

WersiClub UK.Focus

OAS7 A Personal Review

By Bill Gray

A Comparison Review of the changes made to Version 7 from the previous Version 6

Main

Boot up considerably quicker, main screen layout much more defined, a tick now shows you LM Hold is on.

Factory Sounds/Styles etc now completely separate from User Sounds/Styles

Hermodé Tuning: Personally I could not hear hardly any difference; however you may like to go to www.hermodé.com to make your own comparisons.

Selectors

Update of features (Reverb 2 etc) now available

Advanced: similar to V6

Sub Presets: Greatly expanded with presets available for individual sections of the instrument, (A big improvement over V6) unfortunately unlike other manufactures (Whose keyboards are considerably cheaper) there are no Flanger, Compressor or more advanced options. (These are only available within the voices)

Sound Control: One of the greatest advances with V7 as you no longer have to keep editing voices to get the sounds you want for each type of music, unfortunately this is only for the manuals, whereas to get the best it should also be available for styles and sequences. (A big Minus for Wersi)

Accompaniment

Pretty much the same as V6 with just a few extra options (Nothing of any note)

Mixer

Along with separate controls for each VST, the Drums, Acc and Manuals are now independent. (A big improvement)

However, they all still only have a 2 band parametric EQ system which to be quite honest, is pitiful for a so called advanced instrument. (A minimum of 4 or better still 5 parametric bands should be available)

Outputs

Similar to V6,

Effects

A big Improvement, as each effect can now be independently set for Manuals, Acc and Drums, with a separate section for VSTs, Microphones etc.

As mentioned above, Flanger, Compressor etc should also be available to the user, and not just within the voices. (Again Wersi must try harder)

Settings

Edit Long Waves: What an advance in the additional control system, 6 individual sound effect controls for each voice that change their parameters for each voice. (Only the 6 effects relevant to that voice are included, making individual voice editing highly flexible) Well done Wersi a masterstroke. (For those that think their hardware boards have flexible voice editing, they don't come close to sound control)

Edit Drum sets: Much more flexible and easier to use.

All drum sounds are in a drop down list making selection much easier, (You no longer have to remember what key they are on)

The new effects have also been added to the drums.

The biggest improvement (Read easier) is that each section Bass, Snare Cymbals etc have there own independent Effect/EQ settings (In addition to the updated effects of each drum sound) making them much more customizable.

New Drum Kits added (Annoyingly all the styles copied over from OAS 6 still use the old drum sets, although the new settings do improve them somewhat) which have improved samples, but still tend to lack a little behind certain other manufactures. (However there plenty of free drum samples on the web so it is relatively easy to set up complete new drum kits)

Edit OX7: No change from V6

Edit Sound Effects: As in V6

This should really have been updated to use the new effects section, and in addition EQ should also have been added.

Also the ability to sync with the styles (Other manufactures have had this for years) should also have been added.

Edit Midi Sounds: As with V6 (Also see Midi Settings)

Edit VST Sounds: This adds more flexibility to control VSTs, including full control of controller codes. (Unfortunately Wersi don't tell you what codes they use) however this still seems to be a work in progress with the Tone Quality button not appearing to do anything. (Definitely a page to keep an eye on in future updates)

Edit B4 Sounds: If you have the Wersi B4 software it can now be edited directly from within OAS. (Make sure it is loaded into Slot 1)

Edit OAS Drawbars: This is a complete new section that is similar to the X1 drawbars fitted to the Ikarus and Xenios.

