



VERSILIAN STUDIOS



10TH ANNIVERSARY

# TUBULAR BELLS II

PRODUCT MANUAL



# INTRODUCTION

Versilian Studios first ever commercial product, *Tubular Bells* has remained a hit, selling thousands of copies over the past decade. Returning to our roots, we have created an all-new sample library of tubular bells, featuring some of the most powerful microphones in existence across a range of characteristics from state of the art condensers and measurement omnis to rich, smooth ribbons to ensure a perfect fit in your mix.

The Classic Collection runs entirely in the free Sforzando player by Plogue (alternately ARIA Player by Garritan can be used), eliminating the need for Kontakt or other paid software in order to use it. When you install Sforzando, you will also get a standalone version, ideal for stage use, practice, or patch exploration.

To install Sforzando, please visit the Plogue website:

<https://www.plogue.com/downloads.html#sforzando>

If Sforzando is not available for your OS or in your alternate timeline, other players are available on the SFZ Format website (e.g. 'Sfizz' for Linux):

<https://sfzformat.com/software/players/>

# DEVELOPMENT

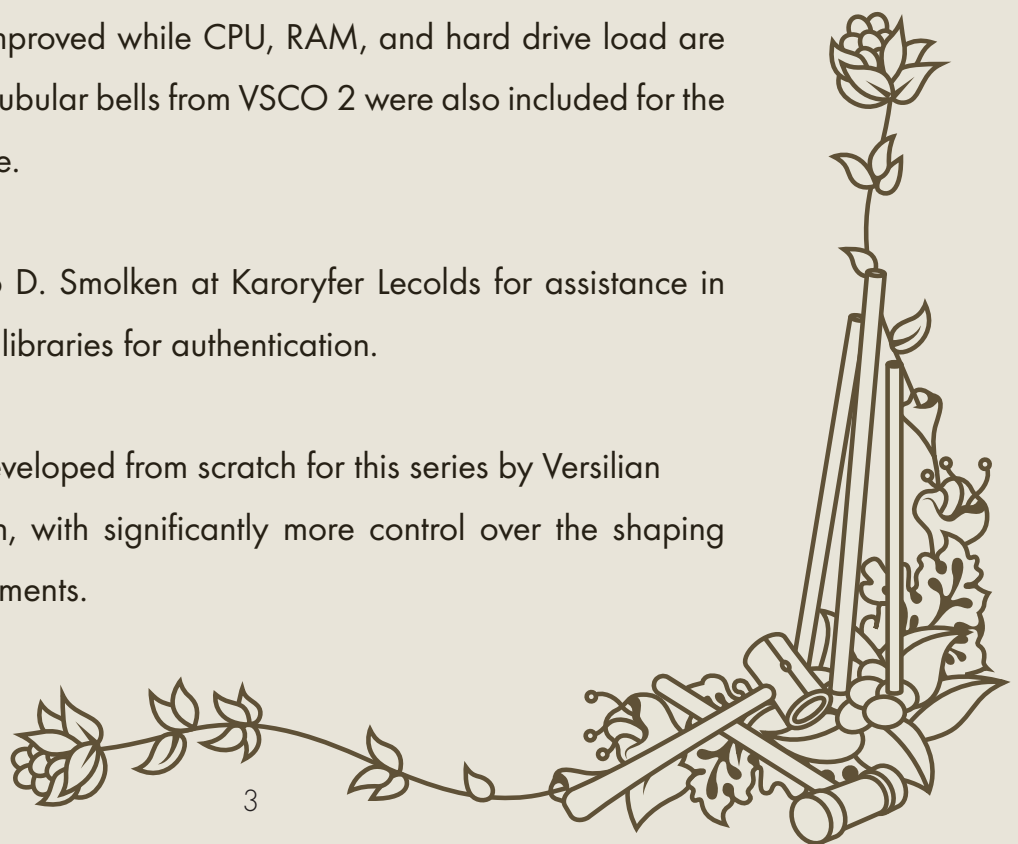
The Classic Series was recorded and released from 2013-2015 during the early days of production on what would eventually become VSCO 2, our flagship orchestral library, and largely funded its development. Recorded in semi-dry environments, the classic series instruments proved extremely popular with their flexible sound and affordable, a la carte pricing.

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of Versilian Studios and Tubular Bells, we applied 10 years of advances in sampling and recording techniques and equipment to create the ultimate tubular bells sample library. Experience 4 mic positions, a range of unique articulations, and realistic damper behavior.

Not to be left behind, the original tubular bells instrument was retrofitted and updated to run in SFZ format, accessible from the free Sforzando or ARIA Players by Plogue/Garritan. Compared to the old VSTi or AU plugin formats, reliability is significantly improved while CPU, RAM, and hard drive load are significantly reduced. The tubular bells from VSCO 2 were also included for the first time in this new release.

A special thanks is due to D. Smolken at Karoryfer Lecolds for assistance in assembling the GUI's and libraries for authentication.

A new GUI design was developed from scratch for this series by Versilian designer Simon Autenrieth, with significantly more control over the shaping and character of the instruments.



