

SYMPHONIC SPHERE

M a n u a l

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About Symphonic Sphere (SSP)

When dreams transform into possibilities

There are some nice orchestrational concepts that sound great with real musicians, but when you want to do the same in a mock-up, you'll get problems because you won't find the "right" samples or articulations in your palette to manifest your ideas.

Symphonic Sphere is a solution for several problems in working with samples.

Now you're able to build chordal trill textures, like Debussy or Ravel used them so much in their wonderful music.

Away from the limit of having half-step and whole-step trills only and fiddling around with keyswitches, the TRILLS ORCHESTRATOR is a huge time-saver and an inspiring tool.

Don't think about how you can play an half-step and whole-step trill simultaneously in a KS-patch. You don't need any keyswitches to have access to 7 types of different trill-intervals within the TRILLS ORCHESTRATOR.

Creating sample-libraries is not our full-time job. I'm a working composer and in some scoring-sessions with the orchestra, I was so fascinated by the harpenist.

She played all the atmospheric pentatonic and whole-tone scaled glissandi of my score with ease.

The truth is, a piano isn't a harp - so I dreamed about a new harp with the possibility to use it like a harpenist would play it.

The result is the Symphonic Sphere concert harp with pedal-control. Set the scale with the pedals and start to play.

Behind this concept is a huge amount of samples. We have recorded every string in three pitching-positions. Now, a B-sharp sounds like a B-sharp and not like a C.

That's why a pentatonic glissando on our harp is a) playable and b) realistic.

I'm sure you'll find some inspiring and usable never recognized articulations by browsing through this huge symphonic library.

Symphonic Sphere is our second product.

Only the huge success of Orchestral String Runs made this library possible.

Thank you to all OSR users and all new Symphonic Sphere customers.

Your support helps us making our dreams of innovative new sample-concepts come true.

All the best wishes,

Hendrik and Team



Credits

Created and produced by
Manfred Mantik, Hendrik Schwarzer

Concept, programming and mapping:
Hendrik Schwarzer

Recording, mixing and mapping:
Manfred Mantik

Conductor:
Benhard Fabuljan

Orchestra:
Belarus Philharmonic Orchestra

Editing, testing, manual:
Jan Lepold



Instrumentation & Recording

As with our first product Orchestral String Runs, we recorded Symphonic Sphere with the renowned Belarus Philharmonic Orchestra.

The following instrumental sections were recorded in our sessions:

Strings

16 Violins
10 Violas
08 Cellos
06 Basses
01 Concert harp

Woodwind ensemble (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets)

Percussion

Bamboo Chimes
Bass drum
Chimes
Cymbals
Finger Cymbals & Bells
Rainstick
Tam Tam
Vibraphone

All playable articulations are listed in the articulations chart.

http://orchestraltools.com/downloads/SSP_ArticulationsChart.pdf

We recorded everything in three microphone positions controllable in the SSP GUI. Additionally, all instruments have been recorded with different velocity layers for realistic dynamics.

All samples have their natural panning.

We used high-end Neumann and Schoeps microphones for our recording sessions.



Standard Settings

All 80 instruments included in Symphonic Sphere feature adjustable microphone positions. Furthermore, some instruments have the possibility to adjust the Release Volume, and some to adjust the Fade Volume.

Microphone Positions

Each instrument was recorded with a setup of different microphones.

Microphone placements available are: close microphones, one pair ORTF, and three mics for the Decca Tree.

Close

Increase the amount of the Close knob if you want to have a more direct sound with less response of the room. Raising the volume of the Close mics will also increase the playing noises made by the musicians, giving added realism for intimate settings.

Decca Tree

Increase the amount of the Decca knob if you want to have as much room information as possible. The reverb will increase while the direct sound decreases.

ORTF

The ORTF position is a mixture between Close and Decca. This position has a rather a direct sound, but also features much room information.

Note

You do not need to think about adjusting the mic positions if you do not want to!

When you load any instrument into Kontakt, the microphone knobs will be set to well-balanced standard positions.

Release Volume

With the Release Volume knob you can control the volume of the release sample that gets triggered when you release a key.

