Very Close Piano

Produced by Nelson MALLÉUS

Very Close Piano offers you the piano with more precision, more attack and more density that you have ever heard.

Very Close Piano makes available, in addition to a classic stereophonic recording, 2 unheard microphone positions which are impossible to produce in a traditional recording session.
With one microphone avec the hammer and one at the other end of the played string, all the sound and musical potential of each note is now within easy reach.

To fully enjoy the possibilities of these 3 microphone positions, *Very Close Piano* features an exclusive *X-Fade* processor that allows you to change the sound from one ore more microphone positions to another during each note. For example, you can take full advantage of the extreme proximity microphones on the attack of the note, while considering using the ambient take on the tail for a better width.

In order to integrate the dense and precise sound of this *Bösendorfer* into your mockups as well as into your final mixes, *Very Close Piano* has been recorded in a neutral acoustic with high quality transparent gear.

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Technical information

- 1300+ samples
- 48kHz / 24 bits (scaled from 96kHz)
- 5 velocity layers
- 3 microphone positions, with 2 exclusive :
    - *Hammer* (mono)
    - *Tail* (mono)
    - *Room* (stereo)
- A mixing console with the following setting for each microphone position :
    - Volume
    - Panoramic
    - Solo / Mute
    - Phase delay
    - Load / unload samples
    - Output selection
- An exclusive *X-Fade* processor
- Automatic panning options for close microphones
- An ADSR envelope
- A Roud-Robin option with neighbour notes
- A VCA controller
- Requires the full version of *Kontakt 5.6.8* or higher

Credits

Producer : Nelson MALLÉUS
Technical advisor : Antoine PRADALET
Piano : Paolo NAVARRO
Sound engineer : Nelson MALLÉUS
Sample editors : Benjamin N'KAOUA, Nelson MALLÉUS, Nelson SANTONI
Programmer : Nelson MALLÉUS
Designer : Dania MALLÉUS

Recorded on Bösendorfer
at Studio La Majeur - 18 rue Saint-Bernard - 75011 PARIS (France)
from 02/23/2017 to 02/24/2017

Beta-testers : Marc HAZART, Nicolas REZAÏ, Nelson SANTONI

Special thanks to Jérôme LEMONNIER

Microphones and placement

If the unique character of *Very Close Piano* lies of course in its extremely close microphones, it also offers an AB recording named *Room*. It can be especially useful to integrate *Very Close Piano* into your mixes, or simply to get a softer sound, a wider stereophony, or even create a more complex multichannel mix by placing the close microphones into the front channels and the AB into the rear channels. This AB take is very neutral, made with a pair of small-diaphragm omnidirectional condenser microphones.

Both proximity microphones - *Hammer* and *Tail* - were moved with the greatest precision above the recorded string(s) before each note. Thus, *Very Close Piano* offers the closest sound possible, while maintaining a very homogeneous sound throughout the range, which makes it unique and absolutely inimitable in recording sessions.

The *Hammer* samples were taken with a high-precision supercardioïd dynamic microphone placed perpendicularly above the recorded string(s).

Using the same technique, a large-diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone was placed 2 cm above the string near the tail for *Tail* samples.
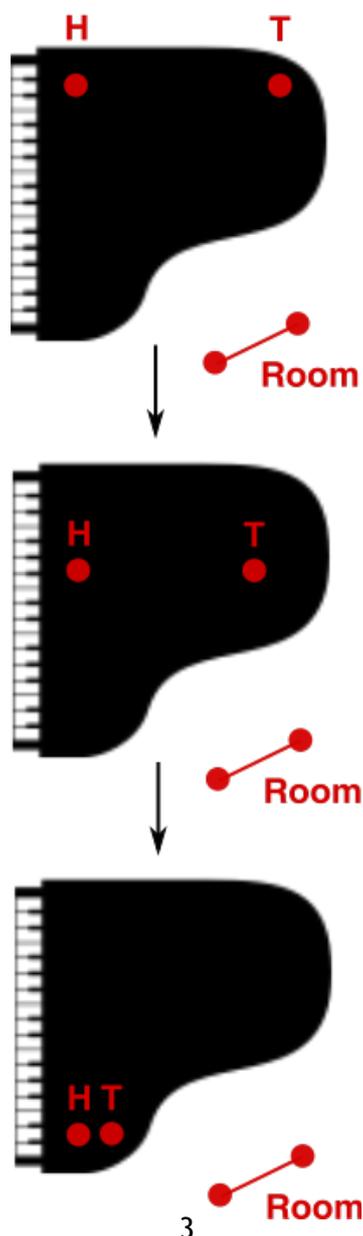
Interface and controls

