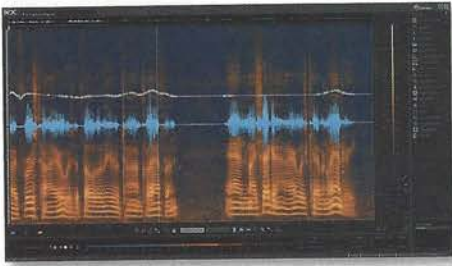


A SOUND PRESCRIPTION



iZotope RX 5 and RX 5 Advanced Glitches and noises beware, RX 5 is here

iZotope RX, in both its Advanced and standard versions, has long been a leader in the audio restoration software field. Remarkably, in its fifth incarnation, it's gotten better. Version 5 focuses on speeding up workflow: Since audio restoration tasks can be long and tedious, anything that helps you work faster is welcome. To that end, the new Instant Process feature lets you select one of five processes, and every time you select a section of audio, that process is immediately initiated on it. The Module Chain lets you construct custom effects chains and apply them with a single click. Users of RX 5 Advanced also get De-plosive, a module that lets you quickly eliminate popped *p*, *b*, and other consonant sounds, as well as a redesigned, more intelligent version of the Leveler module and an AudioSuite version of the Ambience Match processor. Space doesn't allow a mention of all the new stuff, but suffice it to say, whether you have RX 5 or RX 5 Advanced, you're using award-winning software.

THE BETTER YOU SYNTH, THE PLAYER YOU GET



KV331 Audio SynthMaster Player

You'll be happy you fell for a player

iPad owners have scads of soft synths to choose from. Let's face it, though, some are wildly superior to others. One of the very best we've heard is SynthMaster Player, an iOS edition of the Mac and Windows-based SynthMaster that excels in its versatility.

SynthMaster Player's most outstanding feature is a multitude of dynamite sounds. Two hundred top-shelf presets get you going, and you have the option to buy hundreds more. For the best bang for the buck, get 800 additional presets by upgrading to the Pro version. If you own SynthMaster for the Mac or Windows, you can export all your preset banks to your iPad, even the ones you've created yourself. Although Player doesn't accommodate the deep patch-customizing capabilities of the full-tilt version, it lets you edit enough parameters to make it do your bidding. Whenever the job calls for a synth on your iPad, SynthMaster Player rounds all the bases.

THE WHOLE 9 YARDS



MOTU Digital Performer 9

From streamlined workflow to synth-style audio processing, this update has it all

DP9 combines workflow improvements, such as floating plug-in windows, automation lanes, MIDI note muting, and Music XML export with a bumper crop of synth-style audio processing. Megasynt applies virtual analog subtractive synthesis to guitar, bass, or anything else you want to feed it. For a simpler signal flow, try MicroG and MicroB, a pair of Polyphonic Octave Generators designed specifically for guitar and bass, respectively. MultiFuzz models Craig Anderton's Quadrafuzz, bringing independent distortion to four frequency bands for some serious audio havoc.

MOTU models the classic 1176LN Limiting Amplifier with the MasterWorks FET-76, offering all of the controls of the hardware unit. Perhaps the most exciting is the inclusion of MOTU's MX4, a three-oscillator, wavetable synth, whose capabilities extend well beyond analog synth tones, into hyper-animated sweeping sounds and bizarre timbral shifts thanks to a generous pool of wavetables and a brilliant modulation matrix. There is good reason for Digital Performer's frequent appearance in our Editor's Choice Awards; its deep set of recording and editing amenities, intuitive workflow, and terrific-sounding plug-ins keep it ahead of the pack, and this year is no exception.

THE SKY'S
THE LIMIT



EastWest Composer Cloud

A personal orchestra
at your fingertips—
anytime, anywhere

Imagine you're in the middle of a session and you suddenly realize that an orchestral harp would take your track to the moon. With subscription-based, web-delivered software as the norm, shouldn't you have instant 24/7 access to any instrument you can think of? Of course you should, and EastWest has you covered with Composer Cloud.

Highly regarded for its broad collection of libraries and VIs, including the Hollywood Orchestra series and Symphonic Choirs, EastWest's Composer Cloud Gold collection is your gateway to more than 9,000 virtual instruments for a reasonable monthly subscription fee. There's a discount if you subscribe by the year, a reduced rate for students, and the company offers a free trial month with your choice of three Composer Cloud products.

Whether you're a composer, game-audio designer, or songwriter, Composer Cloud is the most affordable way to expand your timbre palette, as well as get the sound you need when you need it. That's a winning combo.

ABSOLUTELY
FABULOUS



FabFilter Pro-C 2

A compressor that's
ready for anything

Voting for this award was easy, because all of the editors agreed immediately: From its excellent sound quality to its extensive feature set and informative interface, the Pro-C 2 is a must-have dynamics processor.