Increase the value of the knob if you want to increase the volume of the release-sample, decrease the value and the volume of the release-sample will decrease.



Fade Volume

Every patch (with the exception of the Trills Orchestrators) with „_Xfade“ in its name has a Fade Volume knob.

In these Xfade patches you can control the volume with the modulation wheel of your MIDI keyboard.

While playing the keys with the right hand you have total control over the volume with the left hand.

With the Fade Volume knob it is possible to control the dynamics between the loudest and the quietest notes, so you can customize the dynamic.

Increase the value of the Fade Volume to increase the dynamic range controllable with the modwheel.

Loose Samples

Some of the patches have a loose sample mode.

So what are loose samples?


Loose samples are samples that are not really clean (untidy attacks, pitches, etc.).

Normally we throw away these samples when we separate the perfect sounding recordings from the dirty ones in the editing process.

This time we decided to keep them and make them playable in addition to the clean ones.

The special idea behind these samples is that when you play them on their own, they do not really sound like you could use them in a score - they are really dirty. But when you combine those not quite so clean samples with other instruments in creating a composition, you will recognize that these small dirty samples will breathe much more life into your mockups.

Loose Modes

 ADD LOOSE

The loose samples and the clean samples are mixed.

In the Staccato patch violins for example you have six repetitions now, four clean and two loose. This mode brings a little bit more dirt and of course more life to your sound.

 ONLY LOOSE

This mode only plays the loose samples with two repetitions. With this mode you can achieve a really grubby short note sound.

The Trills Orchestrator

One of the most powerful tools in Symphonic Sphere is the ergonomically playable Trills Orchestrator. We say ergonomic because you do not need any keyswitches to change between the trills, you just play them. All trills from semitone to fifths are playable (with the exception of double basses, here semitone and whole tone trills are available). We recorded this new instrument for violins, violas, celli, basses and woodwind ensemble.

Read more about the use and features of the Trills Orchestrator on the following pages.

Graphical User Interface (GUI)

In the centre of the GUI you see a helpful tool for your orchestrations, the notation view. Like in all other instruments, there are three knobs for the microphone positions: (Decca) Tree, ORTF and Close, as well as a knob for the Release Volume. Last but not least, every Trills Orchestrator has a Mode Change Function.



Trills Orchestrator GUI



How to play the Trills Orchestrator

We were looking for a way to make this instrument easily playable.

After testing a few options we discovered “rolling up” the chords is the best and easiest way to play trills without keyswitches.

All you have to do is press a starting note and then the final note of your trill and the Trills Orchestrator will trill between these notes.

The Orchestrator allows you to trill between more than just two notes, flickering chords are possible and easy to play. Just roll off the whole chord and the Trills Orchestrator will trill between the notes you are playing.

You can trill between up to 20 notes, the problem is that you will not have enough fingers to do that ;-)

The following trills are playable:

semitone, whole tone, minor third, major third, fourth, perfect fourth, fifth.

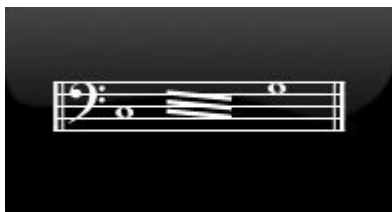
Note:

The starting note must always be lower than the final note.

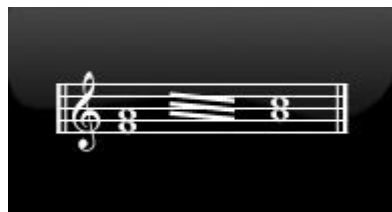
While you are playing, the delay between pressing the start and the end-tone can be very short, you can “roll up” the chords very quickly. But it is always important to roll them up; pressing two or more keys at exactly the same time will not work.

The Notation View

The Notation View is a helpful tool if you want to notate the trills in your written scores. It shows you every trill you are playing, regardless of the number of notes you play.



Cellos, trilling between c and g



Violins, f major flickering chord



The Mode Change Function

Every Trills Orchestrator can run in two different modes:

END -TONE = START-TONE

In this mode every final note is automatically a new starting note if you press more than two keys.

