Etherealwinds Harp II

PRODUCT MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

The lever harp is a smaller cousin to the standard concert harp. With strings numbering from 22 up to 38+ rather than the 47 on standard concert harps, it has a smaller range, while its smaller body provides a different timbre. The eponymous levers appear at the top of the strings (shown above below the tuning pegs), which allow each individual string to be sharpened by a halfstep. By tuning some notes a half step flat (e.g. B, E, A) and then raising them to natural for playing in C natural or sharp keys, the instrument can play both sharp and flat keys.

Applicable genres for Etherealwinds Harp range widely from folk, cinematic, and world to even pop, rock, and ambient. With a tone halfway between a small lap harp (like the Etherealwinds Harp I) and a full concert harp, it can easily swing either way and works just as well in the concert hall as it does in the coffee shop. We encourage you to explore and enjoy this beautiful instrument!

DEVELOPMENT

The instrument sampled was a 34-string Iona lever harp made of ash and beechwood, performed by UK-based musician, singer, and composer Jordi Francis, or Etherealwinds. Jordi's interests range through Video Game, Celtic/World, New-Age, Electronic, Folk, and Classical styles of music, and the results have applied to his playing styles and large range of extended techniques.

As a vocalist, Jordi draws from a blend of linguistic and cultural elements across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East to create a language called 'Etherean', the cornerstone of his unique vocal performances.

Sampling was done over an eight hour period (with a break in the middle for tea of course) remotely in the UK, while monitored live from Versilian HQ in New England, USA. A pair of small diaphragm condensers were the centerpiece of the process, placed relatively close to the harp to pick up the fine nuances in the notes, but far enough to avoid excessive proximity effect and generate a pleasant clean room tone.

The entire range of the instrument was sampled chromatically with four round robins and at up to three dynamic layers across a number of different articulations. This was supplemented by a large array of aleatoric effects such as tremolo and trill sounds performed with a pick and glissandi across the instrument.

As a bonus, Jordi performed two whole octaves of chromatically sampled voice sustain samples and nearly 250 short phrases, perfect touches to any piece.
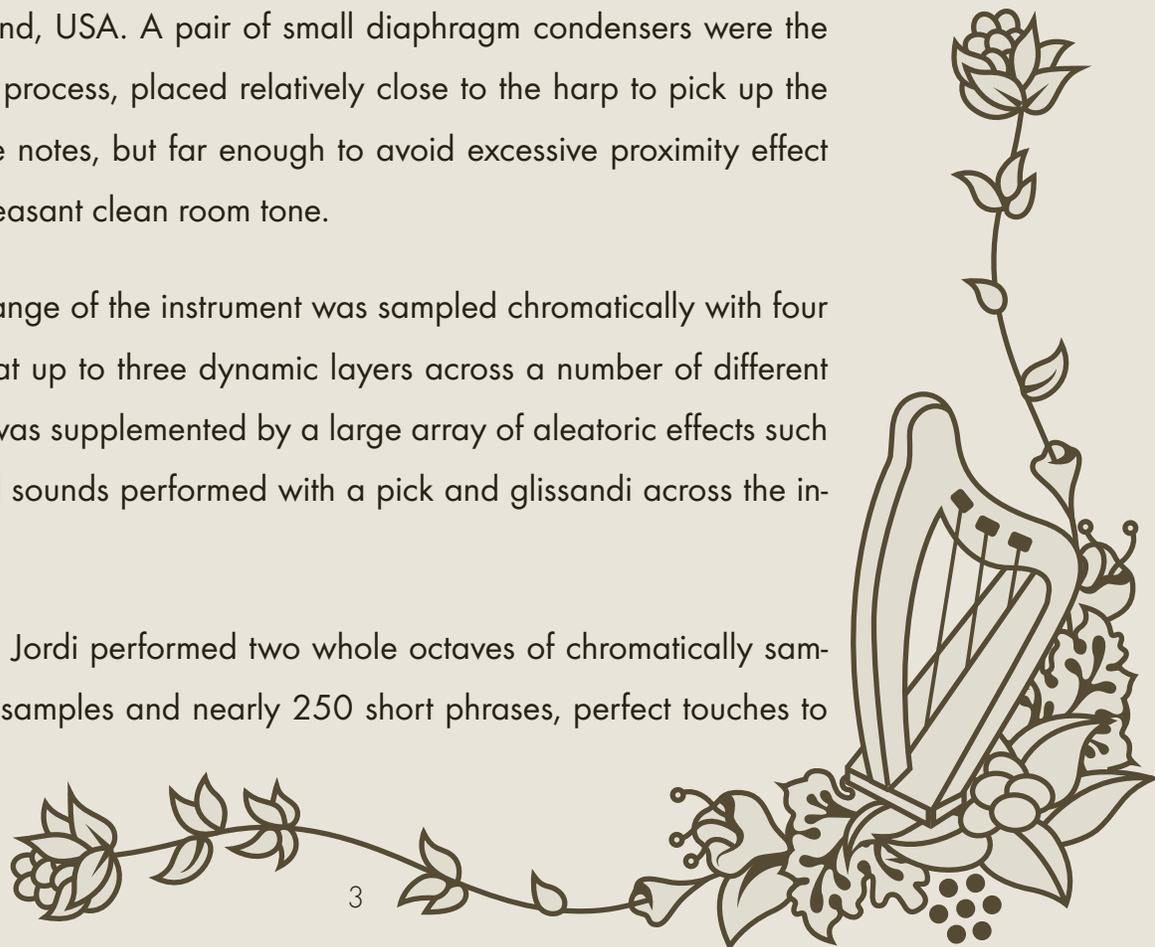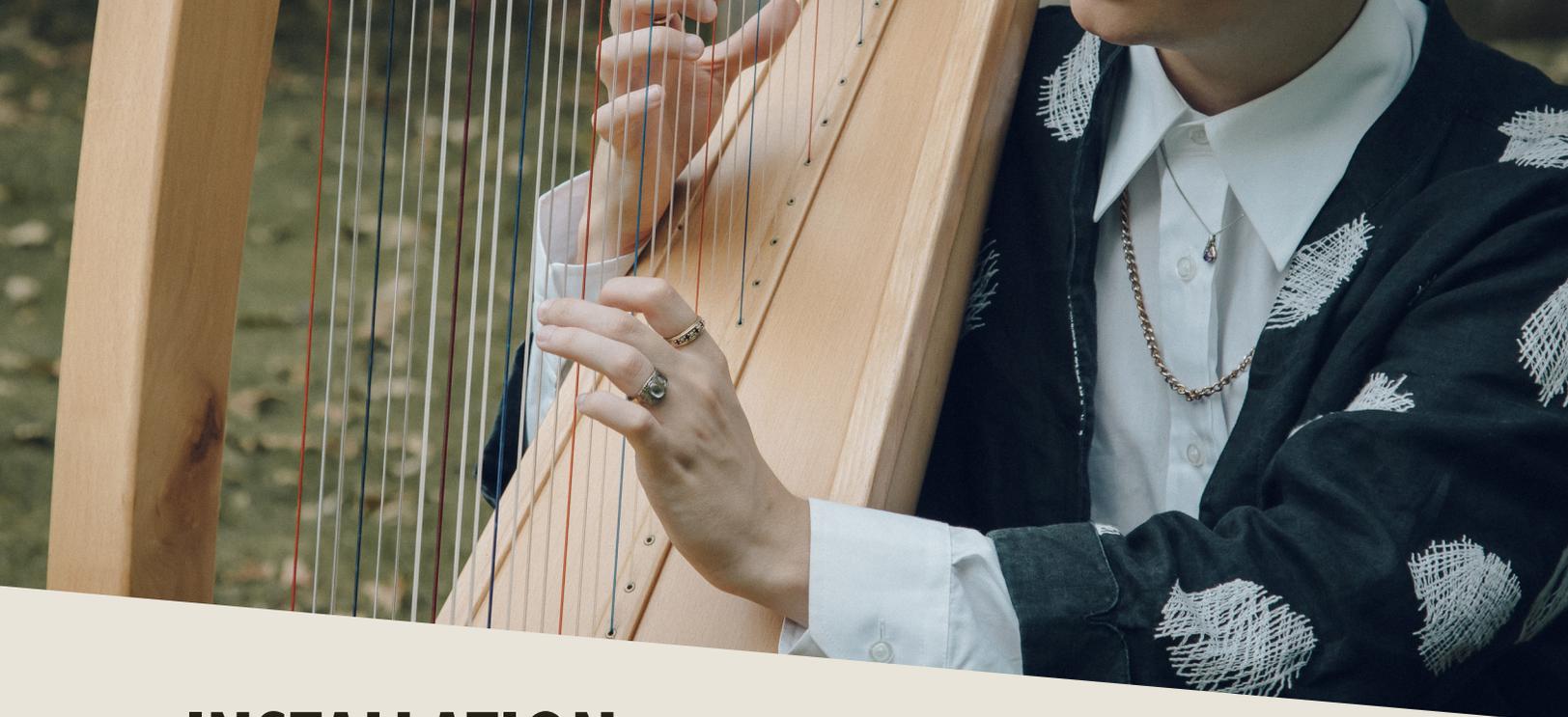
INSTALLATION

