
DIGICUSSION KONTAKT SERIES

Instrument Operation Manual Version 1.0
Icebreaker Audio & Uppercussion 2014

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2 WELCOME TO THE DIGICUSSION KONTAKT SERIES

Thank you for purchasing **DIGICUSSION** from **UPPERCUSSION**. This guide will show you how to use the included instruments, give you an overview of the controls and offer some useful hints and tips along the way.

We hope you enjoy this release and find it to be an inspirational addition to your musical toolkit.

2.1 SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- PC/Mac running Native Instruments **Kontakt 5.4.1** or higher.
DIGICUSSION does not run in **Kontakt Player**, only the full version of **Kontakt**.

More information on Kontakt can be found on the Native Instruments website:

<http://www.native-instruments.com/en/products/komplete/synths-samplers/kontakt-5/>

2.2 ABOUT THE MANUAL

The information in this manual applies to all Digicussion Kontakt instruments, whether bought individually or in a bundle. Even though the included screenshots only show the Digicussion 1 instrument, the feature set is the same for all Kontakt instruments in the Digicussion Series.

3 ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The **DIGICUSSION** instrument is an advanced drum machine based on high quality samples and a powerful feature set.

Each instrument includes a large number of samples crafted to give you a wide variety of sounds that are matched under a similar theme.

These samples are presented in an interface that allows you to create a kit of 16 sounds, and customize them to fit your track and working method. You have per-drum sonic control, as well as high quality master effects, a custom sequencer, and custom mapping options.

Sveral preset kits per instrument are included as snapshots to give you a quick starting point.

3.1 LIBRARY FEATURES

- A choice of 3 engine modes per drum, including a vintage SP1200 emulation.
- Filter and Distortion effects per drum.
- Volume, Pitch, and Filter envelopes per drum.
- 5 preset MIDI maps, and the ability to customize the MIDI mapping.
- Professional Master FX, including analogue modelled EQ, Compressor and Tape Saturation.
- A convolution reverb with 20 custom impulse responses.
- Built in sequencer.
- Compatible with Komplete Kontrol Native Map™ and Light Guide™.

4 SNAPSHOTS

Each **DIGICUSSION** library contains several instruments (nkis), each of which has a number of preset kits available as snapshots.

The instruments load a library of samples based on a common theme, and the snapshots are preset kits of 16 samples from that library. Snapshots also contain effect and sequencer settings, though you can decide whether or not the sequencer data is loaded when you load a snapshot.

You can also save your own kits as snapshots.

4.1 INSTALLING SNAPSHOTS

The folder you have downloaded from **UPPERCUSSION** includes a sub-folder named **Snapshots**.

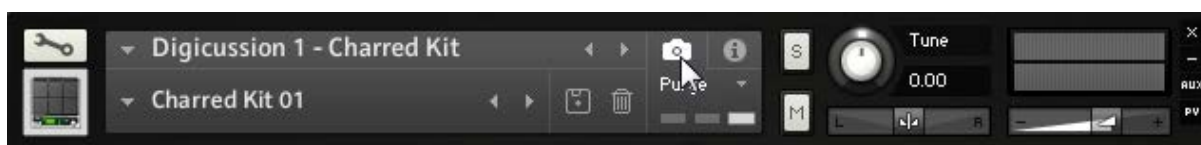
For the best integration with the instruments, we suggest you move the contents of this folder to the following location:

...<user>\Documents\Native Instruments\User Content\Kontakt

This location should be the same for Windows and OSX.

4.2 BROWSING AND LOADING SNAPSHOTS

Snapshots are located in the Snapshot tab of the instrument header. This can be accessed by clicking on the picture of a camera beside the instrument name.



1 THE INSTRUMENT HEADER WITH SNAPSHOT CONTROLS DISPLAYED.

If you installed the snapshots using the method described above, then you will be able to browse the preset snapshots using the dropdown menu or the left and right arrows.

If you have chosen not to install the snapshots, then you should still be able to load them by dragging the files into the Kontakt rack. However, this method is not recommended.

Snapshots will only load data for the parameters that alter the sound of the instrument; they will not change any performance settings (like MIDI mapping).

However Snapshots can contain Sequencer data, though this will only be loaded if you select the **Snapshot Link** option on the Sequencer Page.