For example:

When you trill between C and D, the C is your starting note and the D is your final note. Now you can use the D as another starting note. Just press any other key, an E for example. Now the Orchestrator trills between C and D and also between D and E. So the D is automatically a final note as well as a starting note.

START-TONE = ALWAYS NEW

In contrast to the other mode, in this mode you cannot trill between odd numbers of notes like 3, 5 or 7 for example.

Why?

Because you cannot use the final note of a trill as a new starting note.

With the example before:

You trill between C and D. If you press E now, the E is your new starting note. The Orchestrator then waits for an additional note. Now you press one more tone, lets say an F. The Orchestrator then trills between C and D, and between E and F, but *not* between D and E.

Note:

Just find out which mode is good for your current needs and choose accordingly:

If you want to play flickering chords for example, choose the final note = starting note mode. If you want to play two different trills, each between two notes, you should choose the starting note = always new mode.



The Harp

Another major part of Symphonic Sphere is the harp.
There are four harp instruments available:

Harp_Glissandi
Harp_Glissandi_Beds
Harp_Normal
Harp_Normal_Pedal

Harp_Glissandi / Harp_Glissandi_Beds

We recorded nine different styles of glissandi, all playable in every key from C to B in the four scales major, minor, octatonic and pentatonic.

We also recorded the glissandi for whole tone scale, which you can play in the keys of C and C sharp. (The two whole tone modes)

The Glissando Beds have a length of 40 sec. for a seemingly never-ending atmosphere.
They are playable in the same keys and scales as the glissandi.

For switching between keys and scales, use the coloured keyswitches on your keyboard.

Press the red ones to choose a key, press the green ones to choose a scale.



Keys of the Harp_Glissandi instrument

The instrument display shows the current key and scale.



Display of the Harp_Glissandi instrument



Harp_Normal / Harp_Normal_Pedal

There is a big difference between the Harp_Normal and the Harp_Normal_Pedal instruments: Use Harp_Normal if you just want to play the harp without delving into the technical specifics of this instrument. You can play it the same way you play a piano, for example.

If you want to use the harp as a tool that offers you many creative possibilities, learn to use the harp with pedal control.

Harp_Normal_Pedal

What you can call yours now is the first sampled concert harp with full pedal control. This software instrument offers all the possibilities you would have with a real concert harp. With this instrument you can easily create a huge amount of different scales. This is why sometimes the harp is regarded as a more creative tool than the piano because it allows for more freedom to experiment.

We created a 3D model of the harp's pedals to make the pedal control realistic and user friendly. Just use the mouse and click on the pedal you want to adjust.

Using the slots you can see on the left of the mic knobs it is possible to save pedal presets.

Adjust the pedals, press "store" and then the slot you want to assign the preset to. Now you can easily switch between the presets you created just by clicking on the different slots.



Normal_Harp_Pedal GUI

Note:

You can trigger the slots via MIDI with any kind of MIDI controller.

Use this if you want to switch between presets while you are playing.



Why pedal control ?

The pedals of a harp have the purpose to transpose the strings either to a sharp key, a regular key or to a flat key.

For example:

Put down the C pedal and every C becomes a C sharp.

Put up the C pedal to the high position and every C becomes a C flat.

With these adjustments, it is possible to play nearly every scale you can imagine.

Let`s say you want to play a glissandi in a C major pentatonic scale.

To do that put the B to B sharp and the E to E sharp.

The E now sounds like a F, the B sounds like a C.

With 5 different pitches but 7 different tones, you can say, the “F” exists two times and the “C” exists two times, as well.

Now you have a pentatonic scale, this is what is called an enharmonic change.

B sharp is not C but it has the same pitch.

This way it is possible to create further scales like major, minor, pentatonic, whole tone etc.

Another advantage of the pedals is that you can transfer patterns and melodies into other scales without thinking about how to change the notes and chords you are playing.

For example:

You created a melody in F minor.

Wouldn` t it be interesting to hear how the melody sounds like in a pentatonic scale without thinking about how you have to change the notes you are playing?

With the pedals this is possible: Just adjust the pedals to the scale you need and play the same keys as before and your melody is transferred into another appearance.

This is a very huge and creative possibility.

Note

In this instrument only the white keys are mapped to samples because a harp has only 7 strings.