Begin installation by downloading the library after completing checkout. This will result in a single .zip file containing the entire library. Extract the contents of this .zip and you will see a folder called "Etherealwinds Harp & Voice II".

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, drag and drop any of the .nki (Kontakt instruments) into an instance of Kontakt (either standalone or plug-in), as shown below.
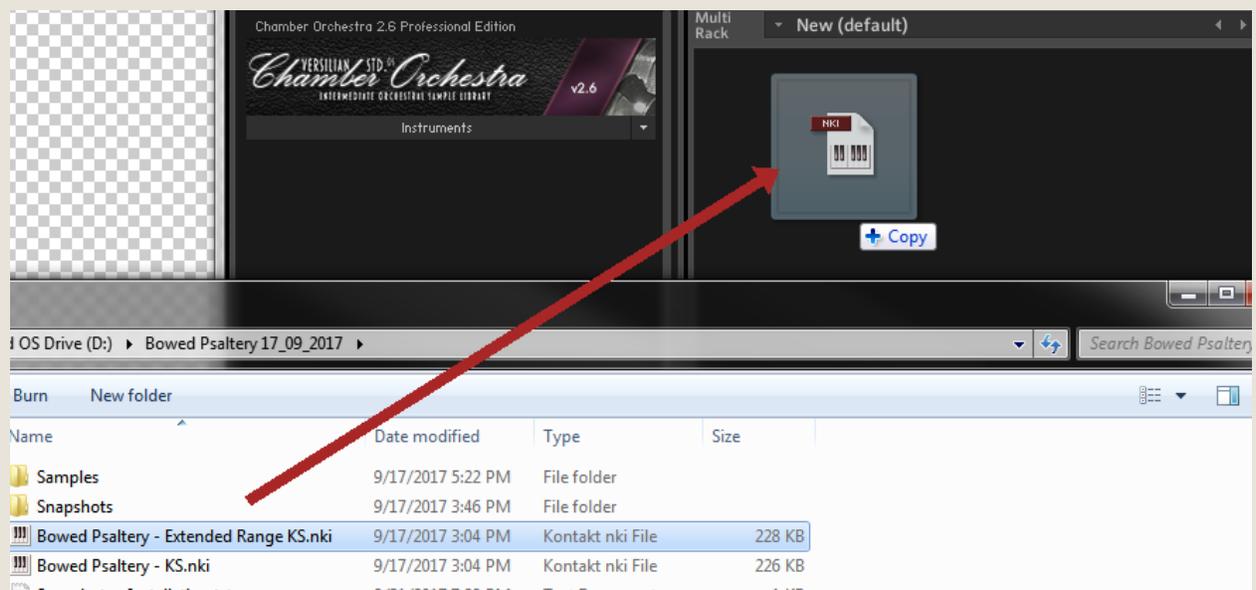
SNAPSHOTS

Within the "Etherealwinds Harp & Voice II" folder you will also find a folder labeled "Snapshots." The contents of folder belong in your user files for Kontakt, and will provide you with some unique preset settings. Typically these are found in <User>/ Documents/Native Instruments/User Content/Kontakt.

