

# cm mini reviews

A rapid-fire round-up of sample libraries, ROMplers and music gear

## Inear Display Cruelle €23

Web [www.ineardisplay.com](http://www.ineardisplay.com)  
Format Mac/PC, VST/AU

The follow-up to their superb Incipit delay plugin (9/10, **cm232**), Inear's latest is a wilfully extreme 'destruction' effect that comprises nothing more than an analogue-style filter and a digital distortion module (both bypassable), but manages to imbue them with a surprising amount of flexibility and creative potential.

The left-hand section of the pleasantly clean but perhaps slightly-too-dark GUI contains the multimode resonant filter, which is switched between pre and post distortion by clicking the routing flow diagram at the top right. All four of its types – low-pass, high-pass, band-pass and notch – work in parallel, with their output levels adjusted independently using the corresponding knobs, and the Cutoff and Resonance applied globally.

The filter cutoff can be modulated by an LFO outputting all the usual waveforms plus regular or smoothed Sample And Hold, and offering a choice of two rate modes: LFO, for rates from

0.0001-20Hz, or synced at 1/128 to 8; and Oscillator, for audio rate modulation from 20Hz-1kHz.

The distortion section features a slider for mixing between classic-style overdrive and a harder foldover algorithm, between them covering a good range of signal-shaping ground, from fairly warm and tidy to edgy and attacking. Neither mode is obscenely aggressive, though, even with the Drive knob cranked fully up... until you start twisting the Feedback knob, whereupon things quickly enter fabulously 'extreme' territory.

And that, apart from a Dry/Wet mix knob for parallel processing, a Config menu (containing Undo/Redo, GUI resizing, MIDI Mapping, etc), and an excellent library of 43 presets, is all there is to it. Cruelle is a piece of cake to get to grips



with and sounds monstrous, largely thanks to the quality of its distortion algorithms, the parallel filtering and the Oscillator LFO mode, which is great for textural shaping. The filter self-oscillates, too, bringing another weird dimension to the party.

An affordable treat for mischievous sound designers.

**8/10**

## Ignite VST 808 Studio \$69

Web [www.ignitevst.com](http://www.ignitevst.com)  
Format Mac/PC, VST/AU

An allegedly "game changing" four-oscillator bass-orientated monosynth, 808 Studio draws on a library of 70 waveforms as source signals for its two main oscillators, about a third of them emulating Roland's seminal kick drum, so beloved of trap, grime and hip-hop producers. Stacked underneath those are Kick and Sub oscillators, the first generating an attack transient, the second a sine wave tracking the first by 0, +/-1 or +/-2 octaves with Drive control.

The effects are a highlight, comprising freely reorderable distortion, EQ, compression (with useful sidechain input from the Kick oscillator) and chorus, while AHDSR envelopes on the main oscillators, filter and amp comprise the only modulation options. The filter itself is a bit feeble, too, and decidedly inflexible.

808 Studio delivers the goods when it comes to relatively simple but impressively sizeable bass and kick drum sounds, and will certainly give open-minded 808 fans plenty of food for thought. The paucity of modulation options (where are the LFOs?!) and limited filter are disappointing, though, as is the absence of a manual.

**7/10**



## Ample Sound Ample Bass Upright II \$149

Web [www.amplesound.net](http://www.amplesound.net)  
Format Mac/PC, VST/AU/AAX/RTAS

Quality double bass ROMplers are surprisingly hard to come by, but Ample Sound's 4.3GB rendition of one (equipped with a DI output) is an absolute stunner.

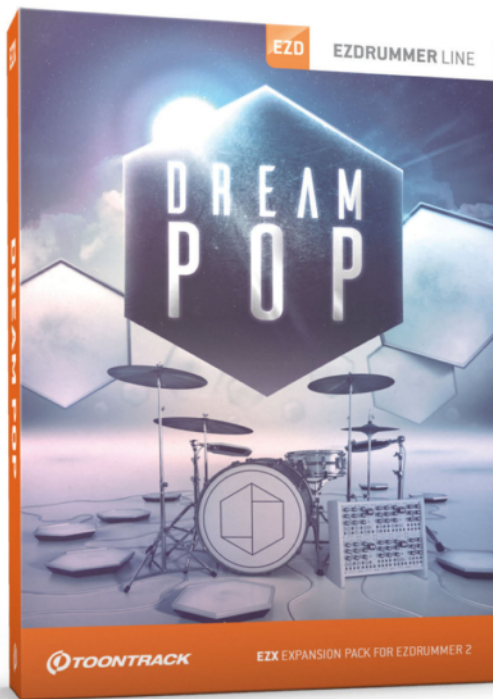
Bass Upright II is a fingered (as opposed to bowed) double bass with six articulations (Sustain, Mute, Natural Harmonic, Hammer On/Pull Off, Legato Slide and Slide In/Out), with every note sampled on every string. Ample Sound's tried-and-tested second-gen engine (that's what the 'II' refers to), only previously used for guitars, feels like a natural fit, despite the obviously erroneous naming of the Fret Sound sliders. Headline features include comprehensive mixing and EQing of Neck, Body, DI and Ambience mic channels in two mono and two stereo modes; a capable Tab file player; a full-on sample assignment editor; and seven stompbox effects.

