

INCLUDES AUDIO

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WHAT IS IT?

The latest incarnation of IK's sound and rhythm workstation module

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Updated mixer and effects
- 2 Scope of sound library
- 3 New filters in the synth engine



IK Multimedia SampleTank 3 | £240

It's been a long wait, but has it been worthwhile? **Bruce Aisher** takes the new improved SampleTank for a spin

SPECS

System requirements
Mac: Intel® Core™ 2 Duo, 4GB RAM, Mac OS X 10.7 or later and 34GB HD space
Plug-in formats (64-bit): Audio Units, VST 2, VST 3, AAX

PC: Intel Core 2 Duo or AMD Athlon 64 X2, 4GB of RAM, Windows 7/8 and 34GB of HD space. Requires an ASIO compatible sound card
Plug-in formats (64-bit): VST 2, VST 3, AAX

Back in 1999 Steinberg unleashed version 2.0 of their VST specification, which allowed, for the first time, a plug-in to receive MIDI data. The virtual instrument was born. Within a couple of years IK Multimedia introduced SampleTank, which included 2.5GB of sample data – a lot back then! Sound editing and effects were enhanced and content was increased to 4.5GB with SampleTank 2.

For many years, I used SampleTank 2 as my 'go to' software instrument, eventually accessing a huge library of third-party and self-created content from ST's familiar red window. Ten years later IK announced that they were introducing an update to SampleTank, and my interest was piqued. But I had already been won over by other solutions. Perhaps IK might be too late?

To those familiar with previous versions, the SampleTank 3 interface

will certainly appear familiar, albeit in a much more refined way. A bigger window (though still too small for me), larger buttons and text, and better use of colour make navigation and selection of sounds far quicker. Underneath much appears to have remained the same, though editing and mixing are made far easier by each getting their own dedicated window. The mix window in particular makes setting up multiple tracks and routing to individual outputs quick and efficient. Each channel can make use of five Insert FX from a choice of 55 (though 33 of these appear to be carried over from before). The new ones are of a high quality, and make a welcome addition. The mixer also gains four Send FX and Master output (with effects), allowing IK to boast the use of up to 30 effects per instrument – overkill perhaps?

Sample content is on the whole strong, with a good selection from

acoustic to electronic. ST3 keeps the resampling capabilities of ST2, but also improves the way in which rhythmic loops are used.

I must admit to not feeling the magic with SampleTank 3 that some virtual instruments and libraries inspire. Spectrasonics' Omnisphere is still far superior from an underlying sound design perspective, though it lacks the breadth of ST3. NI's Kontakt comes at a higher price point, but offers a lot more, in my opinion – disk-streaming and advanced scripting etc – and with a wealth of excellent third-party content out there. NI Complete should also be considered with its exceptional breadth and quality – at a price, of course.

All things considered, for an all-purpose writing tool, ST3 represents a good bet – and with 33GB of content it is no slouch. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD	■■■■■
VALUE	■■■■■
EASE OF USE	■■■■■
VERSATILITY	■■■■■
RESULTS	■■■■■

It's not glamorous, or that deep, but it's a solid workhorse if you need a wide range of good quality sounds.