Special Issue:
Cakewalk Update 2016.10

Cakewalk 2016.10 Update

Don't worry, you don't need glasses—it says "Cakewalk" instead of "SONAR" update. But there's a good reason for that: While our SONAR dev team is hard at work on some bigger features that will roll out in the next few months, we decided it was time to add some features and fixes to other popular products in the Cakewalk lineup.

Coming soon, Rapture Pro and Rapture Session have some useful new features along with fixes, there's info on how to get the CA-2A T-Type Leveling Amp for free, and of course, SONAR gets attention with support for Softube's Console 1 and several important fixes.

And…we have our ever-popular Top 10 Chart, Anatomy of a SONAR Project, a review of the BigTone EDM Expansion Pack for Z3TA+ 2, and Surfboard. So while you get ready for the change of seasons, and for the next round of SONAR updates, enjoy the latest updates for more than just SONAR. – *Your Cakewalk Team*

Softube Console 1 Support: And not just any support, but through a Softube/Cakewalk collaboration, Console 1 is now more than just a very cool channel strip—it's graduated into bi-directional communication with SONAR, track/bus selection, and much more.

Coming Soon—Rapture Pro and Rapture Session Enhancements: Although the core install now includes 50 new Polysynth programs, that's not all—you'll also find multithreaded loading for those files with big samples, better program management, resource sharing to avoid loading redundant samples, and bug fixes.

Z3TA+ 2 Update: There's been an improvement to the authorization process for both Mac and Windows computers that are on slower connections. You'll also find bug fixes for MIDI files with long arpeggios, and now when you pick a controller in the modulation matrix, you can rest assured you'll get the one you expected.

CA-2A T-Type Leveling Amplifier Is Currently Free (Get It Before We Change Our Minds): That pretty much says what you need to know. This acclaimed, cross-platform compressor/limiter for VST2, VST3, AAX, and (SONAR Professional and Platinum only) ProChannel is yours for the taking. Find out how.

Fixes and Enhancements: It seems the theme for this month was "fix several annoying little things, as well as some things that could cause crashes." High on the list are Matrix View fixes, "Follow Host Tempo" tweaks, easier Move tool access in Take Lanes, an UpSampling fix for 88.2 kHz projects, and more.

Charting Now in SONAR | The Top 10 Blue Tubes Plug-Ins: The Blue Tube collection of plug-ins get a lot of use, because they provide a different kind of "flavor" than anything else. So, we asked Dr. Analytics which ones you use the most, and it's clear there are some definite favorites.
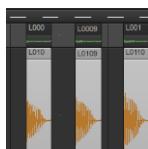
Anatomy of a SONAR Project | Creating an Expansion Pack for the Drum Replacer: When Craig Anderton wanted replacement kicks for EDM and hip-hop projects, he couldn't find any—so he made his own. Read this, and you'll find out how to make your own Drum Replacer sounds.
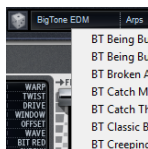
Review | BigTone EDM Expansion Pack for Z3TA+ 2: Prominent sound designer Nico Herz is at it again, with a new expansion pack tailored specifically for EDM. His goal was to reveal another side of the Z3TA+ 2 by creating sounds you wouldn't expect to hear from it. But did he succeed? Let's find out.

SurfBoard: Surfing the internet can be fun, but surfing the Cakewalk forums can be downright instructive because community members are constantly sharing tips and techniques. We've scoured the forums for the latest threads that can help you get the most out of SONAR, and compiled them here.

How to Download the SONAR 2016.10 Update

Open the **Cakewalk Command Center**. If you are prompted to download a newer version, please follow the on-screen instructions to download it.

To download the **SONAR 2016.10** core update, download from the core SONAR Artist, Professional, or Platinum category.

Softube Console 1 Support
Artist, Producer, Platinum

Softube's Console 1 takes a different approach from conventional control surfaces, which typically emphasize multi-track control with traditional faders, or moving faders on more expensive models. Instead, Softube has modelled an SSL 4000 E console in software (endorsed by SSL for its accuracy), with the Console 1 providing hands-on control over a sophisticated channel strip that incorporates gate, EQ, compressor, high and low cut filters, and emulated analog console non-linearities. And just for kicks, there's Softube's Transient Shaper that was not part of the SSL 4000 E. Furthermore, Softube offers optional-at-extra-cost software packs for other consoles, like the SSL XL 9000 K-Series and the British Class A console.

The basic workflow is you select a track and then tweak the channel strip's controls, while your monitor displays a graphic representation of those tweaks. It's all pretty fluid, and the controls are laid out in a way that's both ergonomic and logical.

Although Console 1 has been compatible with all major DAWs since its introduction, now Softube and Cakewalk have collaborated to bring an additional level of control where Console 1 hardware can control vital SONAR functions. These include:

Track and Bus Selection
The new Console 1 software has bi-directional track selection that both reflects SONAR's track or bus selection in Console 1, and Console 1's track or bus selection in SONAR.

Track Names
The Console 1 control surface UI displays track names when selected.

Volume and Pan

In addition to the Console 1 Output Volume and Pan knobs controlling the corresponding settings in the Console 1 software, they can now be switched over to control the pan knob and volume fader on the selected track.

Solo and Mute

You can switch the Solo and Mute buttons to control the selected track, as well as control these settings in the Console 1 software.

