

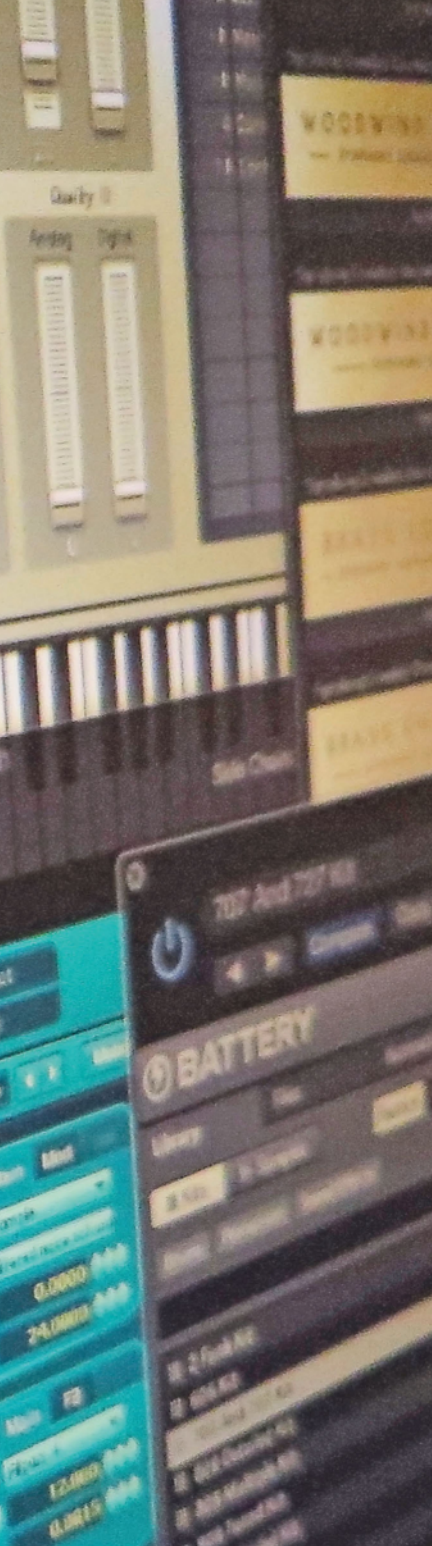


NI Komplete 11 Ultimate

£959 (upgrade: £319)

Is Komplete 11 Ultimate the most fully-formed one-stop shop for composition and production today? **Jono Buchanan** considers...

CONTACT WHO: Native Instruments **WEB:** www.native-instruments.com **KEY FEATURES** I/O: Minimum System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.10 or 10.11 (latest update), Intel Core 2 Duo 4GB RAM (6GB recommended for large KONTAKT Instruments) 15GB free disk space (363GB for complete installation) Supported Interfaces: Stand-alone, VST, Audio Units, ASIO, Core Audio, WASAPI, AAX Native (Pro Tools 10 or higher)



THE PROS & CONS



Form: A great new Reaktor instrument which proves that musical instruments can be 'extracted' from any source sample

Replika XT: Its inclusion here offers both regular and more leftfield approaches to Delay generation

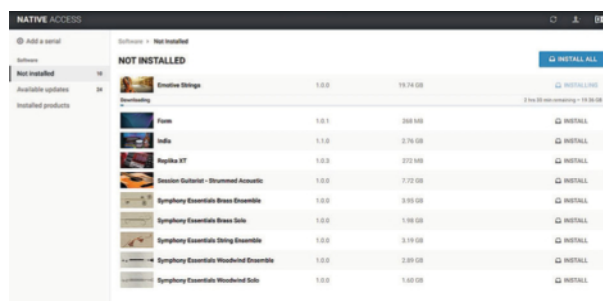
The latest versions of Kontakt 5 and Reaktor 6 are included



Upgrade price a little steep for existing Komplete 10 Ultimate users

NATIVE ACCESS

Komplete 11 is the first iteration of Native Instruments' Komplete bundles to make history of the NI Service Centre which, until now, has been the portal through which authorisations and updates to NI products and libraries have been managed. This has now been replaced by Native Access, a new cloud-based application to which serial numbers are added before their corresponding libraries are made available for download. Already installed libraries (which offer a newer version or new content) are shown here too and your existing Service Centre registration details will log you in to Native Access. It's a cleaner looking and easier to browse interface which makes upgrading or updating only the content you want much simpler.



composers, producers and sound designers alike.

The Komplete package

With 87 instruments and libraries included, it would be easy to use all our space here just listing each title, but NI provide a comprehensive guide to what's included in each Komplete 11 collection. Before moving onto some of the more notable new releases below, let's focus on a couple of titles which were previously 'separately available' but which are welcome inclusions.

The Una Corda felt piano Kontakt library, developed with Nils Frahm, is a composer's dream, with an open, pure sound but, as significantly, an interface which allows you to introduce a pleasing array of sonic 'extras'. These include the sound of the instrument's mechanism, instant reverses, pedal noise and a range of tools to change the instrument's virtual structure. Also welcome is the Strummed Acoustic Session Guitarist module which does a good job of

bringing a virtual session acoustic guitar player to your sessions. With patterns and strums, this is great for mocking up arrangements and, with more careful programming, creating parts which make it all the way through to the mix too.

