



STRING MURMURATIONS

USER MANUAL



"Big messages come in small
packages...."

Rachel Naomi Remen

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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WHATS IN *THIS* BOX MR CROW?



Lets get ready to Murmurate! We've kept things simple, intuitive, quick and easy to use out of the box. But there are a lot of new features to get your head around so hope your inquisitive nature encourages you to RTFM.

String Murmurations is designed for you to think differently about the way you write. The only learning curve you will experience is that of getting used to hearing the music you're about to make.

String Murmurations is composed of a number of components. Master recordings that have been recorded mixed and edited into a plugin with a GUI (graphical user interface) and a preset browser.

This plugin works within your preferred DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) i.e Logic, Ableton, Pro Tools, Garage band, Cubase etc etc.

Within the plug in are 150 presets split into 4 different categories or "Expressions":



Gestures - Behind each key lies an orchestra interpreting your composition and making it into music, into art.



Constellations - Outrageously beautiful clouds of sound, broken down, cell by cell in to granular refractions.



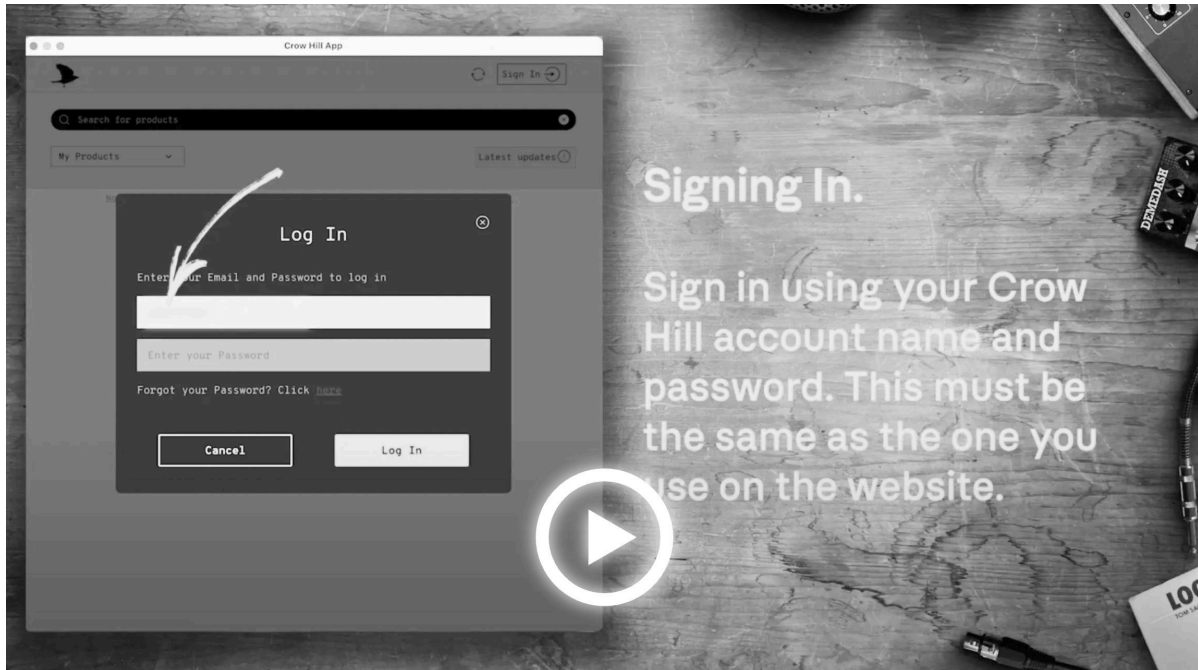
Blurs - True acoustic hysteresis, where sounds intertwine and become one. We made this because samples can't do it.



Crow Hill Selects - We've taken all of these stunning resources and have curated even more presets giving you even more responses to your musical endeavours.

INSTALLATION

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Installation of Crow Hill products couldn't be easier courtesy of our dedicated installer app.

Make sure you have this downloaded as you will require this to install Glass Strings.

