



WHAT IS IT?

Spectrasonics' STEAM-based update to 2002's TrilogY bass plug-in providing electric, acoustic and synth bass to the power of many

CONTACT

Who: Time & Space
 Tel: +44 (0)1837 55200
 Web: spectrasonics.net

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Truly a total bass module
- 2 Vast array of samples, waveforms and effects
- 3 Innovative and inspirational



Spectrasonics Trilian | £215

TrilogY was a popular plug but it's been STEAM-rolled by a new successor. *Jono Buchanan* gets deep...

Around Autumn 2008, Spectrasonics unveiled Omnisphere. Initially billed as an update to their popular Atmosphere plug-in, Omnisphere smashed that remit by unleashing STEAM, the 'under the hood' engine that powered the plug-in and provided its combined sample and synthesis approach to sound generation. Now it's the turn of Trilian, Spectrasonics' update to 2002's TrilogY, which, with STEAM at the core again, also promises to go way beyond its brief as a bass module.

Down to business

Trilian's library extends to 34GB and covers instruments new and old. In

terms of new, there are six separate electric bass instruments, with 60 articulations, including Fender Precision, Chapman Stick and Music Man five string, plus an all-new acoustic bass with multiple mic/pickup positions. There's also a weighty raft of synthesised patches, with sampled waveforms from a huge variety of synths old and new, including Moogs (Minimoog and Little Phatty as two examples) and other classic boxes from Roland, ARP and Dave Smith Instruments to name but a few.

While these weren't quite ready at the time of launch, Spectrasonics have since updated the library with all of the original TrilogY patches too so if, for instance, you're running a newer Mac

with which TrilogY has proved incompatible, you're covered now. One nice addition is the Bass Legends library, which provides the content from Spectrasonics' first ever release, 15 years ago. As with Omnisphere, Spectrasonics haven't been shy about providing presets to show all of this off – there are hundreds available in the synth section alone but you can narrow your search using a number of criteria to make life simpler.

Be a little careful here though, as a single (rather than double) click on any preset launches the sound, which makes it too easily done for my liking. That said, as the Browser window is a separate 'pop-out', you're unlikely to inadvertently switch patches having made edits.

Real bass

Whereas TrilogY was primarily a synth bass module, Trilian comprehensively covers acoustic and electric bass too, with fantastic results. The sample content of these 'real' basses is wonderfully recorded but, beyond that, the playback engine ensures a staggering amount of realism in performance. This is achieved in a number of ways – round-robin techniques prevent against dreaded 'machine-gun' effects, while slides and effects aplenty are employed to make transitions and multi-velocity performances a joy to create. You can

load either a single 'do it all' patch with all variations built-in for these basses, or select single articulations and build your own less 'intensive' patches, which is advantageous if your system isn't stacked with RAM – though v1.2 introduces 64-bit support to utilise all available memory. Special mention should go to the acoustic bass, which uses four separate audio channels and over 21,000 individual samples.

Trilian works in two multitimbral modes – Live or Stack, which is where the power of running multiple sample variations really come to the fore. Here, you can decide how to keyswitch between patches to create more lifelike performances, or how to assign velocity or MIDI controllers to morph or switch from one articulation to the next. In both modes, up to eight separate patches can be run at the same time.

Get unreal

The synth patches are great too and the power of STEAM becomes apparent when you start editing. Again, many of the synth basses are derived from sample data from classic bass boxes but

STEAM-Powered

Trilian's vast array of sample content is impressive enough but the engine which lets you drive it is ultra-powerful too and worthy of further explanation. The move to STEAM with Omnisphere's release meant that Spectrasonics could develop much more powerful instruments, free from restrictions.

This is great news for both Spectrasonics and users, as a raft of new sound possibilities emerge



from STEAM. For a start, the sample and synthesis options are much greater, as is the potential for 'hybrid instruments', as evidenced by Trilian's ability to run inside Omnisphere. However, the main advantage is that Spectrasonics won't be

forced to 'lag' behind when it comes to imposed industry transitions such as updates to operating systems or a wholesale shift to 64-bit. Before, third parties limited development, now STEAM means Spectrasonics can run their own show.

add further levels of detail. Need a 'hold one note' bass sequence for your track? No problem – the arpeggiator is easy to use and can read a MIDI file to generate its pattern if you want to lock performance to an existing groove.

Effects-wise, the racks of options mirror those available in Omnisphere, with separate effects for the 'A' and 'B'

you need? Absolutely. In fact, it could be much more besides. Its forte is with bass and if you're drawn to its electric and upright 'side', then you'll find plenty of what you're looking for, as the plug-in produces stunning, lifelike performances with sumptuous bass recordings which come alive under your fingers. But the powerful processing

engine is the key to its success.

As with Omnisphere, you're encouraged to go way beyond the presets and as soon as you do, you realise just

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because each patch actually accesses two 'layers' of sound, you can create monstrous, hybrid instruments very quickly. Basic editing of global parameters can be carried out on the 'Main' page, while the 'Edit' page lets you go into a sound in depth.

Once the sound is shaped, you can then dive into the FX and Arp tabs to

layers, as well as a 'Common' tab, where effects are added to a patch globally. The options here are impressive, with Tube Limiters and Amp Simulators accompanying the more expected delays, reverb and EQ options.

Conclusion

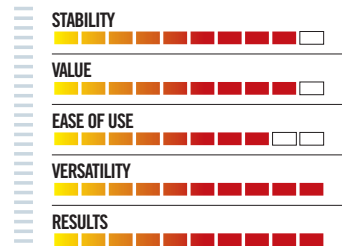
Could Trilian be the only bass plug-in

how powerful an instrument this is, with so many waveforms, samples, routings, effects and arpeggiation options that Trilian is capable of going way beyond bass alone. With the updates already provided since its initial release and the promise of more patches to come soon in future updates, this is a truly comprehensive instrument which I can't recommend highly enough, if your bass options aren't covered already. Even if they are, treat yourself. **FM**



As well as powerful sample and synthesis options, Trilian contains comprehensive effects

FutureMusic VERDICT



If you can't find the bass sound you need here, you're doing something wrong.

SPECS

System Requirements: 2.0GHz or higher processor (Intel Core2Duo or higher recommended), 2GB RAM (4GB or more recommended for multis), Dual Layer compatible DVD drive for install, 35GB of free hard drive space

PC: VST 2.4 or RTAS capable host software, Microsoft Windows Vista or later

Mac: OS X 10.4.9 or higher, AudioUnit, VST 2.4 or RTAS capable host software, Universal Binary for Intel Macs (G5 PowerPC compatible)

ALTERNATIVES



Native Instruments Scarbee Jay-Bass and MM-Bass

79 Euros each

If it's just the 'electric' side of Trilian that attracts you, try these too. Using Kontakt or the Kontakt Player as their front-end, these libraries deliver wonderful, lifelike results too.

native-instruments.com



Rob Papien SubBoomBass

£89

Rob Papien knows a thing or two about synth plugs, so it's no wonder this one delivers synth bass aplenty. Worth more than a peek.

robpapien.com