

## Sound on Sound

June 2008

Equipped Music just go from strength to strength with their series of trip/hip-hop loop libraries. This latest hip-hop release, for example, kept bringing to mind classic Gangsta records like Snoop Dog's Doggystyle , Dr Dre's The Chronic , and Tupac's The Don Killuminati , as well as Notorius BIG's Ready To Die - which can only be a good thing, though whether it's safe to mention all those guys in the same sentence, I'm not quite so sure...

Spanning a tempo range of 85-95bpm, the drum loops exhibit a deep and easy swing reminiscent of Tupac's 'Live and Die In LA' or Ice-T's 'It Was A Good Day'. Kicks throb powerfully, as if through a low-rider's bodywork, while snares combine rich sustain with plenty of punch. Hats take a more background role, merging with the general vinyl patina to subconsciously support the general groove. What always impresses me most about the drums on Equipped releases, though, is their musicality - where most other developers just seem to be programming patterns, Equipped have found the magic ingredient that makes beats sound alive and dangerous.

Certainly the drums on offer here are more than a match for Smokers Relight (which I praised back in SOS August 2007), while providing a more saturated and gritty sound that provides a useful contrast. If anything, the harder-edged feel here appealed to me personally even more. As usual, every effort seems to have been made to increase the usability of the core beat loops, from supplying various simplified versions to including a capacious one-shot section on DVD two. If this isn't enough, of course, the REX 2 files expand the possibilities even further, providing complete multitrack control over the mix.

Moving on from the drums, each beat has an accompanying mixed music loop replete with the kind of sultry added-note electric pianos, vinyl hits and crusty tempo-delays for which Equipped have such a reputation - imagine a kind of scummy mash-up of Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On'. However, the sounds are all shot through with a consistent sweltering languor which again contrasts pleasingly with the somehow coolersounding nocturnal material on Smokers Relight. There was the odd occasion when I felt that maybe the company were resting a little on their Smokers-based laurels here, but there's no getting away from the fact that this is still all really evocative material, with a disjointed, old-school feel that gels beautifully with the beats.

The music loops are also available in deconstructed one-shot form, and the electric piano and bass hits in particular are brimful of Roni Sizeworthy character and grime: pop half a dozen of those and a couple of the beats into an MPC and you're laughing. As an added bonus, there's also the best collection of vinyl-noise samples

I've yet come across tucked away in there, so you can dirty up any other sample library to blend in seamlessly with a Premier Beats-based arrangement.

Despite the large amount of raw material included on the two DVDs (over 2GB of loops and a further 1.2 GB of one-shots, with duplication across Apple Loops, Refill, REX 2 and WAV formats), the quality is maintained at such a consistently high level that it feels like there's no end to it. In short, I can recommend this library without reservation to anyone with a penchant for powerful G-Funk swagger. Go listen to the demos, but I'm warning you now - once you've finished weeping, you'll have little choice but to flex that plastic.

Rating: 5 stars

### **Future Music**

May 2008

Another quality product from the cinemaphonix stable, this vast library of smooth, scratchy and funky breaks oozes streetwise class. The sound is urban '70s funk with a distinctly laidback edge. Beats are hard, while strings, electric piano and brass are warm and fuzzy. It's a superbly recorded set that for all the world sounds like you've just stumbled across the mastertapes of a bunch of lost classics. For enriching your work with a bit of 90bpm lo-fi class swing and groove these are ideal, and as instant soundtracks to daring and experimental rap these loops are hits waiting to happen.

Rating: 9/10

### **iDJ magazine**

June 2008

Premier Beats & HipHop Nstrumentals is the latest sample set to hit the streets. So will it make you the next Dr Dre... or the next Vanilla Ice? Presented in a beautiful package this two-DVD set has over eight gigabytes of samples and loops. 5000 .WAV files, 1400 Rex2 files, 1400 Apple Loops and over 5000 Reason files with beats ranges of 85, 90 and 95 BPM. And that's just for starters... All the files are broken down into folders for convenience, including a whole set of demo MP3s for inspiration that showcase the set's capabilities and which range from raucous 808s to crotch-grinding slow jams. All the folders are then broken down into their respective BPM folders. I'm guessing

the composition and file formation of this CD has been well thought out by a producer whose been frustrated by poorly-formatted samples in the past. They've even taken the time to make the DVDs look like vinyls. Wave, Rex2, Apple and Reason; there really is something for everyone here, and they've even thrown in scratch and FX samples as well as vinyl-style riffs and chords. Whether you're an established producer or just starting out, you wouldn't do any harm by adding this DVD set to your sample library. Easyto- navigate folders and files make this so easy to use, the quality of the samples is excellent, and although this is not cheap, it does prove that you only get what you pay for because Premier Beats offers true value for money.

Verdict:

Sound quality: 18/20

Build quality: N/A

Ease of use: 19/20

Value for money: 19/20

Feature set: 17/20

iDJ rating: 91%

Top drawer, and a must for any hip-hop producer at any level.**Premier**

## **Music Tech**

June 2008

When a new samples collection arrives for review, a quick listen to the accompanying demos is usually first on the agenda. They're often a mish-mash of styles and crossfades, but in this case, HipHop/Lounge artists Fungus & Weed give us 30 short (8-bar) but very impressive tasters. Supplied as a two-DVD set (.WAV, Apple Loops/AIFF, Reason ReFill and Rex2 Xpander files, all 24-bit) the music is downtempo (85, 90, 95BPM), groovy, cool and enigmatic in character.

On DVD 1, the .WAV loops are categorised as FullBeat & Nstrumental, with one loop containing drums and the other the bass and chords. The material is broken down further, though, with a chords-only folder and three drum loop folders - 8Beat & Swing (two versions, straight and swung), Kick-Snare and HiHat. The Apple Loops are similarly categorised, but in this case the drums are available multi-track-style for extra separation (although being very much a 'produced' set, they are already processed).

The Rex2 folder on DVD 2 is in the same vein, with specially prepared files for use within RMX and Reason, but also compatible with any other Rex2-compatible software. A Reason Refill is also to be found,

along with more .WAVs in the form of chords, riffs, bass, Rhodes piano, scratch, percussion and vinyl FX samples

This is a thoroughly professional, if expensive, loop library, but well worth the outlay if you produce this style of music (check out the Fungus & Weed MySpace page).

Verdict: A stylish, glossy and well-produced double-DVD set of cool-sounding hip hop loops that are full of character and interest.

Rating: 9/10

### **Knowledge Mag**

June 2008-05-19

Kmag readers into rap should make sure they pick up this set of samples from Time+Space. Premier Beats is a hip hop pack of epic proportions – leaning towards the Bedford Stuyvesant sound popularised by DJ Premier. Whilst you can meld the beats inside into many hard-edged genres – drum & bass, breaks and so on – they work wonders in rap, and the sounds are refreshingly musical and mellow-tinged. If you need a sample pack for video games or TV ads, this is definitely the one, as everything gets the toe tapping within seconds. It's high quality all the way – don't believe us? Check [www.timespace.com](http://www.timespace.com) for a demo, and you won't be disappointed.

### **Computer Music**

June 2008

This dual-DVD hip-hop library is clearly inspired by old-skool MPC jockeys such as DJ Premier and Pete Rock. The first disc contains just over 2GB of loops, including beats and instrumental sections. While this is certainly useful, the real value comes from the second disc's REX2 loops and one-shot samples. These include tasteful and authentic-sounding soul strings, electric piano riffs, bass notes and individual drum sounds. Premier Beats stands out in a saturated market thanks to its wealth of quality content.

**Rating 9/10**