We've also prepared a simple overview of how the app works but also a suite of quick installation guides specific to your choice of DAW.

Everything you'll need is located here:

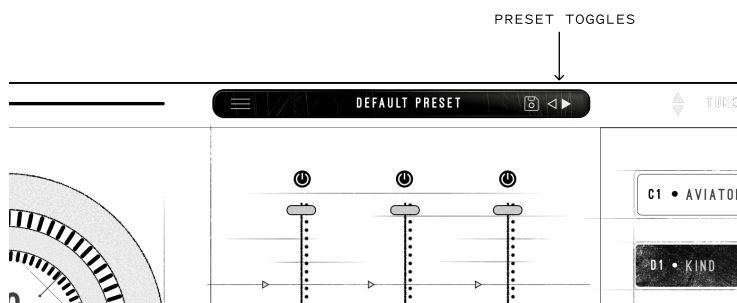
thecrowhillcompany.com/crow-hill-app

QUICK START

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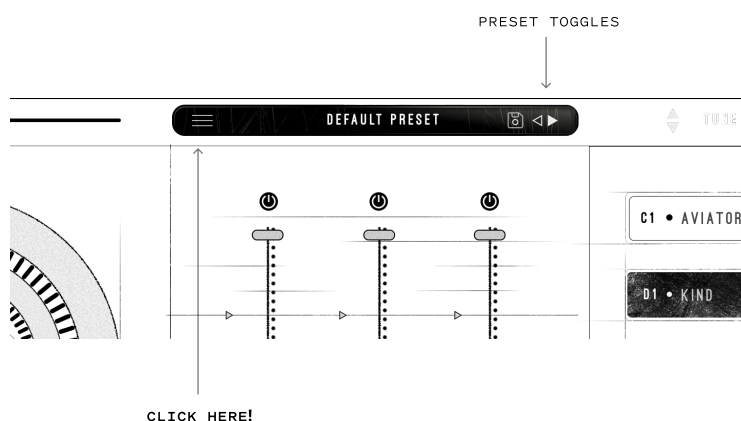


All of the treasures found in this collection work directly in your D.A.W. If you want to get up and running quickly or audition some presets, simply load the plug-in, navigate to the top preset panel, and click the menu to see the fully integrated expression browser.