Alongside previously available content now bundled with Komplete 11, a brand new, Reaktor-hosted instrument arrives too: Form. New sounds here begin with drag and drop sample import. You can then select the area of the sample you want to make the core of your new sound but it's at that moment that parallels with 'regular' sample-based instruments begin to blur. The main page of the interface provides you with a Speed function in the bottom left-hand corner. Selecting 0.00 (effectively 'off') means the selected area will play once but any value above this will begin to loop the sample, as will selecting a positive value in either the Hz or bpm speed modes instead. The Motion section then controls how looping will

Native Instruments occupy a unique position within our industry. They provide not only a wide range of their own instruments and effects libraries but they're also the central linchpin for the content of many a third-party developer, as numerous manufacturers are reliant on Kontakt for sample playback and manipulation. Every year new titles are added to NI's roster of products and, periodically, these are bundled

up to become a new iteration of Komplete. The latest generation of Komplete bundles is now available – as Komplete 11 – in three separate packages. For more modest needs, Komplete 11 Select offers an introductory collection of instruments and sounds. The intermediate step is Komplete 11, which offers 45 products across 155GB of content. However, the subject of this review is Komplete 11 Ultimate, offering a gargantuan 500GB catalogue of instruments, effects and libraries aimed at

THE ALTERNATIVES



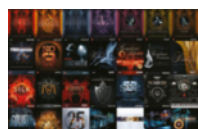
Komplete Select 11 £159 and Komplete 11 £479

NI's own competition to Komplete 11 Ultimate. Use the Product Comparison tool on NI's website before buying or upgrading Komplete. www.native-instruments.com



Apple Logic Pro X £149.99

There is plenty to compare between Logic Pro X and Komplete 11. A mass of content for its sampler, a huge array of native effects, enormous swathes of loop content and a generous assignment of synths and other instruments to boot. www.apple.com



East West/Quantum Leap Composer Cloud \$29.99 per month

Composer Cloud provides access to a huge, multi-sampled collection of instruments. www.soundsonline.com/composercloud

behave, with a number of modes to select the direction of travel, as well as a curve editor which lets you choose the behaviour and shape of Envelopes which can be super-imposed upon the sample.

The Sound tab at the top takes you into a more detailed Edit mode, with Form and Additive Oscillator modules, a central Osc FX section, which provides Frequency Modulation and Wave Shaping among its weapons, as well as an extensive Modulation section for introducing Envelope and LFO behaviour. The Effects tab introduces further Frequency Shaping tools, alongside a Warmth module for adding a range of Distortion types, plus Dynamics, Delay and Reverb.

Form is a fantastic instrument for proving that unexpected sounds can be moulded from almost any input source and it will appeal to a broad range of users, from Pop producers to creators of the more avant garde.

Could you repeat that?

Replika XT – NI's flexible delay unit – is included as an effect plug-in in Komplete 11, joining an increasingly impressive array of effects dedicated to tone, dynamics and spatial manipulation. Replika XT offers five Echo algorithms – Modern, Analogue, Tape, Vintage Digital and Diffusion. Each provides a different (and appropriate) parameter set but, broadly, all offer Lo and Hi Cut filters, while the parameters you'd hope for and expect within each Delay type are included. Single and Dual delay options are available, as are Stereo and Mono modes. At the bottom, you



ACOUSTIC TREATS Among the electronic bangs and whistles of Komplete 11, these two 'acoustic' libraries are very welcome. While Una Corda provides a highly playable felt piano, Strummed Acoustic Session Guitarist is great for non-guitarist composers and producers alike.



STRING THINGS Emotive Strings offers legato string phrases/arpeggios and is an ideal partner to the Action Strings library. Flesh is a Tim Exile-developed instrument. It turns any source sample into discrete elements – melody, beats etc – with a range of tools to create controlled musical mayhem.

can configure the Delay speed (or speeds with separate left and right channels), while the graphic at the top displays how your Delay choices will play out over time, with red and blue vertical lines showing the delay taps for each side. On the right you can further enhance your Delays with additional effects: Phaser, Flanger, Chorus, Frequency Shifter, Filter, Pitch Shifter and Micro Pitcher can be used at any time. Aside from its capability as a 'regular' Delay generator, Replika XT goes further, its Diffusion mode producing Dense

reverb clouds which can then be additionally enhanced with Pitch or Tone offsets on the right-hand side.

The Komplete 11 bundles offer ridiculously good value for money if you're buying from scratch and putting the cost of your bundle up against the price of each library or instrument included. That said, the upgrade price for Komplete 11 Ultimate looks steep, particularly if you've bought any of the collections now bundled (Una Corda, Reaktor 6, Replika XT etc) in the period since Komplete 10 Ultimate was released. There's no doubt, however, that NI's bundle is the real deal, offering a staggering range of tools to composers, producers and mix engineers alike. **FM**

SYMPHONY ESSENTIALS

NI have made a concerted effort to reach out to music for picture and media composers in recent years and the fruits of their efforts are clear here; indeed, composers will be among the groups most enticed by Komplete Ultimate 11. This is in part due to the Symphony Essentials collections, which are stripped-down versions of the Symphony Series libraries NI have developed with Soundiron in the past couple of years. The Essentials collections offer fewer articulations and less flexibility when it comes to microphone placement but they offer a good sound and will prove a real bonus for composers.

FM VERDICT

9.5

You're in the wrong business if you can't find the tools you need here for all stages of your music making. An embarrassment of riches!