However, if you want to check this to be sure, you can click the wrench in the top left corner of the instrument, then click "Instrument Options", then "Snapshots". Next to the directory listed press "Show" and it will open up the location where the snapshots should go.

Copy over the four folders within the 'Snapshots' folder named "Etherealwinds Harp II - Articulations KS" through "Etherealwinds Voice - Syllables - KS" directly into the 'Kontakt' folder you now have open.

After this is done, the snapshots should automatically appear in your open copy of the instrument if you click the camera icon to the right of the product name and then open the out drop-down that reads 'Standard (Reset)'.

You can create your own snapshots as well. If you want to add effects to the instrument and save it as a new snapshot to recall later (e.g. adding a delay or distortion effect), click the wrench in the top left and scroll all the way down to 'InsertEffects'. Click the plus in the corner of one of the dark gray boxes and select the effect you wish to add.

Configure it to taste, then scroll up and hit the floppy disk/save icon to the right of the snapshot name (make sure you are in the snapshot panel by clicking the camera icon again). Give it a descriptive name and enjoy your handiwork later at the press of a button!
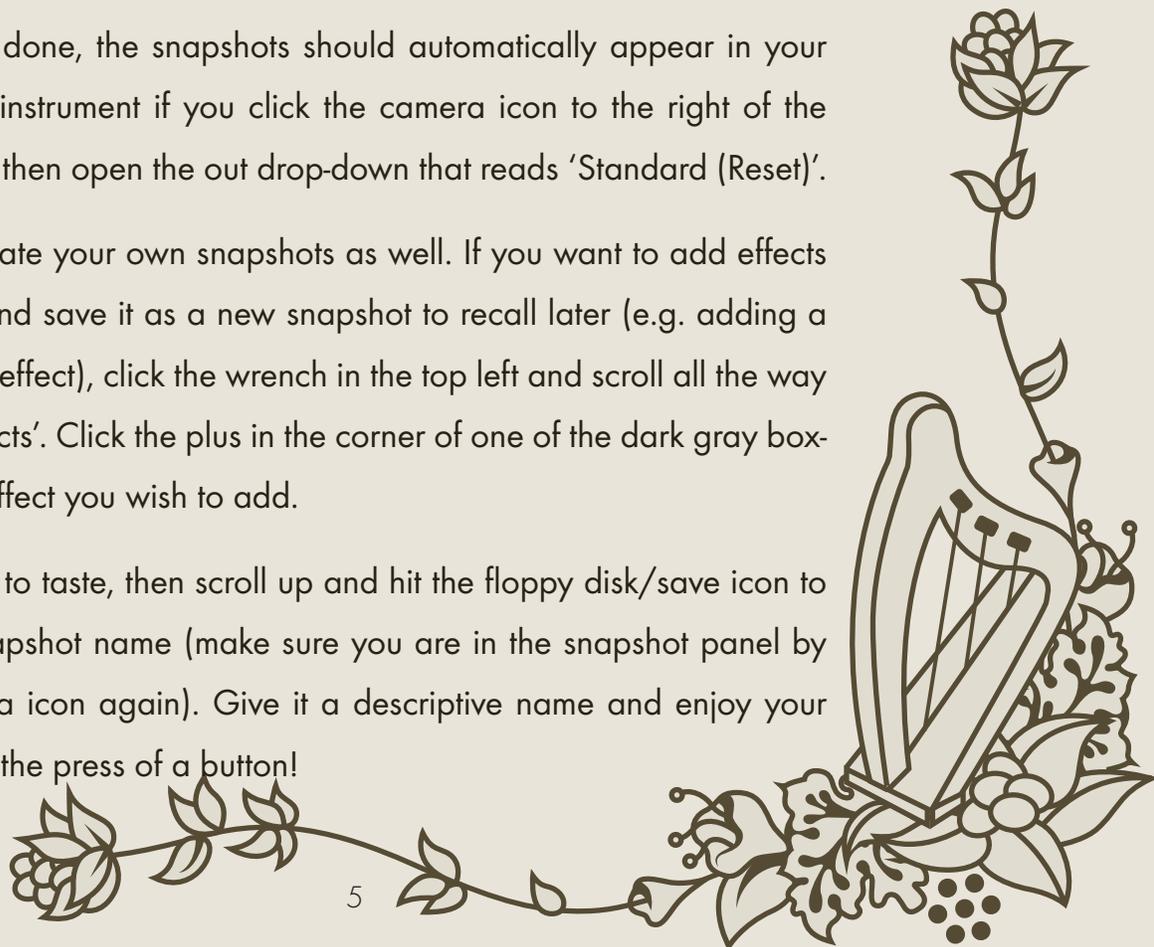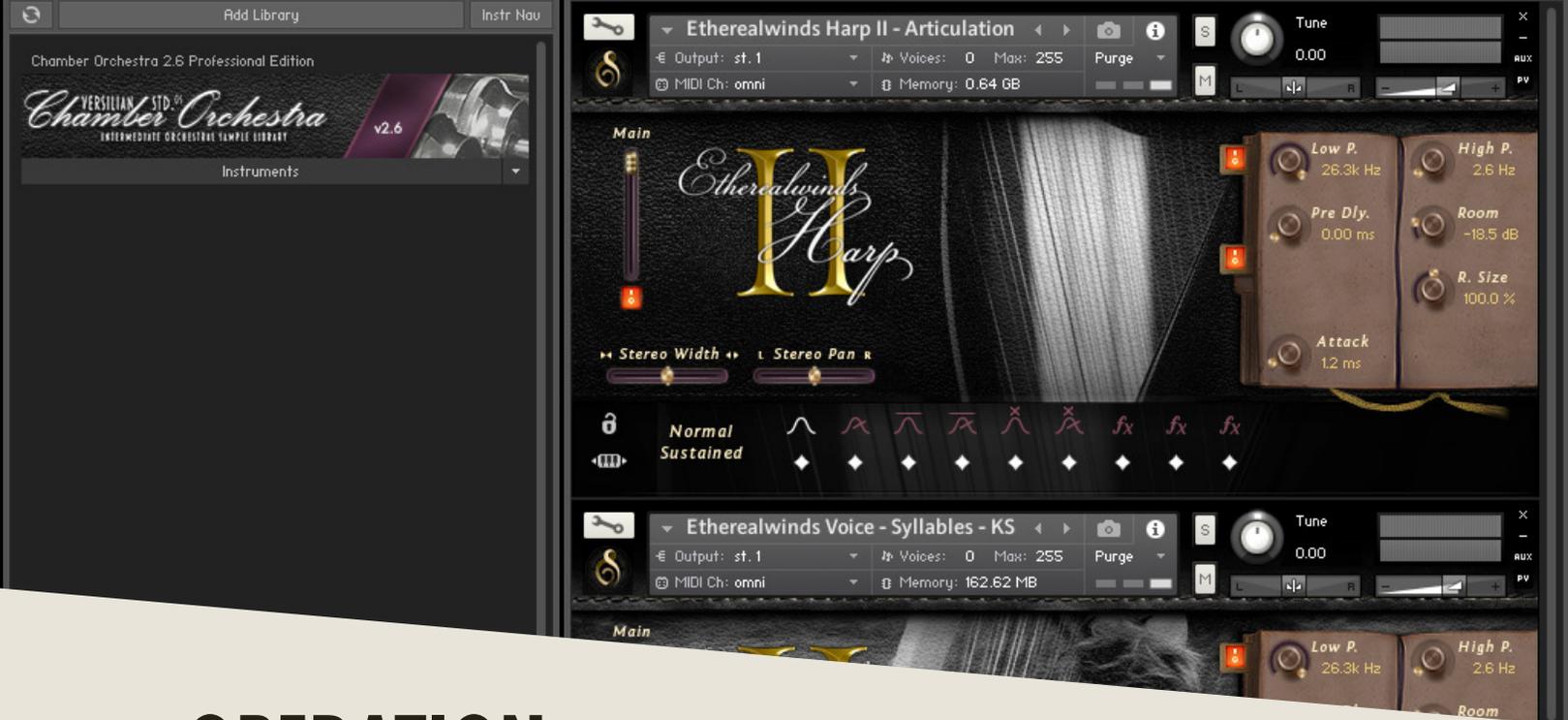
OPERATION

