

Traveler Series - Bluegrass Fiddle

An Impact Soundworks Instrument

for Kontakt Player 7.6+

Instrument Version 1.0.0

Product Manual

WELCOME TO THE TRAVELER SERIES

Welcome to the Traveler Series, a collection of boutique sample libraries featuring traditional world instruments faithfully recorded *on location* from destinations around the globe. Traveler Series libraries focus on delivering a genuine purity that can only be captured where the instrument and musical style originated, preserving its true character and history. We seek out a region's most skilled and renowned performers; amazing folks with stories and bloodlines who live and breathe traditional provincial music. We leave with an education and appreciation for their culture and the role these beautiful instruments serve (as well as a tale or two of our own). We hope our Traveler Series adds an authentic native spirit to your music.

Bluegrass fiddling is a distinctive American style characterized by bold, bluesy improvisation, off-beat "chopping", and sophisticated use of double stops and old-time bowing patterns. Notes are often slid into, a technique seldom used in Celtic styles. Bluegrass fiddlers tend to ignore the rules that violinists follow: they hold the fiddle the "wrong" way and often don't use the chin & shoulder rests.

We journeyed right to the heart of the Bluegrass State for our **Bluegrass Fiddle** – Clay City, Kentucky – to the private studio of one of the most renowned names in Bluegrass music, **Rickey Wasson**. Rickey hooked us up with a true Bluegrass fiddle legend, multi-instrumentalist **Ronnie Stewart**. Ronnie has appeared on hundreds of records and toured with some of the genre's biggest names. Working with Rickey & Ronnie was an honor and an absolute blast.









DOWNLOAD & INSTALLATION

We have an online installation guide for this instrument library here with images and the latest information: https://helpdesk.impactsoundworks.com/hc/3369906564/68/install-guide-kontakt-player-instrument?category_id=5

If anything goes wrong during the installation process, feel free to send us an email at support@impactsoundworks.com and we will help you as soon as we can!

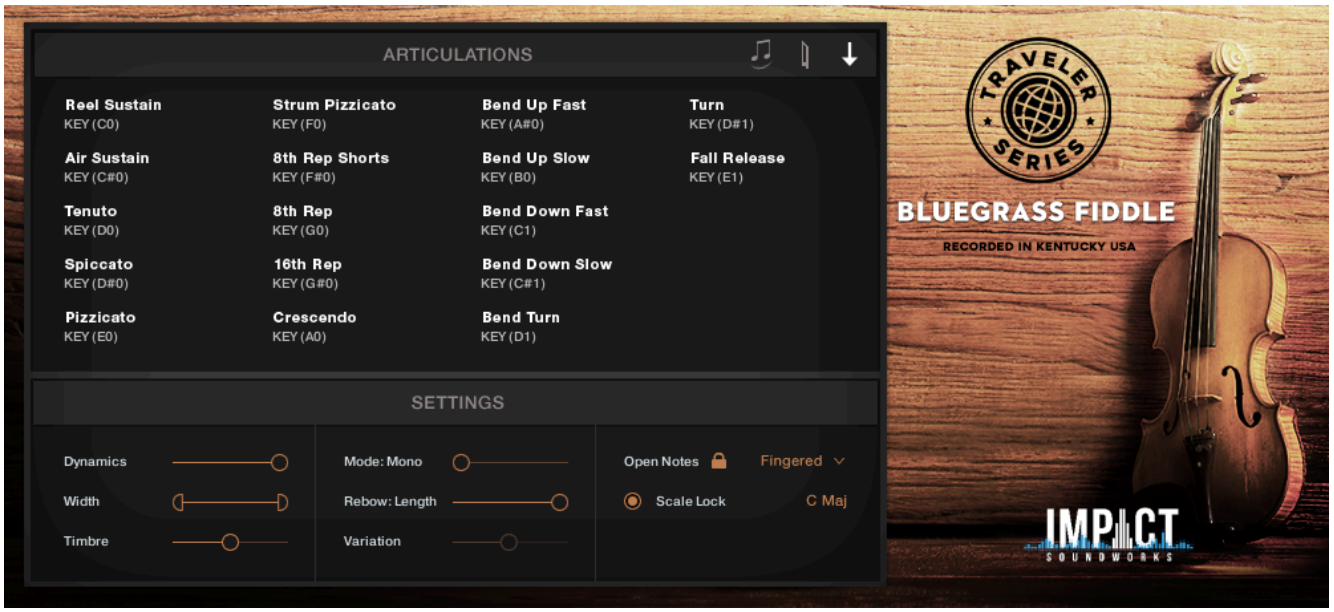
Let's begin with a little honesty. **Sampling a fiddle is hard!** Unlike most solo instruments and even classical violin, fiddle playing employs techniques that are difficult to recreate with samples. We take great pride in producing virtual instruments that are easy to use right out of the box, and we believe we've accomplished this with our Bluegrass Fiddle, but we also *strongly* recommend taking the time to program it properly to get the very best from it. Use your MIDI controls, draw some automation in your DAW and sprinkle in our traditional Bluegrass ornaments. If you take these measures, we're confident you'll achieve beautiful and realistic results!

