

cm mini reviews

A rapid-fire round-up of sample libraries, ROMplers and music gear

Dada Life

Endless Smile \$39

Web www.dadalife.com
Format Mac/PC, VST/AU

The second plugin from EDM production dons Dada Life follows up their lauded two-knob Sausage Fattener compression and distortion module with an even more reductive device. Endless Smile (VST/AU) is designed to turn any input signal (most pertinently, that coming through your master bus) into a rising clockwise, leading into a drop as its snapped back fully anticlockwise. It might sound like a painful music technology blog's April Fools news story, but not only is it real, it's absolutely wicked.

Like its meaty sibling, Endless Smile is so effortless to use that you'll feel like you're cheating. Seven presets ('Fist In The Air', 'Face Melting Joy', 'Broken Teeth', etc) set up an increasingly heavy hidden effects chain, the depth of which is adjusted with the aforementioned Intensity control. The carefully calibrated processes at work under the hood include filtering, delay, reverb, noise generation,

saturation, and - most importantly - a barber pole frequency shifter. The last adds a rising tonality to some of the presets that brings the echoes, spatialising and filtering together beautifully.

By manually operating or automating Intensity, Endless Smile really can turn *anything* into a build-up. Just winding it up over a cycling loop for eight bars, then slamming it to zero on the downbeat, makes it sound like you've put serious work into a drop that doesn't actually exist.

The catch, however, is obvious: it probably won't be long before everyone's using this thing, and each preset has a very characteristic sound, so producers looking to take advantage of



Endless Smile's spectacular build enhancement should do so before the world tires of it. DJs, on the other hand, have no such deadline to worry about - simply assign it to a MIDI controller and surprise the crowd by working new drops into classic tunes, or use it to plaster over even the most tenuous of mixes. Very impressive.

8/10

Divergent Audio Invasors £110

Web www.kontaktthub.com
Format Mac/PC, Kontakt/Player

A super slick animation makes a good first impression for this 2GB multisampled analogue synth emulation for Kontakt and Kontakt Player. Invasors puts hands-on programmability to the fore, with an old-school interface that can be negotiated entirely through the use of eight MIDI-mappable knobs and a faux LCD display. Its two oscillators each load one of 128 waveforms, while low- (regular and "Duff") and high-pass filters are modulated via LFOs or an envelope. The step sequencer at the bottom enables a handful of parameters (velocity, pitch, FX and LFO) to be programmed over up to 12 sequences of up to 32 steps each.

Invasors sounds great, with the 128 waveforms providing plenty of fuel for the filters and effects, and the sequencer bringing it all to life nicely. However, while the 'painting the hall through the letterbox'-style interface starts out quite fun (particularly if you're using a Kontrol S keyboard), you quickly find yourself wishing there was a lot less screen switching involved and that you could just get to more parameters from the front. The absence of a manual isn't helpful, either.

7/10



In Session Audio Riff Generation \$250

Web www.insessionaudio.com
Format Mac/PC, Kontakt/Player

This 2.5GB Kontakt/Player library places a bank of five sound slots, each loading one of 255 multisampled electronic sounds, under the control of a MIDI-triggered step sequencer that auto-generates patterns for control of various per-step parameters, with note pitches snapping to your choice of scale/key. Clicking the big Generate button sets all parameters to new values, while clicking the category-specific Generation buttons (Rhythm, Level, Pitch, etc) randomises the parameters relevant to that aspect of the patch. Individual parameters within each category can also be regenerated, and every parameter can, of course, be manually edited. The specifics of the generative process are highly editable in the Generation Options page, with options including Include/Only Use Triplets, Max/Min Step Length, Max/Min Velocity, Deviate From Root percentage, Min/Max Stutter Rate and many more.

Expensive it may be, but Riff Generation is one of the deepest Kontakt libraries we've ever seen, conjuring original melodic patterns out of thin air.

8/10

