

Miroslav Vitous String Ensembles 1

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / April 20, 2010

Miroslav Vitous' new String Ensembles aren't quite a composer's dream, but they could be.

Miroslav Vitous' new *String Ensembles: Composer's Dream* doesn't yet live up to the name, but it could with some effort.

BACKGROUND

As a musician, Miroslav Vitous is best known for his founding of the jazz group, Weather Report. For three years, Mr. Vitous was jazz department head at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. In music production, he's best known for his orchestral sample library originally priced at \$3500 on five (5) CDs. A while back, IK Multimedia licensed this library and re-released it as the Miroslav Philharmonik.

Reduced in price, the original library is available through [ILIO Entertainments](#) in several formats, most of which have been discontinued, but several of which can be imported into Kontakt.

Mr. Vitous' initial entry into orchestral sampling paved the way for other developers particularly with the quality of sound.

Consequently, the announcement that Mr. Vitous was releasing a new string ensemble library created a great deal of excitement in the professional community. Unfortunately, weak demos, which were withdrawn, and other issues have kept the new library from achieving a healthy buzz.

For the record, the critiques I'm making I made a week ago and were forwarded to Mr. Vitous.

1. PRICE

Pricing at US\$1399 for a single DVD with 6.5GB of material for the Miroslav Vitous String Ensemble is not competitive within the current marketplace. Currently, you can get the single disk from [Big Fish Audio](#) for \$999.99 intro.

2. NO LOOPED STRINGS

In the first library, Mr. Vitous had both looped and unlooped strings in the palette. Not so this time with the Long programs. I tested several violin programs for lengths by recording a 30-second 4-part string pad. At 70BPM, Unlooped Longs are about a half note in length. Consequently, you have to retrigger, edit, etc.

Click the link above to hear the two new demos posted at Big Fish. Without looped Longs, or genuinely long Longs (!), a composer is restricted to using this library for medium to brisk tempos, or to cherry-pick the staccatos, pizzicatos, and other short bowings.

I can't begin to tell you how disappointed I am to write this. The library has a **great** sound. A lot of money went into producing it. A lot of money has gone into distributing it. To ship without looped Longs is just unimaginable to me in this current marketplace.

Unfortunately, the price and the unlooped Longs are the two deal killers for this library today.

3. DOCUMENTATION

Starting on page 16 of the manual is the Content listing all the articulations.

Going through the articulation list shows the high caliber of thinking that's gone into this library. Unfortunately, Mr. Vitous, or whoever wrote the manual, didn't bother to clue us in.

To put this into a perspective, Mr. Vitous recorded a large string ensemble of:

24 Violins
14 Violas
12 Cellos
9 Basses

He then recorded a chamber ensemble (his term) consisting of:

14 Violins
8 Violas
5 Cellos
4 Basses

Stating the obvious, no Violins 2. Now, consider some of these terms which are undefined:

Harmony Movements Fast
Harmony Movements Slow
Harmony Movements Lead
Harmony Movements Second Voice
Harmony Movements 2nd Voice Fast
Harmony Movements Slow Dvorak (?)
Harmony Mel. Leads
Det. Melody Lead Kontrapoint
Lead Parsifal Full

Clearly, Mr. Vitous has come up with a very inventive approach – but he doesn't explain it either verbally or with demos. For example, does Harmony Movements Lead and 2nd Voice mean that the programs have been so edited that Lead is like Violins 1 and 2nd Voice like Violins 2?

Clarity is easily achievable with a new PDF that goes through and explains the concepts and gives suggested approaches.

3. BUILT-IN CRESCENDOS

This is a feature that drove us nuts with the first MV library. I've played through enough to know that a lot of programs don't have it, but it should be marked which ones do. Again, downloadable PDF.

CONCLUSION

Make no mistake, this library does sound good. All honor and kudos for that! But as I see it, there are three deal killers that can be corrected within a few weeks to turn this library into a sales winner.

1. Loop the Longs. Best Service, Big Fish, and some of the other distributors all have download capabilities. No further disk burning required. But this is an absolute. I don't know any working professional, given the tighter deadline structures we're under today, who has the time to retrigger/edit, etc.

2. Price – \$1399 list for one (1) DVD vs. spending \$100 more and doing the pre-order special for Hollywood Strings Diamond? Or spending \$300 less and getting LASS? Value to justify this price has yet to be established. The price needs to be lowered – drastically – to make it competitive and a justifiable business purchase.

3. The Documentation – Discovery should be aural. Features should be explained so that you know how to listen and what to listen for when testing the samples. Two-three days of work and you've got a new downloadable document that explains the thinking behind the design.

Deal with these three issues and watch the sales take off.

A lot of music retailers would really like to see that happen.

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