THE HALFLING

The Halfling for sforzando

User Manual

User Manual

Description:

The Halfling for sforzando is an upright piano and soundscape virtual instrument. It is a collection of instruments and sounds inspired from a hobbit-sized upright piano that grew into a soundscape instrument that includes the spellbound sounds of a Hobbit or Halfling fantasy world. The upright piano alone is worth the price of admission into this incredible sample library, but the piano samples are just the beginning! Taking a page from Production Voices' own Death Piano, The Halfling is tortured, demented and beautifully flawed in a similar vein, but this time with a new sample set that includes throat singing samples, Wurlitzer 200A lid off, thumb piano, lo-fi choir samples, wine glasses, bowls, church organ, toy piano, electric pianos and so much more. All the samples are new content recorded for this library. The samples are used as building blocks (referred to as Spells) to create piano and soundscape oddities that are sure to please.

Ideal for Studio Production, Stage Production, Sound Design, Game Composing, Film Score Production, Performance and more!

The Halfling is also available in Kontakt format for users who own Native Instruments Kontakt.

Upright Piano Features:

- Pedal up samples
- Pedal down samples
- Release samples
- 2 stereo microphone perspectives
- Sympathetic Resonance with on/off and volume controls
- Recorded at 24 bit 44.1k

Sample Set:

- 2 Stereo Mic Perspective Upright piano
- Thumb Piano
- Glass: wine glasses, bowls
- Male Throat Singer: Ahhs, Eee, Hmm, Vowel Morphs, Drones
- Choir: lo-fi samples male and female
- MKS 20 EP samples
- Wurlitzer 200A lid off samples (stereo miked, non-amplified)
- Jewellery Box
- Toy Piano
- Many more oddities

Every copy of The Halfling is digitally watermarked with a serial number and contact information of the purchaser.

Upright Piano 2 Stereo Microphone Perspectives:

One of the key elements of The Halfling for sforzando's upright sound is the 2 stereo microphone perspectives. Take the time to get to know where each was placed and how the placement and microphone choice changes the sound.

MIC 1: Lower Microphones: The bottom panel of the upright was removed for sampling and two large diaphragm mics were placed to capture the bass strings and the treble register.

MIC 2: Room Microphones: Room mics really do give you the feel of playing a piano in a room! The upright was sampled in a small living using small diaphragm condensers in ORTF. Just the right amount of ambience is sampled.

Support

Contact us by email: support@productionvoices.com

Credits

Concept, Editing, Sampling, Programming, UI: Jason Chapman
Graphic User Interface Elements: Koke Nunez Gomez
Photo: Elena Schweitzer

www.productionvoices.com

System Requirements

Minimum System

Plogue sforzando (or Aria Player) required.
Plogue sforzando is available for FREE here:
http://www.plogue.com/products/sforzando/

The Halfling Minimum Requirements:
Multi-core Intel i3, i5, i7 or better recommended
8 GB RAM
64 bit operating system (Mac OS X or Windows)
1.5 GB of hard drive space for samples.
7200 rpm or better non-system hard drive.

Note: The Halfling will not perform as expected on systems not meeting the minimum requirements.

Recommended System

8 GB RAM or more.
Fast hard drive: 7200 rpm, RAID or SSD.
Multi-core Intel i5 processor or better.
64 bit operating system and plugin host.

Getting Started

Installing The Halfling for sforzando

Installation of The Halfling for sforzando is fairly straightforward:

1. Download and install sforzando: http://www.plogue.com/products/sforzando/
2. Download The Halfling for sforzando and unzip.
3. Place the "The Halfling for sforzando" folder on the drive that you wish to run it from. Any fast hard drive will work. If available, we recommend an SSD solid state drive for best performance.
4. Launch sforzando.
5. Drag the "The Halfling.bank.xml" file from within the "The Halfling for sforzando" folder onto sforzando. This registers your purchase with sforzando and puts the presets into sforzando.

Loading The Halfling Presets

Once The Halfling for sforzando is installed, the presets will show up under the **SNAPSHOT** menu.

