

Mini Reviews

The latest musical bits and pieces racked and rated



Far Out Labs ProRemote | £60

A 32-channel wireless DAW control surface on your iPad is nothing to be sniffed at but ProRemote doesn't come cheap. Thanks to the Mackie Control Protocol, it plays nicely with Logic, Ableton Live and Pro Tools, giving you touch-sensitive faders, transport controls and MIDI pads, plus plenty more.

This kind of control would normally require some serious hardware, and Far Out Labs claim that ProRemote is like having four of Mackie's £1,300 Control Universal Pro units "but better"! At a lower price it'd be a no-brainer, so we recommend the Light Edition, which only offers eight channels but comes in at a more wallet-friendly £12. **Greg Scarth**

8/10



IK Multimedia GrooveMaker | £6

If your main priority is to get started making music quickly, GrooveMaker iPad fits the bill. Available with ready-loaded House, Hip Hop or Drum 'n' Bass loop packs plus more available to download online, GrooveMaker makes it easy to put together songs, build arrangements and mix tracks live. The bundled samples are good quality and it's a fun way of getting instant results with loops. It's definitely worth checking out the free demo version on iTunes. **Greg Scarth**

7/10

Kingston 128GB V+ Series SSD Upgrade Kit | £250

kingston.com

The cost and relatively small data capacity of solid state drives has made their uptake pretty slow, but as that gradually changes they're beginning to gain more interest. This kit from Kingston makes the process of replacing a noisy hot laptop drive a cinch. In the box there's an external USB caddy, back-up software and 3.5-inch converter brackets and leads (in case you want to mount the SSD in a desktop machine).

Fitting the drive was a breeze and because of the included caddy, our old grindy hotbox that the SSD replaced could be demoted to a useful portable USB drive – great! Booting Windows 7, or waking it from sleep with an SSD drive is insanely fast thanks to its lack of moving parts and the silence is almost eerie, with



the laptop running much cooler during normal use. All applications load so much faster and loading projects in Cubase and Ableton with sample libraries and multiple plug-ins was massively improved. As an upgrade to a laptop, it's a significant and noticeable improvement, but a

128GB drive for £250 still makes this a luxury for most people. I have no complaints whatsoever about the actual product, but it's still a little too expensive to whole heartedly recommend. **Chris Barker**

8/10

Sennheiser HD650 | £390

sennheiser.com

Championed by Tocadisco in *FM217* and rumoured to be used regularly by David Guetta and Eric Prydz, the Sennheiser HD650s are as open as headphones get, with large grilles on the outside of their huge expensive-looking earpieces.

Slip them on and the audio experience is almost flawless. The mids are crisp and controlled while the high end is airy and accurate, a combination so hard to find on headphones. Their open nature means the low end is rounded but quite transparent, and certainly wouldn't be suitable for sub bass mixing. But being open also means the stereo field is impressively vast. I would have no problems mixing from start to finish on these – with a quick monitor check at the end for very low bass – they really are that trustworthy and pleasing to listen to. As ever open phone leakage is huge here so you're going to 'treat' anyone sat nearby. These are strictly for the boss, not the bus. **Declan McGlynn**

9/10



Kings of The South: Dirty Crunk Kits | £65

timespace.com



The never-ending flood of Crunk sample packages continues with this release from the reliable sample masters at Big Fish Audio.

Separated into 40 construction kits, the 24-bit samples don't stray too far from the tried and tested Crunk formulas, but everything here is produced to a high standard and could easily be used as the basis for your own tracks.

In addition to the separate drum, synth and bass loops, you'll also find individual drum hits for creating your own beats. Acidized WAV, Apple Loops, AIFF, REX2 and RMX formats are included. Not essential, but a solid package.

Greg Scarth

7/10

Driven Machine Drums | \$77

drivenmachinedrums.com



Fed up of weak drum hits, Nathaniel Shreve set out to create the ultimate drum package by taking high quality samples and adding a subtle hint of compression and harmonic distortion to help the sounds gel together perfectly. The gear list alone gives you a good idea of what to expect.

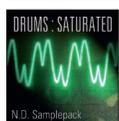
Drum machines including Roland, Oberheim, E-mu, Elektron and Vermona classics were processed through top quality outboard from the likes of Neve, Moog and Thermionic Culture. The result is a collection of 1,684 consistently excellent 24-bit samples which would suit any genre. For an extra \$10, the deluxe package also includes instruments for Kontakt, EXS-24, NN-XT and Structure. Outstanding.

Greg Scarth

10/10

Drums: Saturated | £7

nodoughmusic.com



Relative newcomers to the sample scene, Manchester-based No Dough Music have started to make a name for themselves thanks to a series of solid releases at excellent prices.

