

## JAZZ SESSIONS

Manufacturer **Loopmasters**

Price **£80**

Contact **Time+Space 01837 55200**

Web **www.loopmasters.com**

The old maxim about not judging a book by its cover seems also to apply to samples collections. Cool-looking covers evoking '50s jazz' sometimes turn out to contain frenetic electric jazz-fusion performances. Not so with Jazz Sessions, however, which captures perfectly the sounds and moods you would expect to experience at an intimate jazz venue.

Jazz Sessions is certainly a mighty collection – 3GB of drums, percussion, bass (acoustic and fretless), trumpets, trombones, saxophones, flutes, guitars (acoustic and electric) and keys

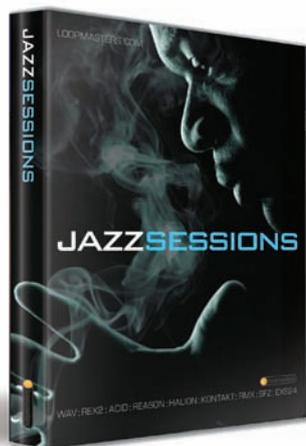
(Hammond, Rhodes and acoustic piano), all played by seasoned jazz musicians.

The content is presented in ACID .WAV and REX2 formats, but in the cases of the double bass, jazz piano, Rhodes and the drum kits, you also get patches for NNXT, HALion, Kontakt, EXS24 and SFZ. Tempos span 60–270BPM.

The horns have been recorded both individually – performing short solo licks – and as a section, playing chords and riffs. However, although most of the sampled sections include a fruity baritone sax, for some reason it's been left out of the solo folders.

Technically, everything is well recorded, but performance-wise, much of the horn work is loose. Presumably that's intentional, but several sax squeaks and the odd brass fluff have slipped through the net, spoiling what is otherwise a fine collection.

Overall, though, this is a unique collection – cool, authentic and perfect for injecting jazz attitude into your music. **KG**



### VERDICT

An authentic, mainly acoustic jazz samples collection that's ideal material for jazz-influenced producers and composers.



## T.90 USB

Manufacturer **Stanton**

Price **£189**

Contact **dj@stantonmagnetics.com**

Web **www.stantondj.com**

The majority of new products appearing on the digital DJ'ing market these days are geared towards users with their material stored on Flash memory sticks and DVDs, but Stanton may just have given us an excuse to dust off our old vinyl with its latest offering, the T.90 USB.

The T.90, with its familiar controls and platter, might look like any other turntable at first glance, but delve beneath the surface and you'll find it's an altogether different beast.

Capable of sending audio not only as a standard analogue signal but also in two digital formats (S/PDIF and USB), the T.90 also acts as a USB soundcard, greatly increasing its flexibility.

And it has a few other tricks up its sleeve, too. The analogue out, for example, can be switched from phono- to line-level, and features such as Key Lock, the two Start buttons and Instant Reverse are usually found on turntables costing a lot more than this one. The build quality is generally good; the platter is solid metal and the tone arm feels reassuringly sturdy. Much of the casing is plastic, but given the price, it's not surprising.

Hooking up the T.90 to a computer and installing the software is straightforward, while the bundled Cakewalk Pyro software makes editing vinyl tracks a breeze. **MV**

### VERDICT

A well-designed hybrid turntable with some clever touches and a lot of bang for your buck.



## PURE COUNTRY IV: NASHVILLE BRUSHES

Manufacturer **Beta Monkey Music**

Price **\$30**

Contact **sales@betamonkeymusic.com**

Web **www.betamonkeymusic.com**

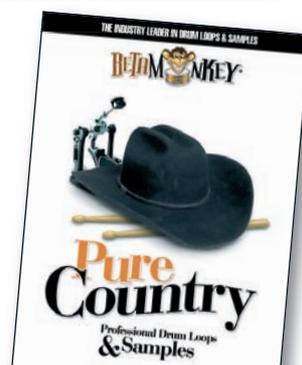
Although there's certainly no shortage of drum loops to choose from, it can sometimes be difficult laying your hands on more genre-specific material, especially when you want a real kit played by a real person. Fortunately, Beta Monkey has turned out a particularly useful line of drum loops, many of which focus on particular styles – jazz, country and metal being just three – that are often overlooked by

other samples developers. At just \$30, the libraries are also extremely competitively priced, making even the occasional 'dabble' easy to justify.

Pure Country IV follows on from the success of previous Pure Country releases, although this time the focus has been shifted towards 3/4 and 6/8 brushed grooves. Despite its relatively low cost, the recording quality is superb, capturing the lightness and detail of the brushes, a neatly rounded kick drum, and just enough ambience to give the kit a sense of life and roominess. Pleasingly, the recordings have

also been kept relatively clean (an important part of the Nashville sound), and this provides plenty of scope for you to add compression and EQ as you see fit.

All of the 300+ loops are clearly labelled, with count-ins, variation grooves, fills and so on. Tempos range from 52–165BPM. We also enjoyed the multi-sampled hits, which we quickly arranged into some useful programs for our EXS24 sampler. It's also interesting – despite the 'country' tag – how transportable these grooves are to other genres, making Pure Country IV well worth a look if you're a fan of brushed playing in general. **MC**



### VERDICT

Pure Country IV offers a depth of versatility and sound quality far beyond what the \$30 price tag would lead you to believe, as well as being a great source of 3/4 and 6/8 brushed grooves.