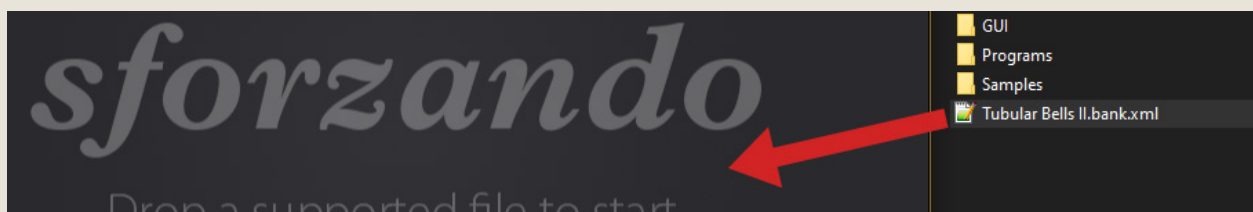
# INSTALLATION

First, you will need to use [Pulse Downloader](#) to download this product. Pulse ensures the fastest and most reliable download process and automatically extracts the instrument for you.

When prompted, choose a location to install the library. Place this folder wherever you would like the library to be accessed from in the future – this could be on an external hard drive, an internal SSD, or your main hard drive.

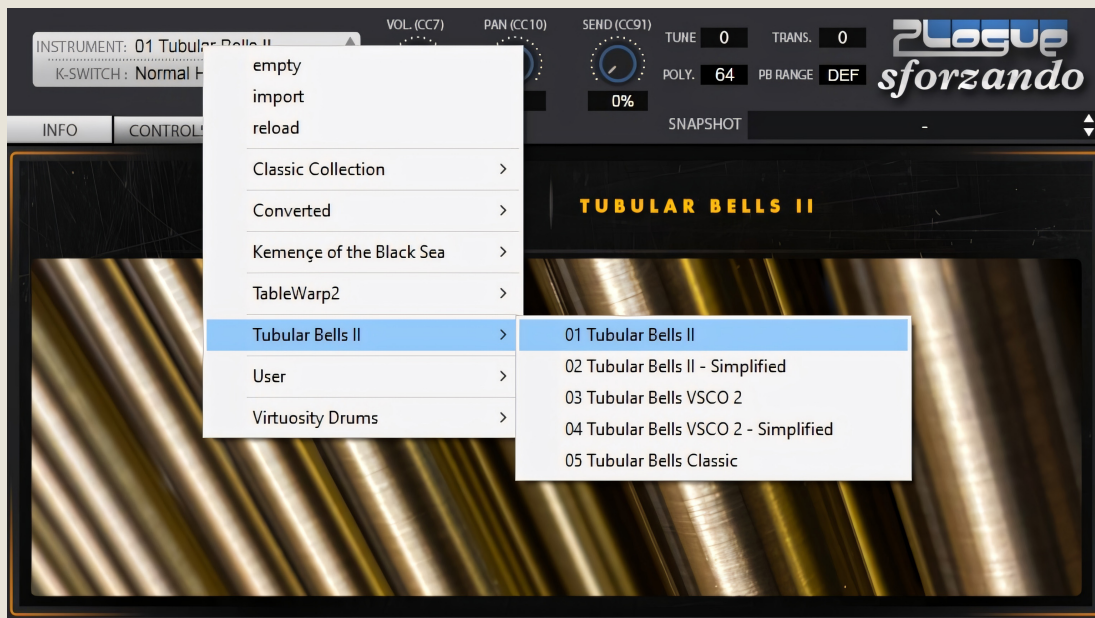
To use the library, you must also install Sforzando or ARIA player by Plogue. Sforzando is available [for free from the Plogue website](#), while you may own the ARIA player already if you have used any Garritan products.

Open Sforzando (standalone app) and open the Tubular Bells II folder (in Pulse, click 'Open' button). Locate "Tubular Bells II.bank.xml" and drag and drop it into the open Sforzando window:



# LOADING PATCHES

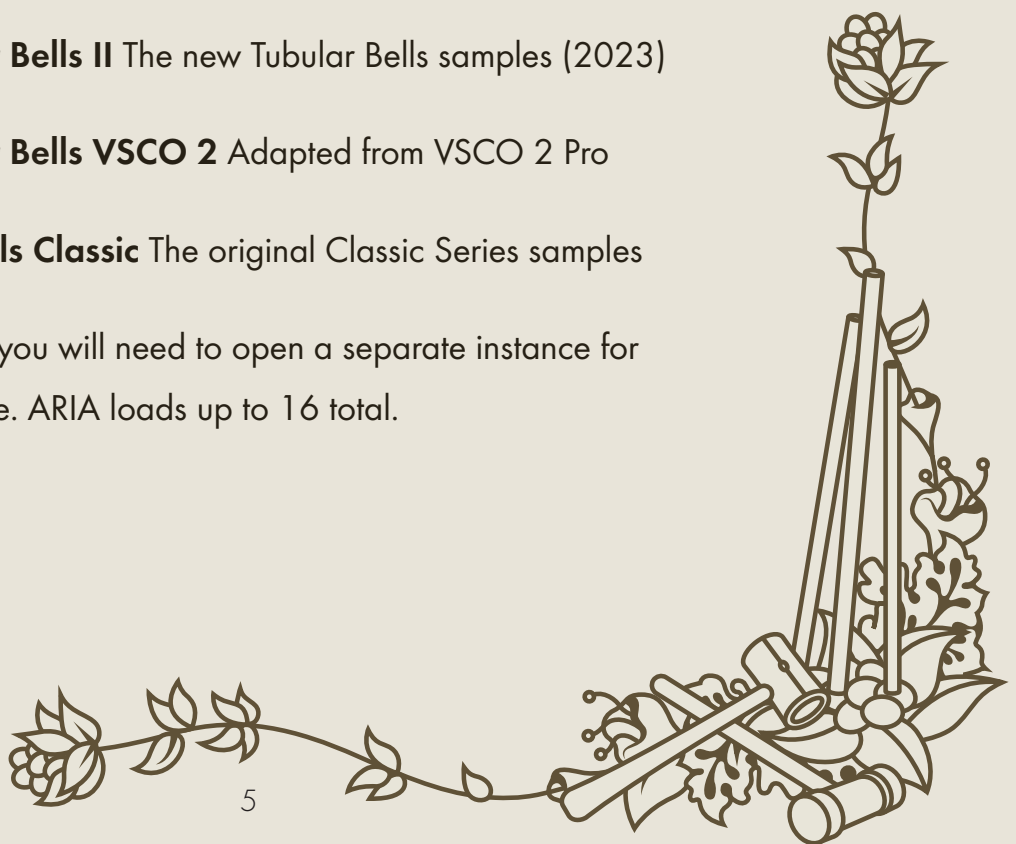
Once you have installed the library, you can load patches by clicking the 'Instrument' dropdown in Sforzando or ARIA, and selecting a program under 'Tubular Bells II':



