



WaveMachine Labs

Drumagog 5

For PC & Mac

MusicTech Choice

Despite strong competition, Drumagog 5 sets new standards for drum replacement software. **Mark Cousins** marks the changes.

Drumagog 5

Manufacturer **WaveMachine Labs**

Price **Drumagog 5 Platinum £289.**

Pro £220. Upgrade from v4 £105

Contact **Sonic8 08701 657456**

Web **www.drumagog.com**

Minimum system requirements

PC Windows XP

Mac OSX 10.4

Key Features

- Auto-Align 2.0 and new triggering engine
- Auto hi-hat tracking
- Plug-in hosting
- Convolution reverb
- MorphEngine

reverb as well as a host of other features. But is it still the ultimate-choice drum-replacement tool?

All 'agag

As before, Drumagog 5 works as an audio plug-in within your chosen host sequencer. In effect, Drumagog is instantiated across the instrument you want to replace (usually the kick and snare, although more adventurous users might also want to investigate the hi-hat and toms). The system uses its own sample format – Gog files – that can be used to replace or augment the drum in question. As you'd expect, Drumagog 5 ships with a healthy collection of Gog-based drum samples (around 5GB) and there's plenty of third-party content if you're hungry for more.

If you've ever used any form of drum-replacement software before, you'll be immediately impressed by the ease and efficiency of Drumagog 5. As there's no MIDI routing involved, the results are almost instantaneous, and the accuracy of the tracking algorithm (developed between WaveMachine Labs and Fraunhofer, inventors of the mp3 format) outputs a sample-accurate drum replacement. As you'd expect, the system accurately tracks the velocity of the performance as well as allowing the user to fine-tune any aspects of the triggering algorithm to avoid unwanted artifacts.

The sound of drums

Away from its basic operation, there's lots of impressive additional functionality in Drumagog 5. First and

foremost is Drumagog 5's ability to accurately track a hi-hat performance. Despite a little effort being required to compensate for the extra latency (displayed on the plug-in's interface), Drumagog's auto hi-hat tracking outputs an almost faultless version of the original hi-hat performance. There's also the facility to host other third-party virtual instruments within Drumagog, which is a great way of using instruments such as BFD without having to re-route MIDI information.

Sonically speaking, it's pleasing to see several additional mixing tools within Drumagog 5. An integral convolution processor is a useful addition, helping to add a touch of ambience to the drum samples, while an intriguing MorphEngine enables you to experiment with a number of dynamic, 'off-the-wall' sound-design treatments that transform a drum sample far beyond its original sound. There's also a built-in synth – an excellent way of adding a subsonic element to kick drums, either with or without additional replacement samples.

Wave machine

With the revisions made to version 5, Drumagog remains the best solution for drum replacement – an essential tool for anyone working with drum kit recordings. From the accuracy of its drum tracking (particularly hi-hat performances) to its intelligent sample mapping and integral mixing options, no other drum replacement tool or plug-in rivals the results produced by Drumagog. Add to that the option of VST instrument hosting and you have a completely integrated solution devoid of complex MIDI routing issues. Whether your kick drum sounds a bit floppy, therefore, or your snare lacks bite, Drumagog 5 is the first choice for accurate and sonically effective drum replacement. **MTM**

MTM Verdict

WHY BUY

- + Neatly integrated solution
- + Sample-accurate tracking
- + Follows hi-hat movements
- + Supports VSTi plug-in hosting

WALK ON BY

- Some added latency with auto hi-hat tracking

A significantly more refined and versatile tool than version 4, Drumagog 5 is easily the most accurate and effective drum replacement tool available.



Unless you've managed to record a perfect drum kit, the shadowy art of drum replacement has become a somewhat inevitable part of the production process. While engineers struggled to work with early 'trigger to MIDI' systems in the mid 80s, today's studios now feature a range of drum-replacement solutions, from Pro Tools' Sound Replacer to the new Drum Replacement functionality included in Logic Pro 9. However, if you're really serious about drum replacement, there's one plug-in that sets the standard for others to follow – WaveMachine Labs' Drumagog.

The last time we encountered Drumagog was back in Issue 61 (April 2008), when it received some positive praise despite its rather rudimentary looks. Since then, though, WaveMachine Labs has clearly invested plenty of time and effort improving both the look of Drumagog and – just as importantly – its functionality. Drumagog 5, therefore, boasts an improved triggering engine (Auto-Align 2.0), hi-hat tracking and convolution

Measuring Up

A cheap-and-cheerful drum replacement solution is Toontrack's **Drumtracker (£75)**. Unlike Drumagog, Drumtracker is a standalone application that's designed to work with audio files that are then converted into accurate MIDI triggers ready to be imported into a host sequencer. Although effective, Drumtracker lacks the seamless integration of Drumagog 5 and the immediate interactivity that its approach offers.