# BOLLYWOOD GROOVES

Manufacturer **Philtre Labs**

Price **£70**

Contact **Time+Space 01837 55200**

Web **www.philtrelabs.com**

Philtre Labs is a start-up venture run by a group of Indian music industry professionals operating out of Bombay. And Bollywood Grooves is their first samples library, inspired by the sounds of Bollywood and using the same instruments and styles typically featured in films of the genre.

Produced by film composers Salim and Sulaman Merchant, this debut set consists entirely of rhythmic material, featuring both solo instruments and rhythm sections – the dhol, tabla, dholak, duff, ghunghroo-tabla and dholak-

tabla. In total there are more than 700 loops, all presented in Apple Loops, REX2 and .WAV formats.

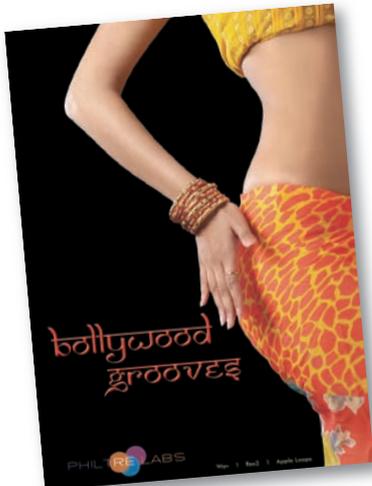
This a classy library indeed, reminiscent of some of the Discovery Sound World Music libraries. It's also very well played and recorded, with just the right amount of natural room reverb. And although we didn't have time to check every single file, they also appear to have been meticulously edited, with accurate timing and seamless looping.

Tempos vary from 74BPM to 135BPM and the content is organised into intros, fills and endings, derived from Bollywood song-style format. We doubt, though, that many producers will be using them in a purist fashion (although that's perfectly feasible). But for flavouring mixes with a touch of authentic Indian popular culture, these loops are perfect.

Another Philtre Labs collection is, apparently, under way. As far as we're concerned, if it's up to the standard of Bollywood Grooves, we're in for another treat. **KG**

## VERDICT

If you need authentic Indian rhythm loops - both solo instruments and rhythm sections – these are some of the best we've heard.



# SOUNDSYSTEM TEST CD

Manufacturer **Headstone Audio**

Price **£5**

Contact **info@headstone-group.co.uk**

Web **www.headstone-group.co.uk**

Understanding how your monitors behave and knowing how to set them up properly is key to success as far as creating a good mixing environment is concerned. And helping you achieve that sonic perfection is Headstone Audio's SoundSystem Test CD, which provides you with a selection of tracks for determining the strengths and weaknesses of your system.

The CD contains 56 tracks comprising constant tones at different frequencies, beginning with a 20Hz sine wave and going up to 20kHz across 27 tracks. These are followed by two sweeping tones, from 15–200Hz and 20Hz–20kHz. Our test system – a pair of PMC passive monitors without a subwoofer – struggled with the extreme bass frequencies and had a pronounced lift around 90Hz. The mid/high range was much more even, and we struggled to hear anything above 18kHz.

Next up are phase and stereo-imaging tests. These enable you to correctly position your monitors, so that ideally you should hear nothing when the signal is out of phase and equal levels between the two channels. Initially, our



system demonstrated some differences between the in- and out-of-phase tracks, although it was not as quiet as we'd have hoped in the out-of-phase track. We couldn't discern any difference in volume between the two channels in the stereo imaging tests, which involve some unpleasant white noise and a selection of stereo percussion recordings designed to test the image across different frequencies.

There are many ways you can test the accuracy of your audio system, but with everything to hand on one disc, this CD makes life easy for you. **MH**

## VERDICT

More complete instructions would make this a far more useful product for studio owners who may not have calibrated a system before.



**MusicTech**  
**EXCELLENCE**  
★★★★★★★★★★

Let's be honest – this product is, at the very least, the best in its class. You probably ought to just buy it!

**MusicTech**  
**INNOVATION**  
★★★★★★★★★★

A very good product that we feel deserves serious consideration by you. Likely to be a studio standard.

**MusicTech**  
**CHOICE**  
★★★★★★★★★★

Being attractively priced isn't enough to deserve this award – the product must also deliver great results.

**MusicTech**  
**VALUE**  
★★★★★★★★★★

This award signals significant progress in the way technology is applied to a particular problem.

## WHAT OUR RATINGS MEAN



**EXCELLENCE AWARD**  
10/10 The best in its class. This product produces superb results, is well implemented and sensibly priced.



9/10 This product demands serious consideration. It comes highly recommended and has an effective balance of features and a pleasing performance.



8/10 A recommended product with features, performance and pricing that meets the needs of its target market.



7/10 A good product that may well fit your requirements, but you need to check that its features fit your working process and that it can deliver the results you're after.



6/10 This product has merit, but some improvements or a more competitive price would make it more appropriate for its target audience.



5/10 Certain oversights in this product's design and performance could limit its usefulness.



1–4 Buyer beware: this is a sliding scale of poor quality, overpricing and/or disappointing performance.

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