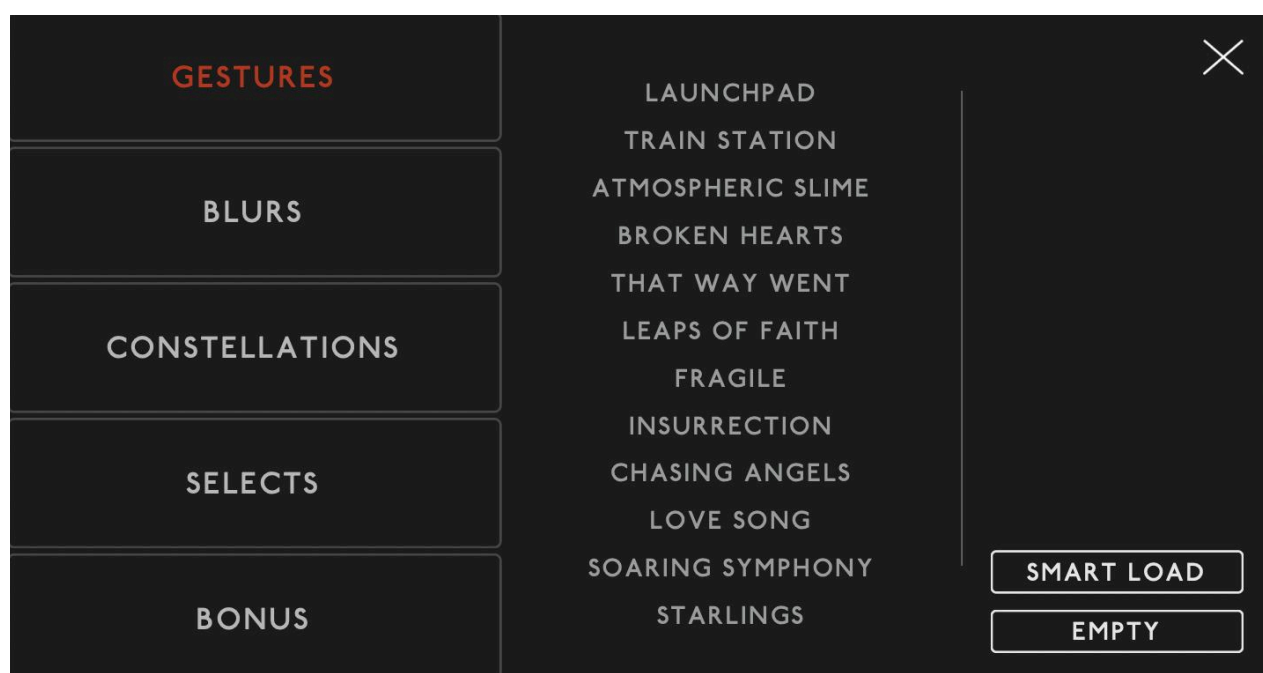


Whilst we'd encourage you to mess around with all the controls. The preset toggles will move you forward and backward through the different expressions.