INSTRUMENT

Traveler Series - Bluegrass Fiddle comes with a feature-packed yet easy to use GUI that's divided into 2 primary panels. Let's take a quick tour. But first, a very handy tip:

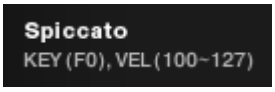
**TIP* - We've added handy help text for every control in our main GUI! If you're unclear as to the function of a control, simply hover over it and the help text appears at the bottom of the Kontakt window. You can also hover over the keys in Kontakt's virtual keyboard to quickly identify the instrument/articulation.*





Articulations Panel

At the top of the GUI you'll find the Articulations panel. This serves as a simple visual list of all available articulations, as well as a legend for how each is currently mapped in **TACT** (see the TACT section of this manual for information on how to customize these settings).



Whenever an articulation is mapped to multiple triggering rules, you'll see both displayed, separated by a comma. In this example, Spiccatos are triggered by pressing the F0 Keyswitch AND playing at Velocities between 100 and 127.

On the right side of the header you'll see 3 helpful icons:



Legato: This icon turns white whenever a legato transition is triggered.



Bow Attack: This small meter shows the level of the bow attack samples.



Bow Direction: This arrow displays the current bow direction.

Settings Panel

The Settings panel contains several useful controls for shaping the sound of the fiddle, as well as powerful features for adjusting its performance.



TIP *- We've created many of the controls in the Settings panel as horizontal sliders so they may be automated in your DAW. As with any knob, button or slider in Kontakt, you can MIDI-learn them to the CC of your choosing by (1) right-clicking, (2) choosing "Learn MIDI CC# Automation," and (3) wiggling/pressing the new control you'd like to assign it to.*

Dynamics: This slider controls the perceived dynamics of the fiddle using a combination of Volume and EQ/Filter. We've employed this method to eliminate unwanted phasing issues typically associated with crossfading between sampled dynamics, which can get especially nasty in solo instruments. The Dynamics slider is assigned to CC1 (modwheel) by default.

Width: This slider adjusts the degree of stereo width, from mono to full.

Timbre: This slider changes the overall timbre of the instrument from dark to bright using some clever, under-the-hood transposition techniques. Note that this may result in the loss of a few notes at the top or bottom of the playable range.

Mode: This slider selects one of fiddle's 4 primary performance modes:

- *Mode: Mono* forces the instrument to perform monophonically (only one note at a time), ideal for legato playing. This mode also supports **held-note retriggering**. Hold down one note while you press a second note & release it and you'll hear the first note again. Very useful for fast performance.

- *Mode: Poly* allows 2 notes at a time, which is as many as a fiddler can realistically play at once (Legato is inactive in this mode).

- *Mode: Smart* is a combination of Mono and Poly modes. The fiddle is monophonic but goes to polyphonic whenever 2 notes are performed within 50 ms of each other. Legato is active.

