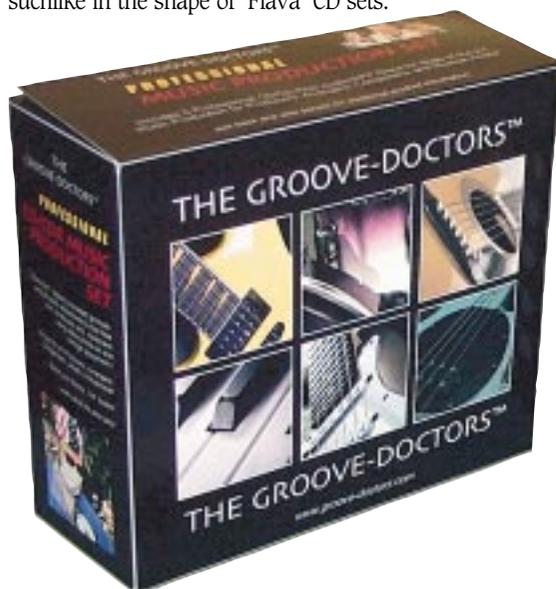


Groove-Doctors RH1 sample set

Catering for those looking for near instant gratification and inspiration, Groove Doctors offers a variety of styles and feels. Groovin' and jammin' **GEORGE SHILLING** takes it to the bridge in a rock/hard rock kind of manner.

THE GROOVE-DOCTORS DESCRIBE their wares as 'Integrated Music Production Sets'. These are essentially sets of sample CDs, but rather than supply lots of different sounds, this set comprises lots of different patterns using the same sounds. I was supplied with the Rock/Hard Rock set, but many different styles of music are covered by other sets. My set comprised the necessary tools to create drums, bass and electric rhythm guitar tracks. Add-ons are available for acoustic, solo guitars, and suchlike in the shape of 'Flava' CD sets.



These sets of CDs are designed to be used with any music program such as Logic, Cubase or Pro Tools, and a reasonable level of competence is assumed. I opened the box to find no less than 36 CDs in envelopes, plus a user's manual, a book of charts, and a Tutorial CD of QuickTime videos. This seemed the ideal place to start, and you quickly get to grips with what seem like unfeasibly complicated theories when reading the manual in isolation. The movies are narrated in patient tones, but everything is explained well and examples are shown on-screen of track construction using Digital Performer.

To save too much time-stretching, samples are supplied in five different tempos from 108 to 150BPM. The samples are supplied in data form and sets can be ordered as either WAV or AIFF files. Accompanying these are audio CDs for auditioning and rehearsing. I had ten auditioning CDs of drums (two for each tempo), and five of other instruments. There are 20 possible bass drum patterns. The ten tracks on each of these audition discs comprise one of the possible bass drum patterns, with the 46 possible hi-hat and ride patterns overlaid for four bars each. By referring to the charts, you can work out which of these you are hearing just by looking at the CD player counter. It is assumed that you will generally use a conventional 2-4 snare, and other variations are not provided on the audition discs.

Unfortunately, the hihat parts are pretty quiet compared to the kick and snare on the audition discs. If you're jamming along as intended (I think you mean jammin'. Ed), it is very hard to hear what they are doing, which somewhat defeats the object of these discs. Listening to these audition discs quickly started to drive me bonkers, as they feature the same kick and snare sounds throughout, and the bass and guitar audition discs feature various grooves played over the same sounds also.

The data discs contain all the necessary audio files for constructing tracks using separate elements or with the drum kit combined in stereo (but again with generally too little hihat). Files are named using abbreviations, which can be decoded to work out exactly what each file represents. Drum fills can be overlaid onto another audio track in the DAW and the necessary bits must be chopped out of the main drum track to give them space. Even the separate miked elements of fills are provided as kick, snare, toms and hats for putting to separate tracks, enabling separate EQ and effects to be applied.



All groove and fill files are chopped up so you simply place them at beat 1 of the bar. In addition to the 20 kick and 46 hat/ride patterns, there are 53 different drum fills, all recorded at each tempo. Despite this enormous flexibility, you are stuck with the same basic set of sounds throughout. They are not bad, but I found them a little unexciting and in need of processing. Unfortunately the snare and rim include some reverb which I felt was unnecessary in the separate parts, as anyone using a DAW will surely want control over this element.

Considering this is supposed to be for creating hard rock music, the sounds are slightly limp. Using Sound Replacer in Pro Tools I could replace bass drum and snare sounds, but this is supposed to be a set of usable sounds.

As far as the other instruments are concerned, there are 61 'flowing' patterns and 60 'choppy' rhythms each for bass guitar, crunch guitar and mute guitar, all recorded in every key. The guitar parts seem to be root and fifth chords, so no minor or major keys are defined. I found these instruments a bit disappointing sonically, and in particular the bass 'grooves' are very obviously concocted with chopped up notes rather

than a bass player actually 'grooving' (It's groovin'. Ed), making the whole thing a bit wooden and keyboardy sounding.

This is a very convoluted way of constructing bass lines when, with a half-decent sampled bass guitar, someone with any keyboard and sequencing skills could easily improve on this. The actual bass and guitar sounds are also a little weak-sounding.

The recommended advice is to copy all the data to a hard drive, which makes sense. Once imported to your DAW program assembling the tracks is fairly straightforward – the parts are all perfectly looped and extremely accurately assembled. Combining drum elements works well.

This set certainly make it easier to assemble particular drum patterns without getting a drummer in, but I'd be very interested to hear the sounds used for the other genres in the series, as perhaps this approach is more suited to dance music... ■

PROS

Useful method of track construction for below-average musicians; more convincing drum parts than usually achieved with drum machine or loops; huge selection of patterns and fills; no need for mics, etc; no problems with the neighbours.

CONS

Average basic sounds; not as good as a real drummer; hihats and rides quiet on stereo 'Grooves'; bass guitar can sound 'keyboardy'; guitar sounds unconvincing and unexciting.

EXTRAS

Other sets in the Groove-Doctors series include the DV1 – rock/pop drum vault Vol.1 (8th note and 8th note triplet feel).



This offers more than 18,000 loops and more than 3,700 'loop and play ready' performances in 5 different tempos in 8th note and 8th note triplet styles. All grooves come premixed and in multitracked isolation breakout tracks. There's also the RP1D1 rock/pop/country 'tight' drums Vol.1 (8th note feel), HS1D1 rock/hard rock 'ambient' shuffle drums Vol.1 (8th triplet feel), and RS1D1 rock/pop/country 'tight' shuffle drums Vol. 1 (8th triplet feel).

Contact

PMI AUDIO GROUP, US:
Tel: +1 310 373 9129
Website: www.pmiaudio.com