There are 5 programs available:

- **01/02 Tubular Bells II** The new Tubular Bells samples (2023)
- **03/04 Tubular Bells VSCO 2** Adapted from VSCO 2 Pro
- **05 Tubular Bells Classic** The original Classic Series samples

If using Sforzando, you will need to open a separate instance for each patch you wish to use. ARIA loads up to 16 total.



# OPERATION

Once loaded in Sforzando or ARIA, the GUI will become available to you. This window will provide nearly everything you need to control and shape the sound of the instrument from adjusting releases to controlling the stereo image to help it fit in your mix. In this section of the manual, I'll walk you through each part of the GUI and typical settings.





The top portion of the GUI is standard for all Sforzando libraries. Note that if you are using ARIA player, your GUI will look quite different here, as ARIA is designed to accommodate multiple patches at once.

Here you can select the Instrument loaded from among all libraries installed on your system. Beneath the instrument is the active Keyswitch. If you press a keyswitch note (grey/red range below white playable range), it will be reflected here.

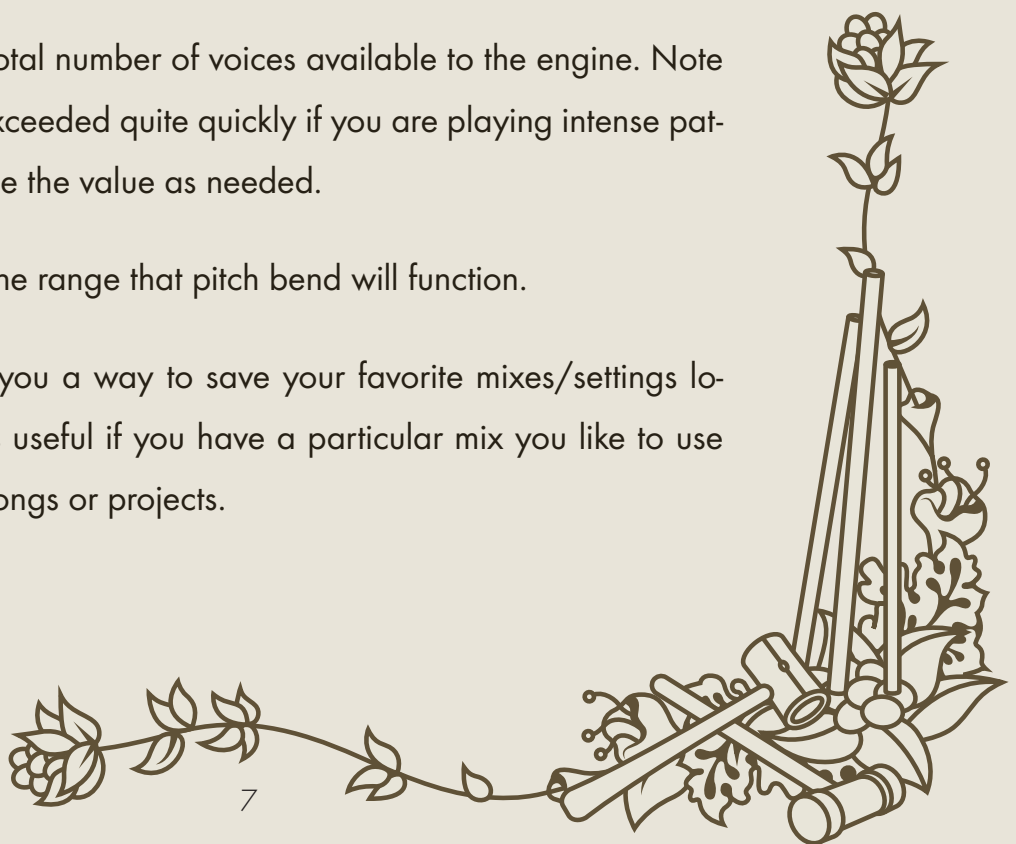
Also accessible are Volume (CC7), Pan (CC10), and [Reverb] Send (CC91) controls. The four tabs below; Info, Controls, Effects, and Settings change the active screen on the GUI.