Send Levels

Hold Shift to control the selected track's send levels directly from the Console 1 hardware.

Real-Time SONAR Updating

When you edit Vol, Pan, Mute, Solo, or Send gain via the Console 1 hardware, SONAR will update in the values in real time.

(Please note that as of this writing Softube is still making some tweaks at their end, so the new Console 1 software might not be available when this eZine hits the world; the anticipated release date is early November. However in any event, SONAR is ready for it.)

Preview: Rapture Pro and Rapture Session Enhancements

Rapture Session: Artist, Professional, Platinum

VST2, VST3, AU, AAX

Rapture Pro and Session continue to evolve, with version 2.0.5 (due shortly) offers several new features as well as some fixes.

POLY SYNTH INSTRUMENT PAGE

One of Rapture Pro's helpful features is including a graphic that indicates the instrument type, and now there's one for poly synth programs.

50 NEW POLY SYNTH SOUNDS

And since there's a Poly Synth instrument page, why not include some new sounds to go along with? Why not, indeed—there are now 50 new sounds with the core install.

LOAD WAVEFORM AND SAVE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Rapture Pro now remembers independent locations for Load Program and Save Program, which solves the potential annoyance of having to switch back and forth between folders when loading and saving.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

- The multisample loading process is now multithreaded, which gives much faster loading of programs with samples that take up lots of memory.
- The introduction of resource sharing means resources aren't reloaded if they're shared with the previous program.
- The bug where the eighth instrument control retained the settings from a previously loaded program has been fixed.
- Improvement to the authorization process for both Mac and Windows computers that are on slower connections.

Z3TA+ 2 Updates
VST2, VST3, AU, AAX
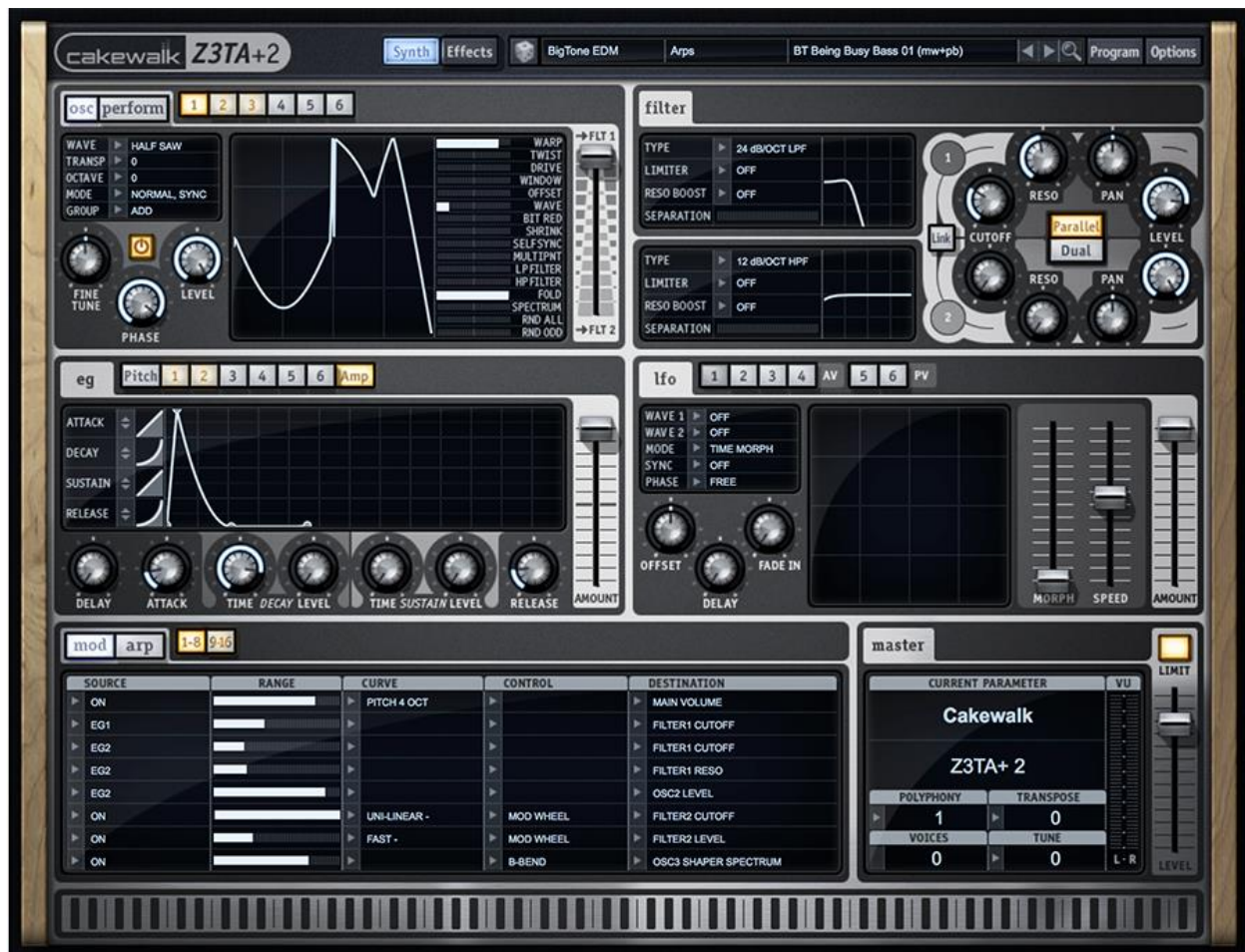
In instrument-land, it's not just Rapture Pro/Session that's getting some cross-platform love. There's been an improvement to the authorization process for both Mac and Windows computers that are on slower connections, so now the Cakewalk Command Center will pass the authorization process (regardless of the connection speed) to avoid timeouts.

