TCHC SMALL STRING GESTURES



Having ‘softly’ set out its software stall late last year with a low-key launch of STRING MURMURATIONS that saw decades of award-winning experience in the music tech sector and at the composing coalface distilled into an easy- to-use, intuitive, and comprehensive sample-based virtual instrument plug-in and GUI (Graphical User Interface) introducing the cutting-edge concept of Gestures (whereby an orchestra interpreting its user’s composition and making it into music and art lies behind every key played), music-making community tools-maker The Crow Hill Company announces the availability of SMALL STRING GESTURES as the latest incarnation of that concept - creating a set of tools where individual instruments and the playing style, strengths, and frailties of the intimate interpretative (3, 3, 3, 3) band behind each key are available for the user to dial up the personality of their composition, created from a collection of master recordings that have been mixed and edited into a sample-based virtual instrument plug-in with a GUI and preset browser that are as easy on the eye as they are in use - as of January 26...

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An armada of strings can create awe - an epic tidal wave of human emotion, of scale, of wonder. While STRING MURMURATIONS makes it easy and intuitive to make music that sounds human thanks to three distinct palettes of expressions, each designed to feel like the user is collaborating with an orchestra of real musicians, creating endless harmonic possibilities that inspire from the moment a key is touched, sometimes music-makers need it to be intimate, truthful, personal, human - hence The Crow Hill Company creating SMALL STRING GESTURES as a set of tools where individual instruments and the playing style, strengths, and frailties of the instrumentalists involved are available for the user to dial up the personality of their composition. Cue humanity, in other words.

With this in mind, The Crow Hill Company specifically selected a 3, 3, 3, 3 - three Violin 1, three Violin 2, three Violas, and three Cellos - band size that ensured its sampling style brought every individual within that ensemble into beautifully detailed and intimate focus for SMALL STRING GESTURES. This toolset is provided with a different lens and aperture to play through.

The Crow Hill Company collectively likes to keep things moving, so while this latest incarnation of its Gestures concept is very much related to one of those distinct palettes of expression available in STRING MURMURATIONS, it is worth highlighting hysteresis - dictionary-defined as the phenomenon in which the value of a physical property lags behind changes in the effect causing it, such as when magnetic induction lags behind the magnetising force, for instance - in relation to SMALL STRING GESTURES. Getting in on the act of creating sample libraries involves always asking the instrumentalists involved to perform musical material that is incredibly easy to play in order for the end result to always be ‘together’. That is fine for programming or composing simple stuff since that would sound true to real life, but it becomes harder, however, for players to remain totally locked to each other’s tuning or timekeeping when playing more difficult passages. Pure sound becomes more problematic as a result - reduced fundamental meaning more character, which is why a lot of sample-based music used in films, games, and TV sounds ‘characterless’. Clearly the samples involved therein lack hysteresis as they were easy to play, yet playing something difficult with them does not sound natural, real, or human. Indeed, it is fair to say that what makes musicians ‘hysterical’ is speed - faster playing means looser playing that is less in time and also less in tune; reach - the wider the gap between the notes, the further they have to reach, resulting in less perfectly in tune playing; and pitch - the higher a player plays, the harder it becomes as it involves more intense accuracy from string players performing on fretless instruments.

It is for this reason that The Crow Hill Company decided to get its players to perform the hard stuff - not compositions, but mere fragments, which is why anyone working with SMALL STRING GESTURES will not feel like they are playing phrases; instead it is rather like having a string band under their fingertips. For Gestures are the very real sound of reach and performance. But by not giving the musicians behind SMALL STRING GESTURES simple stuff to play prevented them from getting bored. Better still, SMALL STRING GESTURES users are accessing the sound that musicians make

when they are smiling.

It is also fair to say, therefore, that the effect of hysteresis on a large string section - including that which was involved in the creation of STRING MURMURATIONS, for instance - is a silky, blurry sound. An audible example of this might be the fast string runs in John Williams' 'Hedwig's Theme' from Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone - ditto the closing bars of 'Mars, the Bringer of War' from Holst's The Planets suite. Saying that, though, there are times when music-makers do not need awe, epic, and huge scale in pursuit of their compositional craft, but instead seek something more intimate, more personal, more human. The theory that led to SMALL STRING GESTURES revolved around if The Crow Hill Company could get a string band small enough then the impact of hysteresis would not be a musical blurring, but rather an exposure of each player involved in its creation - their own style of bowing and vibrato, their own fragilities to help the user's audience connect more with the human nature of their music.

Making that happen meant designing SMALL STRING GESTURES to make its users approach composing and making music from a totally new angle, one where it feels like there are musicians at their fingertips - not samples. SMALL STRING GESTURES is a collection of master recordings - made by world-class producers and engineers at Glasgow's Clockwork Studios, a new custom-designed scoring stage for the UK comprising of a large hall for full orchestra (up to 80 players) with a balanced and focused sound ideal for modern orchestral recording, as well as a smaller dry space in Studio B (up to 15 players), with the world-class Scottish Session Orchestra playing some of the finest instruments through the finest microphones and mic pre-amps - that have been mixed and edited into a sample-based virtual instrument plug-in with a GUI and a preset browser that are as easy on the eye as they are in use. Ultimately, it works within anyone's favourite DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) with 25 presets - presented as six Gestures, four Longs, 10 Presets, and five Bonus - and additional hand-crafted Selects designed by The Crow Hill Company team. There are three mix-ready stereo signals - namely, CLOSE, WIDE, and AMBIENT, as well as unique REVERB controls and a granular effects processor.

Duly designed by professional composers with the sonic connoisseur in mind, The Crow Hill Company's collective conclusion certainly rings true, stating, "We're a small team and have worked hard to make everything as intuitive as possible." Put it this way: with SMALL STRING GESTURES it is perfectly possible to make music that sounds intimate, truthful, personal, human! Hysteresis, of course, comes into play here, albeit with the desired effect - exposure of each player involved in its creation. Clearly, then, big messages come in small packages when it comes to working with the diminutive-sized SMALL STRING GESTURES as another easy-to-use and intuitive virtual instrument plug-in from The Crow Hill Company, one which is also easy on the wallet for those wishing to step into this new world of gesture-based sampling.

SMALL STRING GESTURES is available to purchase - as an AAX-, AU-, VST-, and VST3-format-compatible sample-based virtual instrument plug-in comprising 8 GB of

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uncompressed material (compressed losslessly to 4.4 GB) that loads directly into a DAW - for £49.00 GBP directly from The Crow Hill Company. SMALL STRING GESTURES is available for free until February 29, 2024 when purchasing STRING MURMURATIONS for £199.00 GBP directly from The Crow Hill Company. (Note that SMALL STRING GESTURES is also available for free to existing owners of STRING MURMURATIONS until February 29, 2024.)

www.thecrowhillcompany.com