

Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



Ultrasonik DJ1 | £131

ultrasoneuk.com

Now, try as they may, most manufacturers struggle with DJ headphones as it's a pretty awkward

balance to get right. Invest in the build quality and make a robust durable set of gigging cans, or invest in the sound quality and build a tasty set of monitoring phones. In my experience you rarely find sets that

achieve both but this brilliant set of headphones really does. The sound is so well-defined and separated that long loud sessions are possible without the cloudy fatigue that other boomy cans give you.

They're not too heavy, feel nice and comfy when using them at home and when DJing they are tough enough and feature all the regular reverse

housing and other features you expect. Long-term testing will see if they can really survive the clubs. In terms of buying one set of headphones for a few different jobs, these will satisfy your needs. Once you hear these, you'll be hooked. Great headphones. **Chris Barker**

9/10

Sun Jar | £20

Suck.uk.com

Spending hours and hours hunched over, staring at computer screen in a dimly lit, plant-free studio is no way to spend your life. A happy studio is a happy producer and this solar miracle could save your day.

Forward-thinking gadgeteers Suck UK have come up with the quick-thinking idea of a solar-powered light, contained in an inconspicuous old-fashioned kitchen jar. Left in

sunlight during the day, the Sun Jar charges up in around eight hours without any plugs or switches to worry about. Then, once it gets a bit dim, the automatic sensor switches on the light and its orange glow gives the ambience of candle-light without any of the horrific dangers associated with actually lighting a fire in your studio. Glazed-glass casing leaves all the circuitry and bulbs out of sight, but provides just the right shielding when the light kicks in. Lovely! **Declan McGlynn**

9/10



Nu-Rave Sample DVD | £60

timespace.com



In case you didn't know, Nu-Rave has descended upon us like a saw-wave tsunami, colliding 'real' instruments and full-on synth sounds in a post-apocalyptic after-party that you're not cool enough to get invited to. Thankfully, Sample Magic have come to your credibility's rescue with their new (nu?) sample collection.

Providing the best of Electro-Parisian-House, Disco-Punk and Nu-New-Wave, the DVD is packed with distortion-laden loops and shots, polished to the highest degree, ready for the floor. While there are a little less one-shots than on other sample DVDs, I'll take 30 useable kicks over 400 useless ones any day.

The one thing about the loops is that they are a bit too good! They provide solutions and not starting points. Not necessarily a criticism, the fact remains that Sample Magic have mastered the genre so that you can too. Rad. **Declan McGlynn**

9/10

Balkan Lines | £70

timespace.com



Once again Ueberschall let you go wild, this time in the Balkans. Compiled in co-operation with one of the great Balkan Brass bands – Superstar Orkestar – this 3.6GB collection includes various brass and woodwinds lines along with Bouzouki, Oud, Darbucka, acoustic and electric guitars with some Gypsy style vocals/clapping. These can easily be slipped into House, R 'n' B or indeed Hip Hop tracks with no fuss at all.

1,070 loops and the ever-present Elastik Loop player ensure that this sample DVD can add the little something that your tune has been lacking, or send you off into uncharted areas!

Roger Watson

8/10



iTouch MIDI | €40

itouchmidi.com

When Apple launched the App Store a few months back, our collective imaginations blubbed away as to the possibilities of using it's very portable and very sleek interface in a musical way. One of the most exciting that has cropped up in the past few months has been the iTouch MIDI Gold collection from iTouch MIDI. Containing iTM Keys, iTM Matrix, iTM XY Pad, iTM MCU and iTM Tilt, the collection provides you with instant, touch-screen live performance and

studio tools. If the names aren't obvious enough for you, Keys is a one-octave keyboard (with octave buttons), Matrix is a Trigger-Finger style pad interface with 4x4 or 8x8 options, XY Pad is an XY controller with five preset banks, MCU is a Mackie Control emulator with eight sliders, seq buttons bank options and Tilt capitalises on the iPod/Phone's tilt sensor, essentially creating a touch-free XY pad. Phew. So, does it work? Well, installation is a doddle and I had them running on my iPod in no time. Once the bridging

software MidiLab was installed, my iPod picked it up straight away and I was playing VSTs in Ableton Live within five minutes.

The iPod screen feels great to play around on and for the price and for the features, this is simply fantastic. A lot of fun and, more so, very very useful for quick ideas. Get it. Get it all. **Declan McGlynn**

9/10



Glowing Drumsticks | £15

theglowcompany.com

These heavy plastic delights would probably be quite a danger if they were battering a real drum kit at any pace for a full two-hour rock set. But fling these glowers as a birthday treat to the drummer in your latest New Rave outfit and every time the stick makes contact, watch a beam of light shoot up the stick from the base. These are great as a quirky effect during a gig, or for the drummer who has everything. **Chris Barker**

9/10

All Them Beats | £40

timespace.com



A must-have collection of MIDI files, WAV loops and REX files covering a huge range of styles including African, Middle Eastern and Caribbean beats as well as some true classics such as *The Funky Drummer* and *When the Levee Breaks*. If you have a large drum sample collection and use Guru or similar drum samplers, then this could be a bargain purchase of the season. 430 MIDI files ready to be tweaked and teased to your hearts content.

All recorded live using V-drums played by Bill Bryant. The 1000 WAV files are very useful too, with a bonus helping of loops taken from PowerFX's award-winning samples – Nice! **Roger Watson**

8/10

Dancevolution | £56

timespace.com



Pumping intensity is the order of the day with this DVD, as Big Fish Audio bring you a one stop shop of over 3.7GBs worth of fully-realised moments of energised emotional intensity(!?). Buried within the GBs, you have plenty of different formats for every software you could be using – Acidized WAV files, Apple loops, Halion 2 kits, Battery 2 kits, Kontakt 2 kits as well as NNXT and Redrum kits for the Reason heads out there. Well-produced by Sigmund Droid for Bunker 8 Digital Labs, this didn't exactly set my world on fire, although if you're a Euro/Techno-type then this could be a very useful addition to your library.

Roger Watson

7/10



Overboard Waterproof bags | from £30

over-board.com

After the usual wet festival season it's a shame we didn't discover these completely water proof bags sooner. Designed for sailing, here at FM, we could see the

benefits of keeping all of our audio goodies nice and dry when either out on the road gigging, or attending the multitude of soggy festivals every year. A useful product to keep your treasures safe and dry, despite their butt-ugly looks. **Chris Barker**

7/10