- *Mode: DS* adds a second note to the root note to create a Double Stop, a very common fiddle technique. In this mode, an orange cog appears that opens the **Double Stop Intervals** panel (described later in this section). **Scale Lock** (also described later) is also activated by default when you enter Double Stop Mode, although you may elect to turn it off.

We recommend fiddling around with these 4 modes to figure out when to use them in your music.

Rebow: This slider provides two options for when the fiddle changes bow direction during performance:

- *New* changes bow direction only when a new note is played, great for faster playing. After that, the sustain will loop infinitely.

- *Length* automatically inserts bow direction changes when the fiddler naturally runs out of bow. This adds realism when performing lyrically with legato.

There's also a manual bow direction change keyswitch at **D#2**, so you can insert one whenever you like. Pressing and holding **E2** forces all down bows for a more aggressive sound. Just release it to go back to alternating direction.

Variation: For articulations that have multiple variations, this versatile slider allows you to select between them. For example, when a Bend ornament is triggered, the use the Variation slider to select half tone or whole tone intervals. When the current articulation has no variations, this slider is inactive (grayed out).

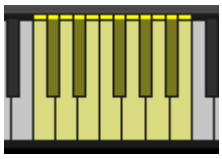
Open Notes: This menu allows you to select which Sustain samples are assigned to the fiddle's 4 open strings (G2, D3, A3, E4). There are 3 options:

- *Fingered* triggers samples of the 7th finger position from the next lowest string. The pitch is identical to the open string, but the tone is a bit different.

- *Open Strings* are just that – we sampled these 4 strings in their open (not fingered) position.

- *Unison* triggers both the open string AND the fingered note samples described above to achieve a slight chorusing effect.

You can also keyswitch between these using **C2, C#2** and **D2**. The **Lock** icon locks your selection so you won't accidentally change it with the keyswitches.

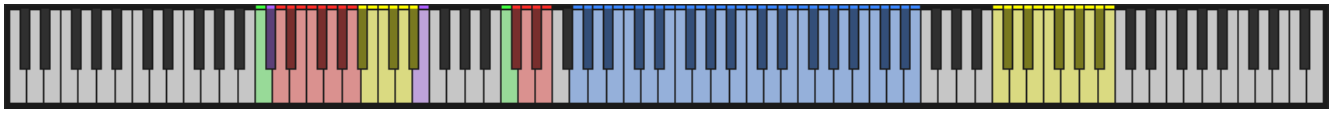


Scale Lock: The last control in the Settings panel is a very powerful script that automagically selects ornament and Double Stop intervals that comply with the scale and mode of your choosing. When Scale Lock is activated, use the yellow range to select a scale. Major is the default mode but minor can be selected by holding down a root note and then pressing the key one semitone above it. On the UI, the current scale & mode is displayed in orange and the Variation slider will display fewer options since many of those decisions are made for you.

Mapping

On the Kontakt keyboard, **blue** keys show the playable range of the current articulation. **Red** keys represent latching keyswitches, **yellow** keys represent non-latching keyswitches and **green** signals the current keyswitch selection. When an articulation is to be triggered mid-sustain or on release its keyswitch color is **purple**.

An octave of additional **yellow** keyswitches appears when Scale Lock is activated and serves to select the scale and mode.



Double Stop Intervals Panel

As mentioned, when the Performance Slider is set to *DS Mode* two things happen. First, Scale Lock is engaged. Second, an orange cog appears that opens the **Double Stop Intervals** panel.



When you select a scale and mode in the yellow key range, the Double Stop Intervals panel is populated with a list of its 12 semitones (in white) and each note is assigned an appropriate interval (in orange). If you prefer a different interval just click it and select a new one from the list. Get creative here! You can save and load your setup as a Preset by clicking the disk icon or delete it by clicking the trach can. Click the orange **X** in the right of the header to return to the main Settings panel.