THE BROWSER WINDOW

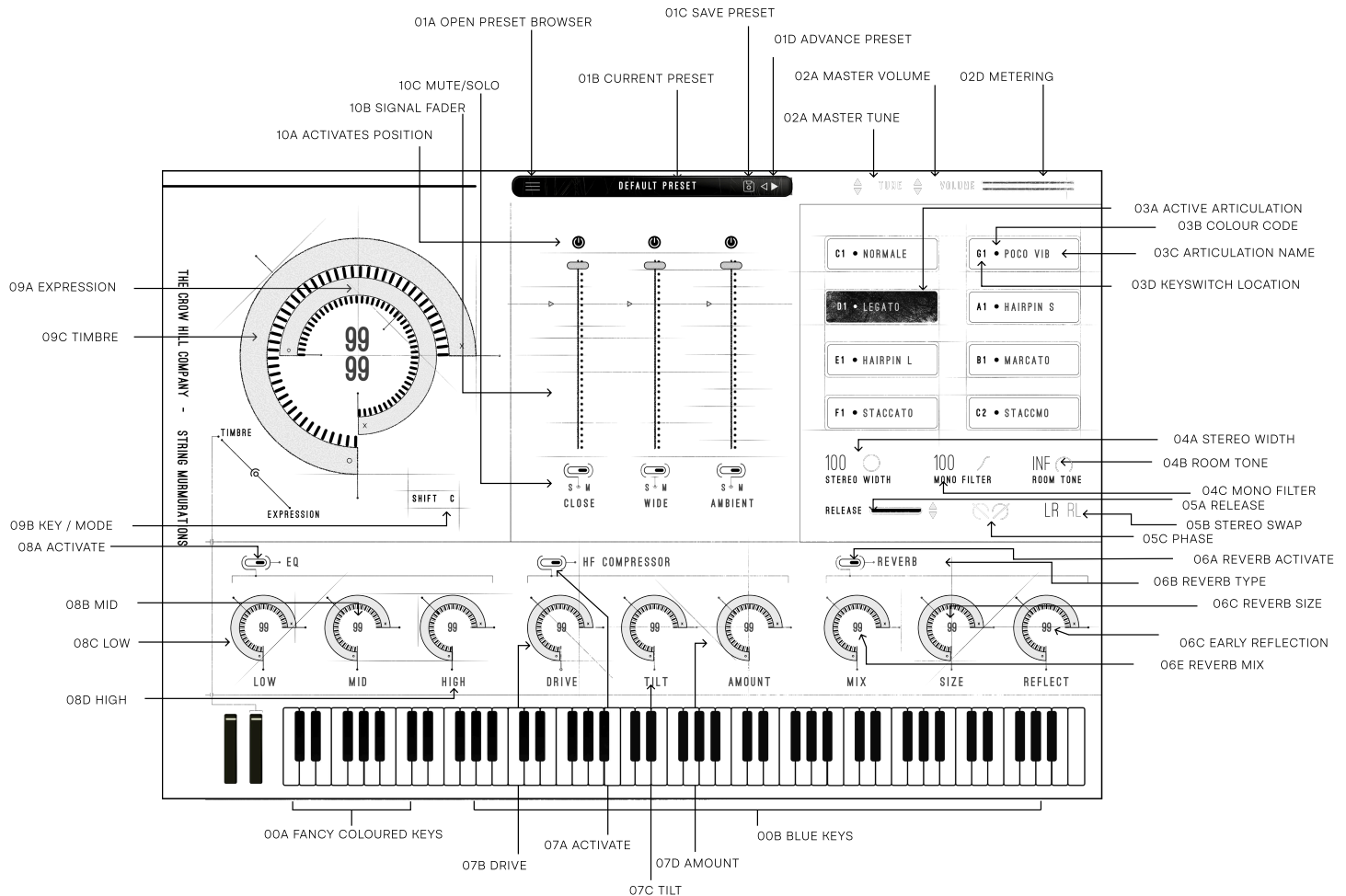


Whilst you can work your way through the presets using the arrow toggles there is also a way of getting to where you want even faster. By opening the preset browser panel.



FRONT PANEL OVERVIEW

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00 KEYBOARD

- 00A FANCY COLOURED KEYS - Denotes keyswitch location(s)
- 00B 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
- 06E REVERB MIX - Middy = 50/50 dry/mix

07 GRAINS (GRANULAR ENGINE)

- 07A BYPASS - Switches off the harvest
- 07B SIZE - How big each grain is.
- 07C SPEED - The speed & direction of each grains playback.
- 07D JITTER - Adjusts the randomisation of each individual grain.

08 EQ

- 08A ACTIVATE - Switches EQ on or off
- 08B MID - Boosts / Cuts amount of mid-range
- 08C LOW - Boosts / Cuts amount of low frequencies
- 08D HIGH - Boosts / Cuts amount of high-range

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

WHAT IS HYSTERESIS

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hysteresis
/ˌhɪstəˈriːsɪs/
noun

1. the phenomenon in which the value of a physical property lags behind changes in the effect causing it, as for instance when magnetic induction lags behind the magnetising force.

The act of creating sample libraries means you are always asking the players to play stuff that is incredibly easy. Which means the end result is always "together".

Which is fine if you're programming or composing simple stuff, this will sound true to real life. However when playing more difficult passages in real life it becomes harder to remain totally locked to each other's tuning or time keeping, which means less of a pure sound. Less of the fundamentals and where there's less fundamentals there's more character. Which is why a lot of sample-based music you hear on the TV, in games and films, sounds "characterless". The samples lack hysteresis because they were easy to play and because you're playing something that's difficult it doesn't sound natural, real, or human.

So what makes musicians hysterical?

Speed - The faster you get them to play the loser they will get (meaning they will be less in time, but also less in tune).
Reach - The wider the gap between the notes the further they have to reach, the less perfectly in-tune they will be.

Pitch - In general terms the higher you get a player to play the harder it is. For wind instruments it takes more lung effort. For string players it requires more intense accuracy (imagine a fretboard on a guitar, notice how the frets aren't uniform and get closer together the higher they get, now imagine playing an instrument without frets).

So we decided to get our players to play the hard stuff. They're not compositions, but mere fragments. Which is why you will not feel like you are playing phrases, you will instead feel like you have a string band under your fingers.

Blurs sound that way because they're bloody fast, you can't hear the individual notes because they're inevitably scattered amongst the players.

Constellations are where we got them to completely ignore each other giving you beguiling textures to work with.

Gestures are the very real sound of reach & performance.

But most importantly, by not giving musicians easy stuff, they don't get bored. So you also have the sound musicians make, when they're smiling... hysterically.