Sonically, ABUII is rich, chesty and stunningly dynamic; and crucially, that all-important fretless legato is handled exceptionally well. Having proven their mettle (or, indeed, Metal) repeatedly with their guitar ROMplers, it's great to see Ample Sound turning their hand to something new, particularly when the end result is this definitive.

**9/10**



# Soundware round-up



## Toontrack Dream Pop EZX £51

We're not entirely sure what the theme behind Toontrack's latest add-on pack for EZdrummer is, but the whole thing sounds so good that we don't care. It seems to be a gathering of around 250 largely 'unreal' drums, cymbals, percussion elements, melodic sounds (some mapped chromatically), drones, velocity-sensitive filterings, crescendos, FX and more, all with a vaguely oddball 'pop' vibe. Like Hip-Hop EZX (10/10, **cm217**), Dream Pop reminds us how effective and fun EZdrummer can be when loaded with unusual material – we don't want to wake up!

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

**10/10**

Niche Audio

## Glitch Machine £25

Any new entrant into Niche Audio's ever-expanding and acclaimed range of Live Packs and Maschine add-ons inevitably brings with it a certain level of expectation. Interestingly, while Glitch Machine is up to their usual standard in terms of production quality, this collection of 15 glitch-hop Drum Racks/Groups, 83 Instrument Racks, 15 Massive patches and 13 full projects might strike some as a little stylistically samey, with less sonic diversity than we've come to expect from the developer. That could be down to the genre itself, though, we suppose.

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

**8/10**



Sample Magic

## Future Soul £35

A 1.4GB library for producers of R&B, neo soul, chillwave and the like, Future Soul is clean, polished and laid-back. The 19 stemmed drum loops (132 files) are easy to remix and reconstruct, but we'd actually prefer more discrete grooves. The Bass folder is even more numerically disappointing, containing just ten loops. The ten Inspiration Kits are superb, though, each one a mini project in its own right, complete with more stemmed drums, Massive presets and MIDI files; while the Melodic Loops, Vox Shots and drum hits also impress.

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

**8/10**



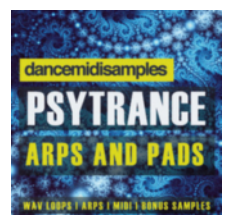
Dancemidisamples

## Psytrance Arps And Pads £15

50 eight-bar arpeggiated synth loops at 136bpm, and the MIDI files used to trigger the original pads behind them, make up the meat of this nifty budget-priced library, supplemented by a range of "bonus" samples that serve no real purpose. The arps are awesome, each presented in Dry and Wet (processed with effects) versions, and named by key for ease of deployment; while the MIDI files let you create your own variations on their chord progressions. From expansive acidic lines to tight, glitchy hooks, this is great stuff from start to finish.

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

**9/10**



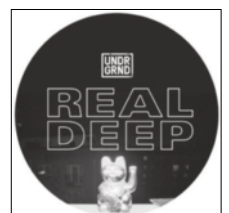
UNDRGRND Sounds

## Real Deep £35

Sampleware newcomers UNDRGRND Sounds are making quite the first impression! Their House For Heads (9/10) and Grime 2.0 (10/10) libraries wowed us in **cm232** and **cm235**, and the positivity continues with this action-packed deep house collection. 44 stemmed drum loops confidently get things going, followed up by a suitably emotive barrage of basses, music loops, textures, stabs, percussion and more. Our only criticism – if you can call it that – is that many of the synth loops would be more obviously useful if they weren't so densely layered.

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

**9/10**



Sample Tools by Cr2

**Groove House & Future Progressive £16**

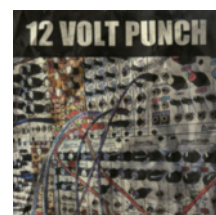
It's balls-to-the-wall EDM all the way with this brash library of loops, hits, MIDI files and Spire presets. 13 stemmed drum loops almost make up for their low numbers with their quality, while the 24 bass and 23 synth loops are as energetic and in-your-face as any we've heard. Six mini construction kits give you all the audio and MIDI parts required to reconstruct or remix a well produced set of tracks, and 150 drum, bass, synth and FX one-shots complete the picture.

