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Issue 273

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EastWest Stormdrum 3 | €440

EastWest's Stormdrum 2 has set the bar very high indeed so can Version 3 reach the same heights? **Stuart Bruce** investigates

INCLUDES AUDIO

WHAT IS IT?

A huge collection of samples and loops

CONTACT

Who: EastWest
Web: www.soundsonline-europe.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Hugely varied set of percussion sounds
- 2 Excellent quality from virtual mic placement
- 3 Vast array of articulations

SPECS

System Requirements:

PC: Windows 7 or 8 64-bit, Intel Core 2 Quad or AMD Quad Core 2.66GHz or faster, 16GB of RAM, SSD for sample streaming

Mac: OSX 10.5 or higher, Mac Pro Quad Core Intel Xeon 2.66 GHz or faster, 16GB of RAM, SSD for sample streaming

There is hardly a film or game that doesn't use a Stormdrum 2 sound somewhere in its soundtrack. EastWest could

have simply added a new set of sounds to that particular instrument and would have undoubtedly sold plenty of them, but instead of taking the easy route they have opted to build Stormdrum 3 from the ground up. This is a completely new set of samples to a large extent drawing on the massive collection of instruments amassed by Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart during his long and illustrious career. These range from monster custom-built Toms to small hand drums and feature individual samples of single hits, fills and whole loopable performances.

Get set up

Stormdrum 3 comes on its own USB2/3 drive. If you have a USB3 compatible drive then you simply need

to install the PLAY software (PLAY is EastWest's Sample player) onto your system Drive, put the licence onto an iLok 2 and get playing. If you don't have USB3 you will need to copy the library onto an internal sample drive or an external Firewire 800 as USB2 doesn't have the bandwidth to stream the large number of samples for each instrument. The whole licensing and installation process is very straightforward and completed very quickly so the copying process is the only thing that may have you rushing to put the kettle on.

Percussion library

As with most sample players you just have to direct the PLAY engine to the sample library the first time and then it's always there in the browser every time you load an instance. The library itself is very straightforward and is subdivided into nine sections. These

are Quickstart (a comprehensive selection of the main categories), Big Drums, Gongs, Metals, Shakers, Small Drums, Taiko Family, Woods and Mickey Hart live loops.

Within each section are a large number of different instruments with single hits, flams, rolls and other articulations. With the more complex instruments like the double-headed drums and the gongs there are a vast array of varied hits, scrapes and other playing techniques, so whatever patterns or effects you need are easy to find and play.

Spectacular sounds

The overall impression I have from SD3 is that EastWest really wanted to emphasise the pure acoustic qualities of these instruments. Each set is beautifully recorded with plenty of dynamic levels and there are so many articulations that it's easy to get really fluid and accurate sounding performances from them. If you want to take them out of the purely acoustic realm there is a delay, a powerful filter section, a comprehensive set of IR reverbs and envelope controls. As with all EastWest instruments it's the detail which draws you in.

Once you have programmed the part you want, sitting it into a track is very straightforward. Well-recorded sounds are much easier to manipulate and these are no exception to that rule. With a bit of judicious EQ and compression you can really pull out harmonics and overtones, changing the character of the original sounds and giving even greater breadth and depth to what is already a massive palette of extremely useable instruments. While it is tempting to compare it directly to SD2, Version 3 is very much its own man. I would go so far as to say that it is the best sounding set of acoustic sampled percussion I have ever heard. Highly recommended. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT



Truly fabulous sounding acoustic percussion with a vast range of sounds and articulations.