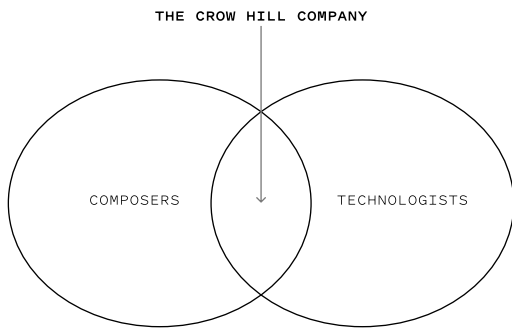
The effect of hysteresis on a large section (as you will find with String Murmurations) is a silky blurry sound. However there are times when we don't want that awe, epic, huge scale. But instead something more intimate, more personal, more human. Our theory was that if we were to get a string band small enough, the impact of Hysteresis wouldn't be a blurring, but instead an exposure of each player. Their own styles of bowing and vibrato, their own fragilities to help your audience connect more with the human nature of your music.



gesture
/'dʒestʃə/
noun

1. a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning.

Phraselets, transitions or as Bernard Herrmann referred to them, "cells". We've settled on **Gestures**. They're not music, they're the secondary colours that go into making it. Where the notes, rhythms and arrangements are the language of music. Without that human element, the gestures, inflections and nuances, music can become un-human sounding. Yes we have done these because they're fun to work with, but there is a more fundamental reason for them and it is the saddening fact that samples are really really bad at sounding alive. The best orchestral programmers in the world have a vast and intimate knowledge of symphonic instruments and how players adjust their playing style to create human-like gestures. We're not all the beneficiaries of that knowledge though, nor indeed are blessed with the time it takes to mimic humanity. So we've decided not to. The way you're about to make music is about to change, alongside the music you make.



This is where we bring two disciplines together for the first time. We have designed a system that is as akin to composing as it is to technology. Our Gestures allow you to create an almost infinite number of possibilities with which to make music, your music. Because of this combination of disciplines you yourself will feel these musicians playing YOUR music, not you playing the music written by someone else.

HOW TO USE THEM

1. Pull up a gesture preset, play a long sustained chord using just the "in key" notes on your keyboard controller.

...and that's it.

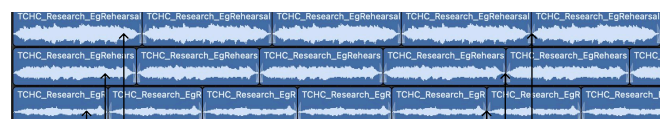
All the white notes tend to refer to the key of C, a happy primary colour, or A min, a sad primary colour. With various "modes" which contain more nuanced and complex harmonic colours. Gestures will work in any key or mode you like. Just change the key or mode with the "shift" function and adjust the relative major scale accordingly.

All gestures have been imagined for a wide array of emotional purposes. From sweeping, grand and epic. To romantic, atmospheric & even a little scary. Dive in and see what works for your mood. Please note this manual doesn't come with a shovel to get you out of the rabbit hole it'll send you down.

HOW TO CREATE A MURMURATION

When you hold down a chord you will notice the effect that gave this collection of samples its name. This is caused by engineering in a-symmetrical gestures.

BY ALLOWING GESTURES TO GO OUT OF PHASE YOU HEAR YOUR MUSIC VARY CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE DURATION OF YOUR CHORD.



3 GESTURES, ALL DIFFERENT LENGTHS

CROSSFADED LOOP POINTS

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 re-run the installer to be up and running in no time.

We recommend frequent back-ups of your system, as well as archiving your instrument installer files to ensure a speedy recovery should it ever be needed.

How Do I Relocate My Instruments Audio Files?

The simplest way to relocate your instrument's audio files (.blob) is to delete the previous files (where you previously installed your .blob's) and re-run the installer, selecting the newly desired install location.

This ensures no files are accidentally removed and will automatically overwrite any pre-existing instrument files.

APPENDIX – SCALES AND MODES

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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?

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.

