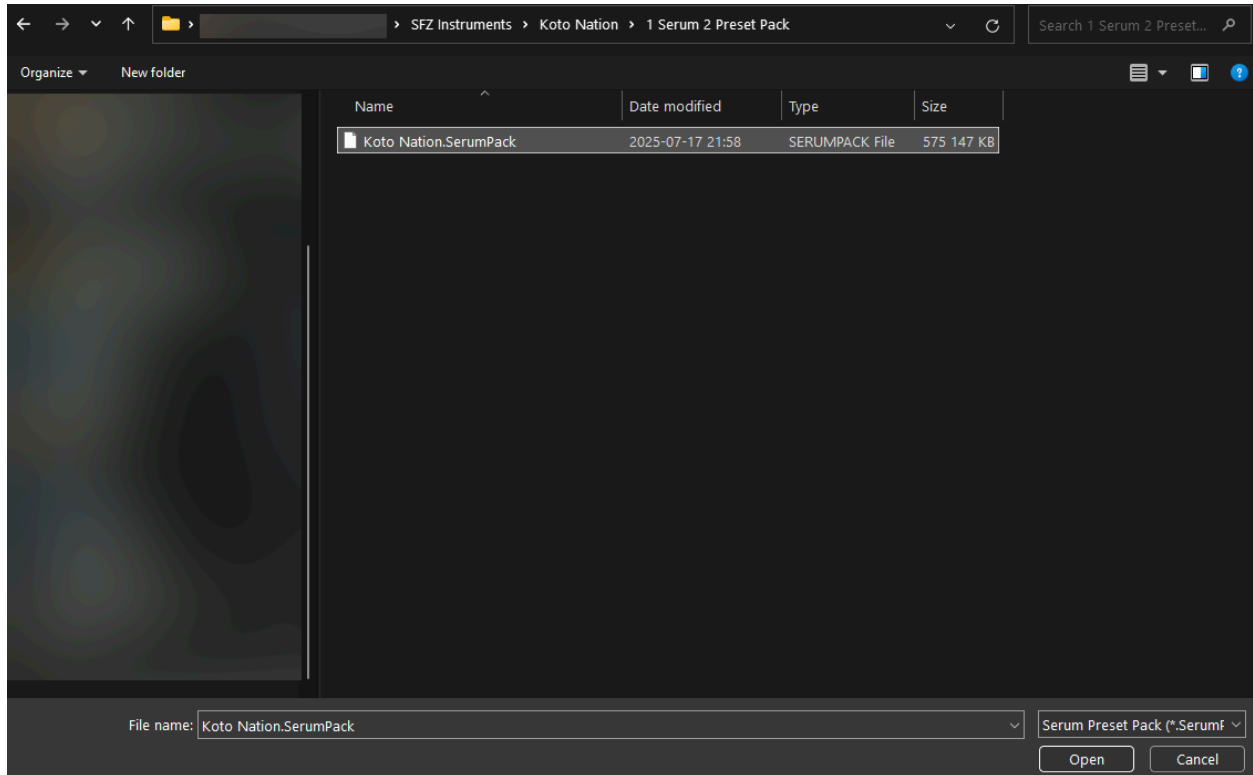
Inside the downloaded folder you will find three sub-folders: *1 Serum 2 Preset Pack*, *2 Sfzs + Samples* (which contains two subfolders: *1 Sfzs* - which in turn contains 4 sub-folders, one for each main patch - and *2 Samples*), and *3 Samples (WAV)*.

