



The Story

We were provided a unique opportunity to preserve an important piece of musical history in its final days. Word had come to us that the historic Clinton Recording Studios in midtown Manhattan was forever closing its doors, destined to be transformed into a modern condominium complex.

One of the many treasures contained therein was this particular Steinway Model D Concert Grand which used to live in the Columbia Records 30th Street Studios. The CBS 30th Street Studio, "The Church" was perhaps the most influential recording studio of the 50's and 60's producing dozens of legendary albums in various genres.

Of those recordings this piano played a critical role in two albums which are still considered among the finest recordings of all time. First being the original Glenn Gould "Goldberg Variations," the most critically received classical album of all time. Four years later came Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue" which forever altered music.



In 1981 Columbia closed its doors and this piano was brought to Clinton. In addition to the grand two of the original Columbia Nuemann U49 microphones made the journey also. These were two of the five (or six) microphones originally used on the Kind of Blue date. We were fortunate enough to sample this special grand using these two original microphones.

A friend of ours, John Davis, did a scoring session at Clinton and let us know about the closing as this day was to be the final date. As the conversation drifted from the saddening state of affairs for large stages we came to talk about why this particular stage was a special place.

Although I had previously worked at the this studio I was never aware that the grand in the corner was the “one piano” used in so many of my favorite recordings.



At the time we were in Seattle conducting some non-cinesamples recordings. Mike and I walked over to secure a copy of Ashley Kahn’s paperback *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece*. This book pushed us across the threshold and the vision for this session started to become a reality.

As Patti headed back home to put the finishing touches on the Seattle project Barry caught a red-eye that night for Manhattan. We had arranged to extend the closing date of Clinton by one day, just ensuring us enough time to sample this extraordinary instrument. Much of the gear being used was already up on Ebay. It was the last session ever recorded at Clinton.

With a mind to the handful of historic pictures from the recording *Kind of Blue* our engineer Tim Starnes (Drums of War, HollywoodWinds, Cinesnares, Cinetoms 2, CineCrash) set up three sets of microphones. The first pair – the U49’s from old Columbia set up in historical position (note that the original was in mono), the two other pairs each set back a touch further from the other.

We recorded two signal chains for each mic, a clean signal going through the Neve board and one going through a historic tape machine and finally into pro tools. We highly suggest exploring the charming colorization of the tape signal but both are provided for your convenience. For some of the youngsters out there note that tape will alter the sound of medium to high gain velocity layers and that often engineers go through great lengths to achieve this distortion.



Due to the delightful variances in timbre with each key the piano was sampled chromatically; this was the only way to get a true representation of the instrument. Barry was the pianist for the sampling and he employed a unique strategy.

"Perhaps this library benefits from having someone so intimate with sampling striking the keys. The way this particular piano was voiced was very unusual and charming. Certain notes when struck with matching velocities would sound rather different in tone from one another. One would scarcely notice this in a session but it would be greatly amplified via sampling. We decided the most faithful way to capture the samples was to do it by ear, rather than by touch. Instead of concentrating on a perfect velocity match across the keyboard we listened for sweet-spots/landmarks, identifiable, pleasing string to hammer ratios. This is a method employed by pianists to layer notes upon one another with clarity. I think the end result is better for recording in this manner rather than a straight key-weight dependent system."

We sincerely hope you enjoy this piano as much as we do.

The Interface

Reverb

We've included with this unique piano library the ability to apply the famous Bricasti M7 reverb to the samples using a built-in impulse response. Just flip the switch and apply the desired amount. With convolution technology, you can adjust the reverb length to create numerous reverberant possibilities.



Low/High Pass Filter

Combined into one mappable control for your convenience, this lets you adjust the frequency cutoff to shape the sound you want on the fly.

Pedal Noise

The pedal noise volume is also controllable - use this to help recreate the sound of a live piano.

Velocity Curve

The velocity curve function is an amazing tool that let's you control the way the instrument's dynamics respond to your performance. The height and width controls adjust the curve which represents the recorded dynamics of the piano - a steep curve means you will reach louder dynamic volume without having to press as hard on the keys, and a shallow curve means you'll have to press a lot harder to trigger the loud dynamics.

Mixer

We've given you the option to mix what we recorded however you please with these faders - the default is the stereo close mic, but with the Vintage Mono switch set to "on," you'll get a mono signal just like the one used on numerous classic recordings. Turning more mic positions on will increase your RAM footprint as those extra recorded samples are loaded into memory.

Tape

Flip the switch from Direct to Tape at the bottom for that classic noisy tape sound. If you really want to recreate the magic and history of this piano, use the tape samples in conjunction with the Vintage Mono mode. This was how the piano was recorded for many of it's most famous performances.



Specifications

- 1949 Steinway D via **Neve 8078 Console**
- Compatible with the Full Version of Kontakt 4.2.3 or higher
- 8 Velocity Layers Sampled Chromatically
- 9300 Samples, 24 bit/48k Resolution
- 9.3 GB Compressed NCW sample format
- 3 Microphone Positions:
 - Close/Vintage – 2x Neumann M49 near the lid
 - Mid – 2x B&K 4007 at the tail of the piano
 - Far – 2x Sennheiser MKH20's in the hall
- RAM footprints: 155MB per mic position
- 2 Processing Paths (Tape; Direct in)
- **Studer A800MKIII 24 Track Analog Tape Machine**
- Programmed by Sam Estes; scripted by Greg Schlaepfer; recorded by Tim Starnes

As always we share our revenue with our brilliant team of programmers, engineers, editors and musicians.

Enjoy Piano in Blue!

