

NEW GEAR

ROUND-UP

DRUM SOFTWARE

From £25 Cliff Douse checks out some of the latest drum software packages available on the percussion market

More drummers than ever before are making music with computers and using drum machines, loops and MIDI files to supplement their own playing. This is hardly surprising as drum software is affordable, easy to use, sounds great and doesn't upset the neighbours - unless you turn the volume right up, that is! We've rounded up four of the latest packages available - a virtual drum machine, two loop-based packages and a MIDI groove tool - and given our verdict on each of them. Each product can be used on a PC or Mac within a popular host such as Cubase, Logic or Pro Tools. Let's check them all out...



STEINBERG GROOVE AGENT 3 £187

This popular package boasts a large library of tweakable drum and percussion grooves covering more than 100 popular styles, all syncable to a sequencer's song tempo. You can import your own sounds and create your own kits. GA3 also includes Special Agent, offering realistic acoustic kits and Percussion Agent for percussive grooves and sounds. Dual Mode allows you to use two Agents alongside each other. This is easily the best, most powerful and flexible version of Groove Agent yet.

System Specs: Mac OSX 10.4, G5 2GHz (Mac) Win XP, Intel/AMD 2GHz (PC) 1GB RAM, USB Key

Rating ★★★★★

Arbiter 0208 207 7880



NONE VOLT AUDIO ACTION DRUMS: TAIKO EDITION £49.95

This package brings Japanese taiko drums to the REX, Apple Loop, Stylus RMX and ACID wav formats. There are 89 loop mixes and 590 individual parts. These are in 3/4, 4/4, 5/4 and 6/8 time between 120 and 200bpm. They sound great and are ideal for TV and film music. You can also tweak the loops within your sequencer or Stylus RMX's Chaos Designer to create your own authentic taiko patterns.

System specs: Mac or PC with Wav, Rex2, Apple Loops, RMX or Reason Refill capabilities

Rating ★★★★★

Time + Space 0183 755 200



TOONTRACK EZPLAYER PRO £25

EZplayer Pro is a multi-track MIDI organiser, arranger and format conversion tool that allows you to organise MIDI drum clips. You can use EZplayer Pro to preview the clips and drag and drop them directly into your sequencer and the multi-track arranger allows you to rearrange your MIDI clips. It's easy to use and a handy tool for anyone who works extensively with MIDI beats.

System Specs: Mac OSX 10.4, G4 1 GHz with 512 Mb RAM (Mac); 1.5Gb HD space, Windows XP/Vista, PIII/Athlon 1.8 GHz with 512 Mb RAM (PC)

Rating ★★★★★

Time + Space 0183 755 200



BIG FISH AUDIO JAZZ DRUMS £49.95

Jazz Drums is a disappointing package consisting of 1000 drum loops ranging from 50 to 200bpm. Although the loops are well organised they're generally uninspiring and lack in variety. While some are more usable than others, the worst sound dreadful when you change the tempo. If you're after jazz drum loops you'd be better off with Big Fish Audio's excellent Brush Artistry.

System Specs: Mac or PC with Wav, Rex2, Apple Loops, RMX or Reason Refill capabilities

Rating ★★★★★

Time + Space 0183 755 200

