Quick tips on Symphonic Choirs:
Shouts

by Piotr Musiał
Note: This tutorial was made using Cubase 4 Studio and Kontakt 3

Hi. My name is Piotr Musiał and I welcome You to my next tutorial!

This time, as promissed, a quick tips on setting up a pretty helpful and quickly accessible shouts multi for Symphonic Choirs. It can be done in either Kompakt, Kontakt or in newest, PLAY version of Symphonic Choirs. Some more advanced features at the moment can be only done with Kontakt and it's built in scripts, but I hope, with PLAY Pro, you'll be able to do it just as easly.

Firstly – let's think, what do we want? Would we like do be able to work with shouts in Wordbuilder, and put the words there?

I hear some of you saying - „Oh, yeah!". But, let me tell you something. Firstly – gettings SC to shout using pitched consonants such as „n", „r", „z" etc is possible, but the results are really bad :) - since the character of these pitched consonants is pretty different that the shouts, so they don't really fit together that well. Notice, I'm still not saying this is impossible – I'd like someone to prove me I'm wrong. Wanna try?

Secondly, once we quit thinking of pitched consonants, and full blown shout lyrics right out of a latin dictionary, we realize, that not much we have left – it's only shouts fx and non-pitched consonants. Shouldn't be difficult to fit into a keyboard range, right?

STEP 1
LOADING PATCHES

I think there's no need for a in depth tutorial about this, so let's start by picking the right articulations.

For example, let's take C mics, and Basses – we need to load these:

Instruments\Basses\C BASS\C BASS fx\C BASS shouts.nki
Instruments\Basses\C BASS\C BASS cons\C BASS non-pitched.nki

(btw, why there are no „pros" folders in this library?;))

You could of course set them to different midi channels, and record midi for both of them separately. End of tutorial, have fun ;).

No seriously, let's set them both to midi channel 1.

STEP 2
REARRANGING KEYS

As soon as you try playing them now, you'll realize, that both play on the same keys, which is not cool.

Easiest thing to do is to transpose of the patches – I took consonants. In all three

virtual instruments, it's very easy to do – each instruments has it's Transpose settings. We want to move the range 8va lower, so we have to set transpose to +12 (this may sound nonsense at first, but this is how it works – we are transposing midi, that's comming to the sample player, not moving the original mapping):
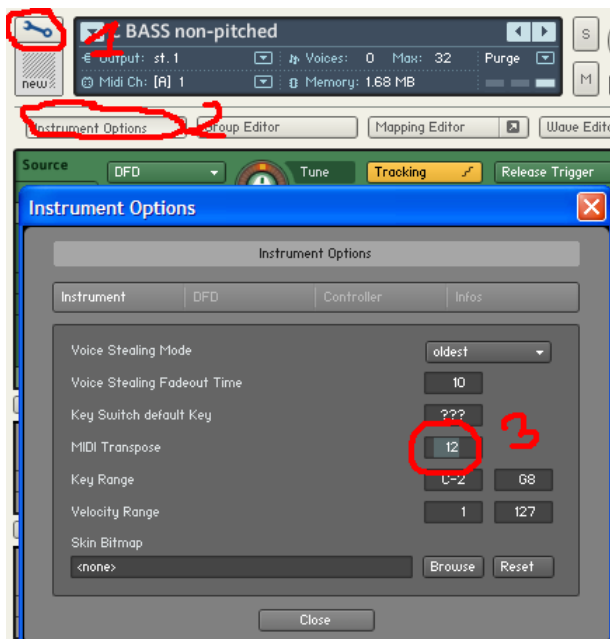
KOMPAKT:

PLAY (it's the EWQLSO interface):

and Kontakt:

Ok, now, the patches are arranged in such way, we can simply use left hand to play consonants, and right hand to play shouts.

But at first, it doesn't seem to fit together that well.

STEP 3
RELEASE TIME & VOLUME BALANCE

Notice, that after releasing the key the consonants stay a while longer. This is a bit unconvinient, because, since when a man can do „shhhh" and shout „A!" in the same time?

The easiest fix for this is to cut down the release time. By default – it's probably around half a second – let's cut that time to a half, or even less, let's say – 200ms.

Each player has it's own AHDSR section, you should find it easly (the most hidden one is actually in Kontakt – it's in the Modulation section of instrument).

Now, sounds a bit better, right? Though, the consonants still are a bit off – let's adjust the volume of this patch – like, even +6dB in comparison to shouts. Yeah, better.

We're basically done, the next step is to actually learn how to use it, record and listen, rerecord or readjust settings. But let's see what else we can do

STEP 4
MORE STUFF
YOU MAY WANT TO TRY

Once we've setup our basic shout multi, we may try a couple more tricks:

All right, basses alone sound OK, but sometimes **we want more** (not that we always need more, but it's just a human thing, you know). First natural thing in this case is actually the best one – let's add to the multi C mics of Tenors and do all the previous steps. Assign them to midi channel 1.

However notice, that boys choirs have one more shout sample mapped in the middle (it's D4), so they won't quite work together with other voices, unless you move the sample above the original range and remap the rest accordingly.

OK. We've got more.

We want them to shout not that perfectly together and all in the same velocity and stuff. We want them to shout **more like human**. Sure – sometimes when you have more than one section, with Kontakt 3 - you may want to try this:

Go to one of the patches, click to open Script Editor section. From the preset menu in the first slot, add „factory -> performance -> humanizer". Do it for all patches in the multi. Now, I've described how to use this script in Tutorial 5, Part 4. Once thing, that I didn't mention there, is that with what we want to do now, we could use some tuning varieties, each time we press the same key – knob signed „tuning" is the one you are looking for. Adjust the settings by ear. Best – differently for each patch.

More mic positions – you can always expand the multi with another mic position. For example, if you have F mic multi – you might want to add consonants from the C mics. F & S mics are a bit more difficult to setup – since consanants F and S also have Release trails – but it works with them just as well.

Improving sound – I think that there's a couple of things you can do to improve the sound, and make it sound even more realistic. Firstly – adding reverb on the multi is the most basic and effective thing you could do.

Secondly – you might have not noticed this yet, but I think that generally, non-pitched consonants sound a bit too wide in stereo so they don't stick with the shouts that well. What I like to do, is to simply add a Stereo Modeler as an insert for this patch in Kontakt, and set the „Spread" knob to a negative value (narrowing the stereo image) or even to zero – mono. My opinion is, that this sounds waaaay better.

You can also add a Low-Pass filter to sort of change character of the sound from softer to harder, when played at different velocities or using modwheel, which is often very handy, when you work on samples, that have only one velocity layer, or don't use any sample crossfading. If you know, how to do this you are very lucky! If you don't... you'll know after reading my next tutorial :).

Have fun!

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