O nce loaded in Kontakt, the GUI will become available to you. This convenient window will provide nearly everything you need to control and shape the sound of the instrument from swapping articulations 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.
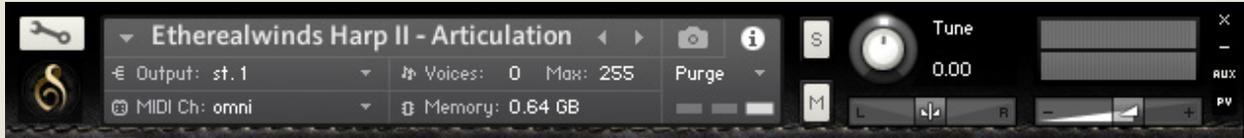
Starting with the top of the instrument, we have the default Kontakt header. This area provides basic instrument settings and allows you to shrink or expand the GUI as needed.

On the left is the wrench icon, which allows access "under the hood" of the instrument. This is best for veteran Kontakt users only, but is worth exploring if you're new to Kontakt as well.

The central gray box displays general information and settings for the instrument. You can swap this display over to show the snapshots menu simply by pressing the camera icon to the right, and vice versa by pressing the information 'i' icon.

Output will control where the audio data goes to. Typically this should be left untouched unless working with a surround mix or bussing specific instruments to different reverb sends or the like.

MIDI Ch. controls what input MIDI channel will send signals to this particular instrument, allowing you to set up multi-timbral sets of several different instruments in a single instance.

Voices displays how many voices are active and the maximum available. You may experience some memory/CPU savings by reducing the max number.

