

Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



Blue Icicle | £40

www.bluemic.com

Now, why didn't someone do this sooner? Blue's Icicle is a (relatively) streamlined way to get your favourite XLR-equipped kit

straight into your computer. The most obvious use being to instantly turn any favourite or classic mic into a USB mic in seconds. While it is possible to pop your mic directly onto

the Icicle the resultant 'megawand' is a little ungainly. Far better to convert it covertly via an XLR lead.

Sound quality is typically Blue excellent and easily comparable to the to the 'pro-pres' in our mid-range USB interface. Simple. *Daniel Griffiths*

9/10

TEAC NS-X1 | £229

www.teac.com

Seems that in 2012 an iPod dock simply isn't up to scratch unless it can wirelessly connect (via AirPlay) to your iDevice and belt out the tunes while you stride around remote dialing in your set.

This does of course ditch the incredibly useful feature of charging your pod while it plays, but thankfully

the NS-X1 also features a dock on top should you require juicing.

Connection was quick and easy – after grappling with a very plastic remote – and it reliably found, joined and magically made itself available every time it powered up. Net radio proved less successful however, it being far easier to your station from iTunes or an App than get it direct.

Sound quality was thick, mid-defined and generally good but rather bass-light and – thanks to the plastics involved and small speaker components loud, but never 'fun' or particularly 'ass-kicking'. That said, if you NEED AirPlay this works, and sounds just fine. *Philip Cheesbrough*

7/10



Inside Apple |

£20

www.hachette.com



Largely the work of disgruntled Apple employees who can finally put the boot into the late Steve Jobs without fear of retribution, Inside

Apple treads a curious path between, gossip-fest and serious 'how to run a successful business' manual.

The over arching theme is – of course – how odd Apple are, often directly contradicting established successful business practices in favour of their own bizarre 'way'. Similarly they come across as a mess of contradictions, being a place where freedom and creativity smash headfirst into 'do what you are told' and 'keep your mouth shut'.

While the retelling of Apple history will be boring to anyone who's already read Walter Isaacson's official Jobs bio, Inside Apple is an ideal sequel with just enough stage whispers to fill in the inconsequential (but juicy) bits that the pair preferred to bury.

Just pray that your boss/spouse/ bandmate doesn't read it and take it as carte blanche that they to can act like a complete asshole and get away with it. *Daniel Griffiths*

8/10

The Evolution of Electronic Dance Music |

\$17

www.backbeatbooks.com



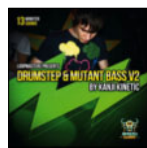
A cracking whizz through the history of synthstry that is easily caneable in a train journey. The old interviews with Depeche/Chemicals

etc might be dated but the on-going story is anything but. *Declan McGlynn*

8/10

Kanji Kinetic: Drumstep and Mutant Bass Vol 2 | £20

www.loopmasters.com



Weighing in at just over 550MB, Kanji Kinetic's subwoofer-splitting Volume 2 is certainly not for the fainthearted. With audio loops split into a variety of tempos (mainly focusing on the in and around 140 and 170bpm mark), this pack leaves no stone unturned in the filth department. The bass loops in particular are saturated in all the right places and ready to be dropped straight into your tracks, as are the synth loops; however a few were slightly over-cooked in obvious 'nastiness' for our tastes.

Though the drum loops sound great, they do wander 'off topic' and some tepid one-shots might be a bit lightweight seasoned Dubsteppers and Junglists. The raga vocals, though authentic were slightly over-compressed and in places there was audible headphone spill, but this is a small gripe with an otherwise great pack.

Whether you're just getting into production or need something to bolster your arsenal, these are some well built sounds, if not a bit content-shy for £20.

Daniel Griffiths

8/10

Re-Zone Presents Progressive Tech Essentials | £25

www.loopmasters.com



Uncompromising for the dancefloor there's plenty to sink your teeth into with over 850MB at play. There's 16 construction kits in a variety of keys ranging from 125-128BPM with a variety of drum loops, basslines, FX sweeps and everything else associated with the Progressive/Tech House vernacular.

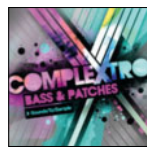
However with massive sidechains and modulation already in place some of the basses in particular are a little too processed and developed to drop straight into tracks. That said, this pack is worth it for the drums alone. Construction kits may not be your thing, and this isn't going to rewrite the book on House music, but the hypnotic and thumping drum loops are a redeeming feature, certainly a lot of keepers there. Hard to justify the price, but there's some top production in here.

