Sounds Editing 1
Panorama

Welcome to the first in a series of articles about editing sounds in Wersi OAS-7. This article is about adjusting the Panorama values of sounds within a Total Preset so is not truly about sounds editing. I thought I'd make a gentle start. If you regularly alter the Panorama setting within the Selectors tab then you need no longer to continue reading this article. If, however, you always leave the Panorama value at its default setting of 64 then, after reading this, you may be tempted to experiment yourself and expand the sound produced by your Wersi instrument.

Touch the "Selectors" tab at the top of the screen. The screen changes and presents a set of tick boxes in three columns. The left section (blue) is for the Pedalboard, labelled Ped1 (and an additional column labelled Ped2 if you have a Scala/Louvre). To the right of that is the Lower Manual area (red) and finally to the right of that is the Upper Manual area (yellow). Panorama is the second row up from the bottom and probably each box contains the value 64 with "Std" below the number. If you touch one of these boxes it will highlight and you can turn the Tempo/Data Wheel to inspect the possible alternative values. These range from zero (far left) to 127 (far right). The range 0 – 127 gives 128 possible values. This is because the system is digital and those numbers are derived from the Binary System as used by all computers and digital devices.

The Standard (default) value is 64, halfway between 0 and 127: well, that would be 63 if we want to be picky but 64 is near enough and also is easier to work with in this article. The best way to hear what is happening to the position of a sound as you change this value is by listening with headphones. Firstly set up a single sound on the Upper Manual (referred to as UM from now on), adjust its Panorama (referred to as Pan from now on) value to zero and check it sounds far left in the headphones. If it sounds far right instead, simply reverse the headphones on your head.

The big question is, what values should be used for different sounds? Well, there are no hard and fast rules so I'll just present my view and what I generally do. Firstly, there are two kinds of sound to consider: ensemble sounds (like Strings 1 Soft, Vocal 1 etc) and solo sounds (like Clarinet, Tenor Sax W etc). All sounds in OAS-7 are samples (as far as I'm aware). This means they are taken from an audio recording of real instruments. A strings ensemble will be spread over a large area and therefore will be in stereo to start with. Setting an ensemble sound at a Pan value of 64 then provides the optimum position for this type of sound. A solo instrument at 64 will appear to be central in the sound field. It will have a natural reverb which will be in stereo. You can therefore position it anywhere you like. If you use two solo instruments they will each then appear to be in different positions which makes for a more interesting overall sound.

There is one other matter to consider – are you making up just one Total Preset (referred to as TP from now on) for your music or are you making up several for the one piece? Let's start with just one TP per piece of music. We can now give an ensemble a Pan value of 64 and solo instruments another value. What other value? Fortunately the 0 – 127 range of values is equally spread around the 90 degrees between far left and far right. A value of 32 would be halfway between central and far left while a value of 96 would be halfway between central and far right. Values of Pan around 8 apart are just about distinguishable in position through headphones. A separation of around 4 or below is virtually impossible to distinguish. I therefore use the following table in assigning Pan values.

0 (Far Left)
16
32
48
64 (Central)
80
96
112
127 (Far Right)

A Single Total Preset per piece of music
For a single TP these Pan values can provide a separate location in the stereo sound field for each sound layer, even on a Scala or Louvre. In practice, I rarely use 0 and 127 because those positions can sound a little extreme and the reverb from the opposite side can cause strange effects. By keeping to these values a symmetry can be obtained and I don't have to think too much or remember too much. With solo instruments layered you are creating a small group. So far as I'm aware the players in a group can place themselves where they like "on the stage", giving you carte blanche what values you use for Pan.

If I'm recreating an orchestra then I try to keep to the conventional placements within a symphony orchestra. It is when I have more than one ensemble sound that I use a slightly different procedure for deciding Pan values. Let's say you want a full string sound so you set up "Strings 1 Soft" on three UM layers. UM1 is at 4' pitch (Octave value = 1), UM2 at 8' pitch (Octave = 0) and UM3 at 16' pitch (Octave = -1). In an orchestral layout I'd give UM1 a Pan value of 32, UM2 a value of 64 and UM3 a value of 96. I've found it better to keep ensemble sounds within this range, only occasionally venturing to 16 and 112 respectively. This has to do with the original sound being fully stereo to start with. The result of using too extreme a position is an unnatural sound where the layers do not blend well. Of course, in this strings example I'd also detune the 4' and 16' strings. Other interesting effects can be obtained by altering the Dynamic value for each of these strings layers, but I must not digress.

What about two or more layers of different ensemble sounds, I hear you ask. Quite. The important point about this is to avoid the sounds competing with each other. Therefore, a stereo separation is but one ploy to this end. You can also use different Dynamic and Reverb settings. A sound with little reverb always sounds nearer than one with a lot of reverb so a front-to-back separation may be possible using that method. Alternatively use values of 48, 64 and 80. Scala and Louvre owners – the fourth sound could be at 32 or 96, but look at the next section for using in-between values. Each ensemble sound should be auditioned on headphones before placement. Some ensemble sounds have unusual arrangements where some instruments are placed other than central in the original sample.

More than one Total Preset per piece of music

In this instance many sounds will continue from one TP to the next. It's important to keep them in their original places. You don't want the poor saxophonist rushing back and forth from left to right each time you change the TP. Additionally, a change in instrument within the same orchestral section needs thought. If TP 1 has a clarinet which is replaced by an oboe in TP 2 you don't want the oboist sitting on the lap of the clarinettist. Therefore a separation is needed but it can be smaller than a value of 16. I resolve the separation to a value of 8 in this sort of situation and may give the oboe a Pan value of 80 and the clarinet 88, for example. This method can also be used on the Scala or Louvre to place ensemble sounds.

That's about it, really. Have fun experimenting. There's no absolute right or wrong but Wersi has provided the Panorama setting to be used, you've paid for it and, as it's so easy to use, you might as well take advantage of it.

In the next article we'll have a look at what's behind "Edit Long Waves" under "Settings" where any changes have to be saved as a new User Sound. That's true Sounds Editing.

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