

EastWest Quantum Leap Spaces: A Professional Orchestration Review

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / March 14, 2011

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The best way I can describe East West's new Quantum Leap *Spaces* convolution reverb is with the equation $J2W^2$, which means *joy to work with*.

I came to this conclusion by doing a simple test which you can do too, provided you have an iLok key. Go to [Quantum Leap Spaces](#) at the EW web site, click Buy Now, then select the 10 day Trial Version, and download a 10-day full working version.

After QL *Spaces* is installed, in your sequencer, set up an arco (legato) bowing for Violins 1 for each string library you have. For *Symphobia*, pick an arco bowing. Insert QL *Spaces* in a master bus so you can quickly compare the same QL *Spaces* selection with each string library.

In my setup, I selected:

- Kontakt/VSL Violin Ensembles
- L.A. Scoring Strings 16 Vlns 1 Leg_L
- Vienna Instruments Appassionata Strings Violins Perf-Leg
- Omnisphere's Adagio Transparent Strings Warm

As you test each library with the numerous IRs within Quantum Leap *Spaces*, you'll quickly discover that *Spaces* sounds great and that everything you use it with sounds better. That said, the further discovery is finding that certain libraries and certain *Spaces* fit like hand-in-glove. It's like they were made for each other. It's hard to describe, but you know it when you hear it.

Testing each library gives you a good sense of its inherent color. For example, with Appassionata Strings, the natural sound (un-effected) was a little darker to me. To brighten it up, I'd use an impulse labeled FR (front reflections – see more definitions below). If I wanted to make it richer, then using an RR (rear reflection) really enhanced the depth.

With this approach you are, in effect, sound designing, but with the heavy lifting done for you by Quantum Leap *Spaces* because of both quality IRs and how it's organized.

One thing I observed with any library recorded dead center, including the Kontakt VSL String Ensemble, my feeling is that you really need the Vienna Ensemble's Power Pan feature to take full advantage of QL *Spaces* orchestra instrument specific IRs as found in Folder 3 (see below) Concert Halls: SoCal Orchestral Hall.

With Omnisphere, *Adagio Transparent Strings Warm* just took on a whole new dimension when used with QL *Spaces*.

When LASS 16 Violins 1 Legato_L is placed in Northwest Hall, the sound is really stunning as some of the edginess is toned down.

And speaking of Northwest Hall, for those who've wanted IRs of where QLSO was recorded, this is it.

As a writer, beyond the sound, what I *really* appreciate about Quantum Leap *Spaces* is that it's a quick learn because of its thoughtful design and implementation. In about 47 seconds of training (which you're about to get), you're working with understanding and comprehension, which, to say the least, is a breath of fresh air.

So let's see what makes Quantum Leap *Spaces* so easy and effective to use.

The QL Spaces GUI

Below is the main screen. In this 1.0 version, you only have four virtual knobs to "turn". Of the four, the one you may want to just leave alone is Pre-Delay because according to Nick Phoenix's instructional videos, these have been set meticulously.



In the "LCD" readout, you'll see this description:

Northwest Hall TS RR 2.6s

Northwest Hall is the name of the hall where the impulse was recorded.

TS stands for True Stereo. Further in the description you'll read that it's four-channel mixed to two-channel.

RR means rear reflections and **2.6s** means 2.6 seconds, the reverb time in seconds.

So here are the keys to using Quantum Leap *Spaces*.

There are three possible mic positions available:

1. **RR** – Rear Reflections
2. **FR** – Front Reflections
3. **C** – Center

My experience with the above libraries is that the richer sound is RR while the brighter sound is FR.

There are two types of stereo impulses.

True Stereo, **TS**, is 4-channel mixed to two while Stereo, **ST**, is two-channel, mono -> stereo.

Of the two, my experience is that TS is deep and rich.

The Folders

In the navigation, you'll see folders labeled **S-S** and **M-S**. M-S means mono -> stereo. S-S means True Stereo.



Well, the good news is that this is as complicated as it gets!

Example of Simplicity: Instrument Specific Tour

Folder 1, Instrument Specific Tour, is a perfect example of what makes *QL Spaces* so easy to use. Here you'll find 26 folders each labeled for a specific instrument. Inside each folder, are presets from a variety of halls selected just for that instrument. See the example below for *Epic Film Final Verb*.



For those doing a lot of orchestral work, I point you to this folder, *So. Cal. Orchestral Hall* within Folder 3. Here you find stereo impulse responses for each orchestral instrument recorded where the musician sits. In fact, this entire *So. Cal. Orchestral Hall* folder is all about orchestral placement. The amount of time it will save you is pretty extraordinary.



Re: Hall Names

In looking at the various hall names, my advice is to learn from Ernest Cholak's interview explaining convolution reverb (see Interview Articles section), and not over identify a particular impulse or hall with a specific instrument. For example, Acme Warehouse may be just what your strings need. But if your entire focus is on the recorded source name only, you'll miss out on some great options. So if you're looking for the Spaces with strings in the name, by all means start with those suggestions first, but then keep going.

My Only Critique

Across the boards, I only had one critique which is that the code information I organized for you here isn't available as a one page PDF. On the various forums, some have wished for more virtual knobs, but I for one was glad there was only the four on the front panel! That may seem to be an archaic retro view, but there's something refreshing about the simplicity and ease of use of Quantum Leap *Spaces*.

The heavy lifting has already been done. All that's required for you is to audition, pick and use.

How cool is that!

Simplicity!

Regarding price, it couldn't get any sweeter: MSRP US \$299.00.

NOTE ON FINAL CUT PRO

For those using FCP 7.0, Quantum Leap Spaces loads right up into Soundtrack Pro 3. And yes, it is very easy to use.

CONCLUSION

There aren't too many products I get so excited about that I want to say, "thank you," to the developer. But this time it's called for. Thank you Nick Phoenix for making my music, and consequently me, sound better. If you download the trial version and test for yourself, I'm sure you'll feel the same way, too.

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