## Serum 2 Preset Packs

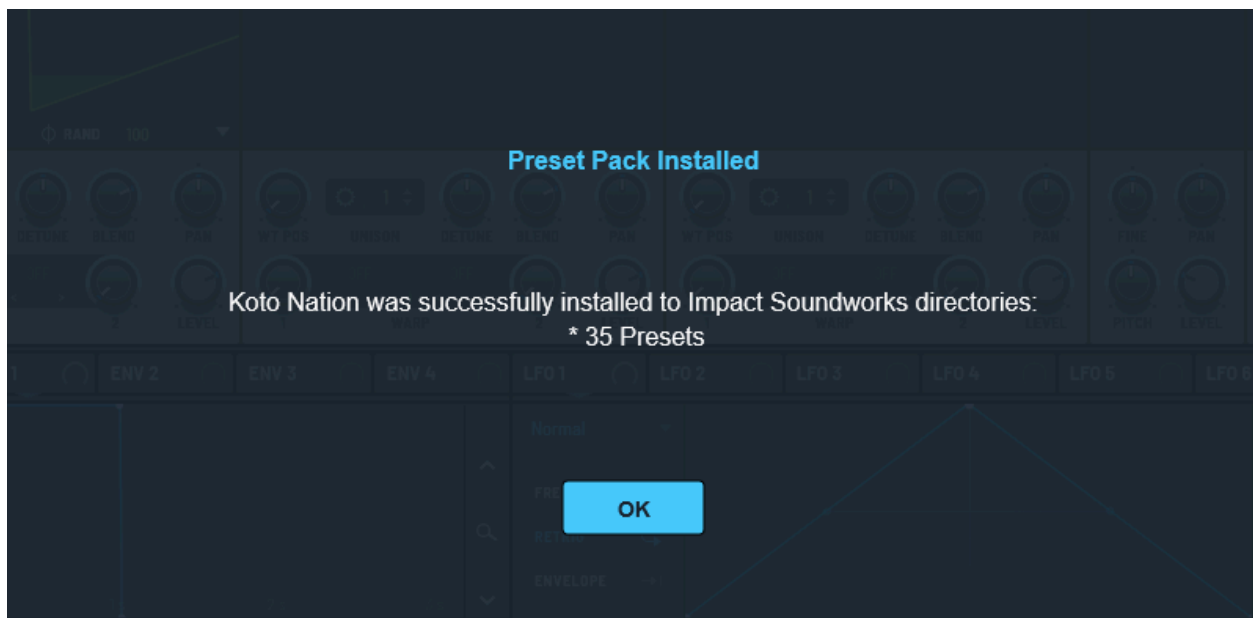
If you own Serum 2, the process of installing **Koto Nation - SFZ Version** is very straightforward. Open up Serum 2, open the *Menu*, and select *Import Preset Pack...* in the dropdown menu:



In the dialog box that appears, navigate to the *Shou Drum* folder you downloaded with Pulse, open the *1 Serum 2 Preset Pack* folder, and open the 'Koto Nation.SerumPack' file:



You should see a confirmation message that looks like this (it can take a few seconds before it appears):



Open the Preset Browser and navigate to *Packs > Impact Soundworks > Koto Nation*. This folder contains sub-folders for the included instruments and their articulations [see pages 7-10]. Selecting

either of them shows the available presets in the browser window (and selecting *Koto Nation* shows them all); click the preset you want to load and you are ready to go!



These presets all use the first oscillator in Serum 2 in Multisample mode and there is a lot of flexibility to change things around as needed (add additional oscillators, per-oscillator filters, effects, and a whole ton more). **NB:** *The additional oscillators in Serum 2 are disabled in these presets by default, but they have been gain-staged to match the samples, so if you turn them on they will blend with the samples immediately!*

The sheer power and scope of Serum 2 is outside the scope of this manual, so please check out the [Serum 2 User Guide](#) for more info!

It's also important to note that, much like the more 'generic' .sfz files, the Serum 2 presets for **Koto Nation - SFZ Version** do not contain all of the controls present in the Kontakt version.

## Generic SFZs + Samples

This folder contains what we refer to as 'generic' .sfz files; these can be opened in most .sfz players.

**NB:** *The internal folder structure of the '2 Sfzs + Samples' folder **must** remain unchanged. If this folder structure is altered, you will run into errors attempting to load the .sfz file.*

Since the most common .sfz player is Sforzando, we will briefly go over how you load these files in that player here.

## Sforzando

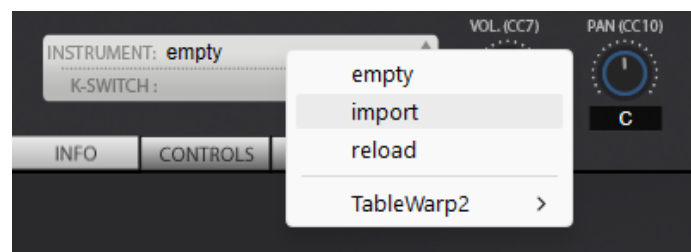
Sforzando is a free SFZ player made by Plogue, available for Windows, Mac, and Linux (in beta).

