

Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



KB Covers | from \$29.95

kbcovers.com

There's sometimes a strange kind of snobbery about keyboard covers, as if having a reminder of the dozens of keyboard shortcuts for a complicated piece of software could possibly be a bad thing.

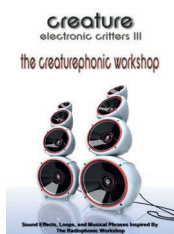
Far from it, they're a handy way of learning or remembering key commands and an easy way to improve your workflow if you haven't got a memory like an elephant. I've been looking for an overlay to help me remember Logic's shortcuts and a quick scan of Google revealed that the only company who make a suitable cover for my particular MacBook are California-based Apple specialists KB Covers.

Their silicone overlay fits perfectly onto the laptop keyboard, doesn't slip

and has a nice soft feel. Over a hundred of Logic's keyboard shortcuts are shown, with the colour-coded system showing how each modifier key alters the function of a given key.

From the moment I started using it, the keyboard cover helped me work quicker, using shortcuts I have trouble remembering and discovering new keyboard commands for functions I use regularly. As well as Logic, KB also make covers for Serato Scratch Live, Ableton Live and Sibelius. Whether you're new to one of these program or you just have a bad memory, a keyboard cover is a great way of getting to know shortcuts and KB's products fit the bill perfectly for Mac users. **Greg Scarth**

9/10



Electronic Critters 2 & 3 | £20 each

electroniccritters.com

We were impressed with the first disc in the *Electronic Critters* series last Summer and these two collections – one focusing on sounds created from radio waves and the other inspired by the Electronic music legends at the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop. The only significant weakness of the first DVD was the shortage of loops, so it's pleasing that there are lots more this time. Even though they're mainly Glitchy samples created with a DIY aesthetic, the sound quality is excellent. This is a great collection, especially at this price. **Greg Scarth**

8/10



Kick Free Revolution Vol 1 | €85

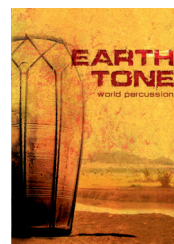
sounds-of-revolution.com

One thing that sets *Sounds of Revolution* apart from the rest of the companies putting out sample DVDs right now is their love of kick-free loops. Most of the samples here would be suitable for producers of just about any kind of House or Techno and with 684 kick-free loops all at 127bpm. They're fantastically versatile sounds which will add to your productions rather than just being a set of finished loops that do all the hard work for you.

As with *FX Revolution*, this is a pricey disc but you get what you pay for.

Daniel Griffiths

9/10



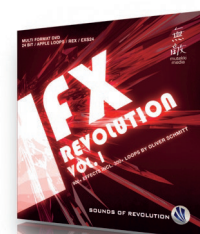
Big Fish AudioEarth Tone | £72

timespace.com

The quality and scale of this Big Fish Audio production is very impressive – over 6GB of content, including samples of all kinds of obscure instruments and loops from 72 to 200bpm. The problem is that at this price point it's difficult to know who'll buy this other than the hardcore World Music fans, and that's a shame because it would be nice for producers of other genres to have these samples on hand. At £40-50 it would be easy to recommend but at this price it's probably one for the World/Ethnic diehards only.

Chris Barker

8/10



Oliver Schmidt FX Revolution Vol 1 | €85

sounds-of-revolution.com

When we reviewed Oliver Schmitt's most recent sample collection, *Club Revolution*, we were seriously impressed with its Techno sounds and he's delivered the goods again this time, with over three hundred loops at 127 and 140bpm and nearly a thousand FX hits. It's not hard to see why Oliver's samples continue to draw endorsements from Funkagenda, Kiko and Jason Nevins. The quality's absolutely top notch and the slick, professional sound of the samples can't be faulted. An excellent collection which is only let down by the high price. **Declan McGlynn**

9/10



Kerchoonz K-Box | £40

kerchoonz.com

This cleverly portable speaker charges over USB, has a 3.5mm jack input and when placed on a flat surface, its rubber base will thump out surprisingly good sound. Don't expect high fidelity or any sensational stereo imaging here, but, if you're on the road, and need something genuinely loud to jack your phone, laptop or MP3 player into, then this

rechargeable wonder (about the size of a fat iPhone) is a fantastic device.

You do need a flat surface (otherwise the sound is tinny, thin and practically unlistenable) but for the money and considering just how small the device is, there aren't many better options for portable speakers out there. Great stuff. **Chris Barker**

9/10



Shure SE115 headphones | £99

Shure.com

Delivered to us in an awkward shocking pink colour, these buds are also available in black, red and blue finishes. They're not the most comfortable headphones we've tried but once you have them fixed in position the isolation from outside noise is very good. The sound is more than acceptable and when given a quick brush up with EQ they are suitably full sounding, right down to

the deep lows. The instrument separation is the only flaw. The midrange is slightly dull also and only works on more sparse Acoustic and Rock rather than Electronic music. Overall, for the money, these wouldn't be a terrible choice, but with a market so saturated with competition it's hard to recommend these as the best available. **Chris Barker**

6/10



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<p>Abstract Electro House</p>	<p>Producer Loops Abstract Electro House</p> <p>Multiformat 345Mb £14.95</p>	<p>Loopmasters Fidget House</p> <p>Multiformat 370Mb £19.95</p>	<p>NEW</p>
<p>Minus Granular</p>	<p>Cluster Sound Minus Granular</p> <p>Multiformat 930Mb £34.95</p>	<p>Inspiration Sounds DnB Breaks</p> <p>Multiformat inc. Midi files, 725Mb £29.95</p>	<p>DnB BREAKS</p>
<p>Percussive Loops</p>	<p>Bluezone Corporation Percussive Loops</p> <p>Wav, Apple Loops 310Mb £19.95</p>	<p>Big Fish Audio Def Jef Kontrol Freaks - Kontrol Ya self</p> <p>Wav 320Mb £35.95</p>	<p>kontrol freaks</p>
<p>Voodoo Grooves</p>	<p>Best Service Voodoo Grooves</p> <p>Wav 462Mb £22.00</p>	<p>Zero G Vocal XTC</p> <p>Wav, Acid 478Mb £34.25</p>	<p>VOCAL XTC</p>
<p>WaterHarp</p>	<p>Sample Logic WaterHarp</p> <p>Kontakt 1.8Gb £35.99</p>	<p>Loopmasters Jody Wisternoff</p> <p>Multiformat 1.1Gb £24.95</p>	<p>07 jody wisternoff FUTURE HOUSE</p>



Musical Inspiration