Jon Andrews

7/10

Complextro Bass & Patches | £13

www.soundstosample.com



Now this is amazing. At a price that's about the same as a suite of vodka/Red Bulls you can treat your FM8 and Massive to a bunch of sounds (46 in total) that'll

instantly give you that grinding in-your-face Electro House and Dubstep lead/bass that you've been dreaming of.

And if you don't own either plug (why not?) then there's 101 loops to drop in exhibiting the same power, but lacking – obviously – your own unique spin.

Of course, we'd always recommend that you simply sit down with Massive and enjoy it's raw power for 100% original sound design, but for Dubstep in a hurry (or as a great way to learn your new plugs) these track-ready sounds are diverse, powerful and bang on-genre. *Greg Scarth*

9/10

Mason: Analogue Farmhouse | £25

www.loopmasters.com



The term 'Analogue' is banded about a lot these days, as producers search for that ever more authentic sound, but with the masters Mason at the controls this is the genuine article.

In a variety of keys centred around prime House tempo territory, this pack is full of deep, rich and wobbly waveforms. Mason have really hit the nail on the head with this one. The genre spanning set of sounds instantly resonates with inspiration and, a wealth of warm, wonky and buzzy basslines slotted right in to anything we tried them with.

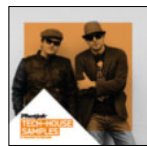
The music and FX loops oozed with class, and the one shot library was hard-hitting and full-bodied.

Skillfully side stepping genre classification, these sounds will breathe life into any style of House that yearns for something classic sounding without being too retro. And at £25 for just shy of 950GB, this is a real gem. *Will Seelig*

10/10

Phatjak: Tech-House Samples | £15

www.soundstosample.com



At just 290MB in total size, this pack cuts straight to the chase, with a laser-accurate blast of solid pumping Tech. Special mention

to the super-warm bottom end throughout that's going to find a place in any in-progress House track lacking that certain something.

Synths are exciting and quirky without ever being plain 'daft' and the mix of programmed beats and shuffling, treated sample loops are spot on, possessing both persistent energy and the vital room to breath between the beats that true pulsing Tech-House demands.

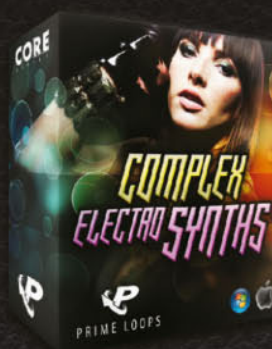
Phat, beefy and guaranteed to hit the spot we just wish this was twice as big and twice the price. *Daniel Griffiths*

9/10

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



COMPLEX ELECTRO SYNTHS

The radical sound aesthetics of Dubstep are all the rage right now – and slowly trickling over into all other major music genres! Prime Loops' latest cutting-edge electro house samples collection "Complex Electro Synths" brings you over 400Mb of dubstep infused electro synth loops, crazy fragmented lead hooks, sidechained wobble bass samples, chopped-up sound FX and much more to instantly tear up the clubs!

£17.95



DIRTY SOUTH VOCAL SAMPLES

Cut right through the sticky, urban air with Prime Loops' blazin hot "Dirty South Vocal Samples" collection! This is the ultimate one-stop shop for all the Dirty and Southern vocal hooks, group shouts, urban hype hooks and hip hop phrases you'll ever need to make your tracks stand out!

£17.95



ULTIMATE DUBSTEP DRUMMER

Dance to the beat of your own wicked drum! "Ultimate Dubstep Drummer" is Prime Loops' latest heavy-weight treasure trove (some call it booty, no less) of multi-faceted drum ammunition, including piercing claps, mighty snares, powerful percussion hits as well as ultra low kick drums that will give any of your dubstep productions the ultimate punch!

£17.95



CHAMPAGNE ROCKAZ

Keep it poppin', baby! The number 1 hitmakers from Prime Loops are proud to present you "Champagne Rockaz": a super-slick, ultra-modern urban sound collection that seriously delivers the sparkling goods – straight past the bouncers and onto your exclusive VIP table in that shiny boutique club everyone is raving about.

£17.95

www.primeloops.com