4.3 SAVING SNAPSHOTS

If you have created a kit that you are happy with, and wish to save it, you can do so by saving a snapshot.

This is easily done:

1. Click on the floppy disc icon in the snapshot area of the instrument header.
2. You will then be prompted to give the snapshot a name.
3. Type a name for the snapshot and click **Save**.
4. The snapshot will now appear in the snapshot menu.

5 THE INSTRUMENT INTERFACE

When you first load the instrument into the Kontakt rack, you will see the main interface.



2 THE DIGICUSSION 1 INTERFACE.

The interface has three main pages, accessed by clicking on the tabs at the bottom of the instrument. These pages are:

- **Sequencer** – where you can program beats.
- **Sounds** – where you can select and control the different drum sounds.
- **Master FX** – where you can process the overall sound of the kit.

By default, the **Sounds** page will be displayed when you first load an instrument.

5.1 THE SOUNDS PAGE

The Sounds Page is where you edit the individual drums, and set the Global Options.



3 THE SOUNDS PAGE.

To the right of the page are 16 pads, which represent the 16 drum slots available to you. You can select a pad for editing by clicking on it.

Above the pads is the **MIDI Follow** option – with this checked, you can use the MIDI keys to select the pads for editing.

You can also use the pads to mute and solo sounds:

- Hold **[Ctrl]** or **[Cmd]** while clicking to mute a pad.
- Hold **[Shift]** while clicking to solo a pad.
- The mute and solo keys can be changed in the **Global Options**.

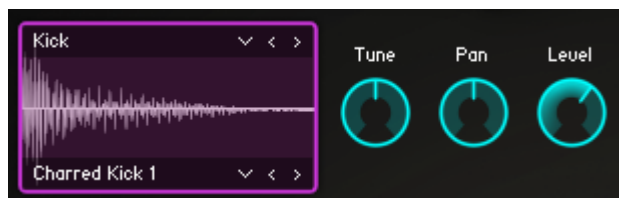
5.1.1 SOUND CONTROLS

For each drum pad there are a number of controls, grouped in sub-pages to the left of the pads.

These controls change the parameters of the currently selected Drum Pad. With the exception of Dropdown Menus, you can modify a parameter of all the drum pads at once by holding the **[Alt]** key while using a control.

MAIN CONTROLS

These are located to the top of the interface.



4 THE MAIN SOUND CONTROLS.

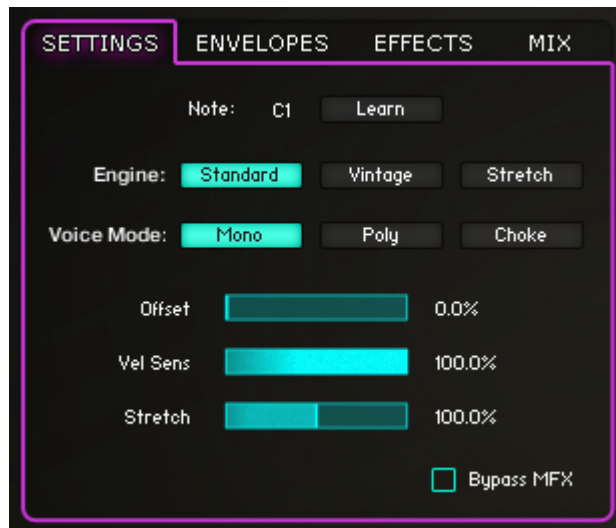
To the left are the sample controls that you can use to select the drum sound:

- Select a category by clicking on the menu at the top of the waveform.
- Select a specific sample within the category by using the menu at the bottom of the waveform.
- You can also cycle through categories and samples by using the left and right arrows beside the menus.

Beside these are the main controls:

- **Tune** – alters the pitch of the sound.
- **Pan** – move the sound in the stereo field.
- **Level** – changes the output level of the sound.

