

MINI REVIEWS

Electro-Harmonix Pitch Fork | £99

www.ehx.com

Taking cues from its POG and HOG brethren, Pitch Fork is the latest polyphonic pitch-harmonising pedal from EHX. Encased in their 'nano' chassis, the Pitch Fork comes in just under £100 and is totally worth every penny. It features 11 pitch settings from a 17-cent detune to three octaves and you can scale up, down or select the Dual mode for both. Combined with the blend function, you can dial in the original signal for bigger

harmonies, or a massive discordant mess – it's entirely up to you. The footswitch features latch and momentary modes, so you can either have a constant pitched signal or a fixed-rate glissando (depending on pitch destination). The rate of glide can be varied with the use of an expression pedal via the EXP input, which will also accept CV.

Pitch Fork tracks notes really well, however there is a slight latency, but it's only very slight

and by no means unplayable. There is also a noticeable attenuation of higher frequencies the further away from the original pitch you go, so the third octave sounds quite dull. Again, it's not enough to be unusable. For the money, Pitch Fork is a no-brainer; there's a huge amount of pitch variation and with CV control it's opened up to even more pitching possibilities. *Simon Arblaster*

9/10



Tidal | £19.99/month

www.tidalhifi.com

Tidal is a lossless music streaming service that is pitting itself against the mighty Spotify et al. So should you be ditching your subscription to your current streaming service, or is this the perfect upgrade to a premium service? Compared to Spotify's lossy format at 320Kbps, Tidal offers lossless audio via 1411Kbps FLAC files. So, with nearly five times the quality, you'd think that it would sound so much better. Unfortunately, there is very little discernible difference to the ear. Yeah, sure there are certain tracks on which it's more noticeable than others but, when listening on a mobile device with average headphones, you'll be hard-pushed to spot that difference. So just invest in a decent set of cans for a better listening experience.

The catalogue is certainly impressive and, while it's not quite the sheer amount of music you'll find available on the likes of Spotify, it is constantly growing. The look and feel of the interface is very similar to Spotify and the familiarity does help to make you feel at home. However, if you have spent years curating playlists on another provider, you'll be frustrated at the prospect of doing it all over again. Another slight disappointment is that tracks are only available offline on mobile devices, but it's only a minor gripe as that's the only place you'll really want offline songs and, as file sizes are greatly increased courtesy of the uncompressed format, you will need a lot of space if you're thinking of taking entire albums offline.

Tidal is available on iOS, Android and Desktop (a Chrome-only web app). Currently there is only one subscription price and that is a very healthy £19.99 per month. Its closest rival, Deezer Elite, is offering its lossless streaming service at £5 less, but it's currently only available on Sonos with no offline mode. There are so many plus points to Tidal and I think they do outway the cons. If you have the storage space and you haven't already invested your time too heavily in another streaming service, then Tidal is value for money. Now, if someone can just develop a tool to port my playlists, then I'll be a lot happier. *Simon Arblaster*

7/10

Decksaver For Push | £40

www.decksaver.co.uk

Decksaver for Push, a protective cover for Ableton's flagship hardware controller, is a single piece of transparent polycarbonate designed to protect the controller "from damaging elements such as smoke, liquid and accidental impact" when not in use. In practice, the sleek cover is simple but effective, fitting snugly over Push exactly as you'd expect. Recesses on the back even allow access to Push's connections and power button while safeguarded. Studio-dwellers are bound to appreciate the shelter against

everyday knocks, scrapes, bumps, spillages, dust and grime; the touring user can now bundle the shielded controller into a bag or case without fear of breakage.

While its £40 retail price may put off those on a budget (we would've appreciated some kind of cover for Push's base, too), many will appreciate the security this product provides – and, as owners will agree, Push is an investment well worth protecting. *Joe Rossitter*

8/10



Sounds + MIDI: Deep & Future House For Sylenth Vol 1 | £24.95

www.producerloops.com



The Sounds + MIDI label expands its mission to bring you the best in original patches for Sylenth1. While previous

releases from the camp have focused on the genre with a wide scope, this release closes ranks on the deeper end of cutting-edge House music sounds.

The fizzing leads, soaring synths, and cavernous bass riffs and loops on offer have been designed to evoke the sonic palette of acts like Disclosure and Dusky, but Urban beatmakers with an ear for the more electronic angles of current R 'n' B could find a home for some of the 38 enclosed MIDI files as well. Dragging and dropping the 128 patches into your arrangements is quick and easy, and the sounds are ripe for chopping and tweaking into freaky new phrases. **Roy Spencer**

7/10

Loopmasters – Synth Explorer: TR-505 | £14.95

www.loopmasters.com



The Roland TR-505 Rhythm Composer never got as much props as its big brother, the 808.

Vince Clarke and

Aphex Twin may have been fans, but not many others managed to eke out killer grooves from its rather underwhelming range of sampled drum tones.

