

Drumagog 5 Platinum

By Luke Marshall

The new Drumagog 5 offers up some very practical, yet powerful tools in achieving that perfect drum sound. Recording engineers of all levels will benefit from its straightforward, easy-to-use layout. Whether you're looking to add a bit more attack on the snare drum or go full-out with a new drum kit sound, Drumagog 5 makes the process easier than ever with the newly-added features.

New Interface and Design

If you were a previous Drumagog user, you're in for a bit of a change with Drumagog 5. The program has a new user-friendly look that aids in the organization of your files, saves you time when editing samples, and gives you great visual information on what's happening with each drum hit.

The new file browser allows users to find samples across multiple hard drives with ease. The program still offers a Favorites section to save popular sample choices for future use. This is always a great feature and saves you from having to scramble through folders in search of that wicked kick drum sound you had a few months ago.

The visual information you receive in Drumagog 5 is great. Like most drum replacement programs, there is a visual triggering window. This allows the user to see where the transients are for your chosen drum track and set a threshold for when the sample should be initiated. Another key section is the samples window at the top of the program allowing you to see which sample of the gog file is being triggered and when.

New Overhead & Room Sounds

In the bottom middle of the interface is a blend control, which enables you to mix your new sample with the original drum sound. Just underneath the blend control are new faders for mixing in the captured stereo overhead and room sounds that were recorded with some of the Drumagog samples. This is a very cool feature that gives the user a lot more options. You're not stuck with just one basic sound; you can now control how close miked the drum is, or how much room and space you'd like in your sample. Both the overhead and room sounds are stereo and were recorded at the same time as the main sample.

Morph|Engine & Convolution Reverb

In the effects section of Drumagog 5, you'll find both of these new processors. The Morph|Engine gives you many options in either tweaking a sound or creating a completely new and unique sound based on your original track or sample. This processor works very well to give added options for tone or slight background effects on the drum. It comes across to me as a huge feature for engineers working in drum and bass, house, dance, electro, and also in creating beats for hip-hop and rap tracks. There are a number of effects to choose from and they are all adjustable as well, giving you a personal touch on the end result.

The Convolution Reverb has some great sounds to work with that are models of real world spaces. It is a great addition to the program as it gives you high-end reverb options while you're working on your samples. I was impressed with the quality of the included patches and ended up keeping a lot of the reverbs in my final drum mixes.

Auto Hi-Hat Tracking

On the right hand side of the interface is the option to turn on the auto hi-hat tracking. This feature is able to pick out the various hi-hat hits the drummer played. Whether it's closed, half open, or completely open, the program is able to pick out these differences and apply them to the sample chosen for the hi-hat track. In the main setting window, there is an auto hi-hat threshold that can be set to control how much the program varies the hi-hat track. When testing the auto hi-hat feature, there was some latency that occurred, but this can be easily solved by nudging your hi-hat track by the amount given by the program.

The overall program works very well with current recording software programs like Pro Tools 9 and others. Users running software below these current programs may run into latency issues with the lack of delay compensation, which can again be solved by nudging your sampled track to align with the originals. For the accuracy of the program and all the options it gives you, this is only a minor setback.

Drumagog 5 is an impressive program and will be a great tool for engineers to have in their studio setups.

Luke Marshall is a freelance recording engineer and session drummer working in Toronto. He can be contacted at lf8@msn.com.