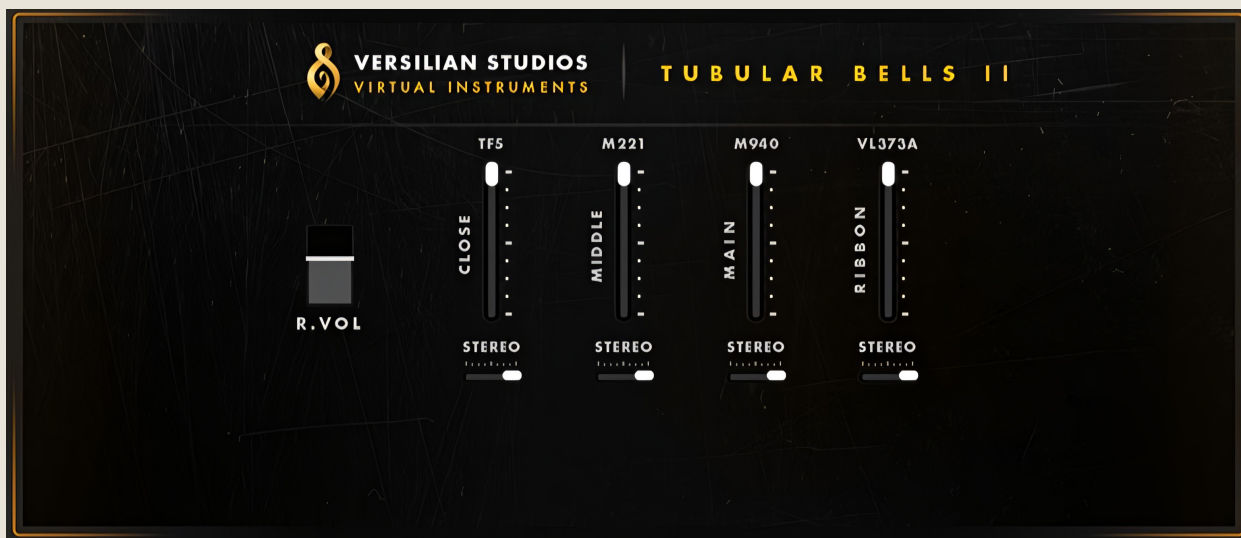
To the right, Tune provides adjustment in cents of the pitch of the library. Trans[pose] allows the incoming MIDI data to be transposed by halfsteps.

Poly[phony] is the total number of voices available to the engine. Note that this number may be exceeded quite quickly if you are playing intense patterns, so be sure to increase the value as needed.

PB Range controls the range that pitch bend will function.

Snapshot provides you a way to save your favorite mixes/settings locally for recall later. This is useful if you have a particular mix you like to use regularly across multiple songs or projects.





Select the 'Controls' tab and the above screen will appear. All controls on this page can be automated, see pg. 12 for MIDI CC's in use.

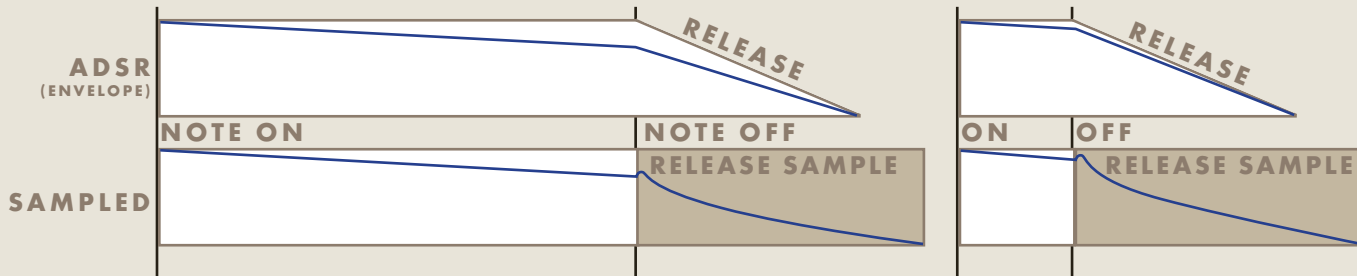
In the center of the screen are the **microphone level** faders, which allow you to mix the various microphones together to achieve the desired sound. Note that only Tubular Bells II features multiple mic positions. The other instruments are a pre-mixed blend of mics. Note that dragging the volume of a mic position down to the bottom will silence it, but the samples will still "play" silently in the background regardless (Sforzando does not feature sample loading/purging).

Beneath each of the stereo mic positions, there are **Stereo** width controls which allow you to collapse the position to mono (center), or reverse the position (full left) to swap between Player and Audience perspective. This is useful for example if you are mixing the instrument into an orchestra, or want to feel like you are playing the instrument solo with a controller. The default position is full right.

The dynamics of all patches in this library are controlled via **velocity**. If you notice the sound is very quiet, make sure you are pressing keys with sufficient force to get the desired timbre and volume.



