

Sibelius 5 Playback for Beginners – Demystified

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→ Go to Play > Playback Devices

Q. What is a “Device”?

A. A Playback “Engine”

Q. What is the one and only “Device” that comes with Sibelius 5?

A. Kontakt Player 2

Q. ...But what if I purchased Garritan Personal Orchestra?

A. That’s not a device. It’s a “Sound Set” or “Sound Library.”

Q. What is a “Sound Set” or “Sound Library”?

A. A set of sounds that play back through a device. ☺

Q. What sound set or sound library comes with Sibelius 5?

A. Sibelius Essentials

Q. What sounds are included in Sibelius Essentials?

A. General MIDI Sounds (“Essentials GM”) and *selected* sounds from more expensive libraries (“Sibelius Essentials”) such as: Garritan Personal Orchestra, Sibelius Rock & Pop Collection, Garritan Marching Band, Garritan Jazz and Big Band, Tapspace’s Virtual Drumline.

Q. So I don’t need to buy those extra libraries – they’re included with my purchase of Sibelius 5?

A. No. Only *select* instruments from those libraries are included with your purchase of Sibelius 5. To have *all* of the instruments from those libraries, you need to purchase those libraries in full. (Mr. Garritan needs to pay his bills.)

Q. So, how many sounds do I get?

A. Your ambassador really doesn’t know... but it’s a lot.

Q. Why, when look at the description in Playback Devices, does it say I only get 16 or 32 Sibelius Essentials Sounds?

A. You’re looking at the “Configuration” – This means you can only have 16 or 32 sounds *playing at once* (depending on the configuration you choose). It does not mean that you only have 16 or 32 sounds to choose from. You have way more than 32 sounds!

Q. What is a “Configuration”?

A. A specified group of devices that will be used to play back your current score. You can tell Sibelius to pull sounds from one device, or from several devices at once. You can also tell Sibelius to use several *libraries* of sounds at once, all of which can be driven by one device (the Kontakt Player); however, you will have to add additional copies (or *instances*) of the Kontakt Player device for each sound set.

To understand this, take a look at the difference between the configuration “Sibelius Essentials (16 sounds)” and “Sibelius Essentials (32 sounds).” What is the difference?

In “Sibelius Essentials (32 sounds)” you’ll see two copies of the Kontakt Player Device. Each copy allows you to play 16 sounds. So, if you load Kontakt twice, you’ll be able to play 32 sounds at once... And, if you have other Sibelius Libraries loaded on your system, you’ll be able to select them to play back using a Kontakt Device – Just change the Kontakt Player’s “Sound Set”

If you make any of these changes (adding extra Kontakt devices, or changing the sound set to use other sound libraries), be sure to click “New” when you’re done, name your new configuration, and click “OK” to save your new configuration so that you can recall it later.

Q. What if I don’t like any of the sounds I have?

A. You can buy virtually any VST or AU (Mac) plug-in or sound library and use it for playback in Sibelius. For example, your ambassador has: Synful Orchestra, MOTU Symphonic Instrument, and MOTU Ethno Instrument.

Anything more on this subject would move beyond the scope of this “beginning” lesson.

Q. If I have more than one device in my configuration, how do I know what device Sibelius is using for all of the instruments in my score that are playing back?

A. The easy answer is that you really don’t need to worry about this, because Sibelius always does its best to choose the *best* sounds for each of your instruments that are playing back. The program actually thinks about what devices and sound sets are available, and which would be most preferable for your music.

The more obvious answer, however, is to look in your mixer window. ☺ But, we highly recommend that you do not make any instrument sound choices in the mixer window. There are better ways to approach choosing and defining sounds in Sibelius.

Q. What are those better ways? For instance, if I have a good string library, and a separate library that has good brass sounds, how do I tell Sibelius to choose one library for my strings, and the other for brass in a single score?

A. When you get into more advanced playback ideas such as this, you need to start exploring more options in the Play > Playback Devices dialogue, such as the Preferred Sounds tab, where you can easily define what device you “prefer” to have playing back groups of instruments or single instruments.



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