Memory displays how much memory is in use by this instance. You can reduce this by unloading mic positions, articulations, or purging unused files to the right-hand side.
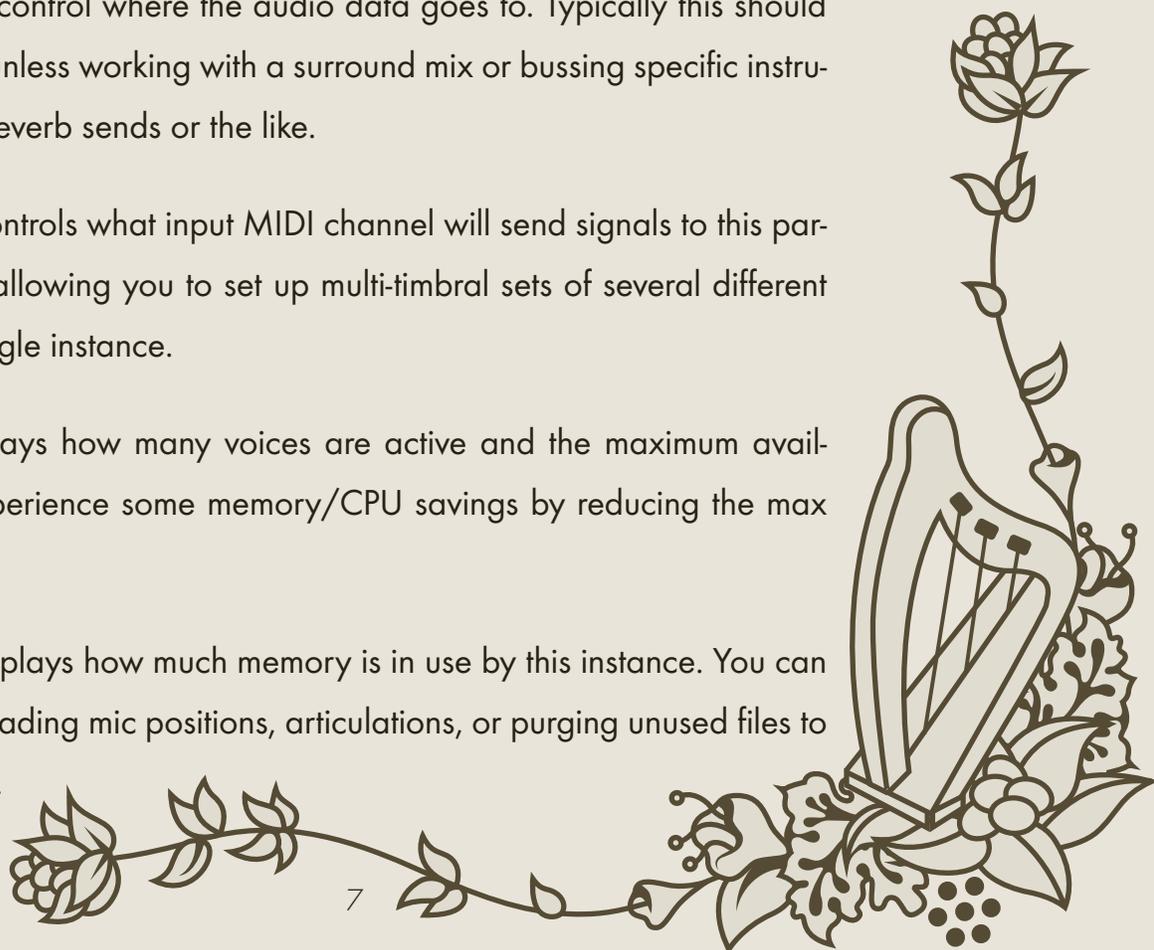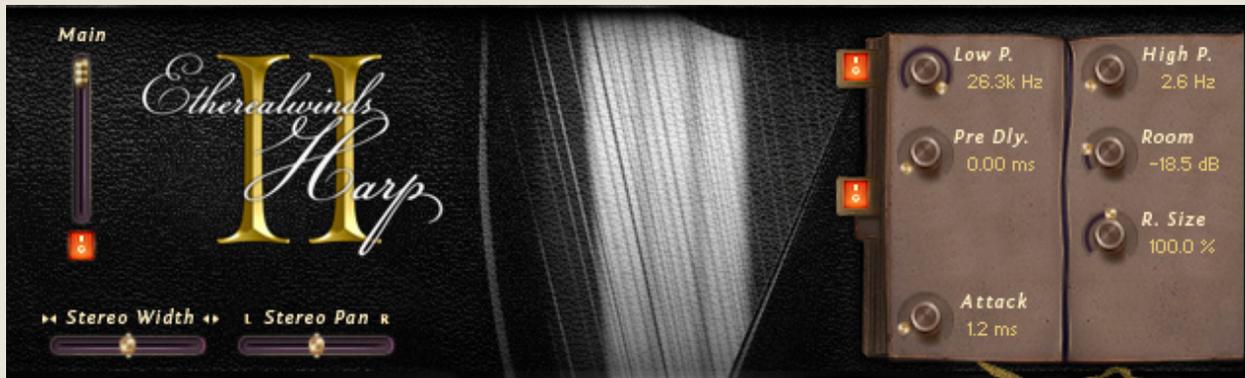
The central part of the GUI is dedicated to shaping the sound of the instrument.

To the left are the controls for the available mic position. There is a volume slider (vertical), a purge/load button (to reduce the memory footprint when not in use), and a pan slider (horizontal).

Beneath the mic position controls are horizontal controls for stereo width and stereo pan. These use delay and other special processes to truly perceptually move the instrument around the virtual soundscape as opposed to traditional volume-based pan found in your DAW or mixer, providing a much more realistic result, especially when used in subtle combination.

To the right is the effects stack, which again have off and on toggles for loading and unloading effects. On the top is a simple low-pass/high-pass filter. You can use this to shape the instrument's sound or remove unwanted noises.

Below that is the convolution reverb, which provides an excellent and realistic hall sound. The pre-delay controls when the sound of the instrument reaches the mics after bouncing off the walls. This is similar to placing the mics farther or closer to the sound source (it takes about 2.9 ms for sound to travel one meter, or 0.9 ms for sound to travel one foot, so place your pre-delay accordingly to fit your virtual placement.

The 'Room' is a measure of how much room sound (i.e. reverb) is mixed back into

the signal. This is typically best between -15 and -5 dB. Below that and the reverb will not sound much, and higher may result in a muddy tone.

Finally, the 'R. Size' (room size) will control how large the space is. At 50%, it is analogous to a medium rehearsal space. At 100% a full concert hall, and beyond that it enters surreal levels of size.

At the bottom are controls for the attack of the sames (i.e. 'fade in'), and the volume of the sampled release tails. These are both articulation-specific, meaning that when you set one, it will only set that for the particular articulation you are on, making tweaking articulation responsiveness easy and painless.

The bottom of the UI is the articulation control area. To the left is a lock for locking the current articulation (so keyswitches will not accidentally switch articulations), as well as a button that can be clicked and dragged left or right to move the keyswitches around the keyboard.

To the right of these buttons is the current articulation indicator. The first articulation is actually three combined in one- you will see the two numbers, which indicate at which key velocities (how hard you press) it will switch.