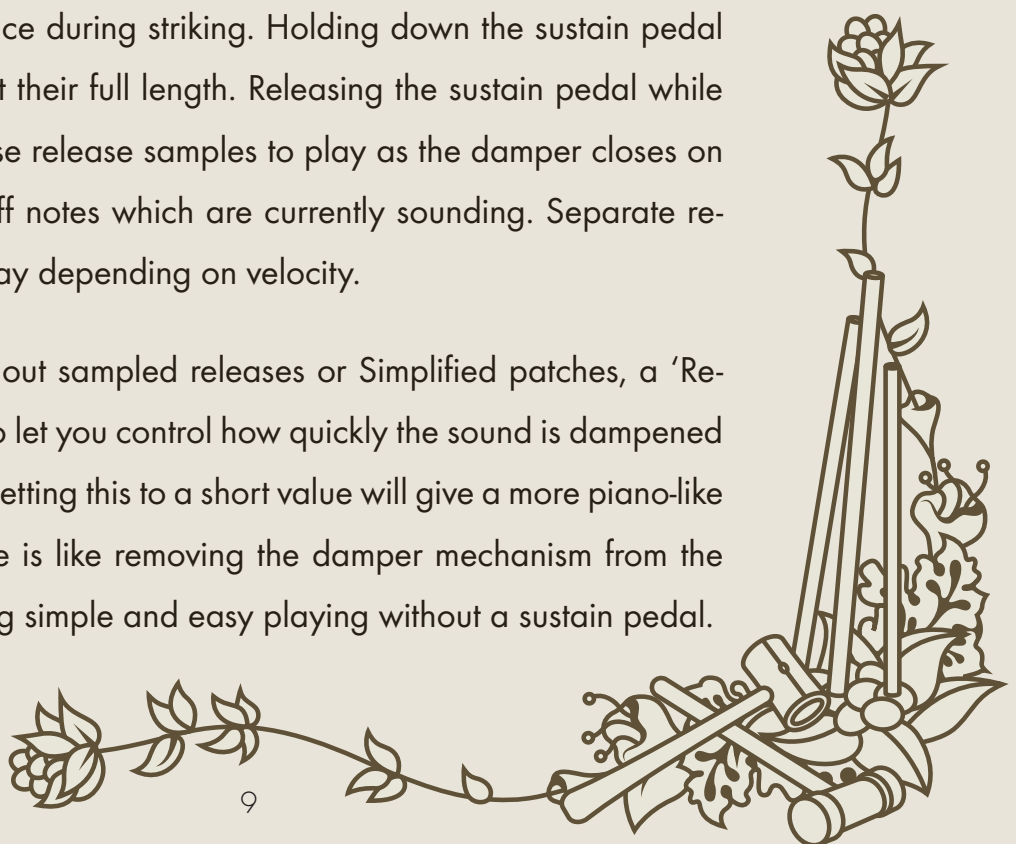
On some patches, you will find controls off to the right side to control either the Release length (ADSR/Envelope) for 'Simplified' patches, OR the volume of sampled releases for full patches.



Release samples are sounds which occur when the note stops, including the sound of the note being cut off and any environmental sound such as the reverberation of the sound in the space. When you release your sustain pedal, this will trigger these samples to play. Using them over a standard envelope release provides a significant boost to realism.

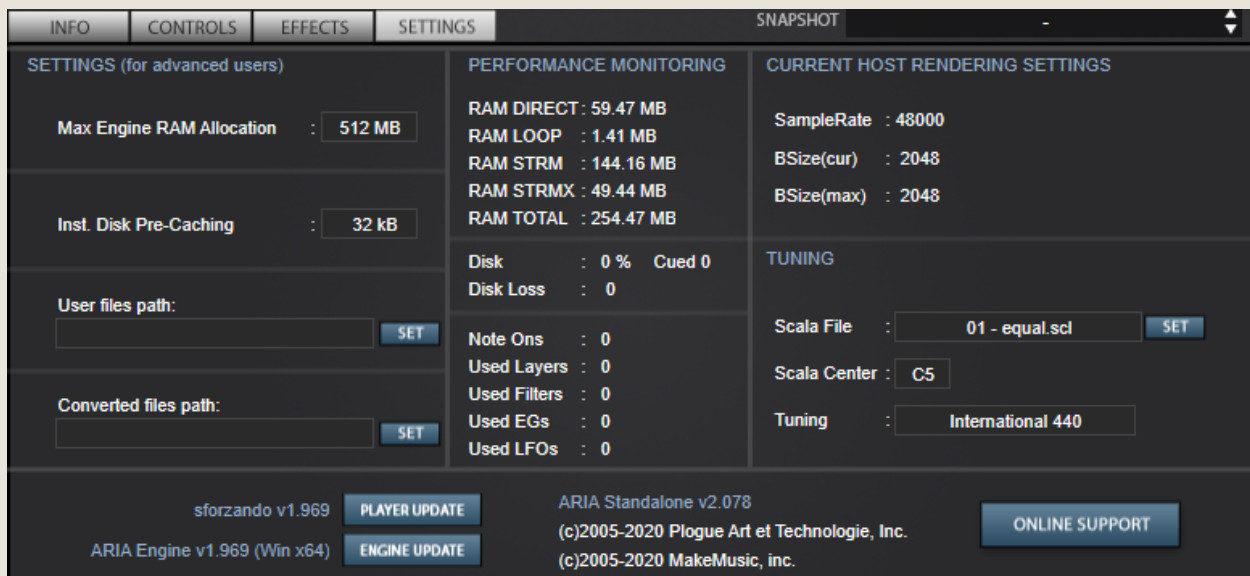
Tubular Bells II has a carefully captured *damper mechanism*, where striking the instrument without the pedal down will result in a staccato sound as the dampers remain in place during striking. Holding down the sustain pedal will allow notes to ring out their full length. Releasing the sustain pedal while notes are playing will cause release samples to play as the damper closes on the tubes, gently cutting off notes which are currently sounding. Separate releases were sampled to play depending on velocity.

