

# Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



## Line 6 Mobile Keys

| £99 and £129

[www.line6.com](http://www.line6.com)

**N**ot one, but two keyboards from a company best known for their superb guitar gear. The 25 and 49 models of Mobile Keys are identical (save for size) and serve a dual purpose, being quality (but rather pricey) MIDI USB keyboards for your Mac or PC, or iOS keyboard

designed to plug directly into your iPod, iPhone or iPad.

It's this second use that's particularly attractive as this marks the first time that real, full-size keys work without external power on your iOS device. Yes, jack in the keyboard into your dock connector (via the 30 pin to proprietary mini 30 pin lead

that comes in the box) and you're up and running in no time.

The first thing our test 'Pads did was invite us to download Line 6's own simple Mobile MIDI recorder app, but even this isn't necessary for both keyboards to instantly be recognised by the likes of GarageBand, Korg iMS-20 or Fairlight Pro. There's pitch bend and mod wheels, volume and pan and even more complex features for setting MIDI channel output etc.

The only feature missing – and it's a big ask – is the ability to run both USB and iOS connections at once, allowing you to use the keyboard as an interface for your DAW to drive your iPad etc, but that's certainly no dealbreaker. Superb. *Daniel Griffiths*

8/10

## Pro Tools 101: An Introduction to Pro Tools 10

| \$49

[www.cengage.co.uk](http://www.cengage.co.uk)

Labelled as official Avid curriculum, Pro Tools 101 is a hefty book to guide you through entering into the industry standard. There are ten lessons to get you hands-on with the DAW including exercises along the way, with projects included on the bundled DVD. As a reference manual, this book is priceless to the beginner, with no stone left unturned, though the DVD could have more content for the price. *Declan McGlynn*

8/10



## Logic Café ControlSkin | £30

[www.logic-cafe.com](http://www.logic-cafe.com)

**T**here are plenty of keyboard overlays on the market that attempt to reign in the power of the DAW to your humble QWERTY keyboard, but ControlSkin from the chaps at Logic Café goes a little further, creating a whole custom Key Command patch file to match their multi-coloured guide. The overlay sits across a MacBook Pro keyboard (or the smaller Apple wireless models) and after downloading and installing the patch file in Logic, it's capable of some pretty hardcore editing including single-button Region to Sampler conversion, Tap Tempo and instant and clear Screenset buttons.

If you've created your own custom Key Commands, or if you're used to the defaults, you'll need to either Export your previous settings or commit to the Logic Café way of

thinking, as they will be overwritten by Importing the downloadable patch.

If you do commit to the overlay's custom commands, you'll be pleasantly surprised at how intuitive it is – we were editing and moving

around between windows, menus and views in no time.

However, the overlay is horrible to type on so you may have to remove it every time you want to use your laptop for anything else – like writing a review, for example. Plus, £30 does seem a bit steep for what is essentially a piece of plastic and a custom patch file that anyone could

download for free. If you do find yourself on the road a lot, or are restricted to single-screen use, it'll turn your keyboard into an intuitive and comprehensive Logic controller and it's also a great aid for those of you learning the software for the first time. *Declan McGlynn*

8/10



## Aquasky Future Jungle & Drumstep | £30

[www.loopmasters.com](http://www.loopmasters.com)



Divided into two tempo-differentiated libraries – one at a Future Jungle-appropriate 140bpm and the other at a D'n'B/drumsteppin' 177bpm – Aquasky's second sample collection sees them resurrecting many of their old synth and sampler patches, and includes numerous sounds from their 2011 album, *Raise The Devil*. Despite the binary categorisation, that trademark earthy, hard-edged Aquasky sound and flavour is gloriously consistent throughout.

The drums range from cleverly constructed drumstep loops, built on classic old D'n'B sounds, to polished, new-take-on-old-school rollers, the bass loops are huge, powerful and cheeky, the synth lines are lush and retro and the FX are energetic and varied.

The icing on the cake are some action-packed Ragga vocal phrases and an impressive array of multis, and it all adds up to a wealth of synth- and breakbeat-based fodder for producers of all kinds of bass music. **Ronan Macdonald**

# 9/10

## The Sound Of Ghetto Funk | £30

[www.loopmasters.com](http://www.loopmasters.com)



Stickybuds, Dancefloor Outlaws, JPod and B-Side come together to present a largely-great collection of Ghetto Funk loops and one-shots. The weakest section is the drum loops: while some of them are fresh, phat and sonically versatile (as are most of the single-hit drums), I just didn't find the majority terribly exciting.

