



EastWest – Pop Brass \$533

*or included in ComposerCloud from \$19.99/month

➤ EastWest/Quantum Leap have one big advantage for creating track-ready, sample-based instrument libraries – they own one of the world's top recording studios! EastWest Studios has a long and

illustrious history, with Frank Sinatra, Elvis and Michael Jackson all making use of the space.

In fact, MJ engineer Bruce Swedien has called their Studio 1, “the best brass recording room in the

world”. Therefore, when you hear that EW is working on a Pop Brass library, and that engineer Moogie Canazio (with 35 Grammy nominations to his name) is also involved, then expectations are high.

Pop Brass weighs in with a hefty 23GB download size and features a wide range of four-piece ensemble-based samples. Multiple mic configurations were used during capture, and can be freely mixed within the software. Studio 1 instruments are based around sustains of varying length and dynamics, shorts (staccato, stabs etc), effects (rips, falls, growls and trills) and legato transition styles. Studio 2 was used to record Phrased and Licks (both of which are locked to DAW tempo by default). You also find key, velocity and mod wheel-switched versions through the library.

One aspect of the EW/ComposerCloud universe that some may find frustrating is the reliance on their Play software. There's nothing inherently wrong about it, though EW face competition from library companies who have made excellent use of all the GUI design features of software like NI's Kontakt, which can make interacting with multiple instruments and articulations much easier to understand, and therefore quicker to use. This does mean that manual-dipping is essential to getting the most out of this collection.

This is an excellent set of instruments that let you achieve realistic, vibey brass parts. For those already signed up to ComposerCloud this is a ‘no-brainer’, and will certainly help sell it to those needing this type of high-quality material. **Bruce Aisher**

VERDICT 8.9

UVI – Attack EP88 €149

➤ This isn't the first piano library that UVI have released that makes use of a ‘customised’ piano, and you may be forgiven for thinking that UVI had already created the last word on electric pianos with their recent Key Suite Electric. However, their inspiration perhaps started with this library dedicated solely to a ‘tacked’ electric piano – an 88-key Rhodes Mark I to be exact. Tacking a piano – where brass tacks, drawing pins or other metal objects are fitted to (or between) the hammers as a way of delivering a different sound – is not a new one. In fact, Abbey Road Studios have had two variously-tweaked uprights in their armoury for years. What's

particularly interesting about the UVI version here is the way in which the instrument has been captured (using a B&K stereo pair, a U67 and contact mics on each tine, as well as the ‘regular’ electrical signals). This library also offers an incredible level of tonal adjustment and detail – different tack positions, pedal noise, five round robins. Eight velocity layers, DI and tube outputs etc. There is even per-note control over voicing and tuning, which means that even if you aren't interested in the tacked sound, there is still a great ‘regular’ Rhodes sound ready to be explored.