For instruments without sampled releases or Simplified patches, a 'Releases' slider is available to let you control how quickly the sound is dampened when the key is released. Setting this to a short value will give a more piano-like feeling, while a long value is like removing the damper mechanism from the instrument entirely, allowing simple and easy playing without a sustain pedal.



The Effects tab (not pictured) provides a generic algorithmic reverb. Make sure you use the 'Send' knob (CC91) at the top of the GUI, about 25-50%, to enable this.

In the Settings tab are some generic metrics about the instrument's behavior and some settings to tweak performance. Of most importance perhaps here is Max Engine RAM Allocation. On a modern system with at least 4 GB of RAM, I would suggest setting this to 2 GB to ensure the engine can load all the samples it needs to into RAM.



In the center column you can see the current RAM, disk, and engine usage. Over time, as notes are played, the total RAM usage will increase as the contents of commonly used samples are loaded into RAM from the disk.

The other settings in this panel fall outside the scope of this manual.

# PERFORMANCE GUIDE

With tubular bells, you generally will have two simultaneous notes possible. It can be tempting to play like a piano with 3+ notes at once, but this can create too dense of a sound, especially given the limited range.

Unlike a piano, tubular bells do not have a per-note dampening system. Instead, a single pedal allows all notes to ring while held down, with notes being cut off all together when the pedal is released.

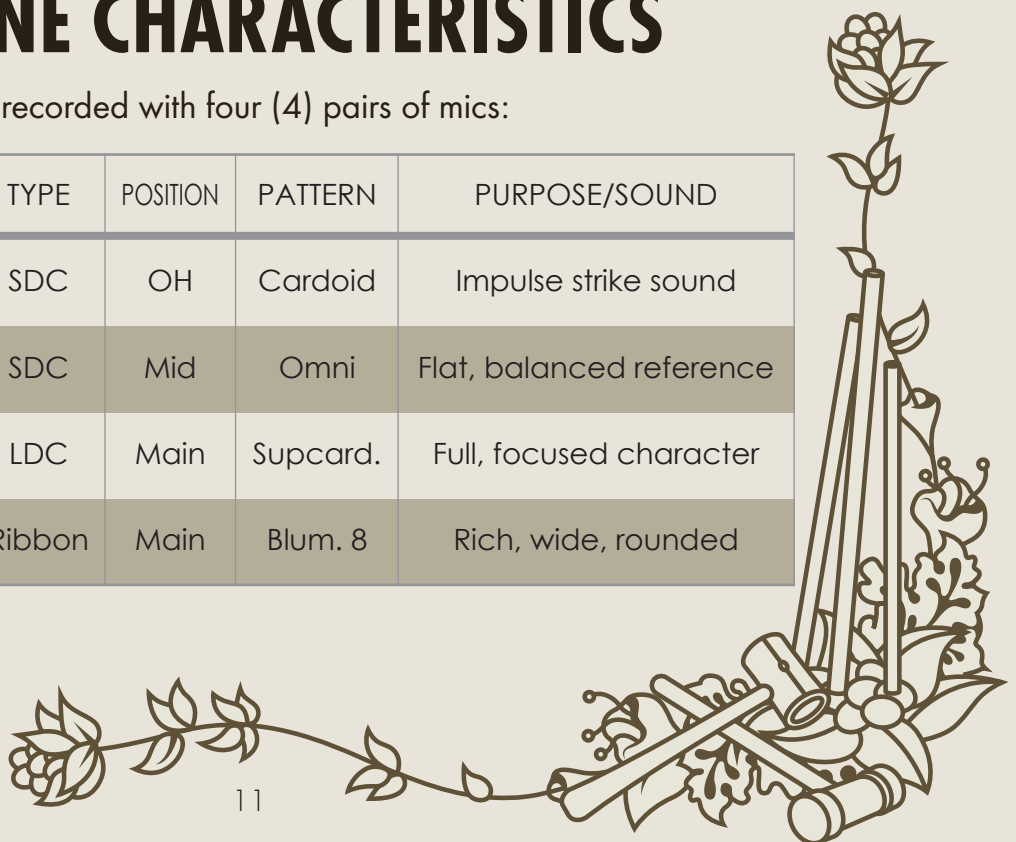
If the pedal is not pressed down, usually a shortened, staccato effect results. This is emulated accurately in Tubular Bells II but not in the original Tubular Bells or the Tubular Bells in VSCO 2 Pro.

Additional hits were added in Tubular Bells II and VSCO 2 Tubular Bells on top of the chimes. This gives a very nasally, shrill sound. The tops of the chimes were also tapped with the hand to give a 'pop' effect.

