

The Two Mike's of Cinesamples Talk About VOXOS and More...

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / June 21, 2010

Mike Barry and Mike Patti of Cinesamples discuss their new vocal library, VOXOS.



Michael Barry (above left) and Michael Patti (above right), two classically trained pianists and film/game composers, joined the growing trend of composers expanding their talents into developing sample libraries. Their company, Cinesamples, has released such brilliant and critically acclaimed libraries as CineHarp, CineToms, Drums of War, CineSnare, Iron Guitars and their most recent release, Hollywoodwinds. The duo is hard at work on their next library, VOXOS, a detailed vocal library scheduled to release late summer. They're distributed by Big Fish Audio.

See www.cinesamples.com for products and demos.

PA: First off, how and when did you guys meet?

Cinesamples: “This one time at band camp”.... No seriously, that is where we first met. A fancy band camp called USDAN on Long Island. At the time we had both managed to get jobs accompanying musical theatre productions for children. This must have been around the summer of 2000, just after

getting out of high school. It was really quite a nice job for two college students and we pretty much enjoyed ourselves heartily (well, except for the musical theatre part). We did spend a great deal of time at lunch discussing the more interesting points of film music, mostly relating to obsessive John Williams observations.

PA: Briefly, what musical training do you both have, and if you studied privately with someone, who?

Cinesamples: For not knowing each other as children we share remarkably similar, musical, pasts. We were both trained as classical pianists from Julliard trained pianists who lived locally. We both grew up playing a healthy diet of Beethoven and Billy Joel (the local hero). In school Patti played cello (and continues to do so) and Barry played clarinet/bass clarinet. In college we both started paying attention to composition – continuing studies at the USC Film Scoring Program under Brian King.

PA: Both of you have excellent professional composing credits. And I know from your web sites, that Mike B. is a concert pianist. With all these professional writing and performing opportunities in front of you, why did you each decide to join the growing ranks of composers who produce sample libraries?

Cinesamples: It's actually quite a simple answer, we were looking for a way to do realistic harp glissandi on a project. After searching all around for a solution we couldn't find a really comprehensive answer so we decided to create *CineHarp*. After using it by ourselves for a while we decided to make it public. For most of our libraries this has been the same principle, record something that we need and can't buy or something we really want.

PA: You're the first sample development team to live on two coasts. With 3000 miles between you both, what's your collaboration procedure?

Cinesamples: Instant messenger! — well until Barry moves back out to Los Angeles. And lots of crazy phone calls.

PA: How did you meet Tim Starnes and what is his ongoing role with *Cinesamples*?

Cinesamples: Around the time we attending USC we both lived in this studio apartment building off of Hoover near downtown Los Angeles. Despite the occasional drive by shooting, it was a charming place and our good friend Patrick Kirst (now on the USC Faculty) lived there also. Patrick was good friends with Tim from their undergrad studies and we met that way.

Tim is our audio quality control expert. He also mixes and engineers most of the libraries.

PA: Are you recording most of your libraries in New York City?

Cinesamples: Yes and no. For our larger ensemble works we like to go to Seattle – [Bastyr](#) is such a lovely place to record and the gear and crew there is first rate.

[**Editor's Note:** Bastyr is a European-styled chapel built in 1958 by Ralph Lund. It's five stories high, 140 feet long, and has 36 stained glass windows. The original score soundtracks *About Schmidt* and *Die Hard With a Vengeance* were recorded there. Click the Bastyr link above for more details on how recording takes place there.]

For our percussion projects we like to record at [Manhattan Center Studios](#) since that's where we originally recorded *Drums of War* and it seems to make sense to keep that all in the same hall. Both studios are fantastic and contain an incredible mic cabinet which we love to take advantage of.

Recently we had the honor to do the final sessions at the legendary [Clinton Studios](#) in Manhattan. We were made aware of an opportunity to sample the actual piano used in Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* and Glenn Gould's *Goldberg Variations* before it disappeared. It was an amazing and emotional experience; we even managed to get the original microphones from the Davis sessions.

PA: Many of the independent composer/developers have opted to sell direct. Why did you make the decision to assign sales to a national distributor?

Cinesamples: We have established a mutually beneficial relationship with Big Fish Audio. Tom Meadow and his staff have twenty years of experience in the market and the work they do allows us time to make new libraries and pursue composing gigs. It really works out for both parties involved.

PA: For a while, you provided libraries in both Kontakt and EXS24 (Logic) formats. Now it appears starting with *Hollywoodwinds* that your focus is on Kontakt exclusively. What prompted that decision?

Cinesamples: Well, it basically comes down to the scripting and DFD power of Kontakt. A script heavy library (as most of ours now tend to be) simply cannot exist in any other form at this point. For example, the time syncing scales in *Hollywoodwinds* are impossible in EXS24 format. Also our customers prefer Kontakt to other samplers at a rate of 25 to 1 according to a poll we ran.

PA: Of all your libraries to date, *Hollywoodwinds* is the most unusual compared to the “standard” woodwld libraries currently on the market. How did you decide on the instrumentation?

Cinesamples: The instrumentation is rather standard, woodwinds in three's. [**Editor's Note:** Woodwinds in three's were first used by Wagner, continued with by Mahler. In film scoring, John Williams often uses this section size.] It's the usage of the section that is indeed different. Whenever practicable, we like to record sections together because it is much more musical for the players in that manner. If you, for example, have a “clubo” (clarinet, flute, oboe) unison they will naturally balance each other on the stage in a way that is impossible to get by recording them separately. This was the entire principle for HWW and for all the ensemble patches we do. So on HWW what you hear is what was we heard on the stage, we didn't “stack” at all in post. It's all natural.