Everything else is fully functional, though, from the serpentine, wall-shaking basslines, through the riotous risers and rhythmic FX, to the inspirational music loops. The highlights for me are the fantastic set of 100+ scratches (by UK DMC champion JFB), the aforementioned bass loops and pretty much everything by JPod. If Ghetto Funk's your thing and you need a comprehensive new set of sounds, then you won't go far wrong with this lot – just don't expect the drum loops to change your life. **Ronan Macdonald**

# 8/10

## Freemasons 100% Remix Tools | £40

[www.loopmasters.com](http://www.loopmasters.com)



Loopmasters' 100th Artist Series library comprises a significant chunk (so we're told) of Freemasons' actual current sample bank, and puts to good use their lavish collection of analogue and digital

hardware. The beats and basslines are strident, funky and impactful, but it's the more 'musical' content that perhaps impresses most, demonstrating the 'Masons' keen ear for a hook and finely honed understanding of hands-in-the-air quantification. Synths, pianos, 'air' and full-mix loops, and even a set of moderately lengthy string section parts – it's all tuneful stuff, but never at the expense of groove or power. A ton of tasty multisampled synths and basses, and a huge variety of delicious one-shot drums serve as a sizeable appendix to this comprehensive House music cook book. Yum. **Ronan Macdonald**

# 9/10

## Sample Magic Vintage Drum Fills | £15

[www.samplemagic.com](http://www.samplemagic.com)



If there's one thing that's certain, it's that every dancefloor likes drum variation and Sample Magic aim to fill the void, ahem,

with this cheap and cheerful collection of 101 samples. Offering a vintage twist with plenty of vinyl crackle, tape hiss and Hip Hop-style samples, the pack is full of retro beats and although they're sourced from a huge variety of genres and styles, will slot into any dancefloor track, as long as it sits in or around 125bpm. We think the price is pretty spot on for what you get especially when you start resampling to your own beats and loops. You might think a collection of fills is a bit niche, but there's enough here to keep you busy beyond the breakdown. **Declan McGlynn**

# 9/10

## Sample Magic Radio Slave | £24

[www.samplemagic.com](http://www.samplemagic.com)



Berlin Techno staple Radio Slave has raided his hard drive for this pack, providing basslines, percussion, tops, synths and drums. The price is quite surprising considering the amount of content: 561 WAV files, 531 REX and sampler patches for EXS24, Kontakt, NNXT and HALion are all included. The samples – especially the drums – are all fresh, modern and interesting, with an excellent production quality. The treatments are as interesting as the actual samples, with each idea given its own style – the loops are a lot more than just programmed one-shots. Musically, the synth and bass riffs and loops are all current and authentic, with excellent effects and rhythmic treatments. Overall it's a perfect bundle for anyone making Techno, Tech House, Minimal or any genre where dark and deep sounds are the norm. A real gem of a pack and the price seals the deal. **Declan McGlynn**

# 10/10

# PRIME LOOPS

## WE'RE IN THE MIX

Prime Loops provide award-winning sound libraries, fresh in-tune with the evolving music scene. We are an extremely passionate team of engineers, sound designers & DJs, hailing from London, UK



## UNITED STATES OF DANCE

Oh say can you see... the "United States of Dance" has got the party jumping from East coast to West! Stars bounce and stripes collide in this fresh new sound pack from number 1 hitmakers Prime Loops! This sound library of decadent dance sounds packs all the potential required to provide that fresh new spring break party anthem!

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## DUBSTEP TAKEOVA

Fresh from the shadowy abyss of the Prime Loops lair, a dark and dishevelled sound library of nebulous atmospheres, dissident drum loops, twisted electro synths and downright dirty wobble basslines. This dark collection of samples, loops and one-shots contains all the grit and grime you would ever need to give your dubstep deviations the ultimate evil edge!

£17.95



## URBAN MAGIC

Magic is the name of the game and with "Urban Magic", Prime Loops delivers a deep multitude of high-definition urban flavours to fulfil your every musical desire. Unleash the power of that beautiful crossover between solid gold American soul and uplifting euro-trance, that will gift your production with what it takes to enchant every dancefloor from here to Wonderland!

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## ELECTRO HOUSE SYNDICATE

Join the jet-setting electro producers' elite with Prime Loops' dance floor destroying "Electro House Syndicate". Gain instant access to a whole new masterclass of Electro House rhythms, gritty basses and soaring synth lines to hook your music into the minds of clubbers for months to come.

£14.95

[www.primeloops.com](http://www.primeloops.com)