



If you're an existing Glass Strings user and you want to find about the latest features in this new (V2) release jump to the appendix on page 16.

"Individualism is a modest and still unconscious form of will to power"

Friedrich Nietzsche

The Crow Hill Company thanks you for your purchase. Designed by professional composers with the sonic connoisseur in mind.

We're a small team and have worked hard to make everything as intuitive as possible. Our hope is this user manual can offer further help to best explain how to install and use our plugin.

In order to help you make music, your music, we have taken time to make this affectionate user manual get the best out of your purchase.

However if you find yourself still stuck with anything we have a great set of FAQ and videos at:

thecrowhillcompany.com/faqs

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A love letter to composers...

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 its because my music is always smothered by a duvet of dialogue) I care less about perfect intonation, and number of round robins and thousands of dynamic layers. I'm 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 all have said you needed too. This library is not about putting musicians out of work, quite the contrary. It is about giving you a sense of how much they bring to our music and how joyous, fun and inspiring they make our jobs.

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. 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, my love letter to music makers, including the ones who don't even know it yet. Glass strings, 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.

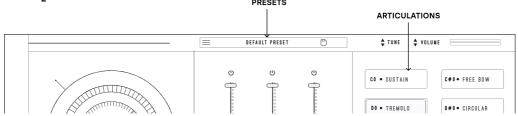
Much love, Christian xxx

# **INSTALLATION**



1

Welcome to our definitive strings library Glass Strings. Here's a quick outline of stuff you may not have seen in either our libraries or those by other companies.



Presets, Articulations & Key-switches - This is a library split into a slightly different hierarchy than our previous outings. Presets are plugin settings that house articulations. Articulations are a selection of different playing styles which you can switch to by using key switches. All the front panel changes you make, i.e microphone balance, amount of reverb etc will remain the same regardless of what articulation is "live".

We have organised presets by the 3 key categories of articulation type you will find in this library.

**Shorts** - These are (as the name suggests) shorter notes and plucks. These are by default controlled largely by velocity which determines the loudness and timbre of the tone.

Longs - These are looping long notes playable as solo lines or indeed chords. The loudness and timbral variation of these notes are controlled with the modulation wheel or a fader controller assigned to CC001.

Gestures - Unique to Crow Hill. Gestures are little cells of performance that bring humanity to your music. Whilst the modulation wheel or CC001 controls timbral differences to a certain degree these are largely determined by the performance of the players.

#### More new things...

Bass - The mainstay of the library was recorded as a quartet (1st violin, 2nd violin, Viola and Cello). With Nikita on bass, recorded as an overdub. The Bass is available on most core articulations, simply switch on BASS and dial in to your preference.

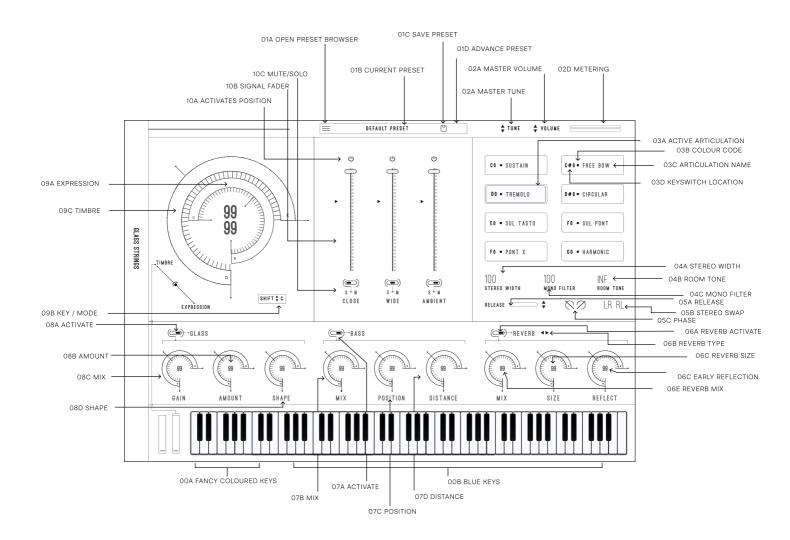
Glass - The dial that gives the library its name and a new innovation in our space. At first listen it may appear to us like a filter or EQ module. It is in fact much more impressive than that. Glass controls the fundamental of every note, which is the dominant part of any tone that defines it's pitch. For decades now with orchestral samples we have suffered with frequency peaking which has often given us a headroom restriction on representing how truly dynamic an orchestra is. The Glass Dial changes all that.

