

Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



Avastor SDX | £207

avastor.com

The hard drive market is currently a crowded one with plenty of options when it comes to data storage.

The Avastor SDX 1000 Quad has done a very good job of positioning itself above the usual crowd. Its wide

range of connectivity options, USB, Firewire 400, 800 and ESATA make this a truly serious contender for the musician. With a storage capacity of 500GB and a top data transfer speed of 3GB/s and a 7200rpm as standard it means that you can really rely on

this for large multi-track audio productions without any fear of bottlenecking or loss of bandwidth.

This is not the cheapest option when it comes to storage but as they say, you do get what you pay for and for those who are relying on efficient and reliable data transfer on a large scale then I would highly recommend it. *Will Seelig*

9/10



Stanton Uberstand Laptop Station | £69

stantondj.com

As laptop DJs reading will know, not every club comes kitted-out for your forward-thinking ways. Placing your precious laptop on an unused 1210 while your interface gets crammed in any space you can find, with vital wires getting bent and twisted all over the place is hardly an ideal way to perform or protect your investments. While there are countless laptop stands on the market, Stanton have stepped to the plate with the Uberstand, aiming to provide the ultimate solution.

It's reassuringly heavy and it's flat-folding ability is a great touch for portability. Once you've got it up and at'em, despite being a bit bouncy, it's very sturdy. The shelf is perfect for your audio interface, and the whole thing feels trustworthy and solid. A great solution to a common problem and it does exactly what it should, very well. *Declan McGlynn*

9/10

Orbitsound T3 | £79

orbitsound.co.uk

The Orbitsound T3 is a 'personal stereo aura', in other words, a handheld, USB-charged speaker for any device that features a headphone



socket. Aesthetically, the T3 is reasonably styled and built, if a bit light and a touch on the large side.

Presumably targeting the 'youth' market, no longer wishing to irritate the public with tinny mobile speakers, Orbitsound promise personal music delivered by its 'airSound' technology.

Unfortunately the T3 is cheap sounding, distorting at higher levels, lacking depth and is, anything but personal. It's 'single-point-stereo' also fails to deliver, with even the most heavily panned tracks sounding distinctly mono. *Dan Vickers*

3/10

The Electronic Music Manuscript | £50

scvlondon.co.uk



Like the Tony Franklin package, this double-CD Sony offering seems to be aimed primarily at Acid users (everything comes in 24-bit Acidized WAV only)

but also includes six readymade Battery kits. The millions of didgeridoo sample fans around the world will be delighted to hear there's even a didgeridoo kit. It's impossible to pin this collection down to a single style as it comprises everything from synth riffs, drum loops and string samples to FX and warped drum kits. As a general collection this is pretty good. Worth checking out if you're just starting to put together a sample library. *Greg Scarth*

7/10

Crunkzilla | £69

timespace.com



Are Hip Hop fans still listening to Lil' Jon-style crunk? YEAH!!! I'm pretty sure we're all on hyphy now. WHAT?!!! That's over too, apparently. OKAY!!! Now it's all about Lil' Wayne's futuristic snap or something. LET'S GO!!! Either way, the 40 Elastik-format construction kits on this 2GB disc will have you sounding like Atlanta circa 2002 in no time at all with their 808 kicks and claps, pimp cup-rattling basslines and skittering synths reminiscent of the sorrowful clatter of a platinum grill dropping from the slack jaw of a misogynistic rapper onto the tear-stained floor of an empty Georgia strip club. I think you're getting the idea now. *Chris Barker*

6/10

Behringer ECM8000 |

£46

behringer.com

This budget offering from Behringer is a phantom-powered omnidirectional cardioid mic with a flat frequency response from 15Hz to 20kHz, designed purely as a measurement mic.

Behringer suggest that you use the ECM8000 with their EQs to create a custom equalisation curve for your room, levelling the frequency response of your monitoring setup. You can, of course, use software or other manufacturers' hardware to do the same job – I measured the response of my studio monitors using FuzzMeasure Pro, which plays a sine wave sweep through the speakers and measures the resulting sound. Even straight out of the box the ECM8000 produced revealing results.

For most of us, the price of the Behringer's more accurate rivals is prohibitive, but the ECM (which comes bundled with a mic stand clip, foam wind shield and plastic case) provides usable results for a fraction of the price of most of the competition. It's difficult to argue with the ECM8000 as a useful tool to get the most out of your monitoring setup. *Greg Scarth*

8/10



Altec Lansing FX3022 | £100

alteclansing.com

Desktop speakers are somewhat overlooked by the studio connoisseur in all of us. But what is also overlooked is that fact that a huge number of potential listeners do so on standard multimedia speakers. A good pair of desktop speakers could reveal horrors in your mix – not always for the best reasons, but your potential fans won't care about that.

Altec Lansing have long-fronted the PC-speaker market, churning out a bunch of computer-audio products for the past 70 years, so no surprises that they're the first to offer consumer's 2.2 desktop speakers in the form of the FX3022s. Shaped like two tiny traffic cones, the FX3022s house a subwoofer at the base of each cone. I do find that most multimedia speakers hype the bottom-end to impress the consumer, wiping out any low-frequency subtleties the producer had in mind, so I was sceptical of two sub bad boys grabbing hold of my DAW or iTunes.

At first, they sound very rounded – a little too rounded. The high-mid is relatively dull until you are perfectly sat in the sweet spot, where the high suddenly appears and everything sounds great. The rubber feet on the base are designed to give the subs some breathing room, but, because of their flat nature, tend to just vibrate the whole surface they're sat on. There's no headphone socket either, although there are two ins, Input and Aux. The volume control is in a '+' and '-' form, which can be annoying when you want to turn down in a hurry. Altec seem to have gone for design over practicality.

For the price, you would expect a wider sweet spot and an even frequency spread, however, if you want to make your iTunes or your mixes sound over-hyped to impress your mates, they're perfect. Otherwise, I'd look elsewhere.

Declan McGlynn

6/10



Tony Franklin – Not Just Another Pretty Bass |

£50

scvlondon.co.uk



Fretless bass master Tony Franklin presents this pack of 1051 bass samples, most of them with a distinct Rocky flavour. Samples from the Sony Sound Series are provided in Acidized 24-bit WAV format only, which may be a turnoff to some but overall, this is a solid double-CD package which never quite offers anything to get too excited about. Take note, purveyors of blandly titled discs: even the clumsiest pun earns you an extra point in the FM rating system. Moog River, Hammond Cheese, Sax on the Beats, Wuthering Hihats – just a few ideas to get you started. Don't disappoint us. *Greg Scarth*

6/10

Rhythm Organism | £60

timespace.com



A DVD devoted to didgeridoo grooves. Wow. Just consider it for a moment: someone, somewhere, has decided that there is a big enough Electronic didgeridoo music production scene to justify releasing a sixty quid sample disc catered for it. A recent Australian book, *The Daring Book for Girls*, incurred the wrath of Aboriginal leaders, who believe that the didgeridoo is strictly a male instrument which must not be played by women. The perfect timing of this DVD is surely not coincidental. If you are a female didgeridoo-based Electronic musician who doesn't wish to offend indigenous Australians, there is absolutely no doubt that this is the ideal product for you. *Greg Scarth*

9/10