The interface is made up of 4 areas :
 - A mixing console
 - Some presets
 - The *X-Fade* processor
 - A control panel

Mixing console

The mixing console is made up of 3 channels, one for each microphone position (*Hammer*, *Tail* et *Room*). Each channel includes the usual controls :

A LED to upload or reload the channel's samples to free RAM. A gain fader A panoramic knob Solo and Mute switches	
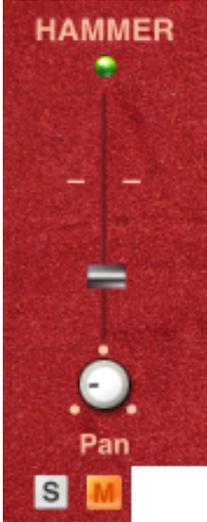
Changing the phase between the different microphone positions opens the possibility to radically change the sound and can be particularly useful between the *Hammer* and *Tail*. For this purpose, in addition to the usual controls, a micro-delay has been added to each channel.

A φ switch to enable/disable the micro-phase delay A knob to move the start of the sounds from -6ms to + 6ms if the φ of the channel is enabled A menu offering the choice of the output for the channel if you use *Kontakt* in multichannel mode	
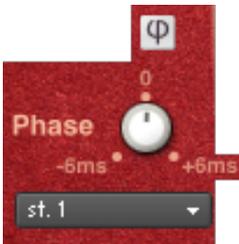
Presets

In addition to resetting a control area or the whole *Very Close Piano*, a series of presets can be used as a basis for a classic or more experimental sound.

The *X-Fade* processor

Once enabled, the X-Fade processor sets the microphone positions that will play during the attack and during the tail of each note. Thus it is thus possible, for instance, to play the *Hammer* position on the attack to get a very percussive sound, then to move to the *Room* to get a softer and wider sound on the tail of the note, and why not play the *Tail* position from beginning to end note, slightly sub-mixed to recover some grain and binder.

An enable/disable switch for the *X-Fade* processor	
A LED matrix to select the channels played on the attack (*Atk.*) and the channels played on the tail of each note (*Tl.*)	
A knob to define the beginning of the transition between the channels played on the attack and the channels played on the tail	
A knob to define the length of this transition	

Control panel

Hammer Autopan and *Tail Autopan* work the same way and apply to their respective channels. When enabled (with the *In* switch), they allow a panoramic from left to right following the evolution of the keyboard from low to high. The *Invert* switch can be used to reverse the *Auto-pan* direction from right to left. It is possible to choose the auto-pan intensity between *Soft*, *Med*, and *Hard*	
The *Neighbour RR* LED allows to enable/disable a round-robin made from the neighboring notes	
The *ADSR* envelope systematically covers all the channels	
The *VCA* fader provides a simultaneous control of the volume of the 3 channels	

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Some tips for use

(1) To get some width with the proximity microphones, you can place them on opposite panoramic and adjust the phase.

(2) To get an even more powerful attack with the ADSR envelope, you can set attack time to the minimum, slightly lower the sustain level and adjust the decay time to set the length of your attack.

(3) If you experience a hollow or bump feel during the transition of a note using the *X-Fade* processor, you can attenuate it by changing the phase of a channel concerned by the transition.

(4) When you use the *X-Fade* processor, putting attack channels and tail channels at opposite panoramic can be a very good effect in some musical contexts.

(5) If you are making a transition between two channels using the *X-Fade* processor, add the third channel on the whole note under-modulating can be a good binder.

(6) For multi-channel mixing, it may be useful to have proximity microphones in the front and surround microphones in the rear.

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