LOADING TIME NOTE: The Halfling has a large sample set and requires about 1.2 GB of RAM on load. This can take a bit of time if loading from a traditional hard drive. Once The Halfling is loaded, preset changes are near instant. To speed up load times, use a solid state drive.

For Sound Designers and Programmers looking to create their own presets:

Loading from the INSTRUMENT top left-hand corner will load initialized programs that are designed to be the starting point for programming presets. Users not looking to program from scratch should use the SNAPSHOT menu to load presets. Each program in the INSTRUMENT menu for The Halfling is identical except that the effects are different. No documentation is provided for the included effects in the programs except to say that they are the basic MDA effects.

Summary:
Spin is a leslie effect
Come Again is a delay effect
Metallic Curse is a ring modulator
Pulverise is a bit crusher etc.

The Halfling for sforzando Controls

The Halfling is divided into two sections: 1. Upright controls on the INFO page and 2. SPELLS and Effects on the CONTROLS page.

Upright Controls on INFO page

All of the Upright Piano controls are located on the INFO page. All of the SPELLS controls are located on the CONTROLS page.

MIC 1 and **MIC 2** turn on/off the main and room microphone perspectives as well as adjust their volumes.

With both MIC 1 and MIC 2 on, considerable resources are used, particularly on note offs where several samples are played at once. Turning off Release, Key Noise and Sympathetic Resonance can free up voices.

Touch Response: **Touch Response** is the dynamic range determined by velocity. Touch Response determines how The Halfling adjusts the sample volumes to incoming velocity. At 100%, The Halfling will respond with an extreme dynamic range. Setting Touch Response too low will result in the low velocities sounding noisy and louder than is natural on a "real" piano. Lower settings will reduce the dynamic range more naturally than a compressor. Touch Response is linked on both the INFO page and CONTROLS page and universally controls all layers including spells and upright.

Key Noise: **Key Noise** controls the volume of the keyboard action sound as a key is released (the hammer returning). This is a subtle sound, but it adds that extra touch of realism.

In a busy production or song, the Key Noises may not be heard. There is a button to turn the Key Noises off. Key Noises does tend to use plenty of CPU and polyphony!

Pedal Noise: Authentic damper pedal samples.

The **pedal noise** controls the volume of the sound of the foot depressing and releasing the sustain pedal. Here the dampers activate the strings in the piano and then stop the strings with a subtle thump sound when released.

Most workstation keyboards do not have this sound! But it is the easiest way to add realism to your sampled piano.

Every microphone perspective has its own pedal noise samples. There are nine pedal down and eight pedal up noise samples that are played in round robin.

The volume control for pedal noises controls the volume of all microphone perspectives equally.

Pedal Noise Tips:

Busy mixes, such as songs with many instruments, may mask the pedal noise. In this case, Pedal Noise can be turned off to save voice count.

On solo or sparse arrangements, consider increasing the pedal noise to give an intimate sound.

Release: **Release** is the volume control for samples triggered when a key is released or when the pedal is let up when a note was sustaining from the pedal, but no key is held. This is the sound of the dampers stopping the piano string from ringing.

The key releases give a realistic sound to the stopping of a note that just isn't achievable with ADSR release envelopes. Users vary in how loud they like the key release samples. The key releases, like the rest of the instrument, have been programmed to sound as realistic as possible. The longer you sustain a note in isolation, the more likely it is that you will hear the key release when a key is released.

All of the mechanical noises can add up to create an authentic piano sound that may not be available in some keyboard workstations, digital pianos or other piano sample libraries.

Width: Stereo image that can be collapsed to mono and anything in between. The **Width** control on the INFO page only effects the upright piano samples. SPELLS have their own controls on the CONTROLS page.

Sympathetic Resonance:

Sympathetic Resonance adds harmonics to the sound the same way a piano does when a note is held and another note is struck. This naturally occurs on notes that are struck an exact fourth, fifth, octave etc. above a held note. **Sympathetic Resonance can add warmth and realism to The Halfling, but at the expense of both increased cpu and voice count!** For solo piano work it is suggested to turn it on, but perhaps advisable to turn it off in busy arrangements where the resonance is likely to be masked or not heard.