# MICROPHONE CHARACTERISTICS

Tubular Bells II was recorded with four (4) pairs of mics:

MANUFACTURER	MODEL	TYPE	POSITION	PATTERN	PURPOSE/SOUND
RØDE	TF5	SDC	OH	Cardoid	Impulse strike sound
Microtech Gefell	M 221	SDC	Mid	Omni	Flat, balanced reference
Microtech Gefell	M 940	LDC	Main	Supcard.	Full, focused character
Samar Audio	VL373A	Ribbon	Main	Blum. 8	Rich, wide, rounded





# PATCHES & ARTICULATIONS

Tubular Bells II contains three unique instruments, with 5 total variants available. Several instruments include multiple articulations, stops, or other features which allow you to alter or shape their sound to fit the needs of your track or composition. Tubular Bells II and the VSCO 2 Tubular Bells feature releases and both 'full' and 'simplified' variants.

You should also keep handy a list of controllers used in this collection, which are standardized across the entire set:

## MASTER CC LIST - TUBULAR BELLS II

### Mic Settings

- CC101: Close Mic(s) Volume
- CC102: Close Mic Width
  
- CC103: Mid Mic(s) Volume
- CC104: Mid Mic Width
  
- CC105: Main Mic Volume
- CC106: Main Mic Width
  
- CC107: Ribbon Mic Volume
- CC108: Ribbon Mic Width (Blumlein = M/S collapseable)

### General

- CC72: Release (ADSR) Time
- CC73: Attack (ADSR) Time (not available on Tubular Bells II full patch)
- CC76: Release Noise Volume (volume of sampled releases)
- CC91: Reverb Send

# PERCUSSION

## 01 Tubular Bells II - *New 2023 Sampling!*

- » Normal Hits (Open/Closed with Sustain pedal)
- » Top Hits
- » Soft Hits (large, soft mallet)
- » Finger Taps ("Pops")

## 02 Tubular Bells II - **Simplified**

- » Normal Hits (Open only)
- » Top Hits
- » Soft Hits (large, soft mallet)
- » Finger Taps ("Pops")

## 03 Tubular Bells - **VSCO 2**

- » Normal Hits
- » Top Hits

## 04 Tubular Bells - **Simplified** - VSCO 2

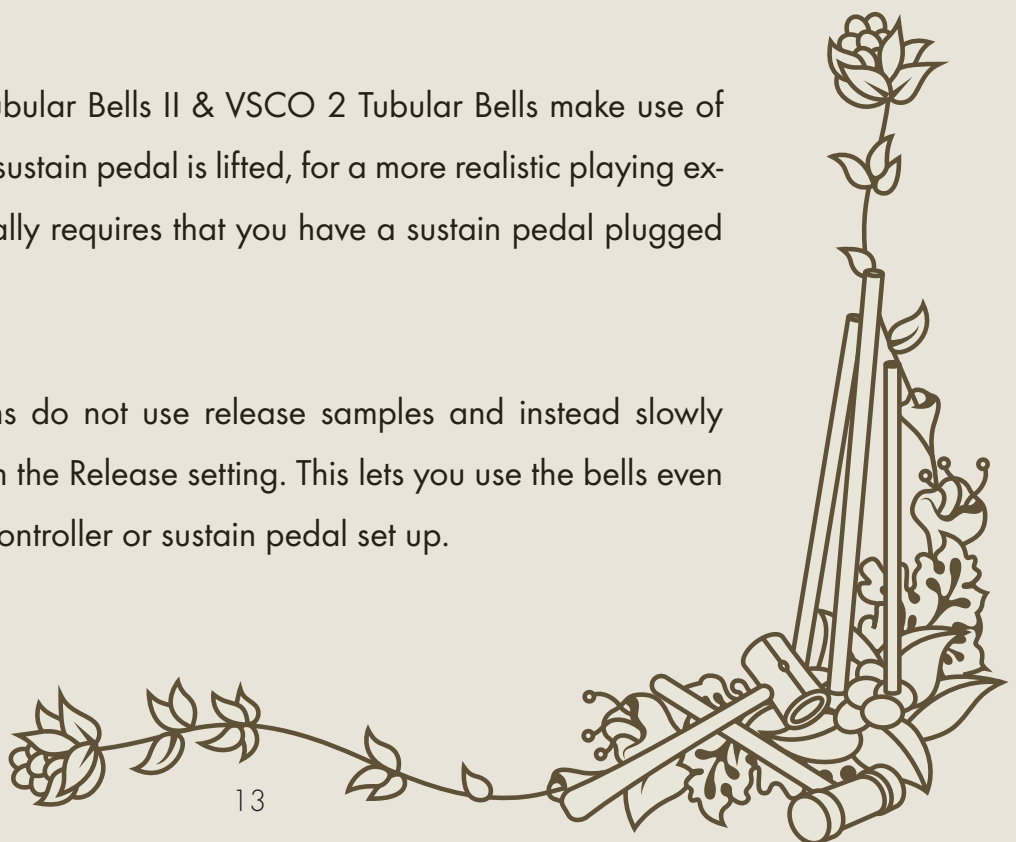
- » Normal Hits
- » Top Hits

## 05 Tubular Bells - *Classic Series*

- » Normal Hits (no releases)

"Full" versions of Tubular Bells II & VSCO 2 Tubular Bells make use of release samples when the sustain pedal is lifted, for a more realistic playing experience. This setup basically requires that you have a sustain pedal plugged in and set up.

