



Neat Beecaster | £229

<http://neatmic.com>

Neat Microphones' Beecaster brings new sophistication to the concept of desktop USB mic by having selectable polar patterns delivered by an array of four large diameter condenser capsules inside their large rectangular housing. You get mono recording with a cardioid pattern, plus three types of stereo: normal (XY), wide (Blumlein) and focused (M/S). Solidly-built with a heavy base and adjustable metal arm that can position the business end of the mic wherever you need it, plus monitoring neatly sorted via a volume knob and mute switch, the Beecaster is the most practical desktop USB mic we've seen, offering quality sound capture for a wide range of sources. **Trevor Curwen**

9/10



Shure Motiv MVi Interface | £95

www.shure.co.uk

Shure's new digital mics could easily overshadow the MVi, their interface-only option. However, this compact, chunky, metal-cased unit includes a combo XLR and 1/4-inch instrument jack, and a mini jack headphone output. The front panel is much like the touch panel of the MV51, with the same DSP options and level control, but here holding down the mic mute button activates the phantom power. This provides +/-12V when hooked up to iOS devices, and +/-48V when connected via USB. So,

assuming your favourite capacitor mic is fairly tolerant of lower phantom voltages, you now have an elegant means for recording directly into your iOS device; and with onboard zero latency monitoring, much like the MV5 and MV51, overdubbing is also straightforward. This simple flexibility actually makes the MVi our favourite of the Shure iOS devices, and £95 is a fair price for an iOS compatible peripheral. **Jon Musgrave**

9/10



Electro-Harmonix C9 | £142

www.ehx.com

The C9 from Electro Harmonix is the latest organ emulation pedal from the New York effects wizards. Following on from the B9, this version also includes nine preset classic organ tones, but focuses on compact organs with some vintage keys thrown in. Farfisa, Telstar and even a Mellotron emulation are among the presets available. The controls are the same as the B9, so the Dry, Wet, Mod and Click knobs are all retained. Mod and Click control different parameters depending on the preset chosen; for instance, if you have the Blimp (Led Zep-style organ) preset engaged then Mod will control the amount of Leslie speaker dialled in and Click the amount of upper harmonics. For other presets the Click may control the percussive sound level, or even depth of vibrato.

The C9 comes in the standard rugged housing we've come to expect from EHX. The sounds generated in the C9 feel like an extension of those from its alphabetically superior brother and not just a replacement.

Like the B9, the tracking of the C9 isn't entirely perfect with some lower notes not tracked as well in some presets. This is only a tiny grumble, as is the slight latency, and neither are at the detriment of usability. **Simon Arblaster**

8/10

Legowelt Studio Sound Pack for Elektron Rytm | £12

eu.elektron.se

Whether you prefer to build your beats from scratch, or just like to tweak the sounds presented to you, Elektron's sound packs are a great addition to your set-up. The quality is always high and this offering for the



Rytm from Legowelt is no different. The soundset is brimming with dense and crunchy tones all laid out in one Rytm project. There are some heavyweight drums and samples on offer here which will have your creative flow taking new directions with ease.

The same can't be said for loading the sample pack though. Rytm power users will no doubt fly through the submenus with ease, while the rest of us do battle with the instructions, and frustration is further compounded by the whole transaction taking around 20-30 minutes. *Simon Arblaster*

9/10



Mono The FlyBy Pack | £145

<http://monocreators.com>

The FlyBy from Mono is the second largest pack in their EFX range and undoubtedly the most useful. The pack is able to transform into two separate bags leaving you with one lightweight laptop backpack and one messenger bag for the rest of your gear. Storage options are plentiful and we found it very easy to pack in a basic live set-up consisting of an Elektron Rytm, a few effects pedals, a

17-inch laptop, headphones, audio interface and a whole bunch of cables – all of which are neatly held in place in their own compartment with a velcro loop to prevent any tangling. The bag itself feels quite bulky, but it's reassuringly protective and comfy, so you won't be worrying about your gear in transit. *Simon Arblaster*