Bow Attack

One tell-tale sign that you're listening to a sampled fiddle is unrealistic bow attack. To address this our fiddle engine allows for complete control over the amount of bow attack noise you hear when playing sustains. You can choose to aggressively dig into the strings or bow them gently for an emotive sound.

When you open TACT you'll find entries for **Bow Attack Reel** and **Bow Attack Air**, These are two different sets of samples, farmed from their respective sustain recordings with many round robins. When re-combined via script they sound perfectly natural and you can use TACT to dial them in to taste.

**TIP* - One common setup is to assign a bow attack's Rule #1 to the same keyswitch as its sustain. Then assign Rule #2 to Velocities 1-127 and check the box for "Vel Dyn." Realistic bow attack is now heard, scaled by velocity. The harder you play, the more bow attack you get!*

Note that since bow attack samples would never be performed individually, they do not appear in the main Articulations panel.

Legato

The fiddle engine allows for flexible control of our two types of sampled true legato transitions. When you open TACT, you'll see entries for **Fingered Legato** and **Bowed Legato**. By default, legato is performed any time MIDI notes overlap (press your sustain pedal to temporarily deactivate it), and the type of legato is mapped to velocity. This is a good example of an articulation with 2 Rules (pedal + velocity). Of course, any rule(s) can be adjusted to taste in TACT.

**TIP* - Our favorite setup is to assign Fingered Legato's Rule #1 to PEDAL (Up) and Rule #2 to Velocity (1-100). Then assign Bowed Legato's Rule #1 to PEDAL (Up) and Velocity (101-127). Now you can alternate between both types by simply playing overlapping MIDI notes and changing Velocity! Hit the keys hard for the more aggressive Bowed transitions.*

Since legato transition samples would never be performed individually, they do not appear in the main Articulations panel.

Unique Ornaments

Our Bluegrass fiddle includes 7 traditional ornaments, most with multiple variations. These expressive embellishments are generally added to the beginning of a sustain in Bluegrass fiddling. One of them, however, has a slightly different implementation.

Fall Release: To perform this, play a sustain note and then press this keyswitch to end the note with a gentle fall..

PHRASES & FX

Traveler Series - Bluegrass Fiddle has a second .nki containing a collection of pre-recorded phrases & FX. Use these to add realism and for inspiration. Let's explore.



Phrases & FX Panel

The left panel displays the 7 categories of phrases and FX, along with their keyswitches. Note that some categories have multiple keyswitches, so there's more here than meets the eye! The currently active category keyswitch assignment is white and, when played, the speaker icon appears.

Settings Panel

The Settings panel contains controls for adjusting the sound and performance of the last played sample. When you make a change to any control in this panel, the **Reset** button in the top right becomes active (turns orange). Clicking it resets everything to default.

Waveform Display: This shows the visual waveform for the last played sample, as well as its name and key assignment. Anything within the brown background range will play (more on that later).

Volume: This slider adjusts the volume of the current sample.

Tune: This slider adjusts the tuning of the current sample up to 12 semitones higher or lower.

Start & End: These sliders allow you to change the start and end points of the current sample, changing its length. These come in handy for selecting only a certain portion of a loop or removing an unnecessary part of the sample. When these sliders are moved, the brown background in the waveform display shows the portion of the sample that will be audible. When the current sample is a loop, **Lock** icons will appear. When engaged, these locks snap the sliders to 8th note increments.

Tempo Sync: This feature applies only to Intros and Rhythms. When activated, the tempo of the phrase syncs to your host tempo. You can also turn this off and adjust its BPM manually with the slider.

In Quantize: This handy feature delays the MIDI input so that the phrase always starts at the beginning of the selected note division.

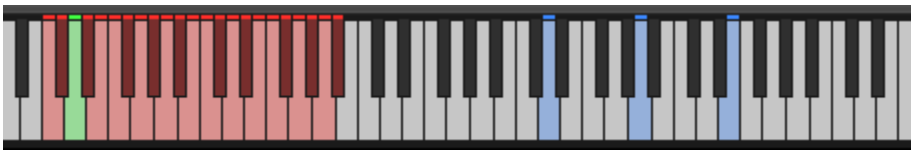
Hold Until: This slider quantizes the end of the sample to the nearest note increment, as determined by the slider.