Mode Key Mnemonic:

C

Cheese



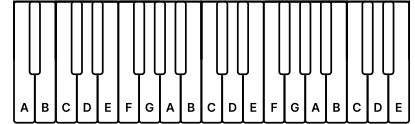
Flavour Profile:

Set the scene, all is good, resolution, happiness.

Weird Greek-God Name:

Ionian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

0	1	2	3	4	5	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

Mode Key Mnemonic:

D

Does Everything

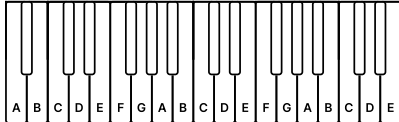
Flavour Profile:

Take me seriously, worrying, intense, time to act, this sh*t is about to get real.

Weird Greek-God Name:

Dorian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	-6	-5	-4	-3
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

Mode Key Mnemonic:

E

Exotic

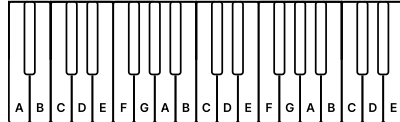
Flavour Profile:

Mystical, unusual, unsettling, slightly dark.

Weird Greek-God Name:

Phrygian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	-6	-5
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

Mode Key Mnemonic:

F

Forever Hollywood

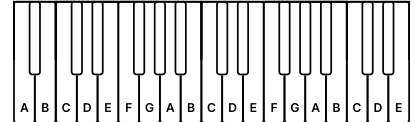
Flavour Profile:

Positive & happy with a sparkly hint of adventure.

Weird Greek-God Name:

Lydian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	-6
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

Mode Key Mnemonic:

G

Good For Romcoms

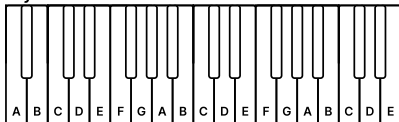
Flavour Profile:

Doing something positive with no guarantee of a positive outcome.

Weird Greek-God Name:

Mixolydian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

5	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

Mode Key Mnemonic:

A

Always Sad

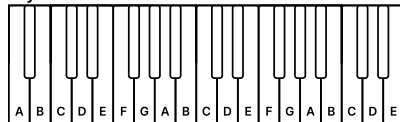
Flavour Profile:

Loss, loneliness, no hope

Weird Greek-God Name:

Aeolian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

3	4	5	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

Mode Key Mnemonic:

B

Broken

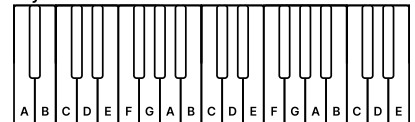
Flavour Profile:

Totally ambivalent with no chance of a satisfying resolution

Weird Greek-God Name:

Locrian

Keys



Notation



Transposition Calculator

1	2	3	4	5	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B

APPENDIX – CREDITS

CROW HILL | STRING MURMURATIONS



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

Conductor:Adam Robinson
Leader:Gregg Lawson
Engineer:David Donaldson
Co-producer / Musicians Contractor: ...Kobus Frick
Orchestration:Jack McKenzie
Orchestration:Joshua Hicken

Development:Calum Minuti-Goold
Art, GUI & User Manual:Christian Henson
Tech Stack:Stephen Tallamy
Artistic & Prose Consultant:Dot Allison
Editing:Kieran Greig
Videographer:Jack Rosam
Production Assistant:.....Theo Le Derf
User Manual:Christian Henson

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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8. Termination of this Agreement. We may at any time terminate this legal Agreement, in our sole discretion without prior notice to you and without reimbursement, if we have reasonable grounds to believe that you may have breached (or acted in a manner indicating that you do not intend to or are unable to comply with) any term herein or if we are legally required to do so by law. You acknowledge that we will cooperate fully with investigations of violations of systems or network security at other sites, including cooperating with law enforcement authorities in investigating suspected criminal violations.

9. Liability. You agree that our liability to you hereunder shall be limited to the amount you have actually paid to us for all products or services hereunder of, if greater, GBP100. Except as set out herein, we shall not be liable for any indirect or consequential loss of any kind in contract, tort or otherwise arising out of your use of the Product or the Content or in relation to the goods and/or services that we provide. Nothing in this Agreement shall operate to limit or exclude liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence.

