



The Cinematic Plugins Guide

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Cinematic libraries. There are so many great options out there from some great companies.

As music creators, we must be selective. We might not need the thousand dollar orchestral libraries for our R&B or hip hop track. However, the DAW stock libraries sometimes don't cut it if you need that authentic cinematic epic vibe (don't get me wrong..some stock sounds are great!).

How do we know which cinematic libraries are the best for the music we're making?

In this guide, I'll list *some of the incredible cinematic sample libraries that we can use to add that cinematic element to our music creations. Libraries that have a lush, full, and authentic sound as soon as you load them up.

Whether you're a beginner producer or an experienced composer, you'll find something helpful in this guide.

We'll break them down into the following categories:

[Free, Strings, Brass, Woodwinds, Choir, Percussion, All Around Libraries](#)

Note: All these suggestions are my subjective choices. There will always be more options than mentioned in this guide. Do your research. Check out YouTube videos. Look at the reviews. Get a full view of a library before making your purchase.

Note 2: Some links may be affiliate links. Clicking and purchasing from those links will add no additional cost to you. Some of the links will lead to [Plugin Boutique](#) which often has a freebie you can get when you make a purchase on their site (every month).

Note 3: Be on the lookout for sales. Subscribe to the company newsletter and follow them on social media to be notified of upcoming sales and deals. Some companies do a big sale every season or every quarter. Some even do a sale on a major product every month!

Note 4: Most of these companies have multiple products in each category. I'll share one or 2 of them and suggest you look more into the other products they offer in that category.

Final Note: Confirm your system is compatible, you have the budget to purchase the library, and you have the time and space to download/install the library.

Thanks for reading!

FREE

[Embertone FREE](#) - Several free options from Embertone!

[Heavyocity Foundations](#) - FREE Instruments for Kontakt, designed to inspire the next generation of modern scores. I especially like the staccato strings and staccato brass!

[OrchestralTools](#) - Check out the SINE factory free instrument subscription service. Specifically, check their site for “Layers,” a free orchestral instrument. Click on “Free Instruments” at the top for more.

[Pianobook](#) - “A global community of samplists who hear music in everything,” Pianobook is (probably) the number one location for user generated free sample libraries. Narrow your search to look for the orchestral categories (strings, brass, woodwinds, etc).

[ProjectSam The Free Orchestra](#) - A selection of “free, cinematic sounds taken directly from ProjectSAM’s acclaimed libraries, ranging from orchestral string staccatos and brass clusters to symphonic percussion and dystopian sound design.” They now have 2 free orchestras!

[Sonuscore free HD Orchestra Chords AND Sonuscore Sustained String Chords](#) - Sonuscore (along with Tonmeisters from GENUIN) “recorded the Brandenburg State Orchestra to give you that warm and massive orchestral sound.” Play softly for major chords and harder for minor chords. This one is a definite cheat code! Sonuscore has also released several other orchestral freebies worth checking out on their site. Click on “Products” and choose “Freebies.”

[Spitfire Audio BBC SO Discover](#) - Free full orchestra plugin (scroll down to the “Add To Cart” button and under that is “free”). This includes *most of the categories: Strings, Brass, Woodwinds, and Percussion and maybe one of the only free all-around orchestral libraries out there. While there are a number of limitations, you really can’t beat the price.

[Spitfire Audio LABS](#) - Download all of these when you get a chance. Spitfire Audio releases a new free instrument every month! (BONUS: [Here’s a link to check out my FREE Logic template for Spitfire Audio LABS](#)). Check out the orchestral items!

[Splash Sounds Free Stuff](#) - I recommend the percussion stuff specifically. Check out all the FREE stuff they have to offer though!

There are even more free resources out there! Be on the lookout for my free plugin guide soon! Also, simply Google or ChatGPT search “free orchestral plugins” and have fun!

STRINGS

[8Dio Anthology Strings \(\\$49\)](#) - 8Dio has an incredible amount of libraries out (including some for FREE!). Anthology strings is a full string ensemble and individual string ensemble that can enhance our music productions. Also, look into the other string libraries 8Dio has to offer!

[Cinematic Studio Strings \(\\$399\)](#) - “Hollywood-style string section” that I often come across on lists where people ask what are some great string sample libraries. These strings (abbreviated CSS) are “realistic and expressive...with smooth legato, punchy spiccato, inspiring textural harmonics and con sordino.” Also look into the other Cinematic Studio Strings products!

[Impact Soundworks Tokyo Scoring Strings \(\\$449\)](#) - Take the top Japanese string ensemble. Put them in one of the world’s top recording studios with Japan’s top recording engineer, and you get Tokyo Scoring Strings! Ideal for scoring anime and video game soundtracks, definitely worth adding to your arsenal!

[Native Instruments Session Strings 2 \(\\$99\)](#) - Native Instruments has some of the best high quality orchestral libraries on the market. Naturally, these libraries integrate well with the Native Instruments software and hardware. In fact, some of these libraries come bundled with software/hardware purchases, so definitely see if you already have some of these great libraries. Session Strings 2 is an 11 piece string ensemble and features the Native Instruments smart “play assistance” features. Check out the other string libraries that Native Instruments offers.