What's more, you'll find bug fixes for MIDI files with long arpeggios, and now when you pick a controller in the modulation matrix, you can rest assured you'll get the one you expected.

CA-2A T-Type Leveling Amplifier Is Currently Free
(Get It Before We Change Our Minds)

Artist, Professional, Platinum
Windows and MacOS, VST3, VST2, AAX and (SONAR only) ProChannel module

The audio *cognoscenti* know that Cakewalk's cross-platform CA-2A is one of the finest emulations available for the classic compressor/limiter that has been a mainstay of hit recordings for over half a century. Even SONAR users who have lots of other compressor plug-ins, including other emulations of the same compressor/limiter, choose the CA-2A over anything else.

Why? Because the CA-2A is one of those plug-ins that seems to have a special mojo all its own. It does something downright magical with vocals, not to mention bass and other instruments. Part of this is, of course, due to the original circuit's use of opto-isolators instead of VCAs or other active electronics to provide the needed dynamics control. But the other element is Cakewalk's DSP expertise (as evidenced in the QuadCurve, Concrete Limiter, and many other plug-ins), which has modeled this audio classic in all its detail and definition. What's more, there's sidechain capability, and the controls are blissfully simple to use—important when you want to dial in a superb sound *fast* while in the heat of creativity.

Here are a few of the highlights:

- Zero latency for real-time tracking and mixing
- Up to 40dB of gain reduction
- Frequency dependent compression
- Program dependent attack/release
- Fully modeled "R37" HF Pre-Emphasis control
- Dual photocell reset modes (Classic and Fast Reset)
- Use side-chain compression for ducking, pumping, and more

For more information on the details behind the CA-2A, click here—and when you're ready to get your free plug-in, click here. And there's even a cool video on CakeTV.

You know you want it…but you better hurry, because we might change our minds any day now. You've been warned.

System Requirements

- **Windows** 7 SP1, Windows 8, or Windows 10 (32-bit and 64-bit); **Mac OSX** 10.8 (64-bit only) or later
- **Processor:** Intel Core 2 Duo or newer processor (32-bit processors not supported)
- **Memory:** Minimum 1 GB RAM
- **Disk space:** 100 MB
- **Screen Resolution:** 1280 x 800 minimum resolution, 32-bit color
- **Formats:** VST3, VST2, AAX (for those still who still use Pro Tools), and ProChannel module for SONAR Professional and Platinum

Fixes and Enhancements

This month's update fixes the following issues:

- Possible crash when removing Saturation Knob from a bus
- Move Tool was not accessible when a Take Lane was at minimum height
- Possible startup crash related to SQLLite
- Possible crash when adjusting fade-ins for multiple audio clips simultaneously
- UpSampling didn't work correctly in some cases when the project sample rate was 88.2 kHz
- Disabling "Follow Host Tempo" could yield unexpected results, like volcanoes and plagues of locusts
- "Follow Host Tempo" could go out of sync on Melodyne clips that were trimmed
- [SHIFT]+[CTRL] dragging a clip horizontally inside Take Lanes didn't anchor correctly
- Several labels in the Plugin Manager were cut off in Brazilian / Portuguese
- Switching the Matrix View's active MIDI cell after at least one loop would stop playback until triggered
- Dragging clips out of the Matrix View to the timeline could result in incorrectly placed clips
- The Number Pad didn't work as expected when the Step Record dialog was open
- Full Screen Mode Icon did not display in some projects

Charting Now in SONAR:
The Top 10 Blue Tubes Plug-Ins

Since their introduction in SONAR X3, the Blue Tubes plug-ins continue to pick up fans. But why? Several functions are duplicated in other SONAR plug-ins, and you might think the world doesn't really need a whole new family of plug-ins. However, the Blue Tubes plug-ins are all about a vintage character coupled with some unique features—which given how often they're used, seems to be exactly what some people want.

Because there are a lot of Blue Tubes plug-ins, it's understandable if you haven't yet tried all of them in depth. But we have a solution! Let's ask Dr. Analytics to tell us which Blue Tubes plug-ins are the most popular among the SONARians who have taken the time to work with them.

#1: BT Stereo Imager ST2S-3

It's probably not too surprising that the top Blue Tubes plug-in doesn't have its function duplicated with any of the

roster of other plug-ins. When you want your stereo image to get a little more w i d e, this is indeed the droid you're looking for. Just remember that like all wideners, tracks using it may seem a little louder because there's more signal leaning toward the left and right channels. So if you widen the image after already starting your mix, you might need to trim the level of the widened tracks a bit.

#2: BT DeEsser DS2S-3

SONAR already has a de-esser in the VX-64 Vocal Strip, as well as in the late, great, and still mostly working VC-64. But the BT plug-in is dedicated to de-essing only, so it makes sense that when people want to kiss their esses goodbye, their mouse reaches for the plug-in that says "DeEsser." Oh, and don't forget de-essers have other uses, too—like using them to suppress highs dynamically when a guitar feeds something that creates a bunch o' distortion.