[sounds.beatport.com](http://sounds.beatport.com)**8/10**

Goldbaby

**12 Volt Punch \$49**

New Zealand's leading samplist has built a massive modular synth setup (there are pics on the website), wrung almost 4000 one-shot drum, FX and drone samples out of it (albeit including lots of velocity-stepped sets), and mapped them to an extensive range of software sampler formats. The quality more than matches the quantity, with all the warmth and analogue chunkiness for which the 'Baby is known, and the real magic takes effect when you start layering hits up to build your own instruments and kits. One of his best yet!

[www.goldbaby.co.nz](http://www.goldbaby.co.nz)**10/10**

Native Instruments

**Motor Impact £44**

The Detroit sound, from original to current flavours, is the subject of NI's new Maschine Expansion, based on samples of all the expected sources: Roland xOx boxes, Juno-106, etc. The 45 Groups and their 135 Patterns (used in seven Projects) segue between techno and various types of house, with a common thread of brooding darkness, analogue integrity and rhythmic drive. In terms of the samples involved, it's a very effective fusion of 'old' and contemporary sounds, bolstered by a good number of well designed Drum Synth, Massive and Monark presets.

[www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com)**9/10**

Samplephonics

**Ipman: Contorted One Shots £19**

More modular synth-generated one-shot drums, cymbals and percussion - 243 of them, to be precise - this time from UK DnB producer Ipman. The proposition here is as straightforward as they get: five folders each contain around 50 Kicks, Snares, Claps, Cymbals and Percussion. Apart from a few slightly premature release curtailments, the sounds are superb: gritty, vivid, full of variety and well suited to use in the gamut of harder electronic genres. At this price, Contorted One Shots is a steal.

[www.samplephonics.com](http://www.samplephonics.com)**9/10**

Loopmasters

**Dark Underground Vocals £25**

Produced by ARTFX, this enormous library (over 2000 samples) of spoken phrases and words is divided into three folders by tempo - 100bpm, 140bpm and 174bpm - opening it up to ready usage in most dance genres. While most of the samples are simply repeated at different speeds and pitches, you still get a hell of a lot for your money. Be aware that there's very little variation in the voices used or the processing applied to them - the former being 100% male with a frequently noticeable Dutch (we think) accent, the latter being relentlessly harsh and aggressive.

[www.loopmasters.com](http://www.loopmasters.com)**8/10**

Gothic Instruments

**Dronar Guitarscapes £60**

The second in Gothic Instruments' Dronar series (the first, Dronar Hybrid Module, scored 9/10 in **cm229**) is a Kontakt library built on 5.8GB of recordings of various acoustic, electric and steel guitars. The idea is to mix Hi, Mid, Lo and FX layers in a patch (each one a blend of two processed samples), then apply modulation, effects and arpeggiation to build complex textures and soundscapes. Like Hybrid Module, it's easy to use and sounds lush. There's also a new Rhythm Editor, which lets you change the grooves of particular samples.

[www.timespace.com](http://www.timespace.com)**8/10**

Mode Audio

**Beat - Drum Machine Samples £15**

A 460-strong collection of one-shot samples captured from vintage Roland TR-machines - 505, 808 and 909 - and a Casio toy keyboard. All are delivered in their raw recorded state, and through analogue saturation and layered/processed into four genre-based kits. 12 sampler patches for Live, Logic, Reason and FL Studio compile and shape them further. Roland TR sample sets may be ubiquitous, but Mode's methodical, broad-based approach lends theirs a high degree of versatility. It helps that the recordings are great, too, not to mention the price.

[www.modeaudio.com](http://www.modeaudio.com)**9/10**

Loopmasters

**Max Chapman - Sub Freq Tech £30**

The house don hits us up with 766MB of menacing tech samples. The 40 bass loops are delivered raw and 'sidechained' (ie, compressed by an unheard four-to-the-floor kick drum), and, as befits the genre, their energy is mainly focused on the sub end of the frequency range. The drums (full loops and stems) are solid and competently produced, but narrow in scope and bothersomely repetitive in places - and the same could be said for the String Pads. The most interesting section is the folder of 40 Atmos one-shots, which are stunning.

[www.loopmasters.com](http://www.loopmasters.com)**7/10**