

# Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



## G-Raid Thunderbolt 4TB | £540

[www.g-technology.com](http://www.g-technology.com)

**T**he G-Raid Thunderbolt drive teams G-Raid's famous build and reliability with Apple's Thunderbolt

interface for the first time. Available in 4TB (tested), 6TB and mighty 8TB flavours, they're not cheap but you can feel the quality the moment you slip it out of the box.

In a perforated metal enclosure that's a perfect match to the Mac Pro it connects with a skinny Thunderbolt cable (not supplied) and pops up

pre-Mac formatted and ready to go. There's a fair amount of whirring and heat thanks to it actually consisting of two separate drives RAID array'd for speed – certainly more than your bog standard USB 2.0 drive – but by no means a dealbreaker.

Of course the real star of the show here is the speed unleashed thanks to that pair of Thunderbolt ports with an incredible 10GB per second transfer speed promised. Be aware however that when copying between your old

drives and your new Thunderbolt, the speed will always be held back by the speed of the inferior unit so bumping files around your system won't see the Thunderbolt fly. Copying a 7GB video file from our Mac's internal to the G-Raid took 1:14 minute, compared to 4:10 for the same job on a USB 2.0. That's three-and-a-half times faster – aka very welcome but not mind blowing. However, it's when your software communicates directly with the G-Raid that it starts to sing. Playing multiple videos and audio streams simultaneously the G-Raid flies, feeling snappier to start, able to throw more around and generally feeling like someone just gave your computer a kick in the pants.

Playing video direct from the drive we were able to get 16 Quicktime Player HD movies running simultaneously before frames started dropping. Meanwhile while our USB 2.0 started to hiccup at five. And 64 tracks of mono 44.1 16-bit came and went without a glimmer of disapproval. It's far more likely that the processor of your computer will expire long before the available transfer speed of this drive.

The G-Raid Thunderbolt isn't cheap (and shelling out a further £40 for a lead smarts like a swig of vinegar) but if your Mac has the slot then we strongly recommend taking your storage seriously. *Daniel Griffiths*

9/10



## Lewitt LCT 240 | £250

[www.sonic8.com](http://www.sonic8.com)

Austrian mic brand Lewitt's LCT640 is modern classic that's right up there with AKG's C414 for all round flexibility and performance. And the great news is that this less expensive, Chinese-made 240 goes a great way to duplicating it's all-powerful sound.

With a solid, edgy modern sound it sounded great on loud male vocals and guitar cabs with a big expansive bottom end. Build wise it's world-class weighty and solid and the illuminated display and flush push buttons for -10 or -120dB and 40Hz and 300Hz high-pass filter are silent and give the mic great 'at the in stage' flexibility.

There's plenty of competition (and at some lower price points) but we found it an excellent inexpensive stand in for its pricier big brother and a great all rounder for your studio. *Paul Tremain*

8/10

## Shure SRH1840 | £590

[www.shure.co.uk](http://www.shure.co.uk)

**O**pen back headphones are a bit of an acquired taste. By allowing the sound to escape from the back of

the 'phone rather than be 'fired' direct into the ear you get a literally more 'open' sound. It's a surprising experience akin to mounting high quality monitors on your shoulders... Of course, this renders open backs as useless for recording or 'on the bus' music listening duties as leakage levels are off the scale.

However for in-depth precision listening during the mix stage we

found the 1840's incredibly useful. Rather than simply 'checking on headphones' we were able to accurately locate and adjust mix queries that our monitors kept masked. The 1840's perspective is super-true with a widescreen look at your music in detail that you simply wouldn't think possible with headphones. They therefore come highly recommended for those who require mix accuracy but must keep levels low. *Daniel Griffiths*

9/10



## Ian Body: Analogue Workshop 1: Distortion and Feedback | £35

[www.timespace.com](http://www.timespace.com)



If you're looking for an injection of originality then this pack is certain to hit the spot. Used sparingly it gives arresting focus to lead lines or pulsating pads, or go over the top with its 150 solo sounds and 150 one shot effects to instantly create an throbbing analogue soundscape that only a roomful of wardrobe-sized synths could muster. And it doesn't stop there. Thanks to some neat Kontakt programming the pack actually appears as 500 presets tweakable in their own front end. Help yourself to Boddy's Roland System 100M, Doepfer A-100, various Analogue Solutions gear, VCS3 and more. Even the on-board effects are something special, the reverbs, for example, being convolutions of real retro springs. With the likes of Trent Reznor coining it in on the soundtrack market with simple measured melody that lets the 'impossible to deconstruct' sound speak for itself, synth legend Boddy's pack is a wise investment for those looking to do likewise.