#3: BT Analog Chorus CH2S-3

Yes, SONAR has a pretty nice chorus—and if you haven't played with the Multivoice Chorus/Flanger in a while, you might want to re-acquaint yourself with its unique features. But chorus *aficionados* have put the BT Analog Chorus at a solid #3 in the Blue Tubes Top 10, and rightfully so: it's a sweet-sounding, versatile chorus. I wouldn't be surprised if some guitar-playing SONAR fans wish it was available as a floor pedal.

#4: BlueVerb DRV-2080

What with ReMatrix Solo (realistic reverb), Breverb (airy algorithmic reverb), and the still valid Sonitus reverb (nothing else gives that same kind of syrupy reverb sound), you'd think we have enough space cases sitting around. But the reality is few plug-ins exhibit as much differences among themselves as reverbs, so as Spock would say, it's logical that this reverb charts within the top five Blue Tubes plug-ins.

#5: BT Tempo Delay DL3D-3

The Cakewalk Tempo Delay and Sonitus Delay, along with the Anderton Collection Vintage Echo FX chain, have been my "secret weapon" delays for years. Then again, more is better, sometimes things need to go up to "eleven," and the BT Tempo Delay gives you *three* pannable, tempo-synced delays with high and lowpass filtering thrown in (however the filters are not in the feedback loop). When you want to get a groove going with delay, this will probably end up in your "Favorites" folder in the Browser.

#6: BT Limiter LM2S-3

It's hard to get much attention when you're up against the mighty Concrete Limiter. But you might not have the CL, or be able to afford it—in which case this excellent limiter will take care of you. It even has some features the CL doesn't, like an attack control, and a five-stage graphic EQ that you can place either pre- or post-limiter. And of course, there's always the "glowing tube" eye candy. If enough people read this Top 10 and as a result give the BT Limiter a try, it wouldn't be surprising if it moves up the charts.

#7: BT Compressor FA770-3

It's late. You've been working on a session for hours. Your brain is fried, and now you need to set up a compressor. FA-770 to the rescue: reliable reports are that you can even set this while

asleep. Adjust the threshold, try one of the six time constants (although 1 works 99% of the time), and if you want to get aggressive, slam the input a little harder. Next.

#8: BT Equalizer BQ2S-3

This EQ's charm is its simplicity: high and low stages, each with four fixed frequencies as well as gain and Q, and a parametric mid. Ooops…boost the gain too much? Turn on the limiter.

#9: BT ValveDriver ADR2S-3

It's strange this isn't higher up the charts, but at least it made the Top 10. If you want lo-fi, not only does the ValveDriver have filtering, a gate, and distortion, but it also adds the infamous Grungelizer switch. Anyone who thinks SONAR doesn't have enough lo-fi options clearly has not been spent some time subjecting themselves to the ValveDriver's potential aural assaults.

#10: BT Equalizer PEQ322-3

This is the "big boy" version of the BQ2S-3 when you want more bands—three midrange parametric bands, and high and low shelving, both with Q controls. But in a pseudo-tie that's statistically almost impossible, the next three most popular plug-ins—not just the three most popular Blue Tube plug-ins—are the BT Brickwall BW2S-3, BT Equalizer PEQ 5B-3, and BT Oilcan Echo TLE2S-3.

Conclusions

In a world where there are a zillion plug-ins and some of them are even free, the Blue Tubes plug-ins hold their own—and their popularity in SONAR Analytics shows that our fellow SONARians have figured out why these are cool to have onboard. If you haven't taken the time to get acquainted, start with these ten. You'll almost certainly find some favorites of your own.

Anatomy of a SONAR Project: Creating an Expansion Pack for the SONAR Drum Replacer

By Craig Anderton

If you've played with the Drum Replacer, you know it's a great way to substitute great drum sounds for less-than-wonderful drum sounds, as well as use the drum samples of your choice. However, when I needed replacement kick sounds for EDM and hip-hop I couldn't find anything suitable in the existing sample set. Being a DIY kinda guy I figured I'd make my own, but didn't know whether this would be a time sink or a fun project. Then again you never find out unless you try, and as luck would have it, creating your own drum replacement sound doesn't have to be too difficult a task.

THE SOUNDS

The kick sounds came from the Kick Start kick drum sound generator for Rapture Pro/Rapture Session/Rapture, along with the companion KickMaster FX chain for processing kick drums. In case you missed this, the Kick Start instrument's main feature is a set of kick sounds modeled in Sound Forge. Modeling them allowed making hip-hop "hum drums" (those long, sustaining kick sounds that blow off car doors when you're stopped at an intersection) that could be tuned easily to specific keys, but also, these sounds don't have the hiss and other artifacts inherent when sampling hardware (remember, you can always mess up a clean drum sound, but it's difficult to clean up a messy drum sound). Furthermore, Kick Start also has click sounds and physical kick drum samples available for adding variety.

THE REPLACEMENT PROCESS

There are two elements needed for a Drum Replacer replacement sound: the samples themselves, and an SFZ script that maps the samples to notes, file paths, and velocity values. Now, if seeing "SFZ script" makes you break out in a cold sweat and want to flip the page, you may be pleasantly surprised when you look over the script later on in this article. You can pretty much just take it, substitute the names of your samples, and be good to go.