In addition to side-chain EQ, auto gain, auto release, and continuously variable knee, the Pro-C 2's notable features include a hold parameter, quality metering, oversampling, as well as mid-side processing and parallel compression capabilities. Our editors especially noted the excellent performance of the look-ahead feature and the useful collection of style presets—Clean, Classic, Opto, Vocal, Mastering, Bus, Punch, and Pumping—that allow for a range of control from transparent to over-the-top. You can even trigger compression using MIDI notes.

The user interface is detailed, but without clutter. Set it to a standard compressor image or a scrolling peak-level display, then expand it to the full size of your computer monitor: Retina support for Mac OS X means it will remain easy to read. But no matter where you use it, Pro-C 2 is likely to get the job done quickly and efficiently. Win-win!

A SONIC
SUNBURST



Gibson Les Paul Reference Monitors

Premium sound in your
choice of finishes

If somebody told us a year ago that we'd be giving an award to studio monitors with front panels finished like an electric guitar, we might have asked them what they were smoking. But as it turns out, they would have been right. There are such monitors—Gibson's Les Paul Reference Monitors—and we *are* giving them an Editor's Choice award. Why? The main reason isn't the Cherry, Tobacco Burst, and Cherry Burst finish options, which look like the top of a sunburst Les Paul guitar. Their excellent sound was what won us over: The playback reproduction was detailed and well balanced, frequency-wise, making them great for mixing.

The Les Paul Monitors come in three sizes, with woofers of 8", 6", and 4" respectively. And while they're a bit on the pricey side for the home studio market, their sound quality is worth the extra shekels. We also loved that everyone who walked into the studio said, "Wow, what are those?"



THE MIX-STRUMENT



Roland AIRA MX-1

Live performance
mission control
brings software and
hardware together

Breakthroughs like the AIRA MX-1 exemplify why we stopped categorizing our Editor's Choice Award winners several years ago. Today's innovative products often combine several categories or create their own. As a case in point, the MX-1 bends the boundaries between mixer, sequencer, effects module, MIDI controller, and instrument.

It starts as the command center for up to four other AIRA units whose audio, MIDI, etc. syncs through the MX-1's AIRA Link USB inputs. It also has analog and digital audio inputs and two PC inputs for syncing and processing DJ software or a DAW just like the other channels. This includes basic mixing, a dedicated filter, "beat effects" (which use a step sequencer to control sidechain, filter, and slicer), multi-effects, and shuffle.

It also offers modes for treating the MX-1 as a full MIDI control surface or as a mixer for 18 DAW tracks. And it has special control over Ableton Live for clip launching, recording, and mixing. Savable combi presets and a Mastering chain of processors on the output are just a couple more features that make the MX-1 a unique creation that you should experience to fully appreciate.

PATHWAY TO OTHER DIMENSIONS



Roli Seaboard Rise

Polyphonic
multidimensional
controllers made easy

Forward-thinking musicians are witnessing a battle for dominance as PMCs slug it out in the marketplace. This past year saw the emergence of two extremely worthy newcomers, the Roger Linn Design LinnStrument and the Roli Seaboard Rise. Though we had a hard time choosing one over the other, the Rise has a leg up with two big advantages. Because its layout is strikingly similar to a piano keyboard, anyone who plays keyboards can get started rather quickly. And because it's a seriously scaled-down, two-octave version of the bigger Seaboards with no internal sound engine, it costs less than any of its competitors.

You can play any hardware or software MIDI instrument with the Rise, but it really shines when paired with the included computer-based soft synth, Equator. Equator pairs DSP-generated waveforms with sample playback and lets you process them with five filters, five envelopes, and an excellent assortment of effects. If you play keyboards and you feel stifled by their expressive limitations, find out what the Seaboard's "five dimensions of touch" are all about.

VIVA LA EVOLUTION



Sennheiser evolution Wireless D1

No white-space
worries here

Available in handheld vocal, instrument, head-worn, or lavalier mic versions, Sennheiser's evolution D1 transmits digitally in the 2.4GHz range where you won't have to fret over FCC registration or interference from "white space" devices. The D1 employs aptX Live codec technology for secure transmission. Automatic frequency management and microphone sensitivity adjustment allow quick and easy setup, and automatic interference management provides protection against potential interference from WiFi or Bluetooth devices.

The evolution Wireless D1 systems are compatible with Sennheiser's Wireless System Remote application which allows remote control over all parameters and provides performance monitoring. Receiver features include remote battery status, automatic pairing, HPF, 7-band EQ, de-esser, the ability to assign names to the transmitters, and a lock mode to prevent accidental changes to the system.