PART SELECTOR
Switch between
four preset layers

FILTER
Syntronik's modelled analogue
filters are a highlight

MIX CONTROLS
Adjust the level and pan
of the selected preset

EFFECTS
Access Syntronik's
powerful modular
effects rack

IN-APP STORE
Add to your
Syntronik
instrument library

LAYER PANEL
Stack and split
up to four presets

OSCILLATORS
Tune the two
oscillators… and
that's your lot

CONTROLLERS
Adjust pitchbend
range, glide time
and more

AMP ENVELOPE
Shape the volume
over time

ARPEGGIATOR
Design arps and
step sequences in
this panel

LFO
Cyclically modulate
pitch, pan and
filter cutoff

FILTER ENVELOPE
Modulate the filter with this AHDSR

IK Multimedia
Syntronik £300 PC MAC

With a soundbank drawing on 38 of the greatest synthesisers ever made, the latest from the makers of SampleTank is a true heavyweight

> Powered by the same engine as their SampleTank 3 ROMpler (8/10, **cm**210), Syntronik (VST/AU/AAX/standalone) is an epic-scale compilation of over 2000 preset sounds built on samples of 38 classic synths and divided up into 17 instrument categories. The rendered hardware includes a comprehensive range of models by Moog (Mini, Modular, Voyager, Prodigy, Rogue, Taurus et al), ARP (2600, String Ensemble) Roland (TB-303, Juno-60, Jupiters, JXs et al), Yamaha (CS-80, SY99 et al), Sequential Circuits (Prophet-5 and -10), Oberheim (OB-X, OB-Xa, SEM), PPG Wave 2, Alesis Andromeda and others. Ten of the instruments group multiple synths – Pro-V, based on the two Prophets, for example, and String Box, taking in the Solina String Ensemble, Elka Rhapsody 490, Hohner String Performer and a couple of Rolands – while the other seven are dedicated to just one each, such as T-03 covering the

TB-303, and Harpy 260, which we'll leave you to figure out.

The presets are housed in an intuitive tagged browser and cover all the usual bases – leads, pads, strings, er... basses, percussion, FX, plucks, keys and so on – and with the ROMs including multiple round robins and oscillator combinations, the whole soundbank weighs in

> "Mixing is done in a single contextual panel, and, astonishingly, no multi-layered presets are included"

at an impressive 58GB. Up to four presets can be layered in an admirably straightforward editor for stacks and splits (by note and velocity), but mixing is done in a single contextual panel rather than a unified mixer page, and, astonishingly, no multi-layered presets are included.

Witness the DRIFT
So far, then, Syntronik appears to be just a (very big) multisampled synth ROMpler; but one of the things IK reckon sets it apart from the countless other (very big) multisampled synth ROMplers out there is their new DRIFT technology. This is an algorithmic system that emulates the inherent irregularity of analogue oscillators by fluctuating the tuning, phase and 'color' of the multisamples. IK claim that DRIFT goes deeper than other, similar approaches, and while we can't vouch for the under-the-hood specifics, obviously, we can report that the note-

"Supremely responsive, they're without doubt among the best software filters we've ever heard"

Buy only the Syntronik sounds you need from the in-app store

to-note character of Syntronik's virtual synths does indeed sound charmingly organic and very subtly variable – the effect is particularly evident when both of the two oscillators are active.

Also central to Syntronik's sonic promise is the filter block, which houses circuit-modelled emulations of the Moog ladder, Oberheim state variable, Curtis CEM3320 and Roland IR3109 resonant filters. The Moog and Oberheim models feature high-pass, band-pass, low-pass and notch types (12dB/octave for the Oberheim, various slopes for the Moog), while the other two are 12/24dB low-pass only. Sounding phenomenal and supremely responsive, they're without doubt among the best software filters we've ever heard. And with all four – as well as a 1/2/4/8-stage phaser, a formant filter and the 'classic' SampleTank filter – available to every instrument, you can shove, say, a multisampled Moog Taurus oscillator through a modelled Roland filter, or bolt the Oberheim SVF onto the Alesis Andromeda. Awesome stuff.