[Soundiron Hyperion Strings Elements \(\\$99\)](#) - I’m a fan of the “Hyperion” series from Soundiron. There is just something about the sounds that make it sound and feel different from other string libraries. And at under \$100, you are getting great quality sounds at a great price!

[Spitfire Audio Originals Intimate Strings + Epic Strings + Cinematic Frozen Strings \(\\$29 each\)](#) - When asked which string libraries someone should invest in just starting out, I usually recommend the Spitfire Audio Originals series of strings. These low cost, but high quality, strings are perfect for someone who wants an improved orchestral sound without breaking the bank. What’s even better is that these string sounds are adapted from those higher end libraries that Spitfire Audio offers (check those out too)!

[Strezov Sampling CORNUCOPIA String Ensembles 2 \(€149.00\)](#) - Chamber string ensemble. This 2nd version features more legato articulations and a more user accessible interface. Check out the other string libraries that Strezov has to offer!

BRASS

[Cinematic Studio Brass \(\\$399\)](#) - “Hollywood-style brass section” (abbreviated CSB) that is an “incredible collection of orchestral studio brass instruments [that] wil bring your music to life.” Also look into the other Cinematic Studio products!

[Native Instruments Session Horns \(\\$99\)](#) - Session Horns is a 4 piece brass ensemble that features over 170 phrases we can use in our music. Created in collaboration with e-instruments. Features the Native Instruments smart “play assistance.” Check out the other brass libraries that Native Instruments offers!

[Soundiron Hyperion Brass Elements \(\\$99\)](#) - A “universal brass ensemble library built for everyone.” This has found a home on most of my templates and is one of my go to brass libraries. Great sound!

[Spitfire Audio Original Epic Brass And Woodwinds \(\\$29\)](#) - Spitfire Audio’s entry level into the brass and woodwinds category. Still, a high quality brass and woodwinds library that I highly suggest. Also, check out Spitfire Audio’s other brass libraries!

[Strezov Sampling Aleatoric Modular Series: Low Brass \(€90.00\)](#) - The “first user guided aleatoric orchestral sample library” this features low brass tones from the following instruments: 2 tenor trombones, 2 bass trombones, and tuba. Check out the other Strezov Sampling brass libraries!

Woodwinds

[Cinematic Studio Woodwinds \(\\$399\)](#) - CSW features “a range of articulations including playful short notes, expansive textures with flutter-tongue and trills, and a stunningly realistic legato engine.” Check out the other Cinematic Studio products!

[Native Instruments Symphony Essentials Woodwinds \(\\$199\)](#) - 36-piece woodwind section created in collaboration with Soundiron! Features woodwind ensemble and solo libraries. High quality Native Instruments sounds. Also, check out other Native Instruments woodwind libraries!

[Spitfire Audio Original Epic Brass And Woodwinds \(\\$29\)](#) - Spitfire Audio’s entry level into the brass and woodwinds category. Still, a high quality brass and woodwinds library that I highly suggest. Also, check out Spitfire Audio’s other woodwind libraries!

CHOIR

[8Dio Insolidus Choir \(\\$498\)](#) - I've heard great things about this choir (especially from people who can catch it for sale, sometimes for under \$100!). I'm still in the process of building my choir library up and this is on the list *eventually. Check out the other choir libraries 8Dio has to offer!

[Native Instruments Glaze \(\\$49\)](#) - Ok. Technically not a choir, but definitely worth checking out for vocal riffs and runs from some of the world's most incredible singers: Sonna Rele, Candice Boyd, B. Slade, and Kip Blackshire. Glaze is perfect if you also want a vocal pad. (One thing I didn't mention: Check your emails from Native Instruments to see if you have a discount code from previous purchases)!

[Spitfire Audio Eric Whitacre Choir \(\\$599\)](#) - High quality choir from one of the top names in the choir world. Yes, it is pricey. Yes, it is worth it. (But look out for deals).

[Strezov Sampling Choir Essentials \(€149.00\)](#) - "A handpicked selection of the most used techniques found in our critically acclaimed Next Generation Choir series." They also share that this should cover "95% of what you will ever need in choral scoring." Check it out and the other Strezov Sampling libraries!

PERCUSSION

[Cinesamples Drums Of War \(\\$99\)](#) - "Iconic cinematic percussion...heard on countless blockbuster films, video games, and TV soundtracks." Check out the other Cinesample percussion libraries too!

[Embertone Body Percussion Ensemble \(\\$15\)](#) - Stomps. Claps. Snaps. Smacks. Perfect for creating uptempo sports sync music. Check out the other Embertone percussion libraries!

[Heavyocity Damage 2 \(\\$399\)](#) - Heavyocity and percussion are almost synonymous. The Damage series is one of the most popular series of drums I hear about when people ask for percussion and drum libraries for cinematic music. Powerful, heavy hitting drums, that work great for action, high energy, and movie trailers.