"Simplified" versions do not use release samples and instead slowly fade out the note based on the Release setting. This lets you use the bells even if you don't have a MIDI controller or sustain pedal set up.





# TROUBLESHOOTING

If you are experiencing issues with the library, there are a few steps you can try to resolve the issues before contacting us. Below is a list of common possible problems and 'home remedies' that will work to fix them.

## 1. Samples could not be found warning.

Generally the best solution is to re-extract the files from the .zip archive, or re-download the archive. Never move any of the folders or files in the 'Tubular Bells II' folder to another location as this will break the program. If you wish to move the library, move the Tubular Bells II folder itself with everything left inside as-is.

## 2. Instrument uses up too much memory or CPU, or I experience clicks/dropouts while playing.

Increase your DAW's audio driver buffer size and ensure your computer's CPU is in 'Performance' mode. If using a laptop, plug it in. Avoid excessive polyphony.

## 3. Library fails to register in Sforzando/ARIA.

Make sure you update Sforzando/ARIA to the latest version. You can do this by

going to the settings tab and selecting 'Player Update', then 'Engine Update' as well after that.

#### 4. Instrument takes a long time to load.

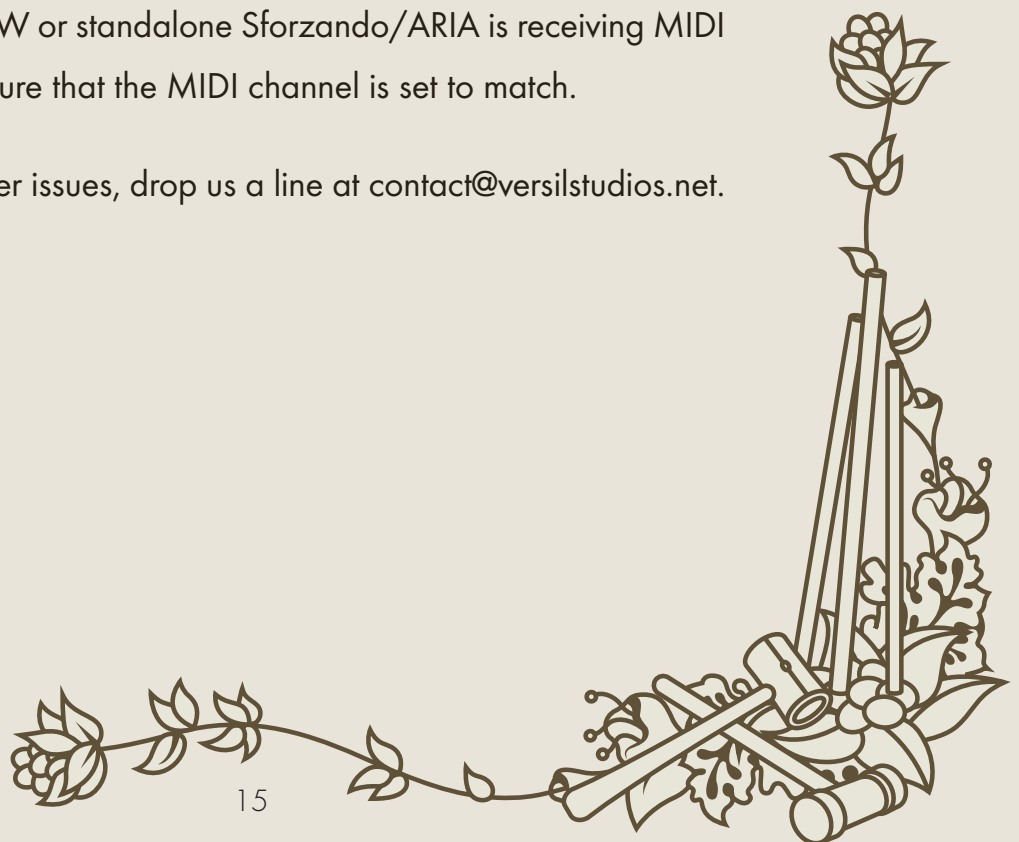
On Windows 10 devices or devices with 'realtime protection' anti-malware systems, such systems will attempt to scan the literally thousands of samples that Sforzando/ARIA needs to load before letting Sforzando/ARIA load them. It is strongly advised that you at least temporarily disable such 'realtime protection' systems while loading libraries, or set up an exemption for your folder or drive of sample libraries.

It is always recommended to use a solid state drive (SSD) from which to stream samples. A 256 GB external drive can be had for the price of a decent dinner with a drink and can hold this very library over 200 times over, while also speeding up load times significantly vs. a mechanical hard drive.

#### 5. Instrument won't respond to MIDI input.

Make sure your DAW or standalone Sforzando/ARIA is receiving MIDI from your device, then ensure that the MIDI channel is set to match.

If you have any other issues, drop us a line at [contact@versilstudios.net](mailto:contact@versilstudios.net).





# CREDITS

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GUI Design, Video Playthroughs

Special Thanks to:

David @ Plogue

Dieter Theuns

All of our customers over the past decade!