## FRONT PANEL OVERVIEW



### CROW HILL | GLASS STRINGS





#### 00 KEYBOARD

00A FANCY COLOURED KEYS - Denotes keyswitch location(s) OOB BLUE KEYS - The range of the articulation keyswitched

#### 01 PRESET WINDOW

01A PRESET BROWSER - Opens preset browser

01B CURRENT PRESET - Indicates preset selected

01C SAVE PRESET - Saves changes you have made to user location

01D PRESET TOGGLE - Advances to next / previous preset

#### 02 MASTER CONTROLS

02A MASTER TUNE - Tunes whole instrument

02B MASTER VOLUME - Changes volume of whole instrument

02C METERING - Shows you when you overall output level

#### 03 ARTICULATIONS / KEYSWITCHES

03A ACTIVE ARTICULATION - Shows articulation determined by 00A

03B COLOUR CODE - Shows which Key colour belongs to that articulation

03C ARTICULATION NAME - Articulation (double click to select)

03D KEY-SWITCH LOCATION - Displays key location (click to select)

#### 04/05 ADVANCED MASTER CONTROLS

04A STEREO SPREAD - Adjusts Stereo Width of the instrument

04B ROOM TONE - Amount of included Room Tone (aka Noise)

04C MONO FILTER - Adjusts frequency at which signal folds to mono

05A RELEASE - Adjusts release envelope times (applies to longs only)

05B PHASE - Inverts phase of the instrument

05C STEREO SWAP - Swaps the channel assignment of the instrument

#### 06 REVERB

06A REVERB ACTIVATE - Bypasses or activates effect

06B REVERB TYPE - Toggles Reverb Algorithm

06C REVERB SIZE - Adjusts time manipulation of the Reverb signal

06D REVERB REFLECT - Adjusts overall decay length

06D REVERB MIX - Midday = 50/50 dry/mix

#### 07 BASS OVERDUB CONTROLS

07A ACTIVATE - Switches Bass overdubs on or off

07B MIX - Adjust level of Bass overdubs

07C POSITION - Pans Bass overdubs

07D DISTANCE - Stereo information of Bass overdubs

#### 08 GLASS DIAL

08A ACTIVATE - Switches Glass control on or off

08B AMOUNT - Determines width of harmonic series

08C MIX - Reduces / Boosts fundamental levels

08D SHAPE - Determines bandwidth around fundamentals

#### 09 PERFORMANCE CONTROLS

08A EXPRESSION - Attenuates your performance (defaults CC11)

08B KEY/MODE - (Gestures only) pitch shifts to key/mode you're playing in

08C TIMBRE - Crossfades dynamic layers or utilises dynamic filtering

#### 10 MICROPHONE MIXER

10A ACTIVATES - Switches on/off signal (indicates when live)

10B FADER - Adjusts signal volume

10C SOLO/MUTE - Toggles Solo/Mute

## A DEEPER DIG

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There are several idiosyncratic features in Glass Strings that may be less familiar to you. Lets have a deeper dig.

PRESETS & KEYSWITCHES - Many composers like to have a single preset loaded in with a number of articulations assigned to keyswitches so that entire parts can be voiced in a single track on your DAW. We have organised keyswitch ('selects') presets by common stemming protocols (ie longs, shorts, plucks and extras). You will see there are a number of different "factory" preset styles "Hollywood" a truly widescreen "sploshy" sound all the way to "intimate" which has a mic selection and and processing that provides a very detailed and focussed sound. You can save your own "user" presets by clicking on the floppy disk icon.

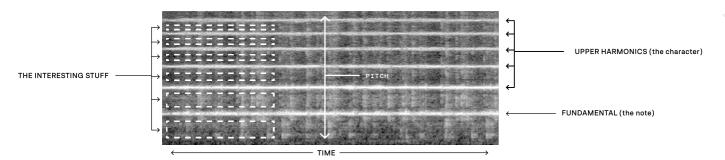
For those of you who prefer one articulation per track we have also curated "single" presets and have moved the keyswitch location(s) to octave -1 which is below the range of most keyboard controllers. This is so you don't accidently lean on a note and switch yourself into an empty keyswitch bay.

GESTURES - Gestures are small 'cells' of performances that change pitch freely. In order for these not to totally nork up your music it is necessary to determine which key or mode you are in. For a better understanding of modes and keys check out the appendices. For example to play in A minor or say D dorian you'll need to select C. There is a crib sheet in the back pages to help you there.