Mapping

Like the main fiddle .nki, **red** keys represent keyswitches, the **green** key signaling the current selection and **blue** keys are the playable range. The number of playable keys varies by category. For example, all the Rhythms were sampled in a large range, so their mapping looks like this:



Other categories, like the Bend Up Unisons, are only possible on 3 notes of the fiddle, so their mapping looks like this:



Note that some phrases include 2 slightly different performance variations. For these we've added an **asterisk** to the sample name and mapped one to low velocity (1-63) and the other to high (64-127) velocity.



Rhythms

A special note about our tempo-synced Rhythms category (keyswitches A1-E1). We recorded all of them performed with both single notes and 5ths double stops. Just use Velocity to switch between them. Single notes are mapped to Velocity 1-64 and double stops from 65-127.

Drag & Drop .wavs

As an added convenience all the Phrases & FX samples are included as uncompressed 24-bit .wavs so you can drag & drop them right into your DAW.

TACT

Traveler Series - Bluegrass Fiddle features a very powerful piece of technology called **TACT (Total Articulation Control Technology)**. TACT provides an interface for mapping and customizing articulations and includes a powerful Automap function to quickly create an entire mapping setup without laboriously editing each articulation individually. **Bluegrass Fiddle** ships with a few alternative mapping presets, but if you'd like to tweak them to taste or create your own custom performance setup, TACT provides the opportunity to do so.

Overview

To access TACT, simply click the labeled script tab at the bottom of the instrument. The interface shows 8 articulations at a time. For instruments with more than that, the dots in the upper right of the UI represent pages, with white denoting the page you're currently editing.



Articulations can be toggled by clicking the **blue LED** next to the articulation name. When disabled, all samples for that articulation are unloaded from memory and its name is dimmed in the Articulations panel.

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Volume controls playback volume. The **Offset** knob sets a sample playback offset in milliseconds (ms) and is only active for applicable articulations. Generally, increasing Offset will make that articulation feel more responsive to keyboard playing, or possibly snappier, at the cost of truncating the attack/transient portion.

Vel Scale is only relevant if the articulation is mapped to a limited velocity range (for example, 10 to 70). It controls the degree to which velocity affects playback volume (low velocity means softer playback; high velocity means louder playback). For example, if an articulation has a velocity range of 10 to 70, then even at its maximum velocity level (70), volume will only scale it to about 55% of maximum volume. With Vel Scale enabled, then in the above example the minimum velocity (10) will be scaled to nearly 0% of max volume, while the maximum velocity (70) will scale to 100%.

Articulation Mapping & Rules



The **three numbered buttons** in each articulation row access its **mapping rules**. Clicking a button turns it white, signifying that Rule's parameters are displaying to the right. Here you can enable a Rule by selecting any mapping method from the first dropdown menu. A blue ring appears around the button, letting you know that a Rule has been assigned to it. You can disable a Rule by once again pressing its numbered Rule button and then setting the first dropdown back to **"-N/A-**." The blue ring disappears.

There are **six mapping methods** available:

- **KEY**: Keyswitch. Triggers the articulation if the chosen keyswitch note is held. **LATCH**, when enabled, means the chosen keyswitch does not need to be held, only pressed once.
- **VEL**: Velocity-based. Triggers the articulation if the input velocity is within the selected range.
- **CC**: Controlled by MIDI CC. Triggers the articulation if the chosen MIDI CC (# box) is within the selected range.
- **BEND**: Controlled by MIDI pitch bend (technically not a CC). Triggers the articulation if the pitch bend controller is within the specified range. Note that pitch bend can be negative as "0" is the middle value; the max possible range is -8192 to 8192.
- **RANGE**: Controlled by key range. Triggers the articulation if the input MIDI note is within the specified range. This is not the same as keyswitching!
- **PEDAL**: Controlled by the sustain pedal (CC64). Triggers the articulation if the pedal is down, or if it is up.

