



**WHAT IS IT?**

A virtual studio with built-in instruments, effects, MIDI, audio recording and sample manipulation tools.

**CONTACT**

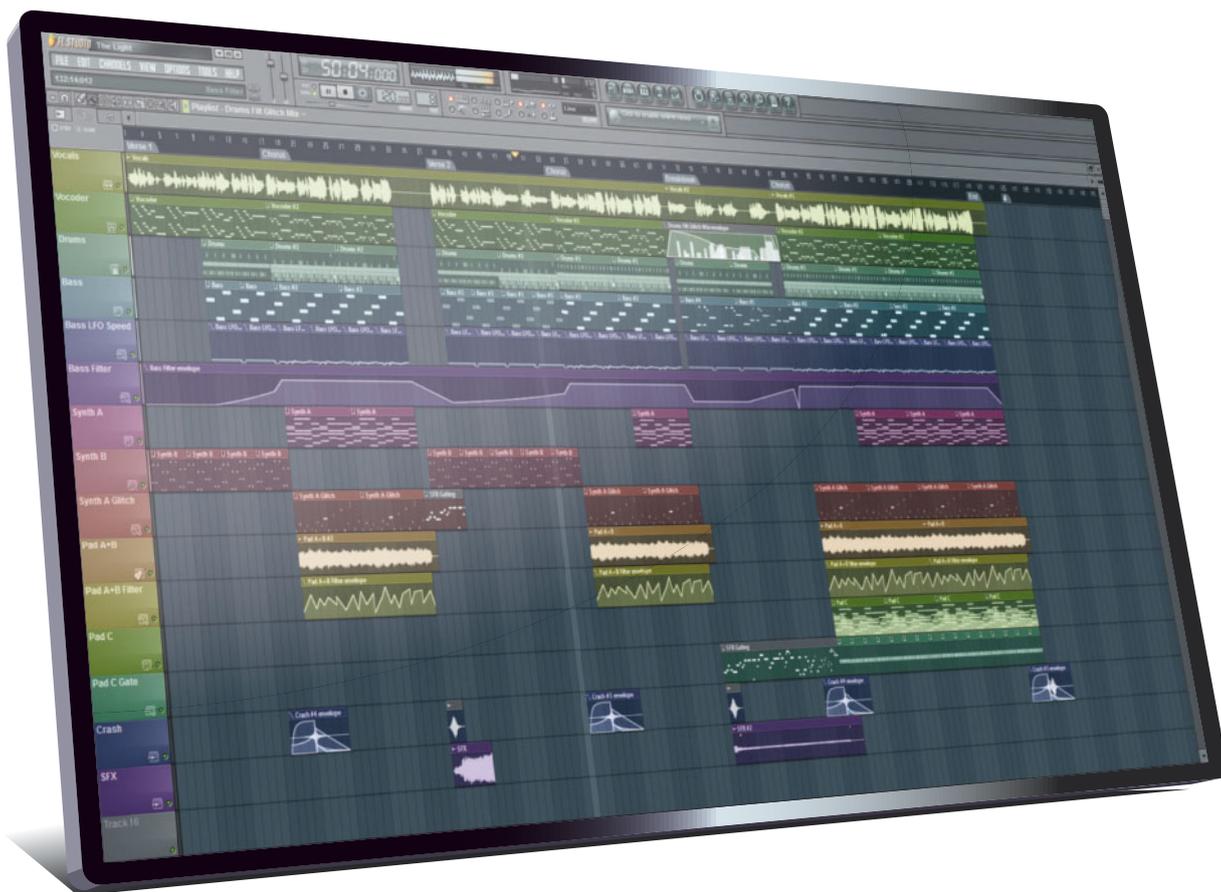
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**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 Value for money
- 2 Plug-in bridging options
- 3 New patcher

**PRICING**

- FL Studio Express Edition (download) - \$49
- FL Studio Fruity Edition (boxed) - £99
- FL Studio Producer Edition (boxed) - £199
- FL Studio Signature Bundle (boxed) - £299



# Image Line FL Studio 10 | £299

FL Studio has just seen an update to double-digits. **Bruce Aisher** takes a look at the latest incarnation of this ever-evolving system and wonders what it has up its sleeve this time around

**T**o many seasoned producers, Image Line's name is still associated with the 'Fruity Loops' moniker – a well-regarded beat creation and programming tool from roughly 12 years ago. However, along the way and as new features were added, the program developed into a fully-fledged DAW. In other words, its functionality has extended into the realms of integrated multi-track audio, MIDI and plug-in technology. However, despite this there

are signs of the original 'Fruity' past in the DNA of FL Studio, but this shouldn't be seen as a bad thing. Essentially, FL Studio offers pattern or track-based sequencing via a step sequencer or piano roll editor using built-in and third-party hosted plug-ins. Check out the box on page 98 for more information on the various FL flavours that are available, and what is included with each version. The last time I looked at FL Studio was last summer, with the arrival of the

FL9.5 public beta. This brought with it a host of new features, ultimately paving the way for the move to version 10.0.0 that sits before me right now.