Behind the curtain
Of course, Syntronik's 17 instruments aren't full emulations of the original synths they represent. Every one of them has its own singular visual identity, but the actual interface comprises the same array of controls across the board, be they presented as knobs or sliders.

The control set starts with tuning of the main oscillator, and activation and detuning of a second oscillator by up to 50 cents up or down. The Filter section houses the filter model selection switches, along with knobs/sliders for cutoff, resonance, overdrive and velocity response. Modulation is provided by AHDSR envelopes for the amp and filter, and an LFO for wobbling of pitch, pan and/or cutoff; and the Controllers section gives access to pitchbend range, mod wheel vibrato rate, play mode (Mono, Poly or Legato) and legato glide time.

Unavoidably (given their sample-based nature) inflexible oscillators aside, the homogenous interface enables enough programmability to get the job done. Beyond

Syntronik's 38 effects are as high-quality as you'd expect from the makers of Amplitube and T-RackS
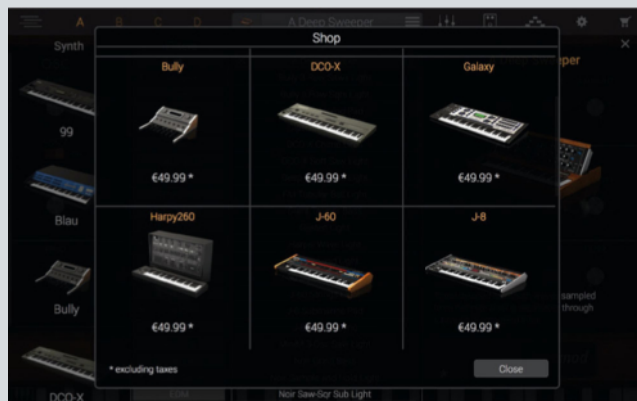
Multiple choice

There are three ways to get involved with Syntronik, and choosing between them will come down to your budget, how immediately sold you are on the whole concept, and whether or not you're already using SampleTank 3.

The first way is to buy the full Syntronik for £300. The second is to install Syntronik Free, giving you a flavour of the full package with 50 presets utilising all 17 instruments, then add full individual instruments for £50 each via the in-app store.

Alternatively, if you have SampleTank 3 installed, you can buy Syntronik's instruments in the ST3 store, integrating them with your

SampleTank library as well as Syntronik itself.

Should you opt to buy the whole thing outright, be warned that a hellish installation procedure awaits. Rather than distribute the sound library as a single multi-part download, IK have chosen to break it down into individual instrument installers, some of them multi-part, forcing you to nurse your way through 23 downloads, then install each one individually. We appreciate being able to pick and choose in order to save disk space, but not having the option to simply get all the instruments in a single installer, then check off the ones you want, is ridiculous.

that, though, the sound can be utterly transformed using Syntronik's 38 gorgeous 'lunchbox'-style effects. Lifted from SampleTank (and thus originally T-RackS and Amplitube), you can load up to five of them at once into every layer. From EQ, dynamics and distortion to delay, reverb, filtering and modulation, it's an all-encompassing roster, and every device sounds as good as it looks.

Finally, each layer also packs an arpeggiator/step sequencer, featuring per-step chord playback, tied notes, swing, keyrange limiting, latching and all the usual arpeggiation modes.

It's a Syn'
If we were to judge Syntronik solely on its synthesis controls, we'd have to describe it as no better or worse than countless other classic synth ROMplers on the market. What elevates it above the baseline, though, are the quality of the multisampling, the sheer number of presets on offer, DRIFT, that incredible filter, those spectacular effects, and the ability to layer four patches at a time. All these elements add up to make Syntronik a quick, easy and convincingly analogue-sounding synthesiser compendium that delivers a voluminous and versatile library of highly customisable preset sounds. **cm**

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Verdict
For Superb multisampled sounds
DRIFT and circuit-modelled filters
Excellent effects
SampleTank 3 integration

Against No multi-layered presets?!
Tortuous installation procedure

Essentially a massive, expensive synth ROMpler, Syntronik makes enough improvements to the formula to stand out from the crowd, and sounds fantastic

8/10