CREATING THE SAMPLES

There's nothing like an automated process to make life easier. Because EDM and hip-hop kicks don't have a lot of nuance, I felt comfortable using only 16 multisamples with velocities ranging from 50 to 127. As the kick drums in the Kick Start instrument already included velocity response, all I needed to do was create a sequence whose velocity went linearly from 50 to 127, and render the instrument track to create an audio file with the 16 samples.
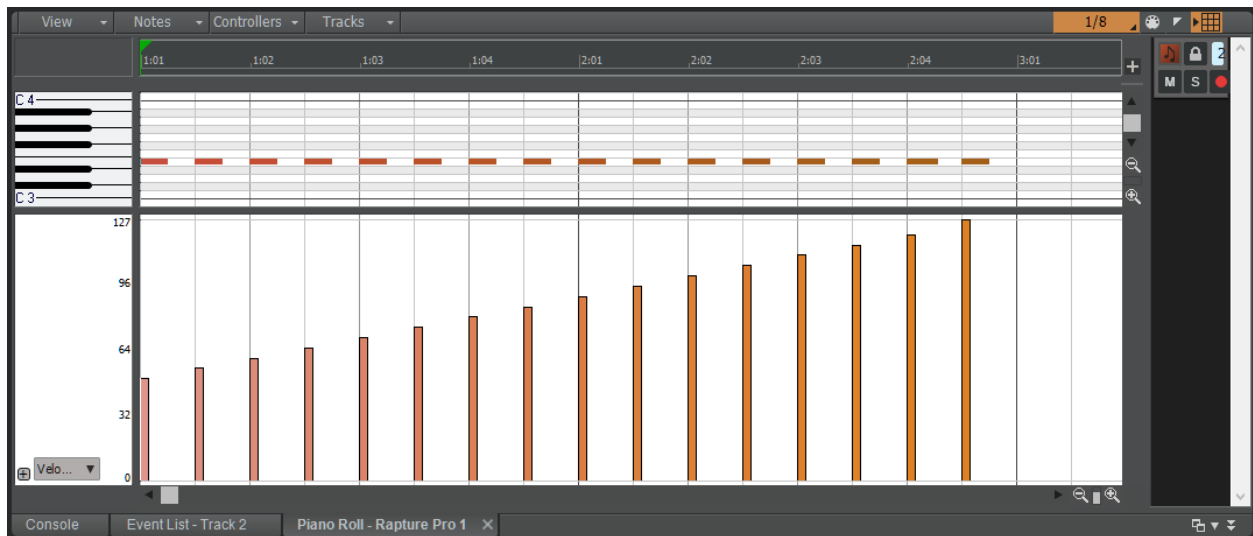
This MIDI sequence triggers the Kick Start sounds at different velocities.

After verifying the process, the next step was to create multiple drum sounds to cover a variety of kicks. I wanted some short kicks, longer kicks, extra-long kicks for the "hum drum" sound, etc. You can see these in the following screen shot, in the process of being cut into individual samples. Because all the kicks were triggered at the same time, it was easy to split at the beginning of the kicks: Select all, place the Now time at the beginning of the kick, then Split.
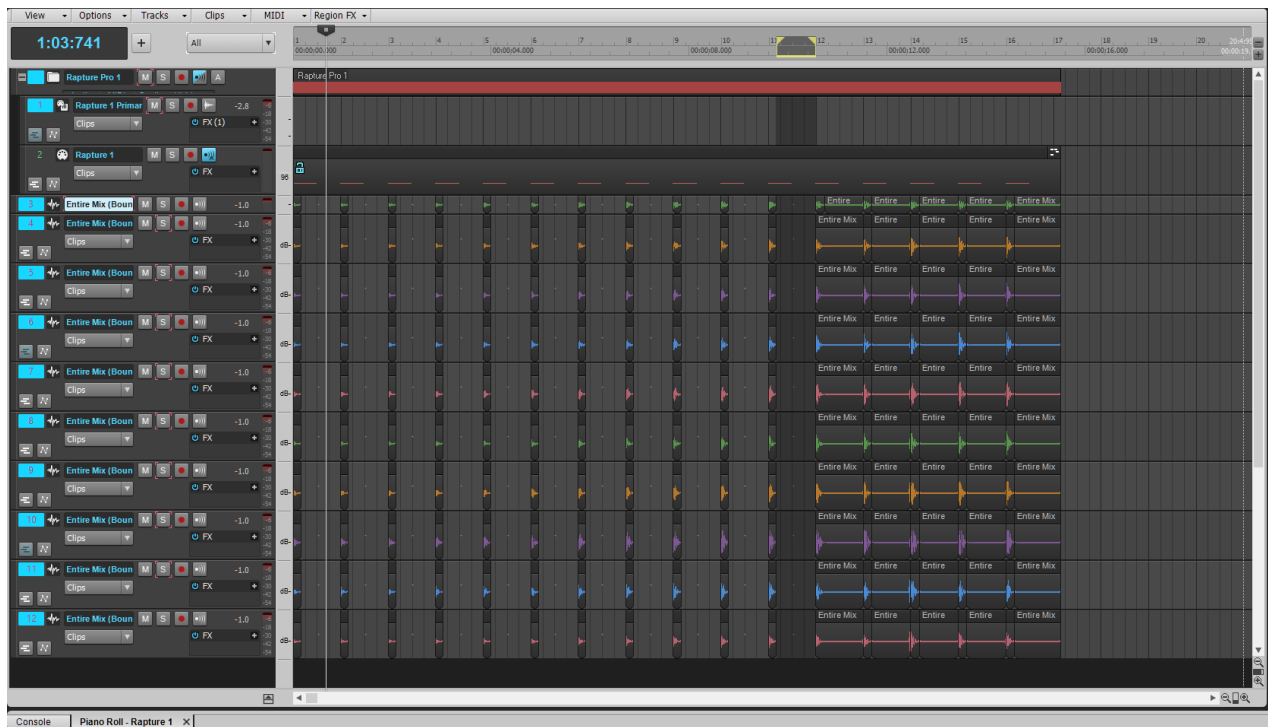
The raw, rendered audio files are being cut into individual samples.

