



Slate Digital Trigger 2 \$199

PC MAC

The new version of this drum triggering plugin boasts even more precise triggering and comes bundled with a powerful sample library

> Slate Digital's original Trigger plugin (cm153, 10/10) already represented the state of the art, enabling a high degree of accuracy in triggering samples from recorded drum tracks – a common studio technique used to embedden the sound of acoustic drums by mixing them with sampled ones (or even to replace them altogether). Trigger 2 (VST/AU/RTAS/AAX) builds on the precision and features of its predecessor and is a free upgrade for existing users.

Trigger 2 comes in EX and Platinum editions, the only difference being that the former includes a much reduced sample library. You use the plugin by inserting it onto a channel in your DAW and feeding it a drum track containing a single close-mic'ed drum kit element – so, kick, snare or tom mics – that you want to replace. The replacement samples come either from the supplied library or your own collection, and you can now load up to eight of them for velocity layering or simultaneous triggering, rather than the six of v1.

Initial setup tweaking begins with the Detail knob, which should really be called "Threshold", as it sets the input level at which the triggering takes place. The Leakage Suppression feature is handled by feeding the target track into Trigger 2's left input and the source(s) of the problem bleed into the right input – useful in ensuring that strong snare hits coming through the kick drum mic don't get misinterpreted as kick hits,

for example. The engine intelligently analyses the difference between the two to suppress the bleed on the target signal. Leakage Suppression isn't new to version 2, but the engine has been improved to make triggering more accurate, and the Sensitivity knob can be used to make even greater distinction between grace notes and bleed. It's a resoundingly successful system – in our testing, it handled a snare track on which the hi-hat spill seemed louder than the delicate snare detail with aplomb.

Take aim...

The trigger signal can be further refined using the low- and high-pass filters, which are useful for rolling off general boom and rumble from loose toms and kicks, or for cutting out top-end transients from bleeding hi-hats on the snare, thus tightening the triggering accuracy. With a range up to 100ms, Retrigger is the final refinement tool, setting the minimum time that needs to pass before the next trigger event is allowed through, thus preventing unintended flammings and stray double hits.

Once you've got your triggering set up, you can focus on the dynamics. As mentioned, each of the eight sound slots can be assigned a velocity range for grading softer and harder sounds. Each slot also has an ASR envelope and a knob for scaling the dynamic range of the replacement sound relative to the level of the

trigger signal. It takes time to set all of this up, but the quality of results are absolutely amazing.

There's also an impressive new noise gate feature, driven by the detected hits but applied to the dry, mic'ed signal (which can be blended in with the triggered sound with a dry/wet mix control), enabling incredibly tight and accurate gating when set up correctly. Also new for v2 is MIDI input/output.

While Trigger 2 might not be the most radical update ever (it is a free one, after all), it's on the inside that the big changes have been made. The precision with which it defines, captures and replaces drum tracks is intelligent and effective to the point of feeling magical. **cm**

Web www.stevenslatedrums.com
Info Trigger 2 EX, \$99

Alternatively

WaveMachine Labs Drumagog 5 cm159 » 8/10 » \$89-379
A huge sound library, but lacking the pinpoint precision of Trigger 2

Steinberg Cubase 7.5 cm201 » 9/10 » £488
Some DAWs offer basic yet useful triggering – Cubase is one of them

Verdict

For Amazingly precise triggering
Bleed suppression is incredible
Works as a terrific gate too
Two more sample slots than version 1
MIDI output for triggering other sources

Against No drag and drop of samples

The definitive drum replacement system gets even better, with an improved engine, more slots and MIDI in/out. Stunning.

10/10

Loading the barrel

Trigger 2 Platinum comes bundled with a wide selection (2.3GB) of Steven Slate acoustic drum samples (mostly with an American rock bias) recorded to 2" tape through vintage analogue gear. They do indeed sound expensive and have been endorsed by many top mix engineers.

The sounds are arranged into presets, which can be loaded from the built-in browser for instant dynamically layered multisampled drums. You can use your

own samples, too, but they have to be transferred into the assigned root folder and loaded via the browser. While there's no drag-and-drop facility from OS X Finder or Windows Explorer, if you're building multisamples from your own library, you can save them as presets for future use.

Each slot has pan, tune, fader and phase controls for balancing the drums, as well as an envelope for each sample to help contain wayward decay tails.