SETTINGS CONTROLS



5 THE SETTINGS CONTROLS.

The settings sub-page contains the following controls:

- **Note** – use this to select which MIDI note triggers the pad.
- **Learn** – click this button, then play a MIDI note to select the **Note** setting manually.
- **Engine** – select one of the three sound engines:
 - **Standard** – a normal sample playback engine.
 - **Vintage** – a sample playback engine emulated from the SP1200.
 - **Stretch** – a granular engine that allows individual length and pitch control.
- **Voice Mode** – select one of three voice modes:
 - **Mono** – in this mode, the pad will only allow one voice to play at a time, so new notes will kill older notes.
 - **Poly** – in this mode, new notes will not kill old notes.
 - **Choke** – similar to the Mono mode, but the note killing will apply to any other pads that are also in Choke mode. This is very useful for open and closed hi hat sounds.
- **Offset** – sets the start position offset for sample playback.
- **Vel Sens** – controls how sensitive the pad volume is to MIDI velocity.
- **Stretch** – controls the time stretch amount. This control only works when the **Stretch** engine mode is selected.
- **Bypass MFX** – when this control is selected, the pad will not be processed through the master effects, however, the send effects will still function normally.

ENVELOPES CONTROLS

Each pad has 3 envelopes:

- **Volume**
- **Pitch**
- **Filter**



6 THE ENVELOPE CONTROLS.

Each of these envelopes has 4 controls:

- **Attack** – controls the fade-in time of the envelope.
- **Hold** – controls how long the envelope remains at the maximum value before entering the decay phase.
- **Decay** – controls the fade-out time of the envelope.
- **Amount** – sets the intensity of how much the envelope affects its destination.

Below these controls is an option to select how the pad should react to MIDI note off messages:

- **Short** – the envelopes will fade out rapidly when you release a note.
- **Decay** – the envelopes will fade out for the time specified by the **Decay** controls.

EFFECTS CONTROLS



7 THE EFFECTS CONTROLS.

Each pad has 3 effects:

- **Lo-Fi** – a digital quality reduction effect.
 - **Bits** – sets the bit depth of the sound.
 - **S.R.** – sets the sample rate of the sound.
- **Filter** – a multi-mode filter.
 - The filter mode is selected using the menu.
 - The **AR** filter modes use *Adaptive Resonance*, so the resonant peak is reduced when the input level increases.
 - **Cut** – controls the filter cutoff frequency.
 - **Res** – controls the resonant peak at the cutoff frequency.
 - **Vel** – sets how much the velocity of the pad will modulate the cutoff frequency.
- **Distort** – saturation and distortion for adding a more aggressive sound.
 - **Drive** – controls the input level into the effect, over-driving the sound from light saturation to harsh distortion.
 - **Damp** – controls a lowpass filter that can be used to suppress the higher frequencies added by the distortion.

MIX CONTROLS



8 THE MIX CONTROLS.

The mix controls are split into three sections:

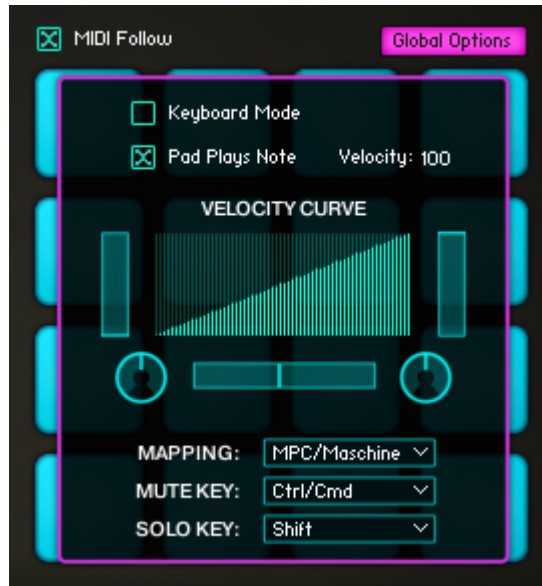
- **Equalizer** – can be used to sculpt the timbre of the sound by altering the level of selected bands of frequencies.
 - **Freq 1** – sets the central frequency of the lower EQ band.
 - **Gain 1** – sets the gain adjustment of the lower EQ band.
 - **Freq 2** – sets the central frequency of the higher EQ band.
 - **Gain 2** – sets the gain adjustment of the higher EQ band.
- **Dynamics** – an envelope shaper effect.
 - **Attack** – controls the scaling of the attack portion of the sound.
 - **Sustain** – controls the scaling of the sound's tail.
- **Sends** – there are two send effects that each drum can be routed to in different amounts:
 - **Delay** – an echo style effect.
 - **Verb** – a convolution based reverb.

The settings for the Delay and Reverb effects can be edited on the Master FX Page.