The current articulation will be shown white to the right of this. The diamonds below will load or purge articulations, saving memory in the process.
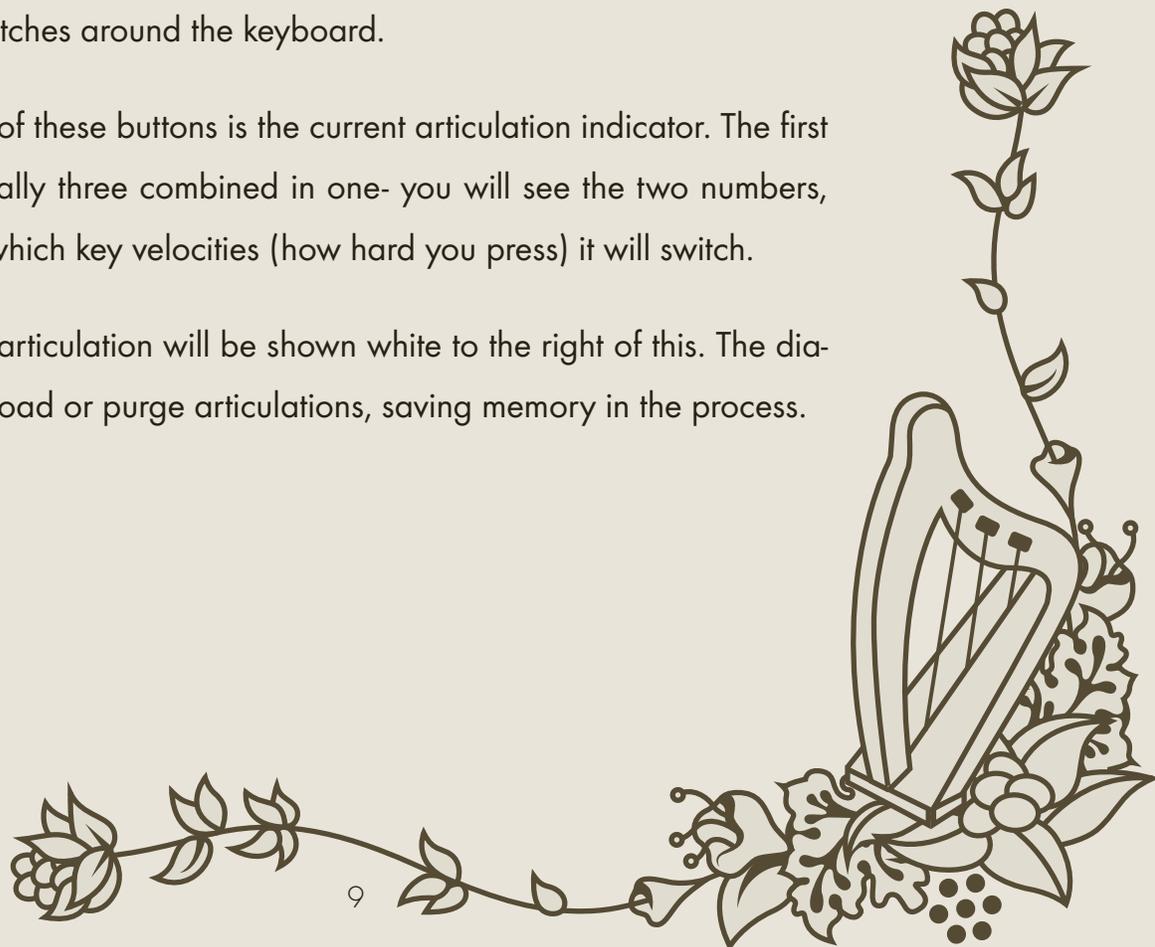
PATCHES & ARTICULATIONS

Within the instruments folder, you will find several .nki files. Each file allows access to a different set of samples or sound generated from those samples.

Name
- Etherealwinds Harp II - Articulations KS.nki
- Etherealwinds Harp II - Borealis KS.nki
- Etherealwinds Harp II - Clavi Harp KS.nki
- Etherealwinds Harp II - Primordial Waters KS.nki
- Etherealwinds Voice - Cycling - KS.nki
- Etherealwinds Voice - Phrases - KS.nki
- Etherealwinds Voice - Syllables - KS.nki

Articulations KS provides access to all harp articulations and most of the snapshots (once the snapshots have been installed as described on page 5). This is the main .nki you will want to work out of when using the harp portion of the library.

Borealis KS, **Clavi Harp KS**, and **Primordial Waters KS** are advanced forms of the harp that began their lives as snapshots but became too detailed to maintain as part of the Articulations KS patch. They do not provide access to the natural harp sound or

other snapshots and should be used only if that particular tone is desired.

The next three .nki deal with the voice portion of the library.

Cycling - KS provides several of the Syllables patches automatically cycling through several different syllables (basically it's a pseudo-wordbuilder with a few preset 'words' available).

Phrases - KS provides access to all 240 pre-recorded phrases, organized by keys as keyswitches (i.e. you can use the C Phrases keyswitch when writing in C, and then switch to F if you were to modulate to F or feature a F chord or tonicization you wanted to harmonize over).

Syllables - KS provides access to a series of vowel and consonant + vowel syllables, which are best suited for background vocals or simple lines. You can also try blending these with other choral libraries for a nuanced sound.

Articulations on the harp and what they mean:

Normal- Standard finger pluck.

PDLT- Pres de la table: a pluck near the soundboard.

Muted- Standard pluck while touching bottom of string to produce a muted, muffled tone.