Each articulation can have up to three simultaneous Rules, but only one of each mapping method (i.e. you cannot use multiple VEL rules for the same articulation.) When an articulation has more than one Rule, this means it's triggered only when *both* conditions are met. For example, you could set up 8th Note Repetitions to be triggered when you press keyswitch C1 *and* play at a Velocity of 1-64. You could then assign 16th Note Repetitions to trigger at C1 and Velocity 65-127, making it easy to play both articulations without the need for 2 keyswitches.

When more than one articulation shares the same rule, its row turns **from gray to red,** signifying a conflict.

Whenever you make a change to an articulation's triggering Rules in TACT it is automatically updated and displayed in the Articulations panel on the main Traveler Fiddle Engine page, for quick reference.

NOTE: Some articulations follow special rules unique to an individual library. For example, Release articulations only trigger when a note is lifted (MIDI note off). Other articulations may trigger before another articulation.

ANOTHER NOTE: Some articulations listed in TACT are not displayed in the Articulations panel of the Traveler Fiddle Engine page because they aren't performed by themselves. For example, our fiddle's Bow Attack samples follow triggering rules in TACT but would never be performed without being layered with a Sustain. Similarly, one could transition between multiple articulations using Legato but wouldn't want

to perform Legato transition samples on their own. Therefore Legato appears in TACT but not in the Articulations panel.

Special Controls

Depending on the instrument, extra controls may be displayed in an articulation row. For example, our fiddle's ornaments have **Speed** knobs so you can adjust their length to better suit your music.

Automapping

Automap works by selecting multiple articulations (by single-clicking their names, activating a blue highlight), selecting a scheme from the first dropdown menu, such as "CC Split", configuring any parameters associated with that scheme (such as for CC Split, which CC# for it to work on), setting the Rule # to apply the new mapping on, and the "GO!" button to execute the automap.

Holding control/command while selecting multiple articulations will select or deselect them all.

When automap is executed by pressing GO!, the previous mappings will be preserved in memory. If the user wishes to undo the change, they can access the preset menu and hit "Undo Automap". Note that this will only work 1 time, as there is only 1 level of history.

When a new mapping is applied to an articulation via Automap, the associated rule is automatically turned on in every selected articulation. If an articulation already contained a rule with the relevant trigger type, that pre-existing rule will be cleared out first.

For all mapping schemes, especially splits, they are done in order of selection, not visually ascending or descending order. For instance, if velocity split mapping was engaged on articulations ABCD that are selected in order CDBA, then articulation C will have the lowest velocity range, D will have the next lowest, and so on. Here is the list of currently implemented schemes:

- **Keyswitch (Semitones):** Will map selected articulations starting at the specified keyswitch, ascending by semi tones (1 half-step).
- **Keyswitch (Wholetones):** Will map selected articulations starting at the specified keyswitch, ascending by whole tones (2 half-steps).
- **Velocity Split:** Will map selected articulations to ascending velocity trigger ranges that are even divisions of 1 to 127. For example, on articulations AB will map A to 1-64 and B to 65-127.
- **CC Split:** Will map selected articulations on the specified CC# to ascending ranges that are even divisions of 1 to 127. For example, on articulations AB will map A to 1-64 and B to 65-127.

In addition to the spanning schemes listed above, TACT also features "shared" schemes that apply the same rule to selected articulations:

- **Shared Keyswitch**: Will map selected articulations to the specified keyswitch.
- **Shared Velocity Range**: Will map selected articulations to the specified velocity range.

- **Shared CC Range**: Will map selected articulations to the specified value range on the specified CC#.

- **Shared Key Range**: Will map selected articulations to the specified key range.

- **Pedal State**: Will map selected articulations to the specified pedal position.

- **Clear Rule**: Will "delete" whatever mapping exists in the selected articulations on the chosen rule (set them to [None]).

A combination of spanning schemes and shared schemes is the key to getting the most out of TACT. For example, in a string library, a user could set all short articulations to a "shared keyswitch" rule, and then have their second rule be a "CC Split Range". This way, they can switch to a general "shorts" keyswitch, and use their mod wheel to select the specific one.