This new collection focuses on hard-hitting saturated drum sounds, including kicks, snares, claps, hats, bongos, percussion and tones. With just over 300 samples supplied in 24-bit WAV format it isn't the biggest pack in the world but the quality is generally very high and although No Dough generally focus on Techno and House, these samples should fit well into most Electronic production styles. Currently on sale at just £6.99, this one's well worth a look.

Greg Scarth

8/10

Liquid Drum & Bass Vol 2 | £25

producerloops.com



We've been impressed by just about all of Producer Loops' most recent output, and this follow up to the excellent Liquid

Drum & Bass collection from earlier this year doesn't disappoint. Again, all the loops are at 177bpm and the sounds are generally very versatile.

The full package is well priced at £24.95, but if you don't need the lot, Producer Loops are also offering five smaller Pick 'n' Mix packs of the same content for just £7.95 each. As usual, all the major formats are available and the sound quality is second to none. Great stuff. *Greg Scarth*

8/10

A Guy Called Gerald – Deep Techno Sessions | £35

loopmasters.com



AGCG (Gerald Simpson to his nearest and dearest) has delivered a new pack of atmos, bass loops, chord progressions and

drum loops. I often question the difference between a batch of samples by a 'big name' and one with an unknown. In this case the 'big name' has delivered the goods in a nod-worthy fashion. Some of the drum loops are truly awesome and I'll be filing them away quicker than you can say "The sounds herein contain patterns that create specific air movement sequence in earth atmosphere used at the correct pressure. The sounds will transport you to the groove simulator first level: the holographic key to die hold activation." And that's from the mouth of Gerald himself!

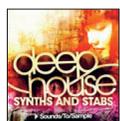
All the usual samplers catered for as you've come to expect. My top choice of edgy soundscapes retro-progressive twisty Techno collection of the month.

Roger Watson

9/10

Deep House Synths and Stabs | £13

soundstosample.com



If you like your synths smoked and leaning on the lo-fi side of the ballpark, then this one could be right down your street. 250 one shots and 128 loops as well as MIDI files for your tweaking pleasure rock in at 242MB with all 24-bits in place.

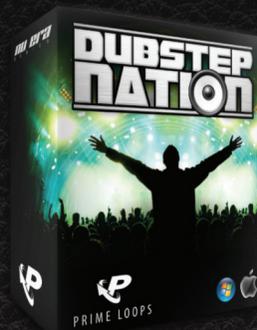
Sounds to Sample have dusted off the Junos, tuned up the FM synths and left no Rhodes unwarped to bring you a collection full of, as the title states – Deep House Synths and Stabs. Chords are ready to be loaded into the sampler and the availability of the MIDI files is a big plus in my book. Another gem from S2S. *Roger Watson*

8/10

PRIME LOOPS

WE'RE IN THE MIX

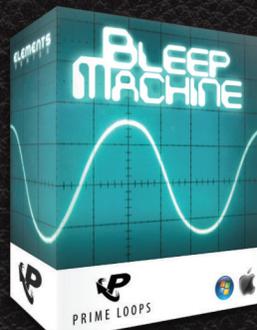
Prime Loops provide award-winning sound libraries, fresh in-tune with the evolving music scene. We are an extremely passionate team of engineers, sound designers & DJs, hailing from London, UK



DUBSTEP NATION

Ready for the ultimate Dubstep experience? "Dubstep Nation" features over 200 heavyweight Dubstep Drum Loops, Basslines and Synth Hooks, complemented with over 200 pounding One-Shots and 130+ mind-blowing multi-patches for Kontakt, EXS24, NN-XT, Sonar & Halion.

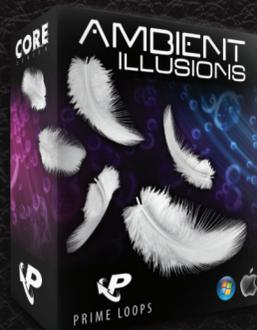
£29.95



BLEEP MACHINE

Greetings earthlings, you are about to be destroyed: Once again Prime Loops are going to pulverise you with their laser beams! For the first time on Prime Loops, we bring you an analogue synth armoury completely dedicated to bleeps, bloops and things that go bweeeeeeeeeeee.

£9.95



AMBIENT ILLUSIONS

Kick back and relax! We are extremely proud to announce this collection of over 120 mind-bending ambient & chill-out instrumental loops, mesmerising chord progressions, intricately crafted sound effects and beautifully sculptured wall-of-sound atmospheres.

£17.95



DA SOUND OF BOUNCE

This mainroom-ready sample pack experience delivers over 300 sidechained, gated synth loops & patches, gritty electro basslines, pounding drum loops, hard-hitting drum shots, powerful FX plus a large selection of full-fat vocal samples, including energetic call-and-chant group shouts!

£24.95

FutureMusic

Readers get **15% Discount** with discount code **FM15**

www.primeloops.com