You will also observe that there are *"Sustained"* and *"Stopped"* versions of each articulation for the harp. Sustained means it will sustain automatically and will not play release samples, while Stopped means it will only sustain so long as the note (or sus pedal) is held down and will play a hand-muted release sample when let go. Use the former for quick playing and latter for enhanced realism, particularly with repetitions.
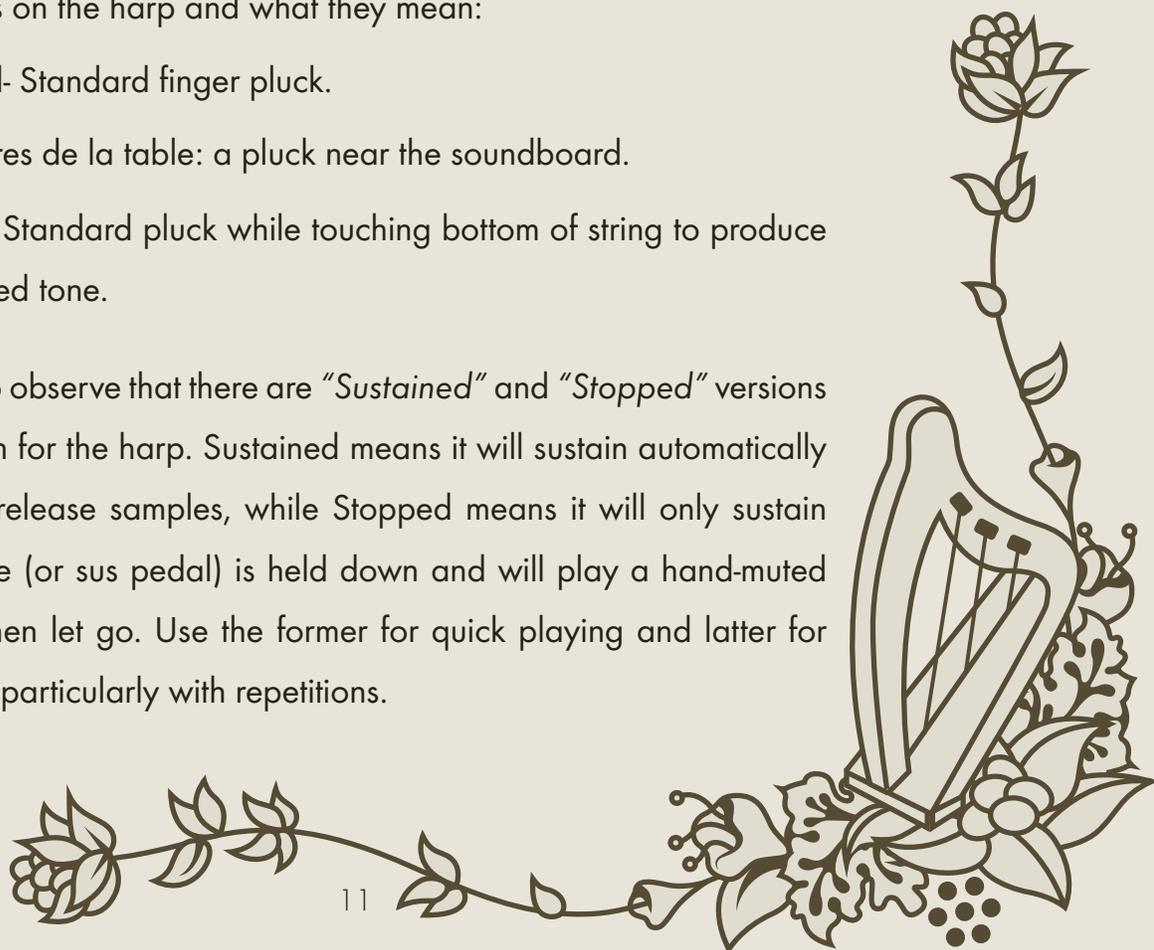
TROUBLESHOOTING

I f 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 missing dialogue.

If you see this window, it means that the samples were moved or are missing from their original location. If you can find the samples, move them into the Etherealwinds Harp folder. If you still get the dialogue, do a batch re-save. Select the floppy disk icon at the top of the Kontakt window towards the right and select 'Batch Re-save'. Navigate to the 'Etherealwinds Harp' folder and select it. When the dialogue pops up, click 'Search for folder' and select the samples folder. After the batch re-save is complete, you should not experience any further samples missing dialogues.

2. Instrument uses up too much memory or CPU.

Use the diamonds beneath the articulations to purge any you doubt you will typically need, and turn off any effects you don't use (filter/reverb). Save this patch (under the floppy disk/save icon at the top of the Kontakt window itself) so that way it will load

this way by default. Note that snapshots include which articulations and mic positions are selected and enabled/disabled, so factory snapshots should be avoided.

3. Instrument is only available in "DEMO" mode.

This is caused by trying to run the instruments in Kontakt Player. Unfortunately there's nothing we can do about this- making libraries for Kontakt Player requires a licensing agreement with Native Instruments, which is simply not economical for small products like this.

However, Kontakt is on sale often around December/January for $200 USD, and honestly that's not a bad price to pay for the "gateway drug" to literally thousands of free and commercial sample libraries. Regardless, we would be happy to offer you a refund if you are experiencing this issue and aren't interested in upgrading to the full Kontakt.

4. Instrument is distorting/clipping.

Make sure you turn down the 'Master Volume' for Kontakt to at or below 0, and turn down the instrument volume to at or around 0. You should be fine with some gain on most patches, but some will clip if you turn them up too much.

5. Instrument won't respond to MIDI input.

Make sure your DAW or standalone Kontakt is receiving MIDI from your device, then ensure that the MIDI Ch. is set to match.