[Native Instruments Symphony Series Percussion Essentials \(\\$99\)](#) - Created in collaboration with Sonuscore, features 18 recorded instruments and 21 Native Kontakt instruments. I'm in the "never can have too much percussion" camp. Check out the Native Instruments site for other percussion libraries!

[Sonuscore Trinity Drums 2](#) - A powerful mix of cinematic and modern grooves housed in a versatile, cutting-edge percussive virtual instrument for the FREE KONTAKT PLAYER. The included rhythms make it easy for you to craft massive drum hits and epic subs; softer, tension-building hits; or electronic and funkadelic grooves all synced to be used in real time.

~~[Spitfire Audio Original Cinematic Percussion \(\\$29\)](#)~~ - Spitfire Audio's entry level into the cinematic percussion category. Still, a high quality percussion library that I highly suggest. Also, check out Spitfire Audio's other percussion libraries!

[Spitfire Audio Originals Drumline \(\\$29\)](#) - There aren't too many sample library companies who have marching band drum style libraries out. Especially at this price point. When the library was released, ~~Spitfire Audio released in in the month~~ of November or December. I think they missed a huge marketing opportunity by not releasing this in the month of March. But...it's still a great library at a great price point!

~~[Strezov Sampling Percussion Essentials X3M \(€249.00 what does that mean in \\$? LOL\)](#)~~ - Orchestral, ethnic, and cinematic percussion ensembles. Customizable drum patches that we can use in our musical creations!

[Heavyocity Master Sessions](#) - Heavyocity's boutique line of scoring tools for the pro composer. Recorded in New York City, the Master Sessions series focuses on specific instruments and ensembles housed in Heavyocity's award-winning engine (powered by KONTAKT).

ALL AROUND

[Audio Imperia Nucleus Lite Edition \(\\$99\)](#) - Nucleus often is cited as being the entry level all around orchestral library for music creators. At under \$100 Nucleus Lite is a great scaled down alternative of the full version. Nucleus (and Nucleus Lite) feature all of the core orchestral categories: strings, brass, woodwinds, choir and percussion. That is rare to find at this price point. Check out the other Audio Imperia libraries as well!

[Heavyocity Symphonic Destruction \(\\$449\)](#) - Not your traditional orchestral sounds, but a unique approach to the orchestra. Offering “aggression in modern scoring...thrilling traditional combinations...visceral sound design...and the gnarliest Braams you’ve ever heard,” this library has been on my wish list ever since it came out. I’ll probably have it by the end of the year. LOL.

[ProjectSam Symphobia 2 \(\\$359\)](#) - A great all-around library with ready to play combinations of strings, brass, and woodwinds. There’s also a nice amount of hits, rips, clusters, and soundscapes. Check out the other ProjectSam libraries too!

[Sonuscore The Orchestra \(\\$299\)](#) (or start with [The Orchestra Essentials \\$99](#)) - Simple and fast way to create orchestral arrangements for your projects. Powerful engine that allows you to [build your own arrangements](#) using different sounds and effects such as arpeggiators. A great way to get some ideas going. Also, check out the other Sonuscore libraries!

[Spitfire Audio Albion One \(\\$449\)](#) - When it comes to all around libraries, Spitfire Audio has several to choose from. The one I have (and use) is Albion One. Great library with most of the categories discussed in this guide (not as much in the choir area here though). Several composers have used Albion one to score TV shows and movies. While it’s not the only choice for all around Spitfire Audio libraries, it should definitely be in consideration.

[Native Instruments Kontakt 8 \(\\$299\)](#) - I keep forgetting about this one. The Kontakt Factory Library from Native Instruments features some really great orchestral sounds adapted from Vienna Symphonic Library. Sounds include strings, brass, woodwinds, choir, and much more. Also, Native Instruments has all kinds of hardware and software for music creators. Definitely look into their stuff!

FINAL THOUGHTS

We made it! That's a lot. Free orchestral sounds. Free synths. Free percussion sounds. Free sound design stuff.

It is definitely a lot to consider. Take your time. Remembr, you don't *need every free thing that's out there.

However, if you *need a specific sound, check to see if there is a free or lite version of it (start with Pianobook.co.uk).

Not all free is all good.

Also keep in mind that price does not always equal quality; there are some great free libraries out that should be worth more than some of the paid libraries. LOL.

Whatever you do, let's continue to make and mix great music. Very few people, outside of us audio folk, will ask you what sounds (free or paid) you used to record your platinum record.

Also, remember: It's not the tools you have, it's how you use the tools you have. Use these free tools and resources the way that works best for your workflow.

Wishing you the best of luck in your musical journey!

If you've found this guide helpful in any way, shoot me an email and let me know:

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Thanks!

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P.S. For more free bonuses, specifically for sync licensing, check out
<https://forms.gle/dSMVaDz2rUvDY2Pi8//forms.gle/dSMVaDz2rUvDY2Pi8>

