

The Crow Hill Company ...HARMONIC PIANO



The Crow Hill Company announces the availability of ...HARMONIC PIANO as its latest VAULTS... drop - duly sampling two lidless grand pianos playing harmonic tones that resulted in an experimental, enigmatic addition to the Edinburgh-based enterprise's free virtual instrument collection, creating a truly unique sound quite unlike any conventional piano - as of July 28...

As admirers of Castlesound Studios, situated in beautiful countryside just 20 minutes from Edinburgh as one of the leading recording studios in the UK, the VAULTS - HARMONIC PIANO production presented itself as the perfect opportunity to return. There, The Crow Hill Company creatively removed the lids from two grand pianos to capture their quietest, most elusive voices by reaching inside the instruments concerned and lightly touching each string at around a quarter of its length while striking the corresponding key, whereupon beautiful, bell-like harmonics emerged - sounds that are almost impossible to produce consistently in performance. It is precisely because this technique is so delicate and impractical to play that The Crow Hill Company collectively wanted to explore its full potential, presenting those meticulously sampled grand pianos in an ultra-wide stereo antiphony to create a virtual instrument of extraordinary depth, space, and character.

Company co-founder and professional media composer Christian Henson has this to say on the subject: "Sampling is like photography - sometimes you plan a portrait or a landscape; sometimes it's about capturing a moment. I had a moment in a studio where I was recording two grand pianos - a rarity; the lids were off both, and I

thought, 'Wouldn't it be amazing to record the harmonics of both pianos - because on some strings the harmonic rings out better than on others - and then place them antiphonally, which basically means left and right, to create a totally new-sounding instrument that also captured the moment that I was in a studio with microphones over the top of two pianos with the lids off?'"

On the face of it, though, this was always going to be easier said than done. "In order to form the harmonic, you have to hit the piano quite hard, and when you do that with the sustain pedal down you hear all of the other notes ring around it," continues Christian Henson, adding: "It has a reverberant effect - in the literal sense - that also does sound like a form of reverb, so it's really kind of odd. It feels like, 'I'm in a room; oh, it's really close.' I think the first thing to do with this plug-in is definitely add some extra REVERB to it, so you don't get that really weird distortion of reality."

As a well-worn adage, A picture paints a thousand words - meaning that complex and sometimes multiple ideas can be better conveyed by a single still image than mere verbal description - could clearly be applied to VAULTS - HARMONIC PIANO, but verbosity comes quickly to Christian Henson, however, when it comes to describing both the sound and functionality of The Crow Hill Company's latest VAULTS... drop: "It's an almost piano sound - not quite right; it has an unrefined, experimental - experimental in a mad, Victorian scientist - kind of sound about it. But because we've lost all the bottom end, what the team has done is create a supporting SYNTH activation control that sits at concert pitch but brings something very special and instantaneous to the instrument. It's great! Then we've got self-explanatory DELAY, while PITCH SHIFT pulls the two pianos in slightly different directions - a really interesting sound that, I imagine, you could really fire in."

Clearly, Christian Henson is keen to pitch ...HARMONIC PIANO perfectly, concluding: "This is part of our VAULTS... range. What is VAULTS...? Basically, we release these little gems, these moments, these opportunities - sometimes it's a bit of research, sometimes it's a bit of inspiration, sometimes we'll find an instrument and go, 'Oh, let's get that done' - and what we do is put them out for free for six months, then they're on sale across our site as exciting little sparks of inspiration."

Current VAULTS... releases from The Crow Hill Company - including ...HARMONIC PIANO - are free for all to download and make music with for the rest of their lives from the website below. VAULTS - HARMONIC PIANO installation and activation requires installation of The Crow Hill App - an easy-to-use app designed by the best in the business to provide seamless download, installation, integration, calibration, and organisation of The Crow Hill Company tools - available for free from the website below.

www.thecrowhillcompany.com