5.1.2 GLOBAL OPTIONS

You can access the global options by clicking on the **Global Options** button above the pads.

The global options will appear in a window over the pads.



9 THE GLOBAL OPTIONS.

KEYBOARD MODE

When Keyboard Mode is activated, the key mapping of the instrument changes to allow you to play the currently selected pad melodically.

The keyboard is split into two key ranges:

- **G#-1 to B0** – keyswitches for selecting the pad that is played. You can also still select a pad by clicking on it.
- **C1 to C5** – the playable key range.

Note that the sequencer will still work normally when in this mode, so you can create a beat on the sequencer page, then flip to **Keyboard Mode** and play a melody or bass line over it.

PAD PLAYS NOTE

With this option selected, clicking on a pad will also play the sound from that pad.

Beside the checkbox is an editable value for setting the velocity at which the clicked pad plays.

The **Pad Plays Note** options are saved globally, so any changes made here will be reflected in the other nkis of the same Digicussion pack.

VELOCITY CURVE

The velocity curve allows you to change how Kontakt responds to incoming MIDI notes. A combination of 5 sliders and knobs allow you to quickly create a custom velocity curve to match your playing style.

- The sliders to the left and right set the minimum and maximum velocities respectively.
- The slider at the bottom sets the breakpoint in the curve.
- The two knobs set the curve shape at either side of the breakpoint.

MAPPING

Digicussion has 5 preset mappings for different set ups and playing styles. These cover the most common drum controllers and conventions.

You can make your own mapping by using the **Note** and **Learn** options in the pad **Settings** area.

MUTE AND SOLO KEYS

The drop down menus at the bottom of the global options page allow you to specify which keys on your keyboard will be used in combination with the mouse click to mute/solo the pads.

By default **[Ctrl] + [Click]** will mute a pad and **[Shift] + [Click]** will solo it. Holding **[Ctrl] + [Shift] + [Click]** will mute and solo simultaneously, but why you would want to do that is beyond me.

If these settings are not to your liking, you can alter them with these menus.

These settings are saved globally, so any changes made here will be reflected in the other nkis of the same Digicussion pack.

5.2 THE MASTER FX PAGE

The Master FX page is where you alter the sound of the kit as a whole.



10 THE MASTER FX PAGE.

You have access to 4 insert effects and 2 send effects. Each effect can be switched on/off by clicking on the button to the left of the effect name.

5.2.1 EQUALIZER

An equalizer (or EQ) can be used to alter the timbre of a sound by changing the volume of select frequency bands.

This equalizer is an analogue-modelled 4-band parametric equalizer with 2 shelves for the high and low frequencies, and 2 bell shaped bands for the mid frequencies.



11 THE EQUALIZER CONTROLS.

The high frequency (**HF**) and low frequency (**LF**) bands both share the same controls:

- **Gain** – controls the gain adjustment for the shelf.
- **Freq** – sets the starting frequency for the shelf.

The mid frequency bands also share the same control set:

- **LMF/HMF** – sets the central frequency of the band.
- **Gain** – controls the gain adjustment for the band.
- **Q** – sets the *quality* of the band, i.e. how narrow the bell curve is.

To the right of the Equalizer controls is an **Output** knob that controls the overall volume of the sound from the effect, allowing you to compensate for any gain changes made by the EQ.

To the left of the EQ controls are two options for changing the effect **Routing**:

- **Pre** – the EQ will come at the start of the insert effect chain.
- **Post** – the EQ will come at the end of the insert effect chain.

5.2.2 PRE-AMP



12 THE PRE-AMP CONTROLS.

The Pre-Amp effect is a simple overdrive/distortion effect with one control: **Gain**. Increasing the input gain will cause the effect to saturate and then distort.

5.2.3 COMPRESSOR

A compressor is used to alter the dynamics of a sound. It does this by reducing the amplitude by a certain ratio when a signal passes a threshold level. Depending on the settings and reaction time of the compressor, the effect can either be used to control peaks in volume, or creatively alter the character of the sound.