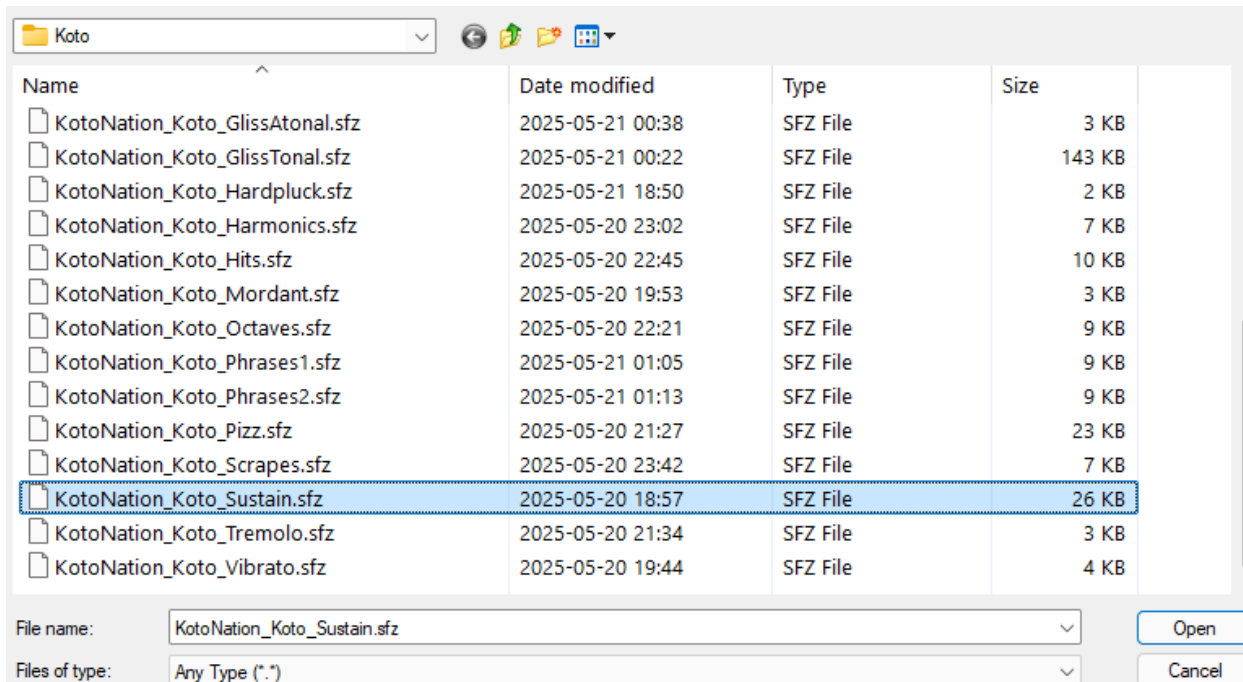
First, head over to <https://www.plogue.com/downloads.html#sforzando> and download the version that's appropriate for your system. The Windows and Mac installers should guide you through the process and install the plugin in a directory of your choosing (keeping in mind that the plugin component(s) should be installed to a directory your DAW scans for new plugins).

When you load the Sforzando plugin, you will see this interface:



Drag-and-drop an .sfz file from the *2 Sfzs + Samples* folder into the plugin window to load it, or click the Instrument section, select 'import', navigate to the *2 Sfzs + Samples* folder, and load the desired .sfz file from the sub-folder you want:





It's important to note here that **Koto Nation - SFZ Version** is (necessarily) a simplified version of [the Kontakt library of the same name](#), so the controls available to you in the Kontakt version are absent here.

## Samples (WAV)

This folder contains audio files in .wav format of all samples used to build the three instruments and the FX patches. You can load these in your favorite sampler or drop them into your DAW for processing and additional sound design - the sky's the limit!

## List of Instruments and Articulations

### Bass Koto Articulations

#### Glissando

A large assortment of tonal, pitched glissandi played with tuning to the Western C scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B) as well as atonal glissandi.

#### Mute

A short, percussive articulation where the bass koto is picked with a plectrum while the strings are muted. Higher velocities trigger a double strike.

#### Pizzicato

The bass koto is played in a pizzicato (plucked) style. Compared to the standard pick/sustain articulation, pizzicatos have a lighter attack and harp-like quality.