Adding a smooth decay was a little less streamlined, but ultimately it was just a question of trimming the ends, then adding a slight fade. The hardest and most time-consuming part was giving a unique name to each sample.
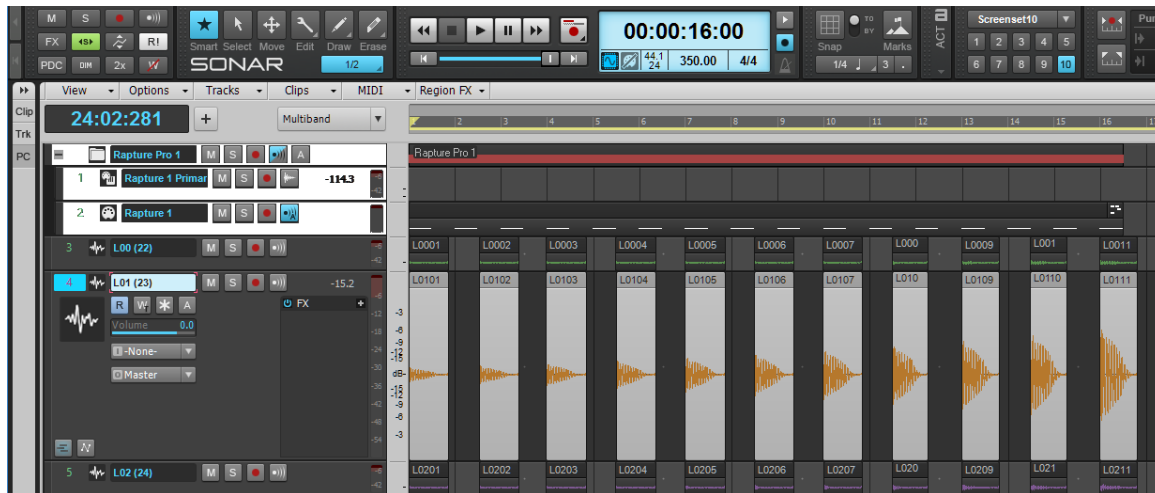
What the final samples look like after splitting, trimming, and adding a very short fade.

One issue I found is that when exporting the mono clips to an appropriate folder to hold the samples, the sound would end up being distorted. This is because being mono files, there's a center build-up because SONAR lives in a stereo world. This happened regardless of whether the files were exported as Mono, or how the Master bus interleave was set.

There are two potential solutions. One is to export as stereo, which is what I did because I figured that ultimately, most people would probably want stereo files. The other is to reduce the file's gain by 6 dB prior to exporting.

Also note that dragging a sample from SONAR into a folder automatically appends a number in parentheses, which you'll just need to delete later. This doesn't happen when exporting.

SCRIPTING TIME

Next up: creating an SFZ script. You can create this in any text editor (e.g., Notepad) by either telling Windows to open SFZ files in Notepad, or changing the .SFZ suffix to .TXT, then changing it back again after saving. The advantage to telling Windows to open SFZ files in Notepad is that you can then save the file and it will retain the .SFZ suffix rather than be changed to a .TXT suffix.

The SFZ text file specifies how the various samples will be triggered; let's take a look at the script.

```
//EDM Long Kicks L00

<group>
lokey=35
hikey=35
polyphony=4
loop mode=one shot

<region>
sample=..\..\Sampledata\CA-EDM-Long-Kicks\L00\L0001.wav
lovel=0
hivel=7

<region>
sample=..\..\Sampledata\CA-EDM-Long-Kicks\L00\L0002.wav
lovel=8
hivel=15

<region>
sample=..\..\Sampledata\CA-EDM-Long-Kicks\L00\L0003.wav
lovel=16
hivel=23
```

Lines preceded by slashes are comments. The top <group> part (colored in red for clarity) specifies common characteristics for the following *regions* (the individual samples). In this case, any region in the group will play back when it receives note 35 because both the lowest key (**lokey**) and highest key (**hikey**) that will play a note are specified as 35. A **Polyphony** setting of 4 is needed in case the same kick hits so fast the previous kick hasn't decayed fully. The **Loop Mode** parameter says to treat these samples as one shots.