13 THE COMPRESSOR CONTROLS.

The Digicussion compressor is an analogue-modelled bus compressor with the following controls:

- **Threshold** – sets the level above which the input signal must pass in order to activate the compressor.
- **Ratio** – the input level to output level ratio for the signal. At a setting of 4, every 4dB over the threshold at the input stage will equate to 1dB at the output stage.
- **Attack** – sets how quickly the compressor will react to signals passing over the threshold. Slower attacks let initial transients pass through unaffected, leading to a punchy sound.
- **Release** – sets how quickly the compressor returns to normal once the signal passes below the threshold.
- **Makeup** – controls the output level of the compressor.
- **Mix** – a dry/wet mix knob to blend between the input signal and the compressed signal.

5.2.4 TAPE

The Tape effect is a tape saturator/simulator. It can be used to add warmth and saturation to the kit.



14 THE TAPE CONTROLS.

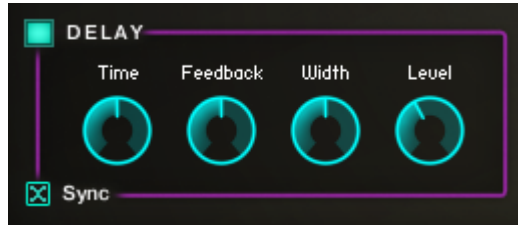
It has two controls:

- **Gain** – sets the input gain into the tape simulation. Higher gain levels will lead to more saturation.
- **Rolloff** – controls the high frequency rolloff.

5.2.5 DELAY

A delay effect creates a duplicate of the input signal, but delayed in time. It can be thought of as an echo generator and can be used as an acoustic effect, or rhythmic effect.

The Delay effect takes its input from the Delay send levels, which are set on the **Sounds** Page in the **Mix** tab. The output of the delay runs in parallel to the insert effect chain, and so is not processed by the insert effects.



15 THE DELAY CONTROLS.

The delay effect has the following controls:

- **Time** – sets the delay time.
- **Sync** – specifies whether the delay time should be synced to the host tempo or not.
- **Feedback** – controls how much of the delay output signal is fed back into the delay input.
- **Width** – sets the stereo width of the echoes.
- **Level** – controls the output level of the effect.

5.2.6 REVERB

A reverb effect simulates an acoustic space, giving the impression that the kit is sounding in a certain room or hall.

Like the delay effect, the reverb takes its input from the Reverb send levels, which are set on the **Sounds** Page in the **Mix** tab. The output of the reverb runs in parallel to the insert effect chain, and so is not processed by the insert effects.



16 THE REVERB CONTROLS.

The character of the reverb effect is set by selecting an Impulse response from the dropdown menu. You can also cycle through the different reverbs by using the left and right arrows beside the menu.

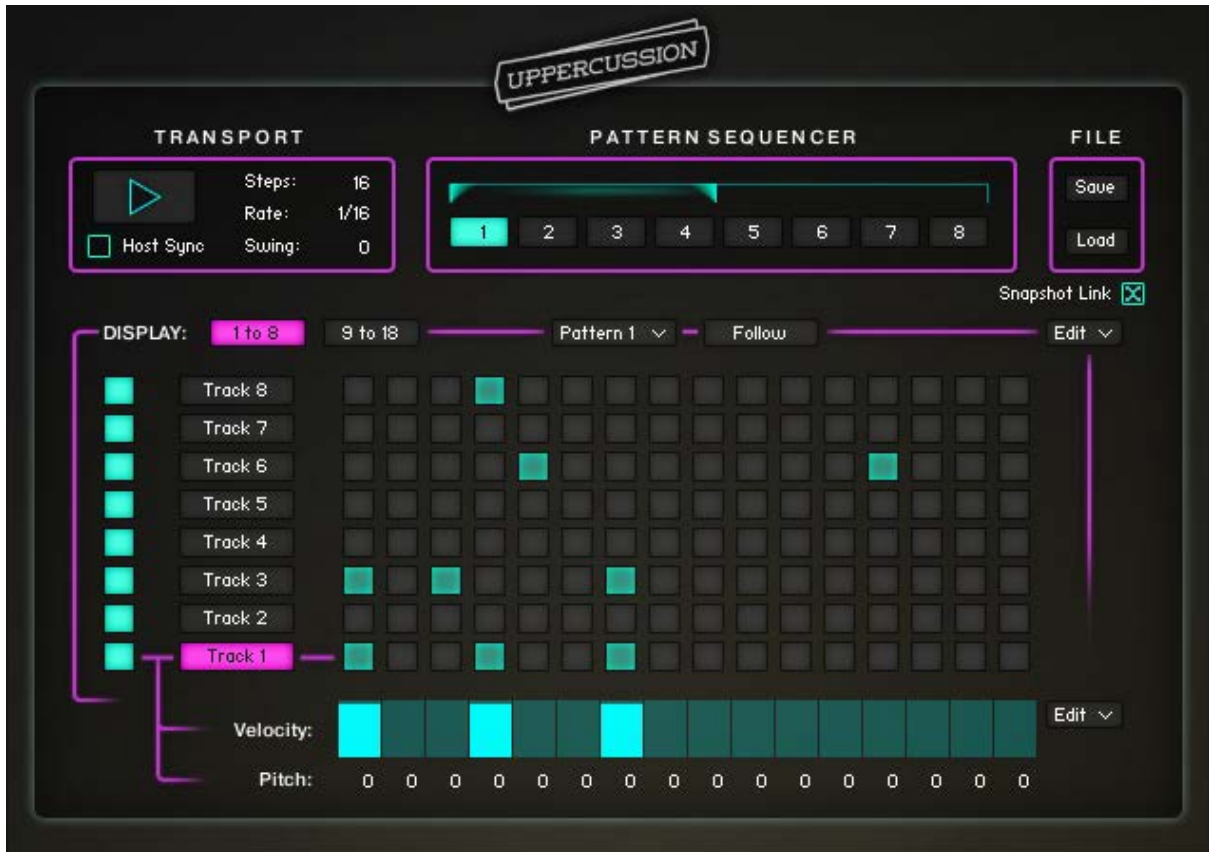
Beside the reverb selector are three additional controls:

- **Pre Del** – adds a delay between the input and the reverb effect.
- **Size** – alters the length of the selected impulse response to change the size of the acoustic space.
- **Level** – controls the output level of the effect.

5.3 THE SEQUENCER PAGE

The Digicussion Instruments all feature a built-in sequencer.

The sequencer offers a velocity and pitch track per pad. You can create up to 8 different 16-step patterns, and then chain them together in any order using the Pattern Sequencer.

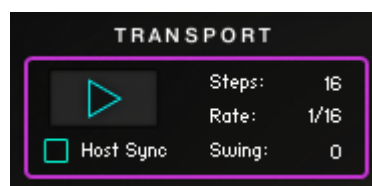


17 THE SEQUENCER PAGE.

The sequencer page has four main areas...

5.3.1 TRANSPORT

In the transport area you can start and stop the sequence, as well as set the main playback options.

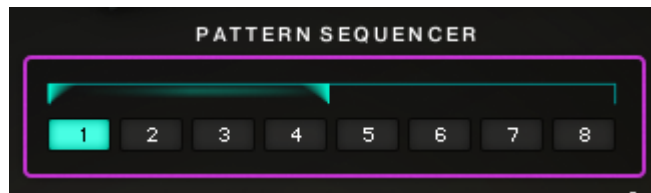


18 THE TRANSPORT CONTROLS.

- **Play** – starts and stops the sequence. If Host Sync is active, the sequence will only play if the play button is on and the host transport is also running.
- **Host Sync** – Synchronizes the sequencer to the host. Playback will only be active if the host transport is running, and the sequence position will sync to the transport position of the host.
- **Steps** – sets the number of steps in a pattern.
- **Rate** – sets the length of each step.
- **Swing** – sets a delay amount for every other step, adding a swinging feeling to the rhythm.

5.3.2 PATTERN SEQUENCER

In the pattern sequencer you can chain together patterns and they will play in a cycle automatically.



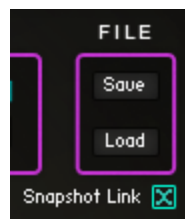
19 THE PATTERN SEQUENCER CONTROLS.

You have access to 8 slots, and can specify which pattern is in which slot by clicking and dragging on the different boxes.

You can set the number of patterns that will cycle by clicking and dragging on the right flag above the patterns; this sets the end point of the pattern sequence.

5.3.3 FILE

In the file section you can Save and Load patterns by clicking on the respective buttons.



20 THE FILE CONTROLS.

- Clicking on the **Save** button will open a window that will allow you to specify the name and location of the saved file.
- Clicking on the **Load** button will open a window that will allow you to locate a file to load.

Both the save and load windows will operate like your operating systems file browser.