### Slides

A 'menu patch' containing a selection of various pitched slides along the bass koto strings.

### Sustains

The bread-and-butter articulation of the Bass Koto, featuring unmuted, sustaining picks of each string with several finger plectrums. A rich, deep tone.

### Tonal Hits

A percussive articulation where multiple strings are struck simultaneously, creating a mix of pitches. **NB:** *In each octave, C-G playback different tonal hit recordings, and G#-B plays a single, longer, rhythmic pattern of hits if the key is held.*

### Wood Hits

An unpitched percussive articulation consisting of hand strikes on the wood body of the bass koto at many dynamic levels and with many variations. **NB:** *In every octave, the six keys between C-F play different samples, and the pattern repeats again on the six keys between F#-B.*

## Koto Articulations

### Glissando 1 (Tonal)

A series of tonal glissandos, played with the standard pentatonic hira joshi tuning (D, Eb, G, A, Bb). Three types are available with two variants each: Down > Up, Down > Up > Down, and Up > Down.

### Glissando 2 (Atonal)

A series of atonal/microtonal glissandos, performed by running the plectrum across the strings on the opposite side of the movable frets.

### Hard Pluck

One of the koto's strings is pulled very quickly and violently, resulting in a harsh plucked sound. Only one note was recorded for this patch (lower velocities = long pluck, higher = short).

### Harmonics

A plucked articulation where the koto's strings are lightly held at different points to produce harmonic overtones.

### Hits

The koto's strings are struck very precisely with the fingers, producing a more percussive, rounded attack. This adds some additional harmonics to the attack sound as well.

### Mordent

A variation of the normal picked sustain consisting of a quick pitch bend starting at the played note, going up approximately one whole step and then returning back to the original pitch for a sustain.

### Octaves

Also known as awase-zume, a playing technique where two strings are picked simultaneously one octave apart. Lower velocities are not only softer, but have less upper string resonance, whereas higher velocities bring in the upper octave more.

### Koto - Phrases 1 and 2

Contains two prerecorded phrases fundamental to traditional koto playing, triggered by playing within the playable range.

### Pizzicato

The koto is played in a pizzicato (plucked) style. Compared to the standard pick/sustain articulation, pizzicatos on the koto have a faster attack and a harp-like quality.

### Scrapes

A collection of non-pitched 'scrapes' where the plectrum is pulled up and down various strings of the koto.

### Sustain + Bend

The bread-and-butter articulation of the koto, featuring unmuted, sustaining picks of each string with several finger plectrums. At max velocity, a bend is performed instead (as in the **Mordent** articulation).

### Tremolo

Metered tremolo on each string. Use the modwheel (CC1) to control dynamics (*Serum 2 preset only!*).

### Vibrato - Slow and Fast

Traditional vibrato on each string.

## Shamisen Articulations

### Bends

**Bend Dn:** A bend all the way up the string before landing back on the played note.

**Bend Up:** A short strike one whole note below the played note, followed by a long, sustained strike bending up to the played note.

**Bend Octave:** A quick bend up and then lands back down to the played note.

### Sustain

A deep sampling of jiuta-style shamisen using a large tortoiseshell plectrum. Lower notes produce an almost sitar-like buzz due to the ornate construction of the instrument. Plucks alternate between up and down strokes on every other note.

## FX

The FX category contains designed patches built from the instruments in **Koto Nation**. Here is a list of them (**NB:** *The list is categorized according to how the patches are grouped in the Serum 2 pack; if you use the .sfz files directly you won't see this categorization in the folder itself*):

### Drum

Koto Taikos

### Pad

Bass Koto Neon Drops

Deep Drone

Pentatonic Organ Pad

### Pluck

Bass Koto Electric FM

### Texture

Bass Koto Ambience

Bass Koto Warm Pad

Broken Android Tremolo

Koto Eternal Gliss

# Credits & Acknowledgements

SFZ / Serum 2 Version

**SFZ Version:** Jared Le Doux

**User Manual:** Fredrik Häthén

**Quality Assurance:** Fredrik Häthén, Shane Roberts, Jared Le Doux

Original Kontakt Version

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**Recording Engineer:** Alec Henninger

**Performer:** Masayo Ishigure

**Additional Editing & Testing:** Steve Davit

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