**Give me some juice...**

So that brings us to the features that will be new to those moving from FL9 to 10, and who hadn't dared delve into the world of public beta-testing. In general terms, we get 64-bit plug-in support, as the plug-in Wrapper now detects the presence of 64-bit versions and automatically opens them in 'bridged' mode. Interestingly, FL Studio also support 32-bit bridging.

In the 32-bit Operating Systems, such as Windows XP, the total memory each application (and by implication all the plug-ins that sit inside it) can use is limited and inflexible. Bridging solves some of these issues, by allowing plug-ins to use their own memory space, which is then 'bridged' back to the main application.

The significance of this for most users is in when using sample-based plug-ins that eat-up large chunks of available RAM – now you should be able to run more of them with less problems. This improved use of memory allows plug-ins to use 2GB (in a 32-bit OS) and up to 192GB in a 64-bit environment. FL Studio now also uses a

'Keep on Disk' option for Audio Clips & Sampler Channels that allows mapping of these to separate memory space.

Sticking to performance issues, the Audio preferences have been updated and offer two further options that might improve CPU load with some ASIO drivers ('Mix in bufferswitch' and 'Triple buffer'). These appear to offer an extra layer of protection between the program and soundcard drivers, reducing glitching and possible drop-outs.

It should also be noted that plug-in delay compensation for a new project is now fully automatic by default.

### Play it again Sam...

There have been some modest, but useful, changes to the mixer section. A 'Wide Tracks' option makes for much easier navigation and editing of the mixer surface, while a 'Waveform' meter option provides a useful alternative way of viewing each track's audio via downwardly-scrolling waveform displays.

The Playlist area of FL Studio has been revised, allowing the resizing of track heights (this addition certainly helps when more detailed editing is required, particularly with automation

## Newtone and Pitcher Plug-ins

The update introduces two new optional pitch manipulation plug-ins for use within FL.

**Pitcher** is a real-time pitch-correction plug-in in the manner of Antares Autotune, but with a few additional features. For simple pitch correction, automatic mode can be used, with the option of setting the scale, key or notes to avoid. MIDI mode allows for external control of pitch transposition, with a 'harmonize' mode capable of producing four-part harmonies. The correction speed setting allows for the plug-in's use a 'special' effect, while various formant options determine how



much the timbre changes with extreme values.

Newtone takes its cue from software such as Celemony's Melodyne or zplane's vielklang. This allows audio clips to be dragged from the playlist and manipulated on a note-by-note basis. The plug-in allows the user to adjust volume, pitch,

pitch variation (vibrato) and formant elements individually against a standard piano-roll style grid. In fact pitch and volume adjustments can be made for the whole note as well as the user-definable ramp-in and ramp-out sections. The results can even be output to a MIDI file.

and the number of mouse and modifier options have been increased for improved copying, moving and duplication of elements.

has seen some significant changes, although many of these might not be immediately obvious and relate to the cycling, selection, zooming and

rescaling of notes and clips.

Usefully, Piano Roll and Playlist sync has now been added – meaning that editing in the Piano Roll while in Song mode will

also move the Playlist transport. Additionally, Piano Rolls may now be exported to a standard notated musical score in PDF format.

## Markers have been expanded to include Live Playlist types that allow for looping, pausing and skipping

work), the locking of track heights and locking of tracks to clips. A new playback tool allows the preview / auditioning of Audio and Pattern Clips,

Markers have been expanded to include Live Playlist marker types that allow for real-time looping, pausing and skipping. Similarly the Piano Roll editor



There have been some modest changes to the FL Studio mixer section

### SPECS

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows: 2GHz AMD or Intel Pentium 3 compatible CPU (with full SSE1 support), Windows 7, Vista, XP/2000 (32- & 64-bit), 1GB RAM, 1GB free hard disk space + Windows-compatible soundcard with DirectSound drivers. ASIO drivers are required for audio recording. FL installer comes with generic Asio4All for soundcards that do not provide ASIO drivers.

**Mac:** Intel Mac with Boot Camp (running XP or Vista) - or another virtualisation environment.