We also knew that we needed to concentrate on capturing the piercing qualities of the piccolo and flutes in an ensemble patch – something which we were sorely missing from other libraries. They are the only part of the WW ensemble you hear during a fully orchestration action scene and needed the attention.

PA: In your own music, how do you personally use *Hollywoodwinds*?

Cinesamples: Mainly we use the three keyboard patches while we are writing, mostly the tutti patch. We also have all the different tunings for each scale loaded in our template now that Kontakt 4.1 is out and memory is less of an issue. Also we like to keep the atonal/tonal rips handy. The other patches we go to when needed.

PA: What made you decide to release this library commercially, rather than keeping it to yourselves as part of your own competitive sonic arsenal?

Cinesamples: We like to share! By the way we love the way it works in collaboration with CineHarp and the way it will work with our future string libraries (which exist only in our minds).

PA: *VOXOS*. With *Symphony of Voices*, *Symphonic Choirs*, the many vocal libraries from other companies, and the newly released *Vienna Choirs*, *Tonehammer Requiem* and the recently announced

Quantum Leap *Choir* – why *VOXOS*? With all these libraries in the field and coming, why add to it? What’s different about what you’re doing – especially since! All of your competitors are also composer/developers like yourselves?

Cinesamples: After VSL Choirs we were the first to announce a new choir library (before TH and EW) – we have just really taken our time in the programming phase. The reason is simple: to make a choir library this large and complex takes a great amount of time and we didn’t want to rush in with an unfinished product. For example, in our “phrase builder section” there are over 100 different recorded samples per pitch. Multiply that by the full range and you can see how large the library gets and how long it took to record. The key to the library is the concept and programming. All the programming was well thought out and tested before we recorded a note, the concept and programming is uniform.

We think the *VOXOS* GUI (graphic user interface) will distinguish itself as being the finest solution possible within the Kontakt Engine which is the preferred sampler of most composers. Our Legato section also features SATB and fully legato soloists in cinematic style. For example the Soprano is based upon a Morricone model, the alto after Lisa Gerrard and the boy soprano was ever done in a cinematic style. We decided to go cinematic rather than operatic.

PA: Let’s talk about syllables. In the YouTube video on your site you see a grid in the Kontakt player that contains 30 syllables. First, how did you decide on these syllables?

Cinesamples: Having 30 syllables (it may be up to 40 by release or in a future update) allows the composer massive flexibility in composing “lyrics” that sound different from one another. I mean let’s face it, in a typical trailer cue the human ear is not going to be distinguishing lyrics so easily. However, having 30 sounds based on five vowels allows you to make a very realistic sounding lyric, with only a few clicks and one pass on the keyboard. Having actually recorded all of these live on every pitch pays massive dividends on the short articulations. Artificial synthesis hits a brick wall on shorts, having 3-5 micro cuts on a sound lasting a quarter second is going to sound fake.

The 30 words in the matrix are all from Latin and all take place in the Mozart *Requiem* which was the foundation for the lyrics. We tried to find a way to balance the words so the user could really make some familiar words when needed “Dominus, Kyrie, Sanctus etc..” and also made up words which might better represent a made up language, which has its appropriate moments too.

PA: Right now there are literally thousands of choral composers, and tens of thousands church music directors, not counting companies that publish choral music. From the perspective of musical genre, can *VOXOS* with its legato program also do Palestrina? a Bach chorale? a traditional 4-part hymn?

Cinesamples: The full SATB legato is extremely powerful and something we spent a great deal of time recording and tweaking. It seems SATB is the only way to go to achieve the Bach type choral writing properly. For example, if the the sopranos had a melody line beginning in the alto range and jumping up to the pure soprano range how will that sound convincing without SATB? You can witness in the YouTube videos, especially video #2, the power of keeping the voices separate and the convincing results they allow you to achieve. Aside from the full SATB Sectional legato you get the boys legato and the three soloists. That’s eight legato sections within *VOXOS*.

PA: What was your thinking about including a children’s choir?

Cinesamples: James Horner. No, really, we just knew we had to have it. It’s a modern piece of the orchestra nowadays and we were sure our clients would expect us to include it. The boys were very charming to work with. The solo boy is just one of the most emotional sounds a composer can present in

a cue – perfect for those epic moments where less is more. It’s a joy to play the solo boy legato patch, We were lucky to get a brilliant young man at the prime of boy voice.

PA: In the first video, you stated that you were adding to the library every day. At this point do you see you have a final design in place?

Cinesamples: Yes everything is recorded, chopped and pretty much finished. The entire library will be completely done and handed over to Native Instruments relatively soon. We like to spend time tweaking each legato sample and getting it just perfect so we don’t have update headaches and unhappy customers. Regarding a final file size we don’t have one yet – but yes it will be over 30 GB.

PA: Finally, what Kontakt version will it be in *Voxos* ships?

Cinesamples: *VOXOS* will ship (or be downloaded) with the Kontakt 4 player. The Kontakt 4 player is the only way we could have made such a powerful GUI and such user friendly scripting. K 4.1 is an masterful achievement from NI. It should be the main sampler for most professionals by now.

PA: Fellows, thanks for your time. We’ll check back when *VOXOS* is released!

YOUTUBE VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/qFNkIuRSMc>

VOXOS DEMONSTRATION VIDEO WITH MIKE PATTI



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