

Vienna Suite PowerPan, Part 1: String Placement

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / March 8, 2011

The Vienna Suite's secret star is the Power Pan.



As mentioned in *Prelude to a Review*, the [Vienna Suite](#) comes with:

- Convolution Reverb
- Equalizer
- Master Equalizer
- Limiter
- Compressor
- Multiband Limiter
- Power Pan
- Exciter
- 120 band analog modeled spectrum analyzer.

Having spent some time with this package over the past week, my view is that the secret star of the Vienna Suite *is* the Power Pan.

1. If you're doing orchestral, and you're trying to blend multiple libraries that have been recorded in different halls, Power Pan enables you to blend the libraries very quickly.

2. If you're doing something different, like creating a precise set of drums, Power Pan gives you the precision to make it just right. And it's not that difficult to learn.
3. If you're working with ambient textures as in Synergy, Evolve or Omnisphere, Power Pan is the tool to use to layer and place textures in the stereo field.
4. When used in combination with the [FORTI/SERTI](#) impulses from Numerical Sound (represented by Vienna), you can move a sound left and right across the stereo field, and with the TILT filters used with FORTI/SERTI, then move the sound front or back.
5. Power Pan loads into Soundtrack Pro 3 and so has potential sound design use with Final Cut Pro. Look at the screen shot below and you'll see the Power Pan controls listed. So you have the option of working with the controls there or with the GUI.



All in all, a very powerful tool unique to the Vienna Suite.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Since you can download a demo version of Vienna Suite, I'm working my review so that you download and try it for yourself. [Click here for the details from Vienna.](#)

SIMPLE CONTROLS

The controls on the Power Pan have, to me, rather “scientific” names that could make the less experienced feel inept when first reading about it.

Width – controls how wide the stereo field for a particular sound will be. You can set the width using either the left or right handles or by using the Width slider.

Center – Center could be retitled as “positioner” since with this slider, once the width is set, you then position it in the stereo field, left to right.

Pre-and Post Balance – The Pre- and Post Balance are used to shape the stereo field or the characteristics of the stereo field. This is done by adjusting the left and right channel’s volume at the plug-ins input and/or output.

Volume Faders (stereo) – raises and lowers the output signal of the virtual instrument. See picture below where the Logic level meter verifies the loudness of the audio signal going into the Power Pan.



Swap – can exchange the left and the right side of the stereo signal (good for making more use of pre-panned libraries, or for changing the perspective on instruments like piano, glockenspiel, marimba, and so on).

Pan Law – Determines the way the volume increase of the left and/or the right signal are handled when they are brought towards the center. This is a very obvious effect, which happens because the signal now comes from two loudspeakers instead of just one. 4.5 dB are a very common value on consoles, for example).

Phase – Very useful when combining (mostly) low-pitched instruments: If two of them are out-of-phase against each other, the volume of them will DE-crease (!) noticeably when they play together.

POWER PAN STRINGS TEMPLATE

I asked Ernest Cholakis of [Numerical Sound](#) to create a basic template for Violins (1 and 2), Violas, Cellos and Basses. When setting up a section, you can isolate each section or you can slightly overlap them. What's "correct" for you is determined by trial and success.

Violins 1 & 2



Violas



Cellos



Basses



APPLICATIONS

If you have Kontakt or Logic – both products come with a sampling of the Vienna library. Assign Violin Ensemble to track 1, Viola Ensemble to track 2, Cello Ensemble to track 3, and Bass Ensemble to track 4. If you've downloaded the Vienna Suite, using the controls I showed you here, recreate the stereo width and positioning.

Here are two very, very simple examples by Ernest Cholakis. The first uses the VSL Kontakt strings as they are, dead center, just playing a basic chord. The second is each part positioned using Power Pan.

[String Section no PPan Only5.mp3](#)

[String Section PPan Only5.mp3](#)

If you have LASS or any other string library – using the positions Ernest created, insert Power Pan into one track with LASS Violins 1 (or whatever Violins you have) and then insert Power Pan into a second track with the second library. Using the Center and Width sliders, position each set of violins until they sound like they're in the same space. Now adjust levels.

LASS Legato L

This is a screen capture of the LASS Legato L Violins 1 Full Ensemble sustaining. No stereo field shaping has been done.



Kontakt Violins Set to Match LASS

Here I've matched the Kontakt VSL Violin Ensemble to match the on stage position of LASS Violins 1. The next step is adjusting volume levels and shaping the sound via Power Pan.



CONCLUSION

I already have an EQ, an Exciter, etc., in Logic. But I don't have a Power Pan. I think the Power Pan helps put the Vienna Suite in the "must have" category. And not to delimit Vienna in any way, Power Pan is a killer tool whether you're working with the Vienna Convolution Reverb, Altiverb, or the new Quantum Leap Spaces.

So download the Vienna Suite and try these two experiments.

My Grade on The Power Pan: A+

My Grade on The Manual: D.

Thanks to Ernest Cholakis for taking the time to create the Vienna Suite Power Pan String Templates and for Dietz Tinhof at Vienna for his valuable input.

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