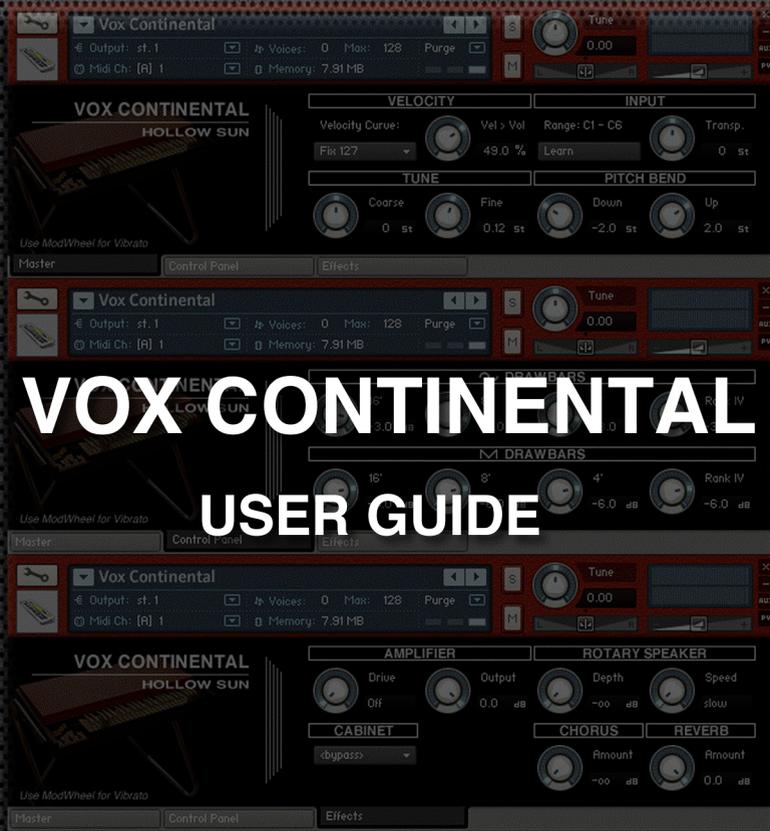


Hollow Sun

Hand Crafted Sample Libraries



VOX CONTINENTAL USER GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for purchasing the Hollow Sun Vox Continental. It features samples from one of the most desirable keyboards of the 60s and 70s and which is still popular today .

ABOUT THE CONTINENTAL

The Vox Continental is probably the most famous of the 'new breed' of transistor organs that emerged in the early '60s.



Previously, organs were built around tone-wheel technology. This undoubtedly created a fantastic (classic) organ sound but made the instruments heavy and unwieldy (and expensive). With the advent of transistors, it was possible to create lightweight, portable organs.... in theory. In practice, the majority sounded thin and weak by comparison. However, that sound in itself appealed to the new 'surf' and 'beatnik' music which was evolving at the time. The portability also appealed to groups. The Vox Continental was unusual in that it actually sounded quite good.... not cheap and cheesy like so many of its rivals.

These organs used 'divide down' technology (like the later string synths) where there is a master top octave oscillator and all subsequent octaves are achieved simply by dividing the frequency in half and then half again and so on. It allowed these transistor organs to be manufactured very cost effectively.

Although possibly better known for their amplifiers (the legendary AC30, for example), Vox actually started life as a manufacturer of 'traditional' home and church organs. With the emerging new micro' technology of transistors, they saw the possibility to use this technology in their products.

The Vox Continental was the first of these (1962) and had drawbars to create sounds. The first three white ones allowed you to adjust the levels of the 16', 8' and 4' registers whilst the two maroon drawbars offered a sine wave and a reedy sawtooth wave. The fourth white drawbar was labelled 'IV' (known as the 'Rank IV' - dunno why!) and introduced higher harmonics. Below these were the mains switch and a switch to activate a simple vibrato effect.



Of course, one distinctive feature of the Continental was the inverse keyboard. This styling served no purpose other than to make the thing look more distinctive. Another distinctive feature of the instrument was its striking, chrome 'Z-frame' legs - this thing just looked cool compared with the stuffy wooden organ cabinets of the time!

Vox went on to make a dual manual Continental and other variations on the theme. Later on, they produced the Jaguar but many claim that this is a poor substitute for a Continental.

The Vox Continental's most famous user was probably Ray Manzarek of the Doors but prior to this, it was also used by UK organist Alan Price (The Animals), the Dave Clarke Five, the Tornados and countless others.

Although lacking the body and depth of a 'proper' tonewheel organ, the Continental has a strong and distinctive sound nonetheless and still has many devotees today.

The Kontakt version has been carefully scripted to recreate the front panel of the original as closely as possible but with some obvious advantages too and comes with amp simulation, rotary speakers as well as more modern effects such as chorus and reverb.

This short manual will give you a guide to operation.

PAGE TABS

At the bottom of each synth are three tabs which select different operating areas. Click on the tabs as required.



MASTER PAGE



Here, you can set parameters related to velocity, keyboard range and tuning.

