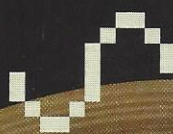


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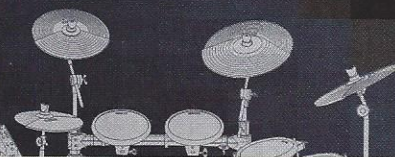
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A MUSIC PLAYER PUBLICATION



# EastWest Steven Wilson's Ghostwriter

Get progressive  
with this otherworldly  
sound library

BY MARTY CUTLER

WELL-KNOWN for his sound-design and mixing expertise, Porcupine Tree founder Steven Wilson prefers to do his own sampling from scratch rather than rely on presets and prefabricated libraries. EastWest tapped Wilson's talents, along with drummer Marco Minneman, guitarist Laurence Juber, and co-producer Doug Rogers to create *Steven Wilson's Ghostwriter*, a library of processed instruments, often played with unorthodox techniques. With more than 60 GB of content, the library is available on a set of DVDs or a USB 3.0 drive. You'll need an iLok to authorize it.

*Ghostwriter* uses the EastWest Play instrument, which carries a great-sounding convolution reverb, a separate set of amplifier impulse responses, and a generous set of controls for tweaking. The Player screen is where you access much of the processing for each patch, including delay, reverb, amp selection, amp envelope, filter settings, and more.

**The Sum of Its Parts** *Ghostwriter* organizes its sounds by instrument, and the top level divides into guitar, bass, keys, drums, vocals,

## SUMMARY

**STRENGTHS** Intriguing, edgy sounds that work well together.

**LIMITATIONS** Some solo patches sound a bit static.

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In addition to offering plenty of editing capabilities from the main screen, *Ghostwriter* offers various sounds and articulations through key switching.

and miscellaneous, with subfolders as needed. Some instruments are organized into a number of variations and playing techniques.

If you are expecting sounds rife with hyper-arpeggiated performance features, or sparkling pads to decorate the high end, look elsewhere. *Ghostwriter* explores dark, distorted, and cloudy timbres, with everything aimed at fitting into a mix in which no single sound dominates the sonic picture.

That said, the collection is intriguing and, as a whole, provides a refreshing set of instruments that are meant to work together, while exploiting the animation that comes naturally from such things as the chaos of plucked strings or feedback. A case in point is the Vocals folder. Played individually, a number of patches seemed to be synthetic sounding and static. However, when judiciously layered, the sounds sprang to life, with an organic quality few digital extravaganzas could equal.

Other standouts include the ambient, Leslie-processed Clavinet that sounds nothing like a Clavinet, yet holds an atmospheric, old-school analog charm. The Ebow guitars are expressive, as are the volume-pedal guitar swells, which could easily be tweaked into service as a pedal steel for ballads.

Prog Chords offers a key-switch menu of jangly chords in different voicings. Many of the patches feature distorted guitars and are exceptional, especially the Sigur guitars, which are bowed. The key switches shuttle between

overdriven sounds, some played with a slide, and others presenting a menu of dive bombs and various articulations. The thing that makes these stand out is the extended length of the samples, which provides chaotic, yet musical, inconsistencies between notes.

Don't overlook the folder of drums, which offers many processed instruments, including mono amp kits. These are powerful drum sets laden with attitude.

There are no multis in the collection. However, creating your own is easy, and a drop-down menu in the Player window offers easy access to the main screen for each patch. I like that *Ghostwriter* is laissez-faire regarding multis; once you load sounds, you can configure your own velocity splits, key switches, transpositions, and even different micro-tunings for each patch. Once you've created your sound, just save it; there is no differentiation between saving multis or single patches.

**Ghost Notes** Designed with film, television, and game soundtrack work in mind, *Steven Wilson's Ghostwriter* occupies a niche that's different from the typical all-in-one library. However, the edgy and distorted sounds in this collection would also provide a great resource for musicians working in rock, fusion, and funk.

What is most remarkable is the attention to the big picture as well as details. These sounds were meant to go together, and in doing so, they provide a go-to progressive songwriter kit with little need to look outside of the library. ■