

cm mini reviews

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

D16 Group Spacerek €79

Web www.d16.pl
Format PC/Mac, VST/AU/AAx

A new Silverline plugin from D16, Spacerek takes on the concept of reverb, doing its stuff by fusing “modelled virtual spaces to a dynamic delay network”. Whatever the underlying mechanisms, Spacerek is capable of creating interesting and rich reverb spaces that don't sound unnatural, but still lets you push things further for some unique results.

Each of Spacerek's 114 reverb models have different virtual microphone, sound source and room size configurations, allowing for versatile results. Those microphone and speaker icons on the display, by the way, aren't moveable – they just represent how each reverb model works under the hood.

In the centre, you can set volume for three reverb stages – Direct sound, Early reflections and Late reflections – and alter the stereo Balance for each. The latter can be done in Left/Right format or in a Mid/Side configuration. You could, say, splay your early reflections out in the stereo field to give your sound a sense of



location while reining in the tail to make it a little more mono, keeping the mix focused.

The Tilt EQ can bias the frequency spectrum of the reverb as a whole, to make it brighter or darker, and there's a Low Cut filter that can be set up differently for Mid and Sides signals to clear up mud where it's needed. Nice!

Another fairly unique addition is discrete Pre-Delay times for the effect's Early and Late reflections, which can really help set the perfect timing to your virtual space, giving the mix more

breathing room where necessary. In use, it's a very useful feature.

As is becoming familiar in D16 Group plugins, Spacerek offers a preset browser with tagging to filter those 114 reverb models for certain qualities. The presets themselves give you a large variety of spaces and some experimental effects. All in all, Spacerek may not have a flight deck full of controls, but it's capable of making your sounds take off.

9/10

Oblivion Sound Lab Hex Drum \$39

Web oblivionsoundlab.com
Format PC/Mac, VST/AU

This is a synthesis-based drum machine inspired by drum machines of the 1980s – with a specific focus on aping the Simmons SDS. Minimalist in its design, it's designed with the intention of getting that quick retro drum feel, while still being able to hold up in modern mixes. That “Hex” comes from the orig SDS's drum pad shapes, but you'll actually find seven drum sounds to design in this one.

For kit elements, you get kick drum, snare, low, mid and high toms, plus open and closed hi-hats, allowing for a nice combination of drum patterns. Each element has the same universal set of controllable parameters, and enables you to select from three analogue-modelled waveshapes each – a sine, a triangle and a hybrid – allowing for different ‘oscillator’ timbres.

You can tweak settings like pitch, noise amount and decay, just like a classic drum machine. Although a visualiser could help to see how the sound is being affected, this method definitely replicates the feel of using a classic

drum machine and tweaking it by ear.

Hex Drum's interesting inclusion of an LFO allows you to modulate the tone of each element, giving rise to further interesting experimental character. Using faster LFO speeds, for example, you can generate metallic timbres.

The plugin includes a nice range of presets, ranging from some classic and instantly recognisable drum sounds to more modern and experimental setups. It's fit for use in a wide variety of genres, but it still remains true to the original drum machines that inspired it.

The inclusion of various seemingly simple functions means that you can customise your drum sounds in a variety of interesting ways. The ability to alter pitchbend styles is a nice touch – one for the serial tweakers – and the



Mix controls offered for the Noise and Click are great options for reinforcing the tone and transients of the hits – or for dulling them down a bit.

Hex Drum is a solid drum machine at a very reasonable price. Sonically, it easily rivals the classic gear on which it's based, and in terms of features, it can serve as a workhorse for bread-and-butter drum sounds in most contexts.

8/10