10. Warranties. TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED UNDER APPLICABLE LAW IN YOUR TERRITORY, ALL OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED ON AN "AS IS" AND "AS AVAILABLE" BASIS WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, OR THE WARRANTY OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. WITHOUT LIMITING THE FOREGOING, WE MAKE NO WARRANTY THAT (A) THE SERVICES WILL MEET YOUR REQUIREMENTS, (B) THE SERVICES WILL BE UNINTERRUPTED, TIMELY, SECURE, OR ERROR-FREE, (C) THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE USE OF THE SERVICES WILL BE EFFECTIVE, ACCURATE OR RELIABLE, OR (D) THE QUALITY OF ANY MATERIALS OR SERVICES OBTAINED BY YOU FROM US, OR FROM ANY THIRD PARTIES' WEBSITES TO WHICH WE ARE LINKED, WILL MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS OR BE FREE FROM MISTAKES, ERRORS OR DEFECTS. THE USE OF THE PRODUCTS AND THE SERVICES IS AT YOUR OWN RISK AND WITH YOUR AGREEMENT THAT YOU WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO YOUR COMPUTER DEVICE OR SYSTEM OR LOSS OF DATA THAT RESULTS FROM SUCH ACTIVITIES.

11. Indemnity. You agree to indemnify us for any loss or damage that may be incurred by us, including without limitation reasonable legal fees, arising from any breach by you of any warranty or other term herein or your misuse of any material or information obtained through the use of the Products or the Content.

12. Complaints. If you would like to notify us of Content, which you believe does not comply with this Agreement or otherwise is objectionable, please notify us via www.thecrowhillcompany.com/faqs making sure to include both the link to the infringing Content and the reasons as to why you believe there is an infringement.

APPENDIX – EULA (CONTINUED)

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13. Hacking. You agree and undertake not to attempt to damage, deny service to, hack, crack, reverse-engineer, or otherwise interfere with the Products and/or the Content in any manner. If you in any way cause such damage, you agree to pay all financial damages we incur as a result. We will cooperate with the authorities in prosecuting any User who Interferes with the Products or the Content or otherwise attempts to defraud us or any other parties. We reserve the right to deny any or all access or service to any User for any reason, at any time, at our sole discretion. You agree that we may block your access, and at our sole discretion to disallow your continued use of the Products and/or the Content. We reserve the right to take any action we may deem appropriate in our sole discretion with respect to violations or enforcement of the terms of this Agreement, and we expressly reserve all rights and remedies available to us at law or in equity.

14. No Partnership. Your use of the Product and/or the Content creates no partnership, client, fiduciary or other professional relationship.

15. Entire Agreement. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties on the subject matter hereof. There are no understandings, agreements, or representations, oral or written, not specified herein regarding this Agreement.

16. Force Majeure. We will not be liable or responsible for any failure to perform, or delay in performance of, any of our obligations hereunder that is caused by events outside our reasonable control including but not limited to: natural disasters (fire, storms, floods), governmental or societal actions (war, invasion, civil unrest, labour strikes), infrastructure failures (transportation, energy, electricity), or any epidemic or pandemic.

17. Severance. If any part, term, or provision of this Agreement shall be held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal, unenforceable, or in conflict with any relevant law, the remaining portions or provisions shall still remain valid and continue in full force and effect.

18. No Waiver. No waiver, express or implied, by either party of any term or condition or of any breach by the other of any of the provisions of this Agreement shall operate as a waiver of any breach of the same or any other provision of this Agreement.

19. Variation. This Agreement may be varied from time to time and any such amendment will be applicable from the date and time such revised terms have been made publicly available. Your continued use of the Product constitutes agreement with and acceptance of any such amendment or other changes.

20. Law and Jurisdiction. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and any disputes shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of England.

21. Contacting Us. If you have any questions, please contact us at www.thecrowhillcompany.com/faqs