If you have any other issues, drop us a line at contact@versilstudios.net.
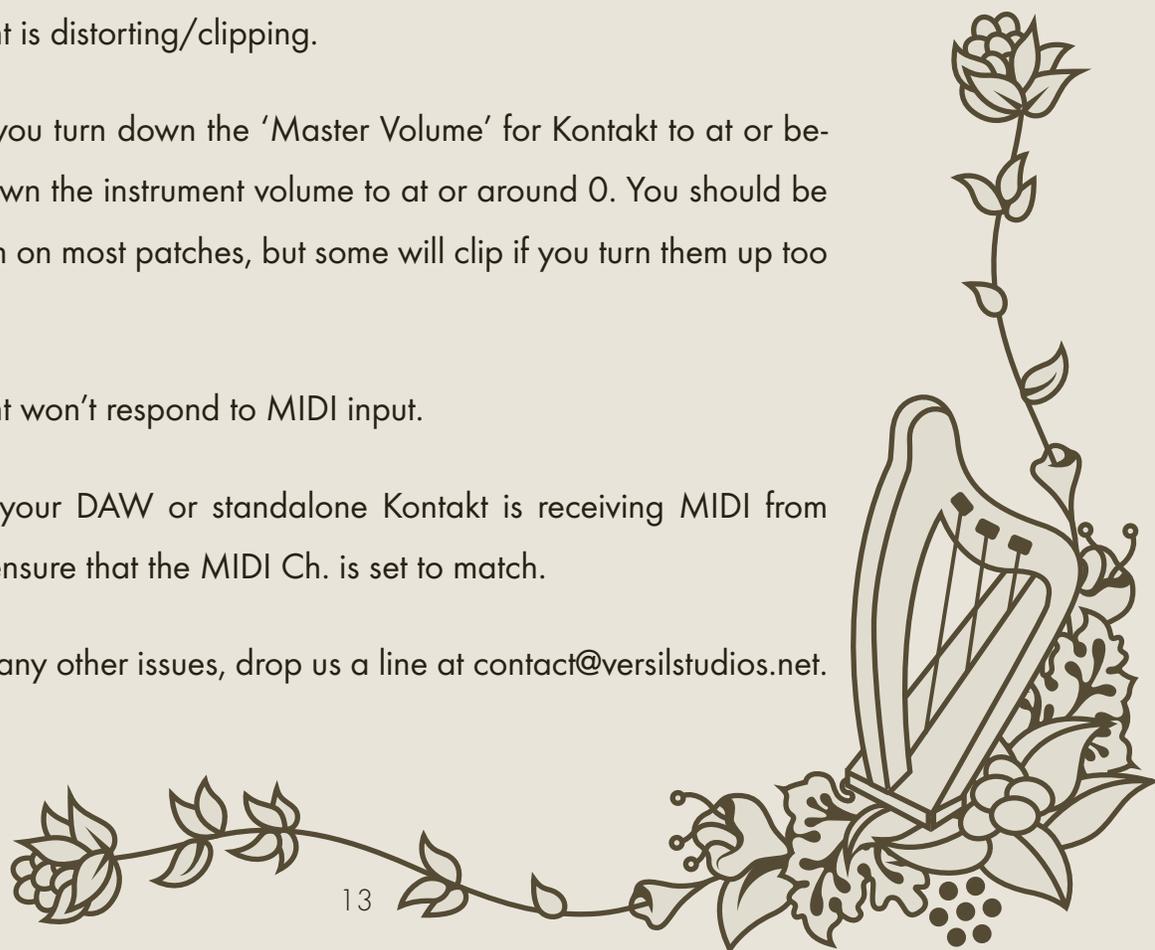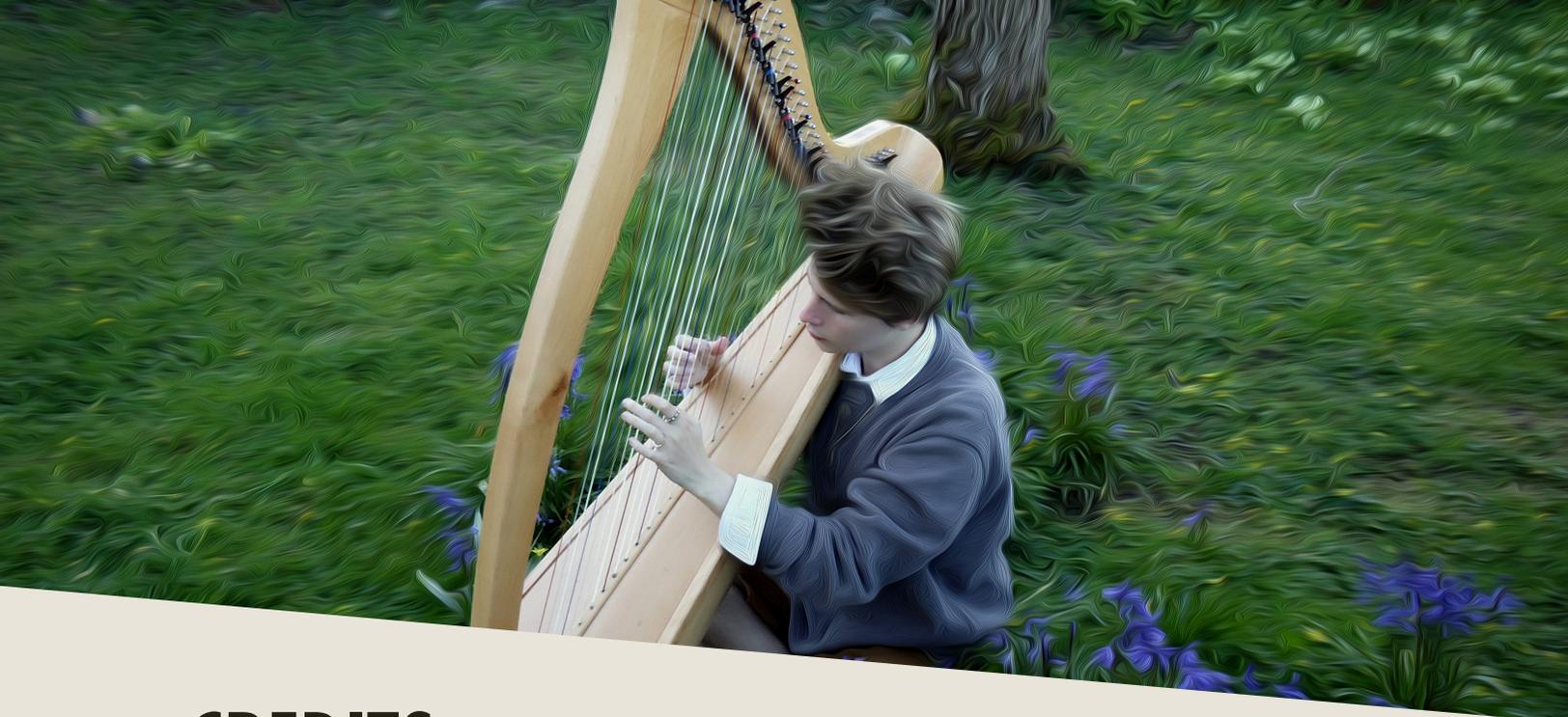
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