



By Bruce Adolph

# Kurzweil SP4-7 Keyboard

Kurzweil set out to make the SP4-7 the modern successor to their best selling SP76, a keyboard which combined their world-class Kurzweil sound quality with affordability and portability. The goal for the SP4-7 is to be even slimmer, lightweight and easy to use. Let's see if they hit the mark.

## Good Things Come In Small Packages

Why does a smaller foot print matter? If you are a mobile church the benefit of a lightweight but powerful keyboard becomes more apparent when you are loading it in and out each and every weekend. Also a small



footprint of a keyboard might make a difference on a smaller platform. When you're trying to pack a full band into a small space and actually have some elbow room to play this becomes more of an issue. The SP4-7 has 76 keys which is plenty when you really think of what range you need to play most modern worship music (for those of you who are classically trained, please don't send me angry e-mails for saying this).

Did I mention how much it weights? Just 24lbs. Picking up the SP4-7 keyboard is a

## Up And Running ASAP

Kurzweil set out to make getting around on the SP4-7 simple with a user interface that is designed to make things as easy for you as possible. They placed the features that are most important, right where you'd want them. You can create splits and layers with the touch of a button (up to 4 zones); select presets and set-ups from easy to access category and program buttons; adjust effects parameters; everything is laid out so that you can be up and running right out of the box. When I sat down to test-drive this board I found this claim to be true as well. It is super easy to get around on. And if you are triggering loops from your Mac or via MIDI with a tone generator and something goes hey-wire during your set, sending all kinds of crazy runaway feedback and sequences ringing out to the audience you have a "Panic" button on the board that shuts everything down that your keyboard is controlling. Smart thinking Kurzweil!

## In the Words of Keith Green - No Compromise

While this new keyboard may be the most affordable one that Kurzweil offers, no compromises were made when it comes to its sounds. 128 hand-picked programs were taken directly from their PC3 line. The SP4-7 delivers with their Triple Strike Grand Piano, classic electric pianos and lush strings and orchestral instruments. Also on board you'll find basses, guitars, winds, brass, percussion and drums. I played all 128 patches and I was surprised how many real good and everyday useful sounds there were. I found quite a few "favorites" to add to my play list.

treat. Throw it in a gig bag and toss it in the trunk. That is my kind of preparation!

When it comes to legacy sounds, Kurzweil has always had some wonderful piano patches – which this keyboard sports – but you will also find their signature KB3 organs patches, with all KB3 parameters accessible via external MIDI control. Having good piano and organ sounds is the meat and potatoes in my book of evaluating a keyboard.

The SP4 can also load programs from the PC3 and PC3LE series keyboards; additional sounds will also be available for download on their website. Having 16-part multi-timbral architecture makes the SP4-7 a good tool for writing and recording music with an external sequencer or Desktop Audio Workstation.

## Yes But To What Effect?

Again borrowing from Kurzweil's bag of tricks, the SP4-7 also features dozens of the PC3's professional quality effect chains. Everything from concert hall reverbs and crisp delays to powerful distortion and amp simulation effects add another layer of depth and realism. The most commonly utilized effects parameters have been routed to the SP's Timbre knob, so you can customize your sound on the fly without having to dive into menus or manuals. That is a big plus for a guy like me who plays first and reads the owner's manual only when I am completely stumped. Ha!

## Lights, camera, action...


When you read the specs you'll see they call the action on this board "semi-weighted". At first I thought to myself, "Well, that is a nice way to say something is less than or cheaper than weighted action" but what I found to my surprise was that it has a weighted feel like a piano but a good bounce back of the keys like a synth would have. A middle ground so to speak that helps you with those faster passages. I like the feel of the keys a lot.

## Counting the Cost...

So if you need a great sounding keyboard that you can easily take with you (either mobile churches, back and forth for rehearsals or for your youth group to take wherever they may wander) this Kurzweil just may be the answer... especially at such a low price point.

When I first heard about Kurzweil keyboards back in the mid 80's. Their flagship keyboard then had a very realistic piano sound and was a whopping \$250,000.00 in price. Can you believe that? It is true. Of course, we have had a lot of advances in technology since (thank God!). We are living in a good era for keyboard pricing right now too it seems, as this one retails for \$1,349.00, before the discounting begins. Go and play a SP4-7 for yourself and listen to the pianos and organs... that just might seal the deal right there! Listen to the other very usable sounds and you may be walking a nice big (but lightweight) box to the car.

Suggested Retail Price: \$1349 More info at [www.kurzweil.com](http://www.kurzweil.com)



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For more information, please contact Joey Sanchez  
[jsanchez@ultimateears.com](mailto:jsanchez@ultimateears.com)

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DANIEL RIVERA  
TECHNICAL COORDINATOR  
OASIS CHURCH, LOS ANGELES



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## Product Review

McPherson's  
new 5.0 XP12 –  
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**Songchart:** *I Lift My Hands* • **A Few Moments With...** Worship Songs On Strike