Hollow Sun
Hand Crafted Sample Libraries

VP330 VOCODER PLUS

USER GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for purchasing the Hollow Sun Vintage VP330 Vocoder Plus library. It features samples from one of the most desirable instruments of the late 70s and 80 and recreates its lush vocal textures and swirling string sound.

ABOUT THE VP330 VOCODER PLUS

Roland brought out their Vocoder Plus keyboard in 1979. It was a variation on their earlier RS505 'Paraphonic' synth which was essentially a string synth with some filters for quasi polysynth sounds and big layers. The VP330 was much the same but featured a vocoder instead of the synth filters and thus was created a unique keyboard.

Apart from the vocoder, however, the VP330 had a totally unique 'Human Voice' register.

As is well known, string synths use what are known as 'divide down oscillators'. That is, they have top octave and all subsequent lower octaves are simply divisions of the top oscillator… that's not important here but they allow for cheap polyphony. These divide down oscillators produce a simple sawtooth-like wave which is passed through a simple envelope shaper and onto a complex chorus unit to provide a lush, rich, swirly string ensemble sound.

Well, some bright spark at Roland had the idea to pass also this waveform through some carefully set formant filters to create a very passable vocal 'aaah' sound and with the chorus unit switched in, the VP330 produced a very pleasing choir sound. Two registers were available – an 8' male and a 4' female choir sound which could be layered for a more versatile range of vocal textures. Furthermore, these vocal/choir sounds could be mixed with the onboard string sound for a truly gorgeous synthetic orchestral sound. At times, with everything on full tilt and vibrato added (via the modwheel) it can sound almost 'theatre organ-ish).

Two models were made – a MkI and MkII. Both identical, they only differed in the switches they used – the MkI used chunky rocker switches whereas the MkII used smaller, self-illuminated switches much like those found on the company's Jupiter 8.

Famous users of the VP330 include Tony Banks of Genesis (who used it to replace the choir sound from his Mellotron when playing live … but I gather it also saw some studio action), Japanese jazz-rock band 'Casiopea', Japanese synthmeister Isao Tomita (although his album credits for the instrument often listed it as the 'Vocoder Pulse'!!), Phil Collins (for the Vocoder), Vangelis, Tangerine Dream and many others.

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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 releated to velocity, keyboard range and tuning.

VELOCITY

VELOCITY CURVE   Select from a variety of different velocity curves.

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

INPUT

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

TRANSPOSE   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 the VP330's operation, where you can layer the various vocal and string sounds as well as set the overall tone and envelope shape. In many ways, this control panel offers the advantage over the original in that the the various 'layers' can be mixed in variable amounts whereas the original intruments only allowed them to be ON or OFF. The controls are:

ENSEMBLE HUMAN VOICE
This provides the VP330's 'Human Voice' sound through the built-in 'ensemble' (i.e. chorus) effect for a rich, wide stereo chorale sound.

MALE 8'   Sets the level of lower male ensemble voice.

FEMALE 4'   Sets the level of the higher female ensemble voice.

STRINGS
STRINGS   Set the level of the strings here

FILTER
TONE   You can modify the basic tone of all layers here. Fully clockwise, the filter is disabled.

SOLO HUMAN VOICE
This is the sound of the VP330's 'Human Voice' without the ensemble effect.

> **NOTE:** *Although the Vocoder Plus is known for its ensemble choral sounds, I thought it might be useful to also offer the 'raw' vocal waveforms – they have their uses. One application is to reinforce the ensemble choral sounds, something not possible on the original.*

MALE 8'   Set the level of the lower male voice here.

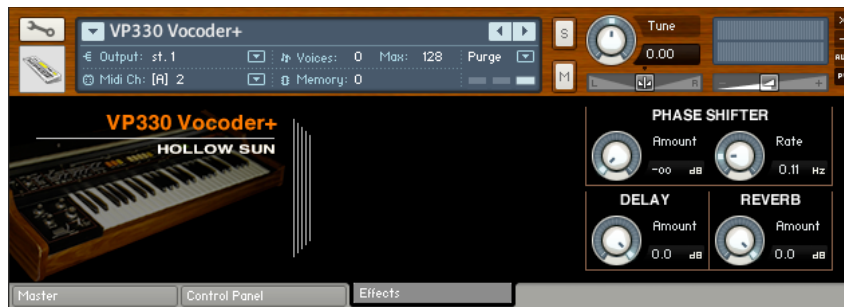FEMALE 4'   Set the level of the higher female voice here.

ENVELOPE

ATTACK   Set the attack time for all layers here.

RELEASE   Set the release time for all layers here.

EFFECTS PAGE

If the CONTROL PANEL is the meat and potatoes for each of the synths, the EFFECTS page is the dessert trolley!

The controls are as follows:

PHASE SHIFTER

AMOUNT   Set the amount of phase shifting effect here. It is fully variable and gradually introduces more effect as the control is turned clockwise.

RATE   Sets the speed of the phase shifting effects.

The phase shifting effect is stereo. It uses an LFO where one channel is inverted so while one phase shift is rising in one channel, the effects is descending in the other. This gives a very 'swirly' sound befitting the instrument.

DELAY

AMOUNT   Sets the amount of delay. The delay times, etc., are set to give a good stereo, ambient 'fattening' of the basic sound.

REVERB

AMOUNT   Sets the amount of reverb applied. This uses the simple reverb effect (to keep CPU usage to a minimum) and is set to a hall ambience appropriate for the lush vocal and string sounds and big layered textures.

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THANK YOU.

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 VP330 Vocoder Plus to its full, it is recommended you buy a full version of it.