Gestures are intended to surprise and work freely as if a musician is interpreting your music as you compose. With glass strings you now have the ability to mix and match (even keyswitch) between gestures, long articulations, short, plucked etc. Whilst playing as a single "patch" may reap insanely gratifying results gestures are well suited to be used in moderation to provide you with melodic inspiration and the formation of motifs. New to Glass Strings are some motoring gestures. These will seamlessly lock to your host tempo even if your tempo map changes gestures will follow glitch free. For the purists in you all gestures were recorded at 100bpm so straying 20-30bpm may produce artifacts (especially when straying south)

## THE GLASS DIAL

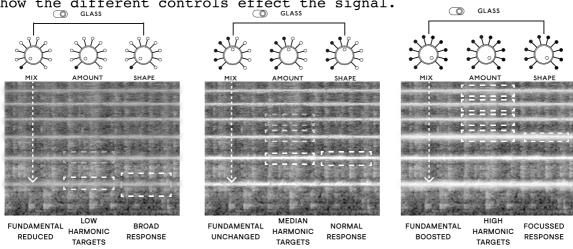
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One note: 4 musicians, 12 mics, 1 hall. Two notes: 8 musicians, 24 mics, 2 halls. Once you're doing 4 part harmony and adding the bass in for good measure you'll have 17 musicians 60 microphones and 5 halls. Whilst we process our signals so you don't get a build up unwanted information, the additive consequence of layering samples means that some frequencies can get out of control. Every room has a mode, every instrument has a wolf-tone and each mic has its own frequency response. The net result is frequency peaking and the only solution often is to reduce the bandwidth so that you don't send your mixes into the red. However if there is one thing that orchestras do really well, is bandwidth. Quiet to really loud, its what makes them such good storytellers. So we have a new innovative solution called "Glass" which has given the library its name.

The Glass controller attenuates how the "fundamentals" and "harmonic series" behaves for each and every note. Each control of each dial allows you to fine tune this to your arrangement and particularly the density of the sonic space you're operating in. Whether that be a rich arrangement or indeed a busy scene with traffic noise, room tone, dialogue, etc. Have you ever noticed how instruments like piccolos, flutes and vibraphones are difficult to control? They're either overwhelming or completely inaudible (possible exception to the piccolo). This is because they have a very pure and proud fundamental (the part of the sound that gives you the sense of pitch). It is perhaps why instruments with more complex harmonic characteristics are more common in scores. Pianos, strings, oboes and alike.

Glass control has three different controls for you to work with to get the best balance of note, character and interest. Used in extremes for smaller arrangements you can pass through a more glassy tone to something that feels a bit more scratchy. However in fuller arrangements or scenes you can expertly pick out phrasing and internal harmonic movements by boosting the instrument or voicing or section but reducing the fundamentals so you don't go into the red. Here's how the different controls effect the signal.



## **TROUBLESHOOTING**

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### I Can't Hear Anything!

As much as we all love John Cage, we are sure you want to hear your instrument. Included in each instrument are a few utilities that can be used to diagnose some likely causes.

Each plug-in has a combination of ways to control the overall volume.

- Ensure Expression (CC11) is at its maximum value.
- If included, check that the mixer controls are not set to -Infinity or muted (m).
- Check that your Master Output Volume is not set to its minimum value (- Infinity).

This can be quickly checked by looking at the Volume Meter, which should be moving while sound is passing through your instrument.

#### Still no luck?

If you have tried the above and still hear nothing, the onscreen MIDI keyboard can be directly played by Left-Clicking a piano key in the user interface.

If you can now hear the instrument then the issue is likely the connection between your MIDI keyboard and your workstation's associated track.

Ensure there are no loose connections, triple-check your MIDI input settings, and remember to arm your track.

### Help! My Plug-In's interface is entirely blank.

Don't worry. Looks can be deceiving, this means the plug-in is unable to locate the audio (.blob) files.

Ensure your external drives are connected and restart your digital audio workstation (D.A.W).

Unable to locate your .blob files, lost track of where you installed them, or had the misfortune of misplacing a drive? Simply open the plug-in and be guided on reconnecting the missing files, getting you up and running in no time.

#### How Do I Relocate My Instruments Audio Files?

The simplest way to relocate your instrument's audio files (.blob) is to open your new virtual instrument plug-in in your D.A.W of choice. You will be automatically prompted and guided on how to re-connect the missing files. The new location will also be saved internally, so next time the instrument will know exactly where to look.

### **APPENDIX - SCALES AND MODES**

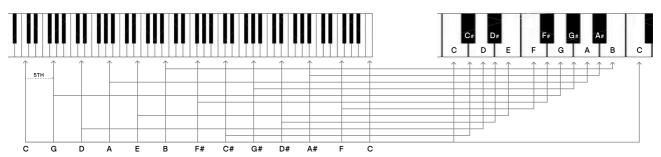
### **CROW HILL | GLASS STRINGS**

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Whilst we won't attempt to explain one of the more complex fundamentals of music theory, we do want you to get the best out of your purchase. So, gestures and scales. How do these work?

Throughout pre-history we sang in monody (imagine monks in a church), either on our own without accompaniment or indeed in unison (all together singing the same thing). When women and men sang together the first interval was discovered, the octave. Men's voices are roughly an octave deeper than those of women's, girls and boys whose voices have not broken. On a stringed instrument it is the halving or doubling of the frequency of the note pitch.

