

Toontrack SDX: Custom & Vintage | £125

Superior Drummer continues to grow in versatility. And **Greg Scarth's** ears are in for a beating



ON THE DVD

WHAT IS IT?

Expansion pack for Superior Drummer 2.0.

CONTACT

Who: Time & Space
Tel: +44 (0)1837 55200
Web: timespace.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Wide variety of rare and unusual drums
- 2 All samples recorded with high production values
- 3 Incredible sound from legendary signal path

SPECS

System Requirements:
12GB hard drive space for full install, DVD drive, requires Superior Drummer 2.0 installation (not included)

Hot on the heels of their well received Metal Foundry and Lost New York Studios releases, Toontrack offer a

huge new Custom & Vintage expansion pack for their Superior Drummer virtual instrument. The first few Superior SDX packs focused mainly on samples of classic drums and cymbals from well-known manufacturers, but the drum selection here is noticeably more esoteric, offering a huge variety of rare and interesting drums to add to your Superior collection.

Installation issues

Whereas previous expansion packs have been perfectly straightforward to install, Custom & Vintage initially refused to play ball with my Mac, despite the fact I was following the instructions to the letter. A quick email to Toontrack tech support revealed that Snow Leopard has changed the way OS X handles file permissions, causing a problem with the Superior installer. The problem is easily

solved by installing the files to the desktop rather than the Superior Drummer folder in the Library.

I'm assured that Toontrack are working on a solution but this workaround is currently the only option. Windows installation is completely unaffected and still runs smoothly.

Drum selection

Diving straight into Superior's kit construction window, a thorough investigation of the choices on offer reveals a huge arsenal of positively droolworthy percussive instruments. Big names like Ludwig, Gretsch, Noble & Cooley and Slingerland are represented, along with high-end boutique manufacturers such as Camco, Craviotto, Noonan and Canopus. Cymbals are mainly K Zildjian, with a variety of Turkish-made crashes and rides on offer.

Paiste provide a handful of further cymbal options, including 16-, 17- and 18-inch fast crashes plus bell, mellow

and dark rides in various sizes. The final choice comes in the form of the Steve Hubback Cymbal Sculpture, an unusual 24-inch handmade ride which offers a wide variety of unique tones.

How do they sound?

One of the most exciting features of the Custom & Vintage pack is the signal chain used in the recording process. All of the drums were recorded at London's 2KHz Studios and the list of equipment used in the sessions will make any gear nerd green with envy: an ex-Abbey Road EMI TG console with Germanium mic pres, a variety of classic Neumann, AKG and Sennheiser mics and the legendary Helios F760 compressor on one of the room mic channels. Soloing individual mic channels in Superior's mixer window reveals the outstanding clarity and character on offer.

It's also worth mentioning that the pack includes library of MIDI patterns played by highly-experienced session drummer Chris Whitten. Depending on the style of music you're making, these may come in handy.

Conclusion

Trying to add up the value of the sounds here is practically impossible. A drum like the Craviotto Timeless Timber snare alone would cost a couple of thousand pounds, putting the sounds in this expansion pack out of the reach of all but the most well-heeled drummers. For most of us, this is as close as we'll get to some of these rare and highly sought-after instruments.

The sound of the samples in this pack is perhaps best described as being less American than previous releases, with a less polished sound which might work better for British music than some of the slick, super-clean kits already available. Overall, the Custom & Vintage SDX is highly flexible, providing the professional results we've come to expect from Superior Drummer. **FM**



FutureMusic VERDICT

STABILITY



VALUE



EASE OF USE



VERSATILITY



RESULTS



Toontrack hit the mark again with a distinctive sound and samples of extremely sought-after hardware.