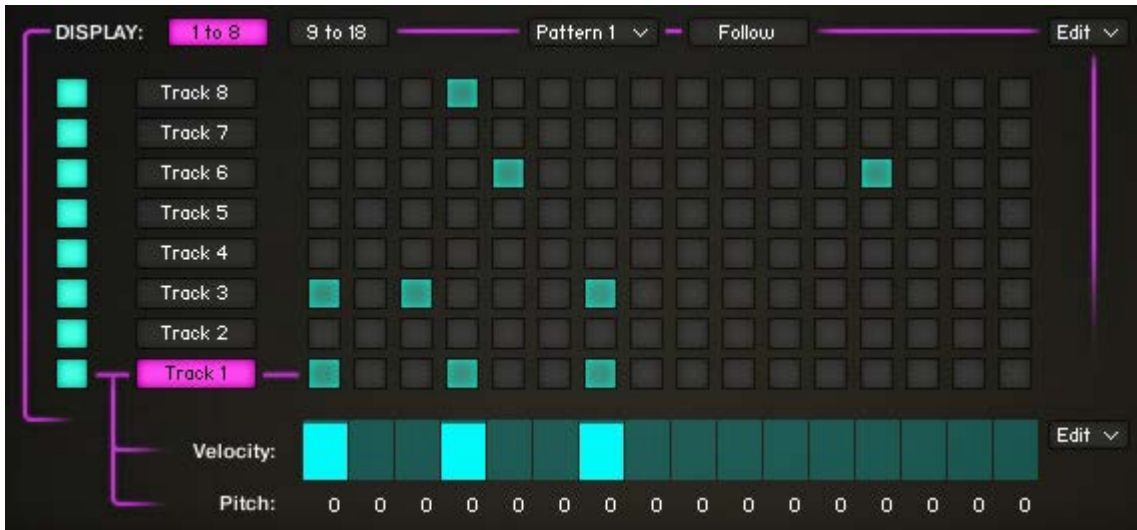
Digicussion sequencer data is universal for all Digicussion Kontakt instruments, so you can create a Pattern in a Digicussion 1 instrument, and load it in a Digicussion 3 instrument, or vice versa.

The **Snapshot Link** option ties the sequencer to the snapshot system, so if the option is checked, loading a snapshot will also load the sequencer data that was stored when the snapshot was saved. If the option isn't checked, the sequencer will not be affected when a snapshot is loaded.

The **Snapshot Link** option is a global option and applies to all nkis.

5.3.4 PATTERN EDITOR

The majority of the sequencer page is dedicated to the pattern editor, where you can create and alter patterns.



21 THE PATTERN EDITOR.

To the top left are the **Display** buttons, which you can use to select which tracks you are viewing for editing.

To the right of the Display buttons are the **Pattern Selector** dropdown and the **Follow** button, which are both used to specify which pattern you are viewing.

- You can select a pattern manually using the Pattern dropdown menu,
- or, if **Follow** is active, the pattern that is currently playing will be automatically selected and displayed in the pattern editor.

To the top right is the **Pattern Edit** menu, which has five options:

- **Copy** – makes a copy of the currently selected pattern and stores it in temporary memory.
- **Paste** – writes the copied pattern into the currently selected pattern slot. This function only works if a pattern has been copied.
- **Clear** – clears the selected pattern and sets all values to zero.
- **Randomize** – randomizes the values in the pattern.
- **Clear All** – clears the data from all 8 patterns.

Along the left side of the pattern editor are 8 buttons, each of which corresponds to its respective track. These buttons toggle the sequencer tracks on or off. Note: these do not mute the audio from the pads, you can still trigger the pad via MIDI if its sequencer track is disabled.

To the right of these are the track selector buttons, which are used to display the Velocity and Pitch tracks of the selected track.

The main central area is a 16 by 8 grid of buttons. These buttons can be used to quickly turn a step on or off for any of the 8 displayed tracks. Clicking on a step will automatically select the corresponding track and display its Velocity and Pitch tracks.

Below the grid of buttons are the **Velocity** and **Pitch** tracks. You can use these to specify the velocity of a step and the pitch at which it is played.

Beside these is the **Track Edit** menu. It contains 4 options, similar to those in the **Pattern Edit** menu, only applied on a single track, rather than the whole pattern.