**WHAT IS IT?**

A straightforward percussive and tonal virtual instrument with grooves, sound library, built in sample recorder, effects and a high level of programmability

**CONTACT**

**Who:** Time + Space
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**HIGHLIGHTS**

**1** A fast and easy way to set up a groove
**2** Great sample library
**3** Up to five layers of samples per sound

# Beatstation by Toontrack | €89

Toontrack's entry level plug promises a quick route to great grooves. *Stuart Bruce* gets up to speed…

**SPECS**

**PC:** Windows XP SP3 or newer, 2GB hard drive Pentium 4 or Athlon processor with 512MB RAM, VST, RTAS and standalone

**Mac:** OS 10.4.11 or higher, 2GB hard drive G5 or Intel processor with 512MB RAM, AU, RTAS and standalone

**File formats supported:** AIFF, MP3, WAV, REX and MIDI files

Will also work with two other Toontracks formats SDX or EZX plus the new BTX format

**S**ometimes when you are in a hurry to get an idea started some virtual instruments can look a little daunting. Not so with Beatstation. In a remarkably simple user interface, it manages to pack in drum pads linked to a flexible layered sample player, a REX file player, a MIDI groove library, a bassline sample player and a lead or chordal sample player. Beatstation has five main areas on its control surface, the largest of which displays the drum pads and two keyboards, one for bass and one for lead. To the left is a file browser where you can select various file types from whole instruments with drums, two synth patches and their related FX to individual samples, REX files or MIDI grooves. Below this sit a REX file player/editor and a MIDI file player.

Below the pads are the simple play controls, two FX controllers and a master level control each with an FX selector pull down menu and an effect parameter control.

## MIDI beat

Toontrack have devised a new format called BTX for the Beatstation. Each BTX set consists of samples, instruments built from these samples, MIDI grooves to play the instruments and a set of REX files.
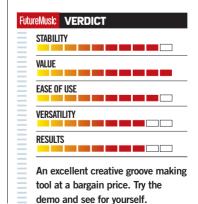
The MIDI department is very straightforward. Each instrument patch has a bass sound which plays the two octaves below note number 36, the drum pads which go from note 36 to note 59 and the lead instrument which goes from note 60 upwards. You can have up to 24 pads and when you right click on them you get the pad properties menu, which allows you to stack up to five samples per pad. Each sample can have its own pitch, ADSR, pan position,

volume, reverse and offset setting. You can drag samples in from the browser and each pad also has a global level control, global FX preset and level controls for the two FX sends.

## One-stop shop

The REX player/editor allows even greater flexibility for your sonic manipulations as you can take any slice from one of the many REX files and use them as samples in your pads. If you like one of the pre-programmed MIDI grooves, you can drag it straight from the browser, use it as it is, or edit it.

I can see myself using Beatstation in plenty of situations where I need to work quickly, knowing that once the basics are done I can get in there and manipulate the sound further to a standard I would expect of virtual instruments costing considerably more. A bargain! **FM**

**FutureMusic** **VERDICT**

| STABILITY | |
| --- | --- |
| VALUE | |
| EASE OF USE | |
| VERSATILITY | |
| RESULTS | |

**An excellent creative groove making tool at a bargain price. Try the demo and see for yourself.**