For the rest of us it's instant atmosphere, power and weight in a pack that's begging to be played with, teased and cherished. **Daniel Griffiths**

**9/10**

## Loopmaster's Latin Horns | £25

[www.loopmasters.com](http://www.loopmasters.com)



This pack puts the 'club' in Buena Vista Social with a collection of bold brass blasts from our Latin brothers. Ranging from 125 to 130bpm, it's very much aimed at the dancefloor, with each mini construction kit taking a riff or phrase in a labelled key and breaking it down across the brass family. Anyone who's tried to find and record brass players will know how difficult it can be, so to have these well-recorded samples to work with will save you bags of time. However, there are no instruments so you won't be able to create your own fiesta masterpiece without reaching for the scalpel. While the bpm's might suggest as much, this pack isn't only for the dancefloor as all the riffs dancing around the Phrygian scale. A shortcut to Latin music maestro – olé!

**Declan McGlynn**

**8/10**

## Sample Magic Drum & Bass | £35

[www.samplemagic.com](http://www.samplemagic.com)



Sample Magic's reputation as one of the finest sample providers for Electronic music continues to stand tall with this

pack. With 560MB of WAV samples, it's trimmed but toned with each loop hitting the mark. Split over beats, music and effects, your basses are covered and in fact, a lot of the music loops could also shadow as dubstep riffs, with half-time beats instead of the circa 170bpm drums supplied here. Speaking of which, the beats are split into Breaks, Loops and Hits, all of which are high quality and will slot in to your tracks seamlessly, as there's no bombastic effects or production sheen to make them impressive on their own, which makes them much more usable, even if they don't slam hard on preview. Special mention goes out to the music loops, which clearly have been thoroughly considered, with some beautiful strings and tones to slot alongside those raucous beats. **Declan McGlynn**

**9/10**

## Dubstep Gladiators | £18

[www.primeloops.com](http://www.primeloops.com)



Gladiators ready! While obviously engineered for Dubstep combat duties the Gladiator's pack is surprisingly diverse with everything from R&B and Ragga vocals to old skool Rave to 100% Trance-friendly synths that show off the genre's ever-sprawling directions.

It's therefore a grab bag of excitement at a consistent 140/70bpm. The wobblesome synths inevitably sound a little token but full marks to the team for trying to slip in plenty of new hits and textures that let you Team the staples on board with some of the fresher off beat samples on board and take Dubstep in your own musical direction. Super bargain price too. **Greg Scarth**

**8/10**

## Urban Dreamz | £17

[www.primeloops.com](http://www.primeloops.com)



An absolutely perfect pack for instant, synth heavy west coast Pop R'n'B. Think urban like Rihanna rather than Old Dirty Bastard and you'll be in the right ball(ers) park. It's high on fizz and shrill pads to team with the bass heavy beats on offer. Slot in your own Cristal-popping, booty-shakin' vocal (or help yourself to the placeholder fare on board) and you'll be rockin it wildstyle in no time. The synths and drums can come across a little lightweight but that's only indicative of the 'hardcore' flavas it's here to depict with rolling 32nd hi-hats and layered up 808 boom with more Euro-ready Rave Pop kicks and snares.

Come in with a broad mind and spice up those thin and floppy Pop productions with a little special (laser-accurate totally on-message super-engineered 2012 Pop R'n'B) sauce. **Daniel Griffiths**

**9/10**

# PRIME LOOPS

WE'RE IN THE MIX

Prime Loops provide award-winning sound libraries, fresh in-tune with the evolving music scene. We are an extremely passionate team of engineers, sound designers & DJs, hailing from London, UK



## DANCEHALL KINGZ

Welcome di King of di Dancehall - welcome "Dancehall Kingz"! This ultra-fresh sample pack from your loyal beat addicts Prime Loops gives you castles full of musical ammunition for your riddim productions, whether you're loading up the next dancefloor smash somewhere near the equator or rocking a mega-rave in the heat of the desert!

**£14.95**



## R&B SLOW JAMZ

It's time to add some seduction to your R&B productions – the sleek synth loops, caressing basslines and inviting drum loops of Prime Loops' new "R&B Slow Jamz" sample pack will have you lighting candles and pouring the champagne in seconds!

**£12.95**



## BIG NASTY ELECTRO BASSLINES

Do you believe in monsters? We do, because we've created one! "Big Nasty Electro Basslines" is the beastly new bass sample pack fresh from the Prime Loops audio lab, combining some fearsomely feral bass and cacophonous synth chord progressions to unleash the Frankenstein within your music!

**£16.95**



## DIRTY SOUTH HEROES

The south is rough, tough and dirty – just the climate to breed true heroes! With "Dirty South Heroes", Prime Loops give you all the tools you need to make your mark in the sizzurp sippin Dirty South game. This down-right dark and dirty sample suite packs over 800MB of ultra-dope audio material, arranged across 6 construction kits of synth loops basslines, FX and drum loops.

**£12.95**

[www.primeloops.com](http://www.primeloops.com)