SPELLS Controls on CONTROL Page

The Halfling CONTROLS page is divided into **3 layers** called SPELLS and a bottom lower **Settings and Effects section**.

All 3 SPELL sections look and function identically with the only exception being that each layer has a different set of SPELLS.

SPELL Section

On/Off: Simply activates the layer or turns it off. The On/Off button is great for muting a layer when creating custom presets.

Rel. Trig: Release Trigger: When selected, the layer will only be triggered when a key is lifted (released).

VOLUME: Layer volume. Note: If you experience clipping or distortion, turn the Layer volume down as well as sforzando's main volume depending on if it the layer or preset that is clipping.

SAMPLE SELECT: Selects the sample set that will be used for the layer.

SPELL 1
Half Upright: Pedal down upright piano samples (stereo)
Choir 1: LoFi mixed choir
Glass 1: Wine glass sample
Throat ARGH 1: Throat singing
Toy Piano: Toy piano sample (stereo)
Throat ARGH 2: Throat singing
Throat Sweep: Throat singing sweeping through vowel sounds
Throat Drone: Throat singing airy drone
Throat EEE: Throat singing eee
Throat HMM: Throat singing humming
Pipe Organ: Authentic pipe organ (stereo)
Throat Ahh: Throat singing ahh
Piano Cursed +12: Half Upright samples transposed up an octave
Piano Cursed -12: Half Upright samples transposed down an octave
Kalimba +12: Kalimba samples transposed up an octave (stereo)
Kalimba -12: Kalimba samples transposed down an octave (stereo)

SPELL 2
Lo-Fi Choir: Another lo-fi choir
Music Box: Jewellery box windup music box player
Case Off: Electric piano sampled with case off (stereo)
MKS EP: Classic electric piano sample set (stereo)
Spellbound Stack: Theremin samples stacked
Spellbound D5: Theremin playing D5
Spellbound D5 V1: Theremin playing D5 with vibrato
Spellbound D4: Theremin playing D4

Spellbound D3: Theremin playing D3
Spellbound D2: Theremin playing D2
RK3 Pipe Organ: Authentic pipe organ soft flute stops (stereo)
Glass 2: Glass bowl sample (stereo)
Piano Cursed +12: Half Upright samples transposed up an octave (stereo)
Piano Cursed -12: Half Upright samples transposed down an octave (stereo)
Toy Cursed -12: Toy piano samples transposed down an octave (stereo)
Female Chorus 1: Single sample female choir

SPELL 3
Choir Merged: Multi-sampled choir with samples stacked to all play at once
Kalimba: Thumb piano (stereo)
Throat 1: Throat singing sample that started this whole project
Tube: Swung tube in air
Choir 2 CGCG: Another lo-fi choir
Choir 2 C3: Male C3 single choir sample
Glass Hit: Multi-sampled glass bowl hits (stereo)
Spellbound D4 Mrph: Theremin playing D4 while morphing the waveform control
Spellbound D3 Mrph: Theremin playing D3 while morphing the waveform control
Throat J OOAH: Another throat singer
Throat J AHH: Another throat singer on AHH
Glass SUS 1-4: Glass x4 samples stacked (stereo)
Music Box Cursed: Music box transposed down an octave
Case Off Cursed: Case off samples transposed down an octave
Toy Cursed +12: Toy piano samples transposed up an octave (stereo)
Female Chorus 2: Single sample female choir

Note: Sample sets are subject to change as more variations are added.

WIDTH: Stereo image that can be collapsed to mono and anything in between.

REVERSE: Plays the sample backwards. Most reverse samples are 4 seconds in length. Using OFFSET, the length can be shortened up to 3 seconds.

OFFSET: Moves the start of a sample forward by up to 1 second. Can be used to remove the attack of a sample or to shorten the length of a reverse sample.

Filters:

HPF: High Pass Filter

CUT: Cutoff Frequency

RES: Resonance

LPF: Low Pass Filter

CUT: Cutoff Frequency

RES: Resonance

ADSR: Typical envelope controls

The ADSR section controls the envelope for the Amplitude (volume).

The PAN is at the front of the ADSR just because of space constraints. It's a busy interface!