FX RACK

Traveler Series - Bluegrass Fiddle includes a modular 8-slot FX Rack, featuring a large variety of useful EQ's, reverbs, delays, modulation FX, amps & cabinets, etc. Let's take a tour of the interface:



FX Chain Panel



The large black panel at the top contains a row of **8 FX slots**. Think of this like a guitar pedal board. Click the **dropdown menu** on any slot to load an effect. The **blue button** to the left of the effect name toggles it between active (on) and bypassed (off). When you load FX into multiple slots you'll notice **left and right arrows** above their graphics. Use these to move that effect left or right across the board, re-arranging the FX chain.

Effect Edit Panel

When you load an effect into a slot or click on its graphic it highlights and the bottom panel populates with controls to edit its parameters. All the individual FX, their controls and features, are described in detail in the Kontakt manual. The **Slot Presets** menu on the left allows you to save your current settings, load a previously saved preset you created, or reset the effect to default.



The **dice icon** randomizes all the currently selected effect's parameters for creative inspiration. Note that it does not randomize Output or Wet/Dry knobs.

Lastly, in the top right of the interface there's a **Rack Presets** menu where you can save the *entire rack's* current settings, load a previously saved rack you created, or reset the rack to default (empty).

LIST OF ARTICULATIONS

PRIMARY TECHNIQUES	DESCRIPTION
Reel Sustain	Fast & lively bowed performance
Air Sustain	Emotive & lyrical bowed performance with light vibrato
Bowed Legato	Recorded transitions between notes with a bow direction change
Fingered Legato	Recorded transitions between notes using fingering
Tenuto	Steady & even short bowed note
Spiccato	Very short bowed note with a sharp attack
Pizzicato	Plucked note
Strum Pizzicato	Plucked note with a lighter, strummed performance
8th Repetition Shorts	Short bowed notes, ideal for repetitions
8th Repetitions (tempo synced)	One looping bar of bowed 8th notes
16th Repetitions (tempo synced)	One looping bar of bowed 16th notes
Crescendo (short & long, tempo synced)	Sustained bowed note that progresses from quiet to loud

ORNAMENTS	
Bend Up Fast (HT, WT)	Beginning of note quickly rises in pitch
Bend Up Slow (HT, WT)	Beginning of note slowly rises in pitch
Bend Down Fast (HT, WT)	Beginning of note slowly drops in pitch
Bend Down Slow (HT, WT)	Beginning of note quickly drops in pitch
Bend Turn	Beginning of note bends into an expressive flourish
Turn (HT, WT, Min3, Maj3)	Beginning of note is an expressive flourish
Unisons	An open string played together with a fingered version of the same note, the fingered often performing a Bend Up
Fall Release	End of note drops in pitch

PHRASES & FX	
FX - Percussive	Chops and knocks
FX – Fret Noise	Various fret noises of various lengths and directions
Bend Up Unisons (HT & WT, Fast & Slow)	An open string played together with a fingered version of the same note, the fingered performing a Bend Up
Intros	Various one-bar phrases for starting a song
Chops Rhythms (tempo synced)	Various rhythmic atonal chop patterns
Rhythms (tempo synced)	Various two and four bar looping tonal rhythms
Various Phrases	Various uncategorized phrases, including the “train” effect

CREDITS

Concept & Art: Dickie Chapin
Kontakt Scripter: Davide Magni & Mario Krušelj
Sample Editor: Christian Yoder
Performed by Ronnie Stewart
Session Producer: Dickie Chapin & Christian Yoder
Engineer: Rickey Wasson

Thanks: In addition to everyone above who worked so hard to create this library we'd also like to give extra special thanks to Jodi & Phoebe & Lola Chapin, and the entire staff at Rick's Main Street Studios.

If you have any questions or comments about **Traveler Series - Bluegrass Fiddle** email our customer support directly at support@impactsoundworks.com.









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