rain computers

Products   Store   Dealers   Why Rain?   Pro   Support   Contact

Pro / Software

Drumagog 5: Changing the world of drum replacement

Jami McGraw takes a look at WaveMachine Labs' acclaimed plug-in that easily replaces drums with world-class sounds.

by **Jami McGraw**

Anyone who has ever mixed or recorded a track has found themselves in the valley of lost drum sounds. A channel strip, compressor, EQ, gate, maximizer, reverb and countless hours later, your kick drum still sounds like a blurry *womp*. Many have been the days of recording drum tracks in basements and garages where the moment was right, but the sounds were... eh.

Enter WaveMachine Labs, a software company from Chicago that develops innovative software for the professional audio industry. Since 1999, Drumagog has been upping the bar for drum replacement utilities. And with the release of the long anticipated version 5, it is safe to say they have succeeded. I had a chance to speak with Matt from WaveMachine Labs, who told me how Drumagog came about: The President and software designer of WaveMachine Labs' Drumagog had finished a recording session that yielded the aforementioned *womp*. Frustrated and disheartened from the many overdub snare takes he had performed he thought, "Wouldn't it be nice if there was a program that could do this for you?" And Drumagog was born.

Drumagog 5 brings new game into the world of drum replacement. With a full library of samples and an open architecture that allows compatibility with collections like BFD2, Superior Drummer, Kontakt and other virtual instruments right inside Drumagog's plug-in host, your drum sample library could literally go on for days.

> Right out of the gate, you have **drum sounds** that you would have to pay serious money to get in a **big studio**... from the **comfort** of your basement, garage, apartment, or studio

The Sounds

The number one concern with regard to drum replacement is always:
How is the sound? Are the samples good enough not to sound like samples?

Yes, as a matter of fact, they are.

The Drumagog Library was recorded in the main room at Smart Studios in Madison, Wisconsin, owned by Butch Vig and Steve Marker (Garbage). This is the studio where bands like Smashing Pumpkins and Nirvana made some of their best albums. The sounds were conceived over a laborious course of intensive sessions, using some of the best microphones and drums available. You can even fine-tune the mic position of each sample with up to three different room or mic placements blended from a single drum hit. This all occurs while the samples maintain a phase lock with one another. In essence, your drum kit still sounds like your drum kit.

Author

Jami McGraw

Jami McGraw has been a Senior RainCare Technician and System Designer at Rain Computers since 2008. An experienced musician and audio engineer, Jami uses modern creative computing technology in every day life.

Jami is also Managing Director of The Studio @ Rain Music Group helping independant artists record and distribute their music.

rainmusicgroup.com

Related Articles

- EQ Series - Part 4 - Kick Drum
- EQ Series - Part 5 - Snare Drum
- EQ Series - Part 6 - The Rest of the Kit

Links

- Drumagog website

Share this article

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Digg
- StumbleUpon

The second biggest concern - usually the drummer's - is that the flavor will disappear. *That doesn't sound like **my** performance...*

This is where Drumagog steps apart from other replacement programs. Each drum sample is adorned with a huge variety of articulations that reflect all forms of velocity and dynamics. These articulations can be used with the number of dynamic groups set at specified intensity rates to truly represent the original performance.

There is a natural feel to these articulations that remains true to that of a real analog drum kit. Drumagog 5 Platinum also boasts a feature called Auto Hi-Hat Tracking that intelligently detects and replicates hi-hat flares and expressions based on pedal position (i.e., open/closed). More importantly, trigger engine's new feature, Auto-Align 2.0, actually looks ahead to hit points, rehearses different articulations to find the best match, looks for phase accuracy, and plays the chosen sample right on cue - all during playback, all in real time. Very nice.

Drumagog 5 Platinum's Auto Hi-Hat Tracking feature

The Features

Aside from the excellent quality of sounds, Drumagog 5 has a full mixer to adjust pitch, mic placement and room blend. It also comes with built in effects like convolution reverb and an effects unit called MorhplEngine. These were designed in collaboration with MoReVox sound designer, Sabino Cannone. The Convolution Reverb has a catalog of IR libraries as well as the ability to read other standard IR files which gives you a truly expandable range of room effects. For those specialized drum sounds, MorphlEngine replicates some of the sounds Sabino created using chains of analog compressors, limiters, and various modulation units to get that custom tailored "affected"sound.

Built-in effects include convolution reverb and an effects unit called MorhplEngine

How to

It's really as simple as inserting Drumagog as a plug-in on your drum track and selecting the sample sound you'd like to use. Right out of the gate, you have drum sounds that you would have to pay serious money to get in a big studio. Except now, you can achieve this from the comfort of your basement, garage, apartment, or studio. Even major producers like Chuck Ainlay and Pat Thrall are using it.

Pros

Easy to use, quality sounds, flexible, great support, expandable, affordable, seamlessly transparent, new features and improved GUI. Farewell MIDI drums!

Cons

The user interface has a ton of options that are much different from Drumagog predecessors. This is not necessarily a con, but it did take some time to really dive deep into what this program can do.

The plug-in is very resource intensive, which is to be expected with the amount of "smart" capabilities the program has, but it may bog down the average computer.

Verdict

Drumagog 5 performs beyond earlier versions and has become a staple for drum sounds here Rain. As producer Pat Thrall (John Mayer, Beyonce) stated, "Drumagog makes others seem like toys. If you are not using Drumagog, you are working way too hard." 🖉

United States   United Kingdom