Rhodes MK8FX

With its integrated, fully analogue front-panel effects section, the Rhodes MK8 electromechanical piano is set to inspire an entirely new generation of electronic pianists, electromechanical synthesists and sound designers, taking the classic Rhodes sound to new and uncharted musical territories. Rhodes newest instrument, which has been launched in parallel with the re-emergence of the globally renowned musical instrument brand, is a wholly reimagined and painstakingly designed instrument that builds on the integrity of a long line of universally loved and now classic instruments. The MK8's new stereo analogue effects section, which delivers the same premium, tactile experience as other groundbreaking features on the instrument, features a classic VCA compressor, 4-stage VCA phaser and bucket brigade chorus and delay - all controllable via the front panel or by using up to two expression pedals simultaneously. Notably, the MK8FX can also function as a standalone stereo analogue FX processor for external sound sources connected via the included FX loop.

"The MK8 builds on the quality and legacy of previous Rhodes instruments, taking them to the next level," commented Matt Pelling, CEO of Rhodes. "The analogue effects section vastly extends the sonic palette of this instrument in a highly customized way. Each effect delivers the rich sound and control one would expect from analogue circuitry, and is crafted to map to the specific timbral and sonic parameters of the MK8. This ultimately delivers a uniquely creative playing experience for each and every player - whether they be composers, live performers or studio musicians."

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The Rhodes MK8 includes the following effects:

- VCA Compressor: Useful for evening out the dynamics of a performance or for achieving creative pumping effects, the VCA compressor is highly adaptable so users can adjust the levels in a way that compliments his or her own playing style. The compressor control is equipped with an LED light that increases in brightness as the player applies more compression.
- Phaser: With the MK8’s built-in phaser, users can manipulate the MK8's sound by modulating notched filters applied to the audio signal. By adjusting the rate and depth knobs, performers can also manipulate the speed and amount of the phase effect being applied. This use of creative comb filtering can be used to spice up a phrase or add funk to a performance. ‘Alternative mode’ also allows user control over phaser frequency.
- Bucket Brigade Chorus: On older Rhodes instruments, a classic 'trick' was to run the piano's output through a chorus pedal for smooth modulation and expanded stereo width. Now, with the new built-in chorus module, users can seamlessly add the effect to their sound by turning an integrated knob. Push the depth and rate knobs clockwise to further the pitch modulation - adjust on the fly to add color to your performances. ‘Alternative mode’ also allows user control of chorus time.
- Delay: With a range of 60ms to 0.8 seconds, the integrated Stereo Delay section can add depth and character to the sound along with pitch-modulated and reverb-esque effects too. Create interesting grooves that are perfectly synced by using the “tap tempo” feature. Play with the mix knob or assign an expression pedal to time and mix while performing to create movement and add variation to a track. Whether embellishing a jazz solo or creating ethereal textures, the delay module brings sounds to life, no matter what the genre. ‘Alternative mode’ also allows user control of delay spread and jitter.

The MK8 is a highly versatile future-facing instrument designed to plug directly into any modern or classic studio or stage setup. The piano is equipped with both ¼” jacks and balanced XLR outputs as well as the familiar send and return ¼” jacks for integrating external audio and FX pedals for even further flexibility. The MK8 features the most advanced preamp found in any Rhodes piano, as well as a 3-band equalizer providing the user with the ultimate degree of tonal control. The preamp also features an envelope knob, which allows users to create an auto-wah / touch-wah effect working in conjunction with the analogue mid-range filter of the EQ section. This wah-effect can also be assigned to an expression pedal for classic foot-controlled wah, negating the need for an external wah-wah pedal.

To achieve the classic Rhodes vibrato effect along with new synth-like textures, ring modulation and sound FX, the MK8 also includes a Vari-Pan section. There are two LED lights that are on by default, which flickers in and out in accordance with the rate and depth settings. This provides a lovely visual of the effect in action, as well as important visual feedback for the performer. Four waveshape presets - including square, upwards ramp, triangle and sine - can also be selected to achieve nicely

varied textures.

?The MK8 also contains an extremely advanced analogue control system, providing the user with the ability to modify performance of both the onboard preamp and FX and the front panel. However, if the user wishes to change any parameters, they can do this in “alternative mode", where features can be edited in real-time and saved even after powering off the instrument.

While in “alternative mode”, knobs on the front panel are mapped to new functions not previously available. As an example, if a user wants to have control over the ratio of compression, they can adjust this by entering alternative mode and adjusting the amount knob. Now, the user has even more control to dial the specific amount of compression. ? Similarly, when moving the “chorus rate” knob in “alternative mode” the user is actually adjusting the time of the chorus effect. These additional functions add more exact control and can lead to experimental and creative outcomes.

In a time when every DAW and VST developer offers a variation on the classic ‘electric piano’ preset sound, The Rhodes MK8 is a potent reminder of the power and mystique that analogue instruments can bring to recording and performing live. With this abundance of new sounds and features, the MK8 is set to redefine and confidently extend the sound of electromechanical pianos for a new generation of artists, producers, and recording engineers.

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