So why bother with a sample pack celebrating this largely overlooked piece of kit? Well, the nerds at Loopmasters HQ have popped the lid and circuit bent the guts out of their machine, making shit pop like never before. The 100 twisted drum loops and one-shot samples they've forced this defenceless little 505 to come up with are, frankly, bare rude. It's a bit of a 'before and after' advert situation. If you thought the 505 was an eight-stone weakling when it came out in 1986, then look at him now – he's ripped, and kicking sand back in your face. **Roy Spencer**

8/10

Singomakers – Ableton Mastering Templates | £19.95

www.loopmasters.com



The demand for Ableton templates is on the up, as producers struggling to make their sound pop as hard as the latest club bangers happily part with their cash. This set from Singomakers camp is a great introduction to this growing market, or another handy production tool for fans of similar packs like Sample Magic's excellent Ableton Magic Racks series. What you get here are 28 mastering

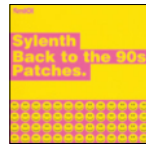
templates for seven of the hottest genres of the day: EDM, Trap, Deep & Small Room House, Dubstep, Melbourne Bounce, Nu Disco & Indie Dance and Drum 'n' Bass. The degree to which these genres favour a polished and balanced sound should have you guessing just how much these mastering chain templates will lift a tired or flat production.

Singomakers have just made mastering a breeze... Note: several templates require iZotope Ozone 5 and Waves Plug-ins. **Roy Spencer**

8/10

SM101 – Sylenth Back To The '90s Patches | £14.90

www.samplemagic.com



The jeans might be tighter, but the pills and piano lines of today's clubland are just as large as the super in-vogue style of the '90s. So, in timely fashion, the Sample Magic bods are all 'Top one, nice one, get sorted' in the place, and taking it on back with their latest collection of Orbital-era Rave-style patches for Sylenth.

As with the rest of the SM101 series, you get slightly over a hundred things to fiddle with. Here it's retro arps, basses, keys, leads and pads – plus some super flexible MIDI files. The sound is proper Old Skool – think early Prodigy: all bad skin and big pupils. If you want to scare *Daily Mail* readers, worry sheep near an outdoor illegal Rave, or just keep everyone reaching for the lasers, this cheeky set will be right up your street, matey. More Hoovers than Dixons – Oi! Oi! **Roy Spencer**

9/10

Sounds To Sample Presents – Fly House Vocal Toolz | £16.44

www.soundstosample.com



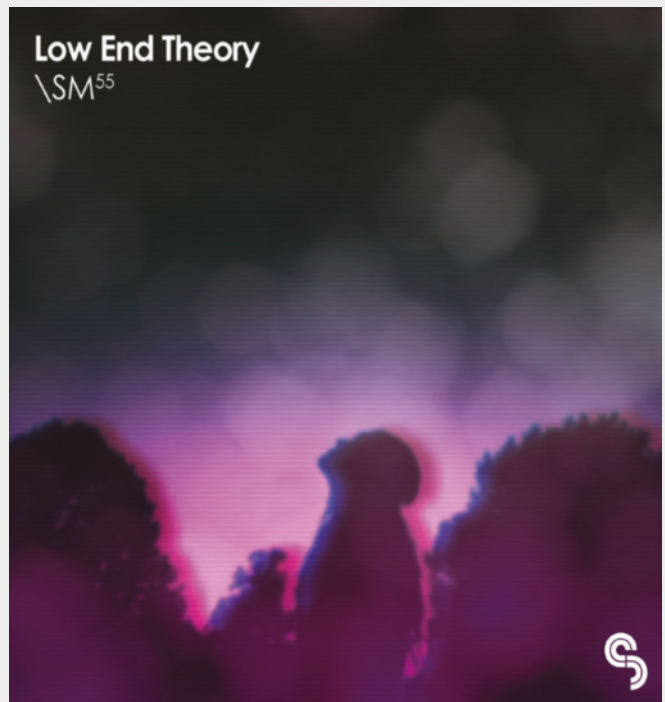
If you're in the market for hands-in-the-air vocal business, look no further. Sounds To Sample have drafted in the Fly House Records camp, and they know a thing or two about the job in hand. Besides the straight-up chart-smashing House styles the label is famed for, you also get a healthy dose of edgier and more underground shouts and phrases to mangle. Twitchy Trap/Rap lyrics rub up next to big room EDM call outs, and vocal lines designed to make you twerk can be found nestled next to straight-up diva-ish hooks built to fit into a Deep House 4/4. The bpm's run from 100-150bpm.

Also with the pack are 105 one-shots in various sampler formats (Maschine 2, Kontakt 5, Ableton, Reason Refill and EXS24) so all you button-mashers will have something to show off with in your live shows. All in all, a great collection of highly editable vocal hooks. **Roy Spencer**

8/10



samplemagic.com



LOW END THEORY

£34.90

An artful collage of west coast hip-hop, sample-heavy electronica and chilled trap – pulling in elements of jazz, funk and soul along the way – Low End Theory is a 1.3GB exploration of the influential LA beat scene.



BERLIN TECHNO TRACKS

Deep, dark and atmospheric techno exploring the singular sound of Berlin in Maschine and Ableton format.

£19.90



SYLENTH BACK TO THE 90S PATCHES

101 acid house and rave-style patches for Sylenth stunningly recreating the iconic sounds of the rave generation.

£14.90



DISCO & FUNK GUITARS 2

Stacks of riffs, leads and licks recorded with a host of classic guitars, amps, pedals and mics for an authentic disco vibe.

£14.90