Each region (in blue) is very similar. **Sample=** specifies the file path to the sample. The Drum Replacer samples are located in C:\Cakewalk Content\Drum Replacer\Sampledata. Within the Sampledata folder, there are folders for the individual kick categories (like CA-EDM-Long-Kicks, CA-XLong_HumKicks, etc.). With these are folders for the individual kicks, and finally, there's the WAV file itself that makes up the region. **Lovel** indicates the lowest velocity that will trigger the sample, and **hivel**, the highest. So the first region shows that sample L0001.wav is one of the 16 multisamples in the L00 drum sound, which is one of several EDM long kicks, and will play back when Note 35's velocity is between 0 and 7.

When you look at the next region, the only change is that the sample is different (L0002.wav) and it plays back when Note 35 is a velocity between 8 and 15. Subsequent regions specify different samples to play back at different velocity ranges; I didn't bother showing all 16 regions, because you probably get the point.

THE FINAL STEP

Now that I had a bunch of SFZ scripts and drum samples, all I needed to do was put them in the right places so the Drum Replacer could find them. The SFZ files went into C:\Cakewalk Content\Drum Replacer\Drums\Kicks, while the folders with the samples went into C:\Cakewalk Content\Drum Replacer\Sampledata.

And now, when I open up the Drum Replacer, *voilà*—all the EDM and hip-hop kick drums I could ever want are now just a couple clicks away.
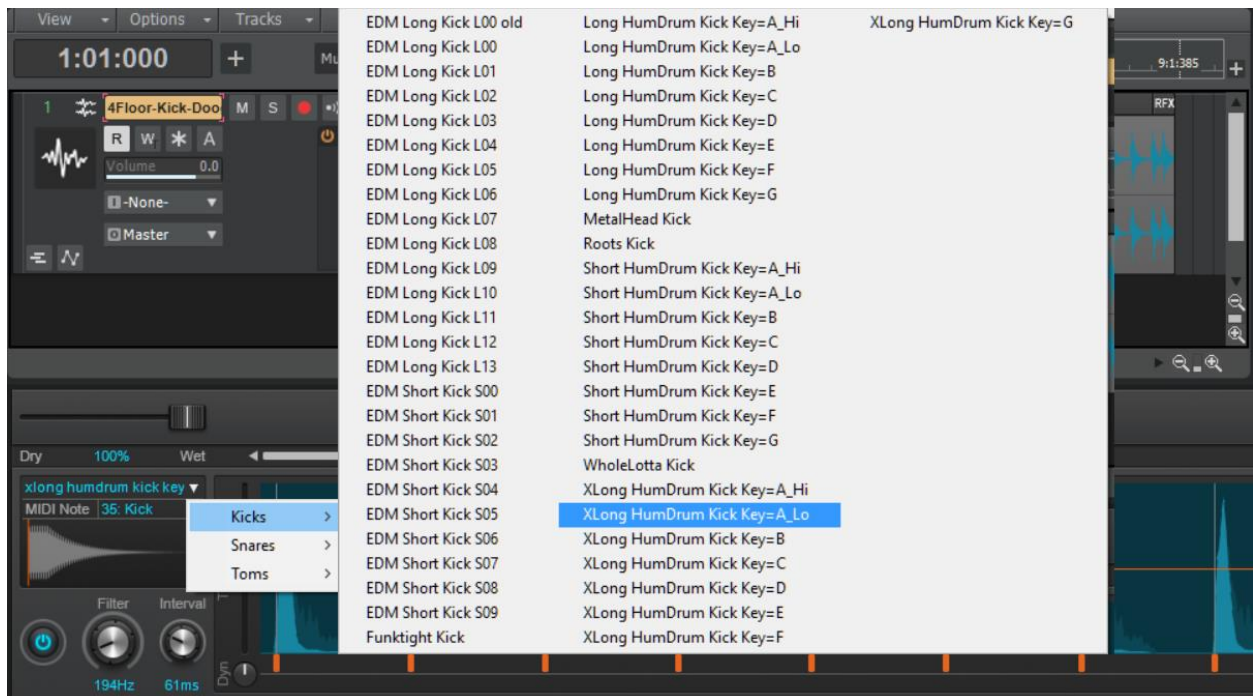
Review: BigTone EDM Expansion Pack for Z3TA+ 2

By Craig Anderton

Sound Designer Nico Herz has done sound design for a variety of companies, of course including Cakewalk. **BigTone EDM**, for Z3TA+ 2, is (as you can probably guess from the name) designed for EDM. So if you're into traditional bluegrass, you probably should not continue reading this.

Anyway, the presets are designed for the EDM "sweet spot" of 125bpm. There are 127 presets total, arranged as eight banks: 7 Bass, 19 Keys, 11 Leads, 20 Pads, 11 Sequences, 6 Sound FX, 19 Textures, and 34 Arps. I'm going to assign each bank a letter grade average for two reasons—it might be helpful, and because sounds are so subjective, if you end up disagreeing with me you'll know not to bother reading any sound reviews I do. Conversely, if you think my evaluations are correct, we can have an ongoing relationship with future sound reviews.

Before going any further, note that I create presets and I'm very, *very* picky. This is both good and bad, because I have definite preferences; what doesn't work for me might be what you've

always wanted, and vice versa. However this also means that I recognize when someone has put a lot of effort into crafting a set of patches, and in that respect, BigTone more than qualifies. The presets have, for lack of a better word, "passion" and the worksmanship is excellent. It takes a tremendous amount of work to create something like this.

