

## The Crow Hill Company VAULTS - ACID SYNTH



Music-making community tools-maker The Crow Hill Company announces the availability of VAULTS - ACID SYNTH as the latest entry into its lengthening line of free and accessible virtual instruments arising from company co-founder and composer Christian Henson effectively opening his 'vaults' for everyone to enjoy - this time creating an homage to the revered Roland TB-303 Bass Line, launched with high hopes in 1981 as a so-called Computer Controlled bass synth by the Japanese giant of electronic musical instrument manufacturing responsible for its creation before being deemed a commercial failure and discontinued quite quickly thereafter, though it was later instrumental in driving Acid House into the musical mainstream as a whole new EDM (Electronic Dance Music) genre and associated cultural movement, the popularity of which triggered a dramatic rise in the price of used units - as of March 19...

It is fair to say that when Roland released its TB-303 Bass Line in 1981 as a so-called Computer Controlled bass synth with the intention of mimicking the characteristics of an electric bass guitar, there were far fewer tools to create electronic music available. But buyers of the TB-303 Bass Line were possibly swayed by the fact that it could be time-synced - using Roland's proprietary five-pin DIN sync interface (later superseded by MIDI) - to its contemporarily-released Computer Controlled sibling, the TR-606 Drumatix drum machine, making for an affordable rhythm section that could conceivably fit into a small briefcase as a beautiful backing combination for the solo gigging musician, further helped by both

devices being battery operated as an attractive alternative to their (included) AC adapters... or so Roland had hoped.

Though the engineers involved tried their best to imitate the sound of an electric bass guitar with the technology of the time, the TB-303 Bass Line fell short in capturing its subtleties as an instrument, sadly, so it was discontinued within a couple of years, with Roland cheaply selling off the last of the 10,000 units manufactured. Now, normally this would be the end of the story, yet something incredible happened...

Helpfully, for the benefit of anyone not already in the know, The Crow Hill Company's Theo Le Derf picks up what is an incredible story in itself: "DJ Pierre and his band called Phuture found a used TB-303 in a music shop in Chicago for a bargain price. They started experimenting with the bass sequencer and a drum machine while playing about randomly with the filter and resonance knobs. The sound they produced was so unique and, frankly, weird that they decided to commit the jam session to tape. With the release of this experiment on Trax Records in 1987, they unwittingly birthed a new genre: Acid House. This slimy, hypnotic, subversive sound subsequently built a cultural movement, and was the soundtrack to many illegal warehouse parties of the late Eighties - all of this from a tiny synth that was used 'incorrectly'."

Thanks to VAULTS - ACID SYNTH's GUI (Graphical User Interface) being as intuitive as always, correct - or 'incorrect' - usage of the virtual instrument in question comes quickly. "The first large dial - CUT OFF - is a 24dB lowpass filter that controls what high frequencies you cut out, and it is automatically assigned to MIDI CC1." So starts Theo Le Derf by way of an appropriately quick guided tour, before continuing: "RESONANCE determines the peak of the filter as it opens and closes, which creates that characteristically 'squelchy' sound that the synth is known for. The small dials are more concentrated effects - MOD controls how much voltage is being sent to the filter, so you can get some really interesting sounds by adjusting the CUT OFF dial and MOD simultaneously; DECAY controls the decay for all the envelopes; and, of course, there is also our standard ECHO and SPLOSH, with the SPLOSH being an algorithmic imitation of a cave, which suits this synth so brilliantly."

It is as easy as that, though Theo Le Derf is keen to add: "Another thing to mention is that you can obviously play staccato, but when you play legato - MIDI notes overlapping with one another, you get a glide between the notes. This glide effect is another characteristic that the '303 is renowned for." No need, necessarily, then, to risk dropping a bank-balance-busting four-figure sum on a decades-old Roland TB-303 Bass Line when The Crow Hill Company's 'tribute' truly captures the essence of its distinctive sound for all to enjoy for literally nothing. Notes Theo Le Derf, ending on a high note: "The story arc of this synth is so amazing - from its unpromising beginning to completely defining a genre and an era, it's so exciting to have this celebrated instrument at my fingertips for free!"

VAULTS - ACID SYNTH is free for everyone - as are all VAULTS... releases from The

Crow Hill Company. VAULTS - ACID SYNTH 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. It is worth noting that each VAULTS... release will not be available to add to an account forever, however, since once a new 'vault' is 'opened' and goes live, another one is 'closed' and no longer available, meaning only six such instruments are available at any given time on The Crow Hill Company website. What this means for those who have already added a VAULTS... release to their account is that it is there forever and accessible through The Crow Hill App. As such, loyal fans can add a brand-new instrument to their arsenal every month, collecting and keeping them all. As each VAULTS... release will only be live for around six months, it is worth making sure that it is added to an account while it is live in order to have permanent access. Access an ever-growing collection of free, professional tools and resources by simply signing up to become a Crow Hill member on the website below.

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