PAN: The layer's panning from left to right, not to be confused with WIDTH that is the stereo to mono controls.

DELAY: Amount of time before Layer envelope begins. The DELAY can be used to have layers start at different times.

A: Attack
D: Decay
S: Sustain
R: Release

PEG: Pitch Envelope Generator

AMOUNT: How much change in pitch occurs. Larger values result in larger pitch changes.

DELAY: Amount of time before pitch envelope begins.

A: Attack - Length of time for a rise in pitch
D: Decay - Length of time for a fall in pitch
S: Sustain
R: Release

FEG: Filter Envelope Generator

AMOUNT: How much change in filter cutoff occurs. Larger values result in larger filter changes.

DELAY: Amount of time before the filter envelope begins.

A: Attack - Length of time for a rise in cutoff
D: Decay - Length of time for a fall in cutoff
S: Sustain
R: Release

LFO Section: Low Frequency Oscillator

Amp LFO: Tremolo

AMT: How much change in amplitude (volume) occurs. Larger values result in larger volume changes.

WAVE: Waveshape

Triangle
Sine
Pulse75
Square
Pulse25
Pulse12
Ramp
Saw

FREQ: Frequency (speed) of the LFO

DELAY: Time before LFO takes effect

Filter LFO: Wah

AMT: How much change in cutoff occurs. Larger values result in larger cutoff changes.

WAVE: Waveshape

Triangle
Sine
Pulse75
Square
Pulse25
Pulse12
Ramp
Saw

FREQ: Frequency (speed) of the LFO

DELAY: Time before LFO takes effect

Pitch LFO: Vibrato

AMT: How much change in pitch occurs. Larger values result in larger pitch changes.

WAVE: Waveshape

Triangle
Sine
Pulse75
Square
Pulse25
Pulse12
Ramp
Saw

FREQ: Frequency (speed) of the LFO

DELAY: Time before LFO takes effect

TOUCH: Touch Response is the dynamic range determined by velocity. Touch Response determines how The Halfling adjusts the sample volumes to incoming velocity. At 100%, The Halfling will respond with an extreme dynamic range. Setting Touch Response too low will result in the low velocities sounding noisy and louder than is natural on a "real" piano. Lower settings will reduce the dynamic range more naturally than a compressor.

EFFECTS Section

Effects will vary depending on what program is loaded. All the effects are labeled as per the MDA effects website: http://mda.smartelectronix.com/vst/help/mdaplugs.htm

Loading from the INSTRUMENT upper lefthand section will load the intialized presets with the different effects. Only one effect can be used in the interface and one effect in the EFFECTS section for a total of two effects per preset. Sforzando's EFFECTS section is limited to Ambience, a reverb effect or Detune, a chorus-like effect.

Performance Optimizations

Disk Issues

If you have a slow hard drive but plenty of RAM, set the Max RAM to 4 GB or higher and set the Inst. Disk Pre-Caching to 96 kB or higher on the Settings tab of sforzando. This will load more of The Halfling samples into RAM bypassing the slow hard drive. With any luck, The Halfling will no longer have disk issues and will likely be able to play many notes at once.

Miscellaneous

Release Versions

The Halfling for sforzando Version 1.0 – Initial Release

MIDI Control Numbers

The Halfling controls have MIDI Control Numbers assigned to them. These are preset and cannot be changed. These controls can all be sequenced and automated in a DAW. Note that most are out of the range of conventional MIDI, but still may be automated in a DAW.

License Agreement

The Halfling is licensed, not sold, to the end user. Users may have up to two installs. The complete license agreement can be found here: http://www.productionvoices.com/terms-and-conditions/

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*Specifications subject to change. Sample sizes are for reference only and may differ slightly depending on how drives are formatted.

Credits

The Halfling could not have been completed without the support and dedication of many talented people! I am very fortunate to have worked with such an excellent team. Thanks again!

Concept, Editing, Sampling, Programming, User Interface: Jason Chapman
Graphic User Interface Design: Koko Nunez Gomez
Throat Singer: Keenan Lachance
Recording Engineer: Jason Chapman
Photo: Elena Schweitzer

Contact

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