

TOONTRACK NEW YORK STUDIOS VOL 3

£127 Software creators aim to provide drum sample utopia

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Fresh from Avatar Studios' Neve 8068 desk comes the latest instalment of Toontrack's NY Studios collection. Volume 3 offers a collection of multi-miked samples for Superior Drummer users, created by engineers Neil Dorfsman and Pat Thrall with the help of session drummer, Nir Z.

Build

As we mentioned above, you'll need a copy of Toontrack's Superior Drummer to host these samples - the pack doesn't include the host software. With that out of the way, you get three five-piece drum kits (a '79 Ludwig, '64 Slingerland and '66 Rogers), augmented by six different snares. There are 22 cymbals arranged into three different set-ups, each with six 'positions' plus a slot for hi-hats and rides. The whole lot has been captured using multiple mics, taking up 22 channels on Superior's virtual mixing desk. Clearly, offering multiple velocity layers with all of these mic positions takes up a lot of space - the package comes on three DVDs and the full installation requires 18GB of disc space, though you can install a lighter version.

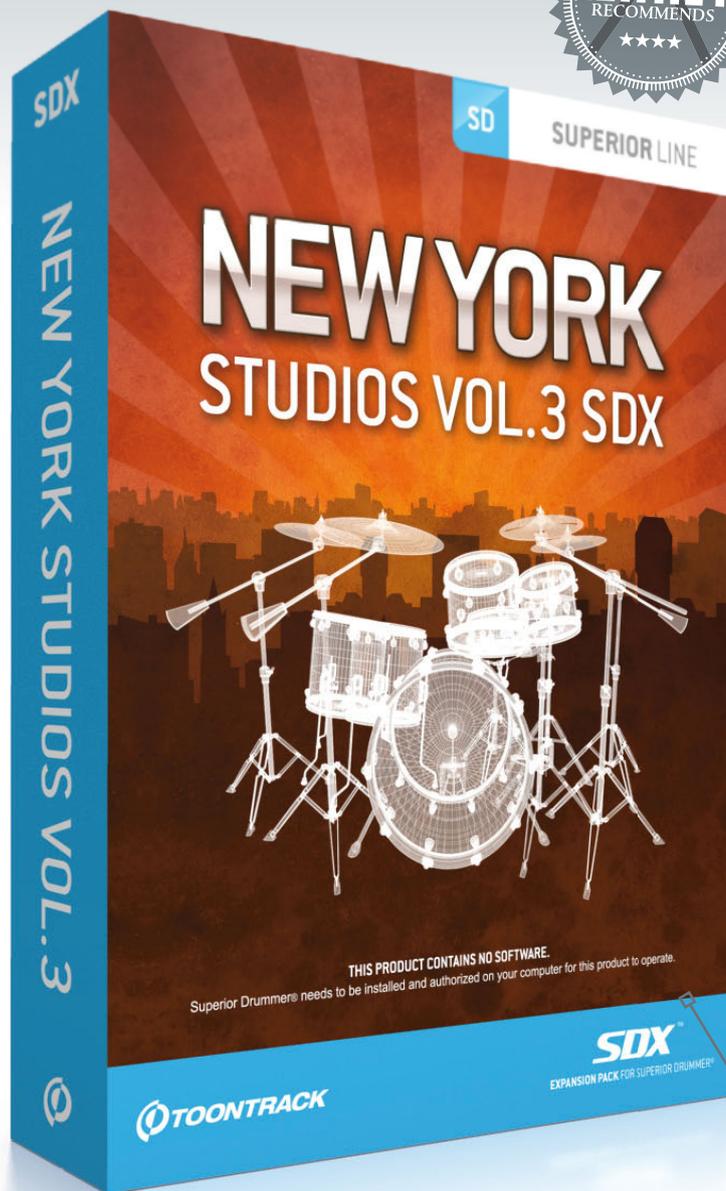
Hands On

If you've used Superior before, you'll be familiar with the layout. Otherwise, getting started is simple. You're presented with a 'Default' kit comprising the Ludwig kit and a set of cymbals. From here, you can change drums individually or load a whole new kit using one of the presets. There are loads of options for changing the pitch, dynamic range and MIDI note of each drum, plus a lot more, and that's before you even start tweaking the mixer settings.

This is a very 'live' sounding collection. The Ludwig kit provides a meat and potatoes kit that, when you blend in some room ambience, can achieve fat rock sounds. The Slingerland offers a similar sound, but is tuned a little higher with more overtones from the toms. Finally, the Rogers kit offers a tighter, more fundamental tone - perfect for some '70s 'studio' style drum sounds, and we were able to get a convincing processed Phil Collins-esque gated kit simply by using the room mics and Superior's built-in effects.

The biggest variations in sound and character come from the snares. Our favourites include the 14"x5½" Slingerland

(a funky wooden snap), the 14"x5½" Burned Edge Zebra Snare (for huge rock backbeats), and the 14"x6½" Ludwig Black Beauty (with more 'ring' for country and blues). It does seem odd that with so many options, Toontrack has included a pair of 16" crashes as the only hi-hats - they work well a lot of the time, but lose definition in places. We'd also like to have seen a few more presets included, if only to demonstrate exactly how versatile this pack can be. **R**



Essential spec



PRICE

£127

MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Windows: 2GHz Pentium 4 or Athlon processor with 1.5GB RAM;
Mac: 2GHz G5 processor with 1.5GB RAM;
18GB free hard disc space (4GB for basic install); DVD drive;
Superior Drummer 2.3 installation

CONTACT

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SAMPLES

The pack includes three five-piece kits, six snares and 22 cymbals

VERDICT: Toontrack's New York Studios Vol 3 offers a surprisingly versatile set of sounds that will work for everything from pop to rock to fusion. If you're looking for a do-it-all set of samples, put this on your list.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★★★