Only one word for this WOW, this is a fantastic addition that allows you to mimic most types of organs that have been available over the years, with true editing, and a superb Leslie Sim. (Blows OX7 completely out of the water)

The downside is that Wersi has not made it easy to find it from the sound section, but do a search to find it, and you will never look back. (Wersi really ought to bring this to the fore)

Midi Settings: AS with V6

This should really be updated as it hasn't changed from V5 and lacks true individual Midi control and System exclusive information, (This should also be tied in with Edit Midi Sounds) still the fact that you still have separate Midi sections for Manuals, Styles and Sequences, means its still ahead of a lot of boards out there. (Ironically a lot of the settings are available under the hardware button, but you need a code from Wersi to get at them)

Activation Codes: Considerable expanded

System Installation: As V6

OAS Database

Sounds: The Akai import has been significantly updated, and it is now easy and simple to add voices, (The interface in V6 is crude in comparison) this also applies for the voices from V6 and below. (Due to the completely changed sound engine it is no longer possible to load previous sounds directly into V7)

In addition considerably less editing is required of the imported sounds. (Well done Wersi)

Styles: Additional features over V6 (See below)

Variation Presets: You can now assign a TP to each individual variation button of an accompaniment, thus making changes much more flexible. (This is particularly beneficial when you consider it can be used in conjunction with Midi, Waves, MP3 etc as well as styles.

Friendly Styles:

This brings up the optional integrated EMC style works thus making it easier to convert styles from other manufactures, or at least it would if it worked properly. I don't know who set it up, but most conversions go to completely the wrong place, (Intros to variations etc) and quite frankly is a total disaster, not worth even a fiver.

Tip. Buy the independent version from EMC and ignore the one included with V7. (The EMC one works, and costs a fraction of the option in V7)

Backup: As V6

This could do with updating to allow saving to external media, without having to go into Windows.

Plug-In Administration: This has come on in leaps and bounds since I first saw it a couple of years ago, with pretty much all sound settings (Banks, Programs etc) now capable of being saved. The main downside is that Wersi have not updated the manual, so unless you're familiar with VSTs you won't have a clue about all the new features. (Come on Wersi get your act together)

Hardware: As V6

Style Edit: No change from V6 (You will need to buy the OAA (Which completely replaces the OAS style section) if you want to get any further advances)

Sequence Edit: This is completely new, and in most respects makes the use of Cubasis pretty irrelevant on the instrument. (Pretty much everything you used Cubasis for in V6 can be done from within the V7 sequencer, with the main exception being a lack of score edit (Wersi should definitely be adding it)

The part sequencer takes the use of Midi files to a whole new level. (Particularly as they can be tied into the variation presets)

CD Burn: No change from V6

The complete section including hard drive recording should really be overhauled, to make way for a truly integrated multi-track audio recording system with full MP3 conversion. (This is most important for those that bought OAS 7 from new, as Wavelab is no longer provided)

Much cheaper instruments have more features available.

Button Text: There is still too much German text around that should have been converted to English a long time ago.

Additional: Still no Time Stretch capability and their needs to be detailed update details provided. (Including how to get the best from them)

Sound Packs:

Various sound packs are available (The software equivalent of the Roland and Korg hardware expansion boards) with many allowing a try before you buy. (Unlike hardware all the sound packs can be used simultaneously if required)

My favorites are two of the Analogue sound packs.

The biggest disappointment is Drums 2007, as due to the fact that the EZ-Drummer VST and the Drum sound packs for the Free Core 2 player VST are a fraction of the price of Drums 2007, (As well as being a lot better) which makes (For me) Drums 2007 very poor value.

Anyway the above is my take on OAS 7, and while there is a lot of good points, as soon as you start getting underneath the skin, it can become very disappointing. Was it worth upgrading?

For me NO/YES, as with the use of VSTs and other software I could get a much better performance with OAS 6, (I am not into all singing all dancing styles, so the lack of upgrade to the OAA with OAS6, is of little relevance too me) however if Wersi put right all that I mentioned above, then YES it would be well worth the upgrade. (Now I have OAS 7 (There is no going back to OAS 6 as OAS 7 requires a hardware change) I just hope Wersi get their act together, or I may consider going back to just software) (There is certainly no hardware board that comes close in sound or flexibility at present)

For those that just want to switch on and play, then OAS 7 is probably the best thing since sliced bread. (I was just expecting a lot more)

Bill