Even the names are better than average, as many actually do give an idea of what to expect (e.g., "Fluctuating Decays," "Ringing Sweetness," "Analog Snapper Bass"). More importantly, there are hints in parenthesis about what can modify the sound, such as "pb+mw+at." This lets you know that yes, it's worth turning aftertouch recording back on in SONAR because there might be something useful happening if you press on the keys.

However, I'll argue with Mr. Herz about these being best at 125bpm. Granted, they all work great at that tempo so I understand his point. But you can drop many of the Arps and sequenced sounds to 85bpm for some righteous hip-hop madness, add some spice to rap, or add ear candy to rock.

GOING TO THE BANK

As to the banks themselves, the Arps are ideal for those background driving forces behind music that occasionally take the spotlight. I expect to hear the "Catch the Smack" and "Hollow Bass Sequence" Arps on Netflix before too long in a movie suspense scene, with the tempo at 100 and perhaps filter resonance turned down. Overall the Arps are strong, and generally aggressive but without being rude. They slide very easily into existing productions; I suspect "Tech Stack" will show up in a bunch of dance tracks, and the "Sophisticated Pumper" patch is just waiting for me to write a song around it (at 91bpm...so there). I'd give this bank a solid A.

The basses are okay; there are a couple standouts, they do offer something different, and they benefit from the mod wheel and bend where indicated. But I didn't find them as compelling as the other presets, so I'd give them a C+. Next up, I found the Keys outstanding—I'd rate them an A+. They're sophisticated presets, and most have a "haven't heard anything quite like that before" quality that makes them a welcome addition to any set of presets. If some of the "new age" synth sounds of the 80s became Harley-riding high-society biker chicks who wore lots of makeup but did so tastefully, they might sound something like this.

The leads are definitely designed to punch through the music, not provide a demure harmony in the background. I'll give them credit for not being stereotyped sounds, but I'm not sure how much I'd use them. I rate these a B-.

If you're looking for pads, although all the presets in BigTone are well-crafted, the pads go the extra mile for being extremely versatile. I could hear them as taking center stage in chill, providing breathy atmospherics in trance, offering some relief in hard trance, and showing up

all over the place in movies. If I had to describe them in a word, I'd use "cinematic" in both scope and depth. Another A+ all around.

The sequences are also outstanding (and not just because it's reassuring to know someone else is fascinated with "one-finger" sequences). They're idea-starters, song backbones, fine embellishments to something chugging along intensely at 125bpm...all told, although not every sequence will be everybody's favorite, every sequence will be somebody's favorite. They get a solid A.

The sound FX are...well, sound FX, which means if they're in the right place at the right time, they're great and otherwise, they're not of much use. I must say that the Sunny LAX sound FX are my first call SFX, but it's always good to have choices and several of BigTone's will end up being in the right place at the right time for me. I'll go for a B+.

The Textures are like sound effects that got a PhD, and then married pads. As such they're more universally useful than sound FX per se, because they have a very musical component. If for no other reason than originality and their passionate vibe, another A+.

So there you have it. Interestingly, the banks that got the lowest grades have the fewest presets and the ones with the highest grades have the most number of presets so to me, this means significant value compared to sets that have a few great patches and the rest are so-so. But I can't emphasize enough that even the ones that didn't strike my fancy were up to the same level of craftsmanship as the others. If you have a Z3TA+ 2, these sounds will breathe new life into it—and don't believe that it's only good for EDM at 125bpm. Good sounds are good sounds, regardless of the music that hosts them.

Surfboard

Surfing the boards in the SONAR forum can uncover a wealth of great tips, like these…

[Matrix View Applications?](#)
If you haven't checked out the Matrix View, do you ever wonder what you've been missing? One SONARian was curious, and the responses in this thread contain a wealth of information on how to apply the Matrix View.

[Creating Markers When Dragging Clips from the Browser?](#)
SONAR has so many nooks and crannies that sometimes you don't know whether something you're experiencing is a feature or a bug. As it so happens, in this case what might appear to be a bug is actually a useful feature—if you know why it exists, and how to use it.

[Beginning of Songs Chopped When Burning Multiple Song CD](#)
Yes, people still make CDs—regardless of all those who say streaming is the only way to go. But is SONAR's CD-burning facility up to the task? Well, yes…and no. Find out when it works for "yes," and what to do when the answer is "no."

[Stuttering Audio and Dropouts after Installing New Graphics Card](#)
It always seems counter-intuitive that graphics cards can have such an impact on a DAWs audio performance—for better or worse—but they do. This thread contains multiple suggestions on solutions that have worked for various scenarios, and probably qualifies as essential reading if you use nVidia graphics cards.

[The Importance of the Loopback Test and Using SONAR](#)
Is your audio interface not reporting its latency accurately? Are its drivers as good as the manufacturer says they are? Are you finding that WDM isn't quite up to what you expected? You can learn a lot about your audio interface and how it reacts with SONAR from this informative thread.

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Publisher
Noel Borthwick

Editorial/Design Director
Craig Anderton

SONAR Product Managers
Lance Riley, Morten Saether

Contributors
Joey Adams, Keith Albright, Christopher Brown, Dan Gonzalez, Bill Jackson, Mike Lally, Jimmy Landry, Jim Lima, Lance Riley, Morten Saether, Jon Sasor

Advisory Board
The Cakewalk community

Gibson Pro Audio General Manager
Ingrid Calvo

Executive Director
Henry Juszkiewicz