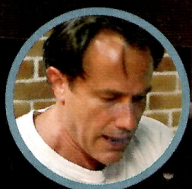


# electronic MUSICIAN

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Multisampled articulations

**Voices of the Empire** supplies a wealth of exotic vocals suitable for film or game scores

EASTWEST



Stereo doubler effect

Microtuning choices

# Voices of the Empire

LOCATION,  
LOCATION,  
LOCATION!

BY MARTY CUTLER

Marty Cutler is the author of *The New Electronic Guitarist*, published by Hal Leonard.

## STRENGTHS

Lush, beautifully recorded vocals with a number of ways to play them.

## LIMITATIONS

No documentation for translating words or phrases.

**\$24.99/month with Composer Cloud subscription.**  
[soundsonline.com](http://soundsonline.com)

**E**astWest has vocal instruments for every occasion: *Voices of the Empire* focuses on stylings from Bulgaria, Serbia, and Mongolia, among other locales, and is meant for cinematic use and to evoke the exotic. EastWest Play is the host, supporting VST, AU, or AAX plug-in formats as well as standalone use. The library requires less than 14GB of disk space.

The collection spans six categories—Sustain, Legato, Combo, Words, Phrases, and Keyswitch. All of the patches extend to their natural duration; there are no loops or synthetic alterations to the presets.

The Sustain folder gathers 24 performances in every key over a 3-octave range, with vowels sung in a variety of melismatic approaches, slurs in minor seconds to a perfect fifth, sustained vocals with and without vibrato, and crescendo/decrescendo notes. The performances often include multiple articulations that exhibit the masterful range and consistency of singer Uyanga Bold. There are no pitch-shifting artefacts of reduced sample sets here, because each key and articulation is multisampled.

Legato groups three performance setups, including Ah Mong VS, which takes an Ahh vowel and uses increased velocity coupled with legato technique to invoke a Mongolian articulation. Playing a single note with force brings a change from Ooh to Ah and produces brighter vocals with variations in natural vibrato. Combining velocity while holding a previous note invokes slurs, timbral variations, and subtle melismatic turns, which differ from key to key. The effect is warm and human.

The Legato scripting sounds utterly convincing, but it took a while to digest the timing; not all transitions from one pitch to the next sound natural if you switch, say, from a note where the vibrato is

full-on to one in which it hasn't begun, or vice-versa. Generally, they need breathing time. The other two legato patches are more Western in style, switching from raw singing to vibrato.

The Combo folder uses MIDI velocity and modulation to enact different articulations and is my

favorite of the lot, as the contents are easy to work with. In combination with the legato performance, these really felt like a live vocalist was at work.

The Words and Phrases content can be played polyphonically, albeit with different applications. Words has a selection of 24 words as individual patches that can be played chordally. Again, the remarkable chops of Uyanga Bold come into play with the performances of words in each key; the vibrato, melisma and other articulations are just enough in sync to keep it from sounding mechanical. Moving the mod wheel alters the sample start time, reducing the syllables or smoothing out consonants or attacks. Here, Play's excellent stereo doubler greatly enhances the choral effect.

The Phrases folder contents lay out performances across diatonic keys: Each patch is in a specific key, excellent for individual phrases or grabbing a handful of notes and letting parts interact. Each key is a different melodic passage, and they all resolve beautifully. The Keyswitch folder loads content from the other folders, with switches running chromatically from C0 upwards. There's room for customization, too, with multiple mic perspectives, convolution reverb and more.

EastWest *Voices of the Empire* is an invaluable collection of lush vocals that will serve film and game composers especially well. ■