

TCHC announces availability of GLASS STRINGS

Thursday, 24 October 2024 20:10

TCHC GLASS STRINGS



The Crow Hill Company announces the availability of GLASS STRINGS - distilling decades of award-winning experience in the music tech sector and at the composing coalface into an easy-to-use intuitive and comprehensive plug-in and interface acting as a love letter from one composer making tools for other composers, readily representing its definitive string library by drawing upon the talents of a small ensemble of musicians who could bring their own personality,

creativity, and open-mindedness to bear upon the sampling process by making every note sound different, duly delivered as the music-making community tool-maker's first key-switch instrument whereby up to eight different articulations can be loaded up into a single preset with a single uniform balance of microphones and processing - as of October 24...

But better understanding the love letter that is GLASS STRINGS surely warrants a better understanding of the inquisitive musical mind that drove it into existence... enter composer Christian Henson: "I recently set up Crow Hill with the sole purpose of making our working lives more fun. I don't like faffing around with tech. If you give me a turd I won't polish it. Call me a philistine - or maybe it's because my music is always smothered by a duvet of dialogue, I care less about perfect intonation, number of round robins, and thousands of dynamic layers and more about being here for the duende, as the Spanish call it. Being a die-hard journeyman - a hack - means I don't have time for mic positions, legato transitions, and what-not. These always sound too time consuming, and that the time spent working with them wouldn't be fun. I've spent 25 years writing scores with samples and this is - selfishly - what I need, and - having met loads of you - what you have all said you needed, too. This library is not about putting musicians out of work. Quite the contrary, it's about giving you a sense of how much they bring to our music and how joyous, fun, and inspiring they make our jobs."

Makes musical sense, surely? After all, with creativity comes innovation. It is with these very thoughts in mind, then, that The Crow Hill Company commissioned a small ensemble of highly-capable musicians - namely, The Scottish Session Orchestra's Greg Lawson (1st violin), Cheryl Crockett (2nd violin), Tom Dunn (Viola), Alice Allen (Cello), and Nikita Naumov (Double Bass) - to bring their own personality, creativity, and open-mindedness to bear upon the sampling process. Put it this way: GLASS STRINGS is the result of extensive workshops, whereby those musicians were asked to throw out all preconceptions about how to approach the recordings in favour of only adhering to one simple rule of making every note sound different. It is fair to say that everyone involved brought new ideas and novel playing styles to the production table, bouncing off each other to create an extraordinary set of tools. The whole library was masterfully tracked by GRAMMY Award-winning producer/engineer and SAE Glasgow graduate David Donaldson - to a single brief that clearly could not be more to the point: to hear each individual player.

Radical root recordings notwithstanding, there is more to this easy-to-use intuitive and comprehensive plug-in and interface than a quick glance might initially imply. Indeed, if it is not on the front panel then users will not need it, yet one particular control is actually responsible for the library's name. Digging deeper, the brains behind GLASS STRINGS have struggled for decades with the foibles of sampled strings and the fact that frequency peaking prevents them being as dynamic as real orchestras. On the face of it, the answer that the head of The Crow Hill Company's world-class production and engineering team came up with is GLASS STRINGS' GLASS EQ control. Although at first listen it may appear to act like a filter or EQ module, it is, in fact, much more impressive than that since it is actually a way of

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managing - reducing or boosting - the fundamentals of each and every note to allow for brighter or warmer tones, but also ensures users can give their listeners a true sense of the explosive power of a string band. Simply switch on GLASS EQ, play with its associated - MIX (reduces/boosts fundamental levels), AMOUNT (determines width of harmonic series), and SHAPE (determines bandwidth around fundamentals) - controls, and prepare to be amazed.

As if that was not ear-opening enough in itself, GLASS STRINGS is duly delivered as The Crow Hill Company's first key-switch instrument whereby up to eight different articulations can be loaded up into a single preset with a single uniform balance of microphones and processing. Prepared presets to get users going with intimate mixes for pop tracks to full-scale Hollywood widescreen epic-ness are the order of the day here. However, The Crow Hill Company has also developed a choice of presets suited to those who have different workflows and approaches, including single-articulation presets that have the key-switches removed - perfect for those who play fast and loose with the bottom-end of their controller keyboard.

This time, The Crow Hill Company has opted to split the GLASS STRINGS library into a slightly different hierarchy than was the case with its previous outings, organising those presets by the three key categories of articulation type that are available: SHORTS - shorter notes and plucks that are, by default, controlled largely by velocity, which determines the loudness and timbre of the tone; LONGS - looping long notes playable as solo lines or, indeed, chords, the loudness and timbral variation of which are controlled with the modulation wheel or a fader controller assigned to CC001; and, unique to The Crow Hill Company, GESTURES - little cells of performance that bring humanity to the music being made, meaning timbral differences are largely determined by the performance of the players even though the modulation wheel or CC001 can control that to a certain degree as well. Worth pointing out here is that though the mainstay of GLASS STRINGS was recorded as a - 1st violin, 2nd violin, Viola, and Cello - quartet, Nikita Naumov's Double Bass was recorded as an overdub, available on all articulations by simply switching on the BASS and effectively dialling him in as desired. And associated MIX (adjusts level of bass overdubs), POSITION (pans bass overdub), and DISTANCE (adjusts mic balance of bass overdubs) controls are always at hand to independently blend in a Double Bass performance. Put it this way: with 10 SHORTS, nine LONGS, and 12 GESTURES - all as imaginatively titled as they are inspirational - on offer, rest assured that duende is far from being on short supply while playing GLASS STRINGS, regardless of whether that BASS is switched on or not.

Needless to say, GLASS STRINGS far from disappoints, specification-wise, with edited highlights above and beyond that which has already been mentioned in that regard reading as follows: three mix-ready stereo signals - CLOSE, WIDE, and AMBIENT; four unique reverb algorithms - with self-explanatory MIX, SIZE (adjusts length of reverb decay), and REFLECT (early reflection) controls; and master processing tools - including STEREO WIDTH (adjusts pan/stereo width of plug-in), MONO FILTER (adjusts frequency at which signal folds to mono), and ROOM TONE (continuous room tone amount).

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As Christian Henson himself considerately concludes: “There is a dual purpose to this library, other than me getting my own way as a composer and developing with the amazing musicians and talent at Crow Hill... finally, a library that will do everything you need to create seminal string music - whether that be for film, TV, computer games, or pop tracks; there is a secondary desire to share my self-taught understanding of making music that tells stories to people who fear that they are unable to do that. I want to prove there is nothing to fear. This objective meant we shouted and rowed about the price of this, but inclusivity and diversity of experience and spirit in our art-space is key to its survival. So here it is: GLASS STRINGS, my love letter to music makers, including the ones who don't even know it yet. Be an individual and create a lens of your own to tell stories through. I really hope you like it, and all the stuff that follows.”

GLASS STRINGS is available to purchase for a time-limited introductory promo price of £149.00 GBP until December 1, 2024 - rising thereafter to an RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of £199.00 GBP - as an AAX-, AU-, VST-, and VST3-format-compatible sample-based virtual instrument plug-in comprising 37.58 GB of uncompressed material (compressed losslessly to 17.9 GB) that loads directly into a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) directly from The Crow Hill Company (Note NKS - NATIVE KONTROL STANDARD - compatibility is coming soon.) GLASS STRINGS 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.

www.thecrowhillcompany.com