8/10

Retrospective Presents Back to the '80s | £29.95

www.loopmasters.com

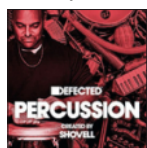


The '80s wasn't all Miami Vice jacket sleeves, Rubik's Cubes, and time travelling sports cars – there was some iconic music too. Over the course of this 789MB pack you'll hear some of the best and brightest sounds of the decade. Think Electro's booming 808 bass, Classic House's one-finger synths, and early Hip-Hop's tough drum programming and you're getting warm. That's the overall vibe of this collection, as its low-slung beats and handclaps cut through the rich analogue melodies. There's no cone-melting bass, frantic builds and drops, or schizo synth lines. The picture painted here is of a laidback and groovy '80s, which will be right up the street for any producers out there feeling a bit worn out by the pace of the sound of late 2015. Tempos range from 104-122bpm, and all of the 419 WAV files were recorded at 24-bit 44.1KHz. *Roy Spencer*

8/10

Defected Percussion Shovell | £29.95

www.loopmasters.com

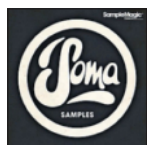


Defected Records had already dipped their toe in the sample pack scene with the excellent Copyright comp, Defected House. For round two M People percussionist Shovell is tasked with supplying the loops, and he does here what he does best. The 1.26GB of 24-bit 44.1KHz loops and hits are exclusively percussion. Everything from bongos to congas get a workout, and they're locked into such intoxicating rhythms that you'll be itching to drop them into your tracks the minute you clap ears on them. Standout picks include the 103 indispensable shaker loops, or the fine batch of cowbell licks. Every folder hides some gold, though, and they are sure to lift your 4/4 drum patterns into funky new heights. We dig. *Roy Spencer*

9/10

Sample Magic Soma Samples | £19.90

www.samplemagic.com



If any label deserves the sample pack treatment it's House and Techno imprint, Soma. Since 1991 they've been at the forefront of Dance music. Everyone from Daft Punk to Funk D'Void have dropped game-changers on this beloved Scottish label and, where they go, people follow. Now you can too, with this epic set of samples inspired by the output of the vast

Soma camp over the years. The 625 24-bit WAV files ooze class. From vintage Detroit influenced synth and pad chords, to contemporary speaking quaking basslines, this pack takes in the breadth of the label's output over the years without any elements feeling dated, or, indeed, trendy. The key-matched and cleanly labelled loops are a breeze to work with, and everything has been recorded with care, using some of the most iconic machines in Dance music history.

Scrolling through the folders feels like an education, and the contents are sure to fire the imagination. *Roy Spencer*

8/10

Prime Loops Shaolin Beatz | \$25.53

www.primeloops.com



King Fu film sampling started with experimental Breaks bods like Depth Charge, but the true master of the style has to be RZA. The Wu-Tang beatmaker really ran with it on his first batch of group and solo albums, taking snippets of movie dialogue to add mood and punch/kick sound effects to bolster his drum hits. Prime Loops are picking up the baton to bring you more battle-ready beats for your buck. And what a crop! They've dusted off their Shaw Brothers films, broke out the MPC, and really gone to town on this Wu-Tang inspired collection of Golden Era East Coast samples. The 895MB+ collection has more neck-snapping drum hits, funky Oriental melodies, and punch and kick SFX than you can shake a nunchaku at. The Kung Fu content is wrapped up in 14 fully-formed song kits, and two dedicated folders of MIDI files.

Roy Spencer

8/10

APM Productions Halloween Vocal Intros Vol 1 | £7.26

www.soundstosample.com



As you read this, Halloween will be some ghoulishly distant memory, but there's always next year. That's where this comes in – a vocal sample pack dedicated to the most haunting night of the year. It's always a big party night and parties mean DJs, so why not stock up on some scary voices, maniacal laughter, and spooky vocal intros to pepper your next monster mashup with? At 91 files it's a bit skeletal, but it is a budget pack so you don't expect too much more meat on those bones. As vocal sample packs go, it's hilarious – twice as camp as Vincent Price's spoken word bits on *Thriller*, if you can imagine that. Perfect for cheesy intro overlays for your next Halloween set. *Roy Spencer*

7/10