

EastWest Voices of Passion – Part 2

By Peter Lawrence Alexander / August 10, 2008



With EastWest's [Voices of Passion Library](#), you get vocalizations, special effects and phrases from America, Bulgaria, India, Syria, and Wales. Vocal tone is that of alto extended down to E below C and up to E to G above High C. This range, when not working with pre-recorded phrases, enables you to write for two to four voices in linear or vertical harmony. Over the extended range, I found three-voice writing most effective. However, with careful editing, you can also do jazz voicings. While the immediate thought may be to use *Voices of Passion* for film, games, et al, don't limit yourself to that thinking as you can do all kinds of album production with VOP. For example, using Wales Ah DXF, I was able to pull off harmonizing the melody by voicing down, along with another vocal harmony technique (found in Gospel and Country) of harmonizing above the melody.

With careful phrasing, jazz vocals can also be done.

Those remembering the late Karen Carpenter will recall how she multi-tracked herself to create dense harmony. You can replicate that with VOP.

So, to reassert from last week's review, you're not getting a booming church choir sound with VOP. Instead, you're getting all kinds of opportunities to do intimate vocal writing, in a variety of styles, separate from the specialized phrases found in the Bulgaria, India, and Syria collections, that can create intimate vocal arrangements previously unavailable.

With careful editing and phrasing, listeners will be hard pressed to not think they're not hearing live vocals. That's how good *Voices of Passion* is.

Five Countries

VOP contains female vocalizations from five countries, or if you prefer, cultures. These are:

- America
- Bulgaria
- India
- Syria
- Wales

Organization

For all cultures, there are two consistent sound sets: Master and Elements. With Master, you have keyswitches. Keyswitches sometimes control the key the phrase is recorded in (you have all chromatic keys available), while other times you're selecting specific phrases Elements, like the name implies, are specific sounds and phrases that you load individually in the Player section under Articulations.

Master and Elements are good places to start to learn what sounds you have available.

Here's the outline for each culture's sounds

America

- America Elements
- America Master
- America Oo Leg Port
- America Oo Legato
- America Oo Portamento

Bulgaria

- Breath Deeper
- Breath
- Bulgaria Elements
- Bulgaria Master

India

- India Elements
- India Master

Syria

- Syria Elements
- Syria Master

Wales

- Wales Ah DXF
- Wales Leg Port ah
- Wales Leg Port Oh
- Wales Legato Oh
- Wales Legato Ah
- Wales Oh DXF
- Wales Portamento Oh
- Wales Portamento Ah
- Wales Vowels Elements
- Wales Vowels Master
- Wales Words Elements
- Wales Words Master

Bach and VOP

To test VOP musically, using Logic 8.01, I keyed the Soprano, Alto and Tenor parts of Bach #238, Mach's mit mir, Gott, nach Deiner Gut written by J.H. Schein in 1628 and reharmonized by Bach about a hundred years later.

I wanted to find out:

- a. could it do eighth notes?
- b. if yes, at what tempo could I do eighth notes convincingly?
- c. how did it sound and was it convincing?

Why I chose a Bach Chorale. I didn't choose a Bach chorale because I'm a classical egghead. Rather, Bach chorales represent a standard that amateur/volunteer choirs are capable of performing. The Bach chorales have specific rhythmic figures that comparably test out what a vocal library can do. So this is why I go to a Bach chorale first to test out a vocal library.

Can VOP do eighth note lines?

Yes, it can. I tested it with Wales Legato Ah.

At what tempo can VOP do eighth note lines?

Using Wales Legato Ah, I determined that the maximum tempo for clarity of line was 80 BPM. Any faster than that and it smears together.

How did it sound and was it convincing?

It was a very “hip” and intimate compared to a choir which would have had a more majestic sound. Adding a touch of “swing” gave it a nice flowing lilt. The feel of the chorale was very peaceful. Since the Bach chorales have no tempo indications, we don’t know the tempo Bach would have performed it. My thought is that 80 BPM is the upper tempo limit and that somewhere between 60 and 75 BPM is where the tempo should fall comfortably with VOP.

Suggestions

This is an observation, not a criticism. In seeing the potential of *Voices of Passion*, if the existing recordings allow, it would be great to see an update in the future with a selected set of Legato syllables that are a little shorter to enable faster tempos and more florid lines (to use a counterpoint term).

System Settings

I had previously had my latency in Logic set at 512. But to perform Bach #238 effectively (within Logic. I didn’t test it in standalone.), I needed to reset the latency for 1024. *Voices of Passion* is a wonderful program that gives you new range to expand your writing, and hence, your income earning opportunities.

SPECIAL NOTE:

I bring to your attention a special work of passion by a lady named Margaret Greentree:
www.jsbchorales.net.

About herself, Ms. Greentree writes on her site: *I am not a trained musician, but I have taken some piano, voice and music theory at Shoreline Community College in Seattle many years ago. I have also had some tutoring in counterpoint. I got hooked on Bach when I heard Glenn Gould play the two and three part inventions and the little preludes and fugues. I got interested in the chorales when I began listening to the cantatas and while studying them in harmony classes.*

On the site, you can find the 371 Bach Chorales where you can find a PDF of nearly every chorale (but without the German lyrics) a QuickTime file to hear it, and a MIDI file to download and import into your sequencer. And that’s just the starting point. This site is a labor of passion. And because of that, I felt it appropriate to bring it to your attention while reviewing *Voices of Passion*. Thank you, Margaret, for a great gift.

This article was previously published at SonicControl.tv