VELOCITY

VELOCITY CURVE Select from a variety of different velocity curves here. By default, velocity is set to FIXED to emulate the real thing.

VEL > VOL Set velocity sensitivity to taste with this control.

INPUT

RANGE Set the keyboard range for the selected instrument. Click LEARN and play a low and then a high note on your MIDI controller to set the range.

TRANPOSE You can transpose the instrument with this control.

TUNING

COARSE Tune the instrument in semitone steps.

FINE Fine tune the instrument in cents.

PITCHBEND

DOWN Set the interval (in semitones) for downwards pitch bend.

UP Set the interval (in semitones) for upwards pitch bend.

CONTROL PANEL PAGE



This is the meat and potatoes of all the Conti's operation, where you can set the virtual drawbars much like on the real thing. There are two sets of drawbars. One sets the levels for the sine wave drawbars and the other sets the levels for the 'sawtooth' drawbars (*).

The sine wave drawbars give a more 'churchy' sound while the sawtooth (which was depicted on the actual instrument with an 'M' symbol) allows you to create the classic 'beatnik' surf's up organ sound. This is actually an improvement on the real thing in that it only offered one set of drawbars with master sine and 'M' drawbars – this allows you to mix the sine and 'M' drawbars freely for a wider range of sounds.

There are no rules – just set the controls, listening as the various octaves are introduced (or removed) until you arrive at a combination you like ... just like the real thing. The 'Rank IV' drawbars introduce the familiar transistor organ sound. If you create something you like, you can save it of course but part of the fun is making a sound unique to any given situation.

A virtual vibrato switch isn't provided – you should use your keyboard's mod wheel ... which has the benefit of being a variable control rather than just an on/off switch.

(*) *It's not actually a sawtooth but a square wave. Just thought I'd mention it!*

EFFECTS PAGE

If the CONTROL PANEL is the meat and potatoes for the Vox Conti, the EFFECTS page is the dessert trolley!



The effects page adds amp and cabinet simulation, a rotary speaker effect plus chorus and reverb. The controls are as follows:

AMPLIFIER

DRIVE

Sets the amount of distortion. It is fully variable and gradually introduces more distortion as the control is turned clockwise. Fully counter-clockwise, the distortion is switched off completely.

OUTPUT

Sets the overall output level. Because the DRIVE control adds gain and hence increases level, use this control to back the output level off a little to avoid digital distortion (which isn't nice!).

CABINET

Drop down menu

Select a cabinet type here. Eleven types are available that emulate several classic cabinets, many pertinent to the time. The Vox Continental can really come to life with these as it doesn't sound so 'clean' and more like some of the classic Conti tones we hear on records of old.

ROTARY SPEAKER

DEPTH

Sets the depth (and stereo width) of the rotary speaker effect. Although rotary speaker cabs are usually associated with Hammond tonewheel organs, people put their Continentals through them and it does add a lot to the sound.

SPEED

Sets the speed, fast or slow. The rotary effect speeds up and slows down as on the real thing.

DAMAGE

AMOUNT

This is a curious control!

If a Vox Conti got a bit beaten up being thrown in and out of vans, etc., when gigging or through electrical failure, whatever, the top octave of the divide down oscillator could 'bleed' into the signal with every semitone 'singing' in the background. It was pretty horrible but is simulated here for a bit of fun as a special effect. Simply turn the control clockwise to introduce more of the 'damage'!

CHORUS

AMOUNT

Sets the amount of chorus applied. Although the chorus effect would not be invented for 15 years or so after the introduction of the Continental, it's a good sound that suits the sound well

REVERB

AMOUNT

Sets the amount of reverb applied.

With all these effects in combination (and with all the drawbar permutations available), this modest Vox Conti library can create a massive range of tones, more than the original in fact!

With everything off, you get the clean sound of the Vox Conti, the equivalent of a line out jack plugged into a good hi-fi amp. However, adding distortion, a suitable cabinet and rotary speaker, you can really dirty the thing up such that it sounds more like a Hammond than the transistor sound we associate with the Conti. And you can add variable amounts of 'damage' for a bit of fun!

As always, if you come up with a combination of effects types that you like, you can save the sound for later recall but as always, the fun is creating a sound for any given musical situation which is easily achieved and the panels here make the experience as close to owning the real thing as possible.

My thanks to Barry at Forgotten Keys (<http://www.forgottenkeys.co.uk>) for his help with some scripting for the Effects page. Do visit his site for some serious and inexpensive vintage action!

The small print...

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USING THIS WITH THE FREE KONTAKT PLAYER

You CAN use this collection with the free Kontakt Player and it will play and work perfectly but with the following restrictions:

- There is a time limit. This varies according to the version of the Player you have.
- You can edit the sounds to your requirements exactly as though you have a full working copy of Kontakt but you cannot save any edits or tweaks you make.
- When the Player times out, you can restart it immediately and continue (although you will, of course, have to reload everything).

To enjoy Hollow Sun's Vox Continental to its full, it is recommended you buy a full version of Kontakt. It is compatible with Kontakt 3.5 and higher.