Around the 10th century AD the fifth started to appear in music, then the 4th and the 3rd. But it was really the fifth that was the disrupter as when you travel up from say a C through all the fifths you end up at C again after 12 steps. Arrange these 12 5th notes in "scale order" ie side by side and you get the 12 notes of the chromatic scale... or more accurately, 11 notes before the thing repeats itself.



To our human ears we tend to prefer tonal to chromatic music. This is music where the frequencies that play against each other are most complimentary. Where the vibrations are simple subdivisions, not complex ones. Which is why we use scales of 7 notes to create more tonal and emotionally relatable music.

The way of determining a scale is its tonic. Basically the note you return to the most. A scale is defined by its relationship to that tone.

When looking at a keyboard playing all the white notes and returning to the "C" will give you the most pleasant tonal character. It is the thing of nursery rhymes and Christmas carols. However it has a darker twin, if you play all the white notes but return to the "A" most of the time you will have a sadder tonal quality. The "C" scale is a major one, the "A" is a Minor (strictly speaking a diminished minor). These are both modes, and there's not just two, there's seven.

Without shifting the key of any gestures you are playing you can alter the tonal character of the music by simply changing the tonic whilst playing just the white notes. Modes have funny names too. 7 white notes, 7 tonics, 7 modes.

- C-C = IONIAN Our major, joyful, happy scale.
- D-D = DORIAN Minor in sound but more sophisticated (very popular in Hollywood)
- E-E = PHRYGIAN Exotic fruits, mysterious and unfamiliar.
- F-F = LYDIAN Super popular in Hollywood, positive with a questioning nature.
- G-G = MIXOLYDIAN Like a major version of Dorian, major but cooler.
- A-A = AEOLIAN The saddest of modes our "minor" or strictly speaking "diminished minor"
- B-B = LOCRIAN Dissonant, but not sad, unstable.

## **APPENDIX - CREDITS**

### CROW HILL | GLASS STRINGS



Glass Strings wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for the efforts of these amazing, talented and generous individuals.

Leader:Alice Allen
Engineer:David Donaldson
Contractor:
Orchestration:
Producer & Development:Calum Minuti-Goold
Tech Stack:Stephen Tallamy
Editing:Kieran Greig
Videographer:Jack Rosam

All of us at Crow Hill would like to offer our sincerest thanks to all of the musicians who took part. Everyone at Clockwork Studios. The undying support of our family and friends getting this across the line.

But most of all, to you for buying it. Without you we wouldn't get to play with such a wonderful train set.

### **APPENDIX - EULA**

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## **APPENDIX - NEW IN VERSION #002**

### **CROW HILL | GLASS STRINGS**

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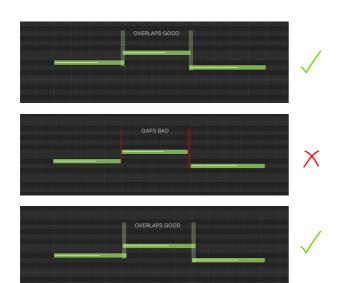
We've taken Glass Strings out of circulation to give it a bit of an overhaul. Not only is the GUI totally re-designed but we've added many features and nearly 8GB of totally new recordings based on feedback from yourselves, which we thank you for.

We've done this not because of any unhappiness with Glass Strings, more-so the encouragement and enthusiasm we have received from it's users who have decided that this is their new-route to more intricate, and human sounding string arrangements.

These updates have been made totally free of charge to existing Glass Strings users.

Here's a quick breakdown

ALL NEW LEGATO - You spoke, we listened! We think our legato patches are some of the best in the business. These work like longs patches, so controllable via timbre and expression. However they're designed for single lines or voices. Make sure you overlap notes so that the plugin can insert the relevant intervals in-between the notes you're playing. Because of the natural lag caused by these computations we recommend you insert a pre-delay into your track header when quantising these articulations.



Original Performance - Unquantised but with each note overlapping ever so slightly. This will trigger legato intervals.

Quantised version, notes maintain original lengths but because of time correction now have gaps between them and will NOT trigger legato transitions

Corrected version, after quantising, these notes have had their lengths increased in order to ensure overlaps are in place and legato intervals are triggered.

**ALL NEW CINEMATIC SHORTS** - We love the brushed beauty of some of the glass shorts all the way to the highly characterful biting spiccatos. But felt we were missing something between the two. Particularly when creating inner accompanying parts, ostinatos etc. We're sure these new shorts will become a new go-to for your arrangements.

BASS LAYER - Alongside the front-end switch to layer bass an octave under your cellos we've stemmed out the original bass sessions to give you this in isolation for your specific arrangement and orchestration needs.