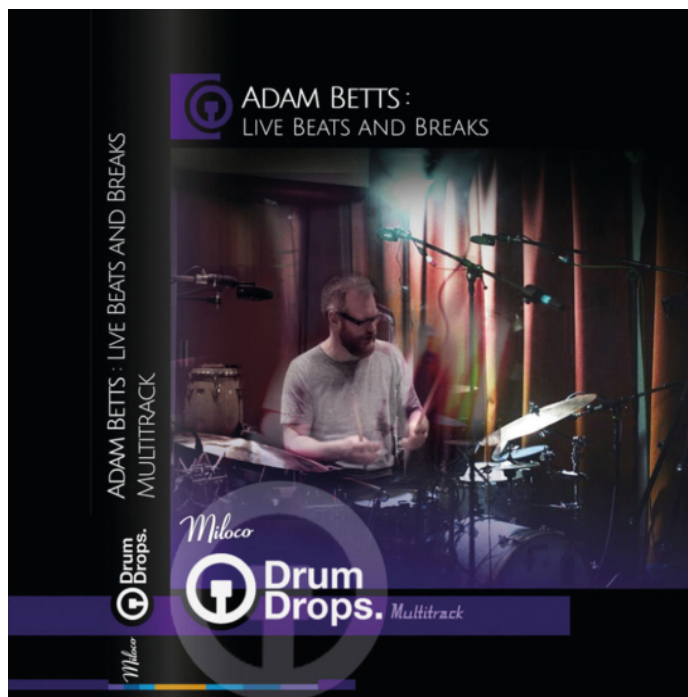
Bruce Aisher

VERDICT 9.0



DrumDrops – Adam Betts

Live Beats & Beats from £10

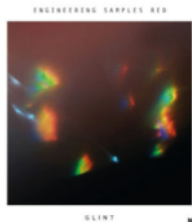


Drummer, Adam Betts, has played with everyone from Squarepusher to the Heritage Orchestra, so he's pretty much the 'go-to' guy when it comes to dance music tub-thumping. Here he serves up a gang of live breaks, inspired by the most sampled funk drummers of the '70s. From 'Amen' moments, to 'Funky Mule' workouts, he revisits drum patterns and playing styles that crate diggers still flip, and flip over, to this day.

Each folder comes with variants, different mixes, and the choice of FX-laden or clean takes, so you get maximum flexibility. Meanwhile, tempos run the full range from 95-155bpm, so you have everything from neck-snap hip-hop all the way to jungle rinse-outs.

Also available in a multitrack version, for that full performance live room feel. **Roy Spencer**

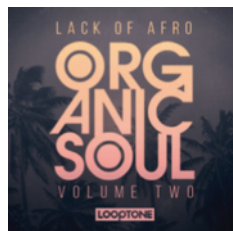
VERDICT 8.0



Engineering Samples RED – Glint £16

No messing here – straight-up pounding beats, subby and dubby bass, and the kind of muted, driving grooves designed to soundtrack a 4am Berlin techno room with style. Over the course of 154 thundering WAV files, broken down into five folders, the team at RED take the opportunity to stretch out a little, and explore the outer limits of their prized analogue synth collection. The iconic sounds of kit like the Moog Sub 37, Moog Mother 32, Behringer Model D, and Arp Odyssey, have been tweaked, twisted, and repackaged in cutting-edge quality. The results shimmer and shake, with the dense, layered 4/4 drum loops holding their ground as the pads and synths fill out the space above and beyond. Top stuff, all round. sounds.beatport.com

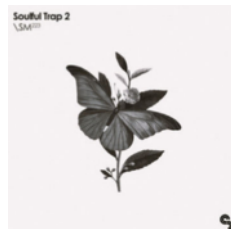
VERDICT 8.0



Looptone – Lack of Afro Presents Organic Soul Vol. 2 £25

Lack of Afro's Adam Gibbons has been serving up summery soul from his pristine white studio for some time. His blend of retro live grooves and wizardry strikes a balance in his productions that gives them a timeless vintage flavour with a modern punch. He's no stranger to sharing the secrets of this formula in his sample packs, either. Here, he delivers another set of stem-based construction kits, full of his trademark snappy breaks and funky playing. The sessions are made up of 105-130bpm loops, with styles ranging from laidback '60s soul to borderline disco vibes. Perfect for adding a splash of throwback class to your next track. loopmasters.com

VERDICT 9.0



Sample Magic – Soulful Trap 2 £30

Fans of the first instalment's mix of 808 basses and organic future flavours will know what's in store in Vol. 2, and be chomping at the bit for more of the same. There are more than 600 samples in this bespoke set, crafted from the finest vintage gear and late-night studio sessions, and intricately reprogrammed for your production pleasure. The hat work (the driving force in this style) is next level, with found sounds and custom kit work giving it a unique spin; while the glitzy melodic loops are drenched in song-starting potential, and are sure to fit snugly in a wide style of street beats. A great set, all told, for neo-soul producers who are wanting to add a little dustiness to their digital. samplemagic.com

VERDICT 8.0



Audiotent – Surface £37

Looking for a huge library of sounds for your next melodic techno masterpiece? Then it's time to scratch below the surface with Audiotent. As always, the sound design from this team is to be applauded, with everything crafted for maximum impact. The drums punch, and the basses are clear, with other elements across the board exploring the width and space in the spectrum. The kicks, especially, come through, seemingly designed with one true goal – to sound immense on a club sound system. Vital elements like perc, hits, and FX loops, add colour to proceedings, while never feeling overbearing. The perfect glue holding the pack together, as showier loops take centre stage. Recommended. audiotent.com

VERDICT 8.0