



WaveMachine Labs Drumagog 5 | \$379

Bruce Aisher gets trigger-happy with a much-anticipated update to the Drumagog plug

ON THE DVD

WHAT IS IT?

A multi-platform drum replacement and re-triggering plug-in

CONTACT

Who: WaveMachine Labs
Web: drumagog.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Improved triggering
- 2 Automatic hi-hat tracking
- 3 Plug-in hosting

SPECS

OS: Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7. Mac OS X 10.4 or greater

Host: Any VST, RTAS, or AU host

HDD: at least 4GB

Copy Protection: iLok or Challenge/Response (iLok included or required)

WaveMachine Labs have been producing the well-regarded Drumagog transient replacement

plug-in for quite some time now, and the latest instalment was announced in the early months of this year. The release was delayed a couple of times, but it has now officially hit the streets.

Drum replacement technology takes various forms, but the basic concept is that individual drum recordings (kick drum, snare, toms etc) can be replaced or added-to using samples in order to bolster original recordings with additional layered elements, or to make use of better recorded drum sounds.

The replacements

What we have here is Drumagog 5 Platinum – the daddy of the range – and the only one to feature the full slew of new features. The software itself is cross-platform, with VST, RTAS and AU

versions. Installation is straightforward – the plug-in and (4GB) sample libraries are provided separately – and authorisation can either be handled by the usual challenge and response codes or iLok dongle (depending on your taste). Having loaded-up a multi-microphone drum recording, and inserted Drumagog 5 across the kick drum channel it was immediately clear that all the familiar Drumagog functionality was still in place.

However, the interface is a noticeable improvement on previous versions in aesthetic terms, and the rather amusing Drum Movie graphic has been dropped. Layout of the various functions is also clearer, and the Triggering Characteristics window is now always visible, giving constant feedback on triggering activity and associated parameters. These improvements also make for easier sample editing. In use, D5 feels more solid and reliable than its

previous incarnations. Certainly the 'Auto Align 2.0' appears to deliver improved accuracy when blending real and re-triggered elements.

WaveMachine Labs make much of their collaboration with Fraunhofer (inventors of the MP3 format) regarding these improvements, and it is certainly quicker and easier to get dependable results than before.

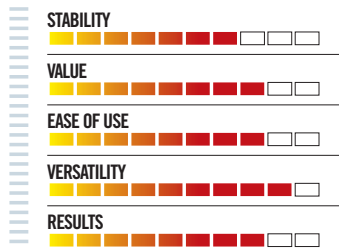
This success does, of course, depend on the way in which your drums were originally recorded, although there is still a range of different tools to minimise and manage mic-bleed from other kit elements.

Hats off

'Auto Hi-Hat Tracking' automatically detects hi-hat pedal positions (closed to open) in real time, and can be quite effective on well recorded hat parts, although considerable tweaking may be required, and I would hesitate in saying that you will get consistent accuracy across a single recording. Latency compensation also raised a few issues here. As well as the previous version's MIDI In/Out capabilities, D5 can now host its own plug-ins. Setup and plug-in scanning was fiddly (in order to avoid repeated crashes), but once in place, it allows you to trigger any plug-in you wish, and easily, from within Drumagog itself – very useful.

Built-in effects have also been added, with a decent-sounding convolution reverb and the 'MorphEngine' for more extreme processing. Drumagog 5 is a big improvement on earlier versions in many areas, and was for the most part a pleasure to use. Make sure you check version differences carefully before purchasing. Remember too that other software such as Logic Studio offers drum replacement functions, but at a much more basic level. If you consider the library, Drumagog 5 Platinum does pack a considerable punch. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT



A worthy successor to its earlier incarnations, with some useful improvements and great features.