

Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



BookBook | \$80

twelvesouth.com

Protecting your laptop is almost as important as looking good and finally, the two are combined in the most urbane manner imaginable. The BookBook from the quirky folk at Twelve South is a zip-closable case for your 13- or 15-inch MacBook (Pro) disguised as an antique, and rather large, book. No joke.

What's kind of surprising about this is that not only would I be more inclined to pick up and inspect an over-sized antique book than a laptop, I'm also a lot more likely to throw it around the room. That being said, the BookBook certainly delivers where it counts – once your MacBook (Pro) is zipped-up inside, not only will you be at a loss to distinguish it from an over-sized copy of Ulysses, but it will be well-protected from the cruel world. It's not the sturdiest case available, especially at this price, but its velvety lining and quirky styling mean it's secure for use in a shoulder bag or to studiously tuck beneath an arm. **Declan McGlynn**

7/10

Shure SRH750DJ Headphones | £140

shure.com

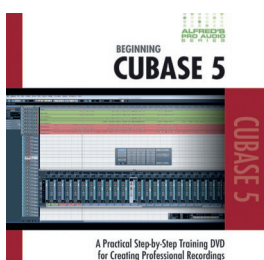
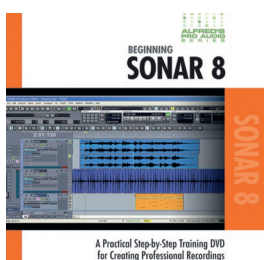
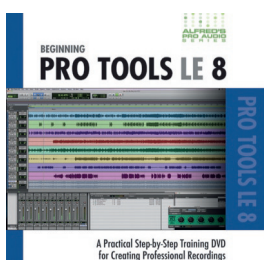
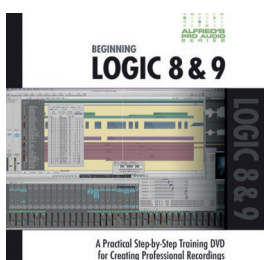
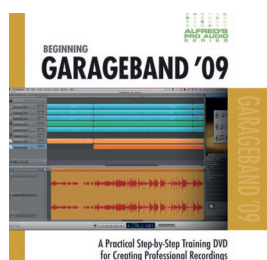


We're always on the look out for a robust set of headphones in the *FM* office, as most of us

destroy about two or three sets a year in various acts of DJ booth clumsiness. Opening this box we were disappointed, as all of our hopes were on the shiny silver exterior being made of aluminium were quashed as we lifted the light plastic cans from their box. Once the initial disappointment faded and we took into account the £100 price difference between these and the Pioneer HDJ-2000s (which are made of metal), the experience of the Shure package is actually pretty good.

In the box you get a spare set of ear pads, a lead and screw-on gold adaptor. Now, here's the real treat – these headphones sound great, really great. They're quite flattering and probably not ideal for referencing but they have been the headphones of choice for listening to music in the office for weeks. As DJ headphones go we're unsure about their long-term durability but they're one of the best set of DJ headphones in their price range and sound better than most of the main DJ-branded cans. **Chris Barker**

9/10



Alfred's Pro Audio Series training DVDs | £18 each

alfreduk.com

This new series from Alfred Publishing, one of the oldest educational music publishers, offers specialised advice on a number of different DAWs. DVDs are available for Cubase 5, Logic 8/9, Sonar 8, GarageBand '09 and Pro Tools LE 8, with each delivering its content in video form, featuring a teacher walking a

student through a series of lessons on computer-based music making.

Topics covered start from the most basic fundamentals of Electronic music, introducing equipment including keyboards, microphones, audio interfaces and even computers themselves, then working through demonstrations of how to

perform simple tasks in your DAW. The teacher takes things slowly – which is admittedly probably better than rushing through complicated subjects – and at times, the pace can drag as the student asks for simple ideas to be explained multiple times. It may be too basic for most *FM* readers, but if you have no idea

where to start with music technology then the advice and basic tutorials on these discs could come in handy.

By no means a must-have, but worth checking out for complete beginners.

Greg Scarth

7/10



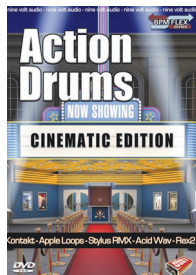
Deep Tech-House | £60

timespace.com

Proof yet again that the boys at Sample Magic can be relied upon to come up with the goods, this solid Tech-House package hits the spot nicely. All of the 24-bit samples are neatly classified by type and everything's at 125 or 127bpm, which should make things easy to work into club-orientated productions.

By my count there are the best part of 800 loops, all of which maintain high production levels and sound slick and polished. In addition to the loops, you'll find the best part of 250 individual hits and one-shot FX ready to slot into just about any kind of House or Techno tracks. Great stuff and very usable. **Daniel Griffiths**

9/10

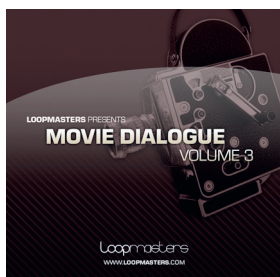


Action Drums: Cinematic Edition | £65

timespace.com

When this new release from Nine Volt Audio dropped out of the *FM* postbag we weren't exactly thrilled. Soundtrack sample packs don't usually offer much in the way of versatility and the samples tend not to lend themselves well to anything other than film score work. Against all odds, *Action Drums: Cinematic Edition* exceeds all our expectations with a package of fun, funky drum loops and hits which could slot into a variety of genres. If you dare to think a little different with your drums and percussion then you won't go too far wrong. Well worth a look. **Declan McGlynn**

8/10



Movie Dialogue Vol 3 | £15

loopmasters.com

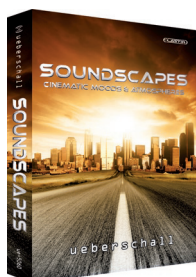
Sampling dialogue from films is one of the oldest tricks in the book for adding a bit of atmosphere and interest to a track, if not a slightly dated approach.

The one huge drawback, though, is that if you want to stay on the right side of the law, you're going to have to try and get clearance. With this package of 824 fully cleared samples from genuine movies, Loopmasters have taken the hard work out of clearing vocals while also making it easy to find fun dialogue without sitting through hours of movies and sending your Blockbuster account into the red.

Content is genuine but unrecognisable and unfamous. That said there's plenty of effective call outs to fire your imagination.

Greg Scarth

7/10



Ueberschall Soundscapes | £90

timespace.com

Soundscapes offers sweeping pads, echoing riffs and otherworldly vocals to bring some atmospheric magic to your tracks. The samples are grouped into 24 construction kits, each of which contains intro and outro parts as well as a main theme, and individual hits are provided in addition to the full loops. As usual for an Ueberschall product the samples are supplied in Elastik Player format, which requires you to install the proprietary software. It's definitely priced towards the higher end of the market, but *Soundscapes* provides plenty of versatile tools for producers of a variety of genres.

Greg Scarth

8/10

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