Quantum Leap Pianos – Overview

By Peter Lawrence Alexander / May 6, 2009

Quantum Leap Pianos – Save $35,000 on a grand piano.

I've held off on making any comments about the Quantum Leap Pianos for two reasons: 35 disks and the fear I didn't have a powerful enough system (Mac Dual G5 2.7Ghz with 4GB of RAM).

On the first reason, you do get four pianos and there are 35 disks to install, but you only have to install one piano at a time. Otherwise, as has been reported across the web, you're looking at a 16-hour plus installation time, or an average of four hours per piano installation.

On the second reason, I *do* have a powerful enough system, however, I slightly fudge it by running the lite version for most cases. But since my piano touch is light to begin with, running with the full version worked out OK inside Logic (vs. in standalone mode).

The size of this library is 135GB (yipes!). On the G5, there are only two hard drives. With all the EastWest libraries I have to review, I simply ran out of space. I corrected that with a 1 terabyte Western Digital MyBook drive pre-formatted for the Mac that I ordered from CDW. The first drive was defective. So was the eSATA cable I ordered to connect the MyBook to a special eSATA interface I installed in the Mac enabling me to connect two more external eSATA drives on my system.

When the replacement drive arrived, CDW had forgotten to include a replacement eSATA cable. Fortunately, MyBook has Firewire so that's how I connected it to the Mac.

I've had the MyBook running for several months and installed several other test libraries. Good news: no problems. And even though it's connected to the Mac via Firewire, it's still mighty fast to use.

I installed one of the four pianos, a Bechstein 280. The other three pianos include the Bosendorfer 290, the Steinway D and a Yamaha D7. After I get the next three installed I'll report back how the total installation went. Overall, one critique for EastWest is that the graphic user interface could be clearer for the installation since part of the data goes to the C Drive while the samples go to the MyBook. This is one

place where I felt that Spectrasonic's *Omnisphere* manual earned an A+ by describing how to install on an external drive.

Another reason I stopped with one installation is that one of the DVDs needed for the next piano was corrupted. However, EastWest replaced the bad disk in a business day.

My keyboard for testing is an older Yamaha S90.

My opinion so far after the angst of installation – *wow*.

This brings me to the next reason I haven't finished installing the other three pianos – I'm having *way* too much fun on the Bechstein.

Quantum Leap Pianos is a beautiful sounding piano with a touch that on my keyboard literally enables your fingers to dance across the keys. I've never said that about any pianos before now. But I compared the QL Pianos Bechstein for playability with several other sampled pianos. Only Hans Adamson's *Virtual Piano* came the closest to the Quantum Leap for playability and sound.

When you start playing the Bechstein, the reverb, labeled *Ambience*, is on. For me, a real test is how well the instrument sounds when the reverb (EW Hall LR) is off. Well, it still sounds just as beautiful, as if you're playing a "regular" piano in a room.

For each piano there are three different mic positions: close, player and room. You can also change the lid position. Here I do have a critique which is the lack of calibration on the faders. However, I don't see this as a deal killer because you're mixing by ear anyway, but if you're keeping notes on your session (which I do), it's much easier to write down a numeric position.

Overall, if you're looking for a really stunning piano sound – consider this. List price is $499. For a lighter version, there's a Gold version for $349 list.

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