



FXpansion

FOR PC &amp; MAC

# BFD PERCUSSION

The latest expansion pack for FXpansion's BFD has everything plus the kitchen sink. Mike Hillier knocks up a beat...

## KEY FEATURES

- 27GB of percussion hits
- Expands the already huge BFD sound library
- Three types of natural ambience

## BFD PERCUSSION

Manufacturer **FXpansion**

Price **£150**

Contact **Sonic8 08701 657456**

Web **www.fxpansion.com**

Minimum system requirements

**PC 1GHz processor, Windows XP,**

**1GB RAM, BFD 1.5.45**

**Mac G4 733MHz, Mac OSX 10.2.8,**

**1GB RAM, BFD 1.5.45**

Musicians looking to use sampled drums in their recordings are spoilt for choice these days, with sample libraries providing a plethora of audio and MIDI loops in every conceivable genre, and hyper-sampled virtual instruments such as BFD capturing the individual kit pieces themselves in ever-increasing detail.

The original BFD library, however, focused solely on traditional acoustic drum kits, featuring kicks, snares, toms, hi-hats and cymbals. Subsequent expansion packs brought new instruments to the collection, but the focus remained on traditional kit pieces, with only the 8 Bit Kit expansion pack addressing some of the more unusual percussion instruments. BFD Percussion takes this idea further still, comprising ethnic instruments, esoteric effects and 'junk percussion' to add interest and variety to your rhythm tracks.

In keeping with the other BFD libraries, installing Percussion is a time-consuming task – there's a total of 27GB of samples spread across two DVDs. If you're using Percussion with one or more of the other expansion packs, it's probably worth investing in an additional hard drive reserved solely for BFD. If you don't have sufficient space for the full 27GB, the library can be installed at lower detail levels, with the Small option installing only 17GB of samples. You can further customise the installation by installing some instruments at higher detail levels than others, as well as choosing not to install some instruments at all.

## Beat it

Like the Jazz & Funk Collection that preceded it, Percussion was recorded at Omega Studios in Rockville, Maryland, although the smaller, more intimate setting of Studio B was chosen over Studio A, which was used for Jazz & Funk Collection. The two studios have both been used to record previous BFD expansion packs, and although this does impact to some extent on the ability to mix and match elements from different packs while retaining an authentic sound, the Percussion expansion has been assembled in keeping with common recording techniques.

If you're composing music derived from western pop and rock, the chances are that you're likely to

use only one or two percussion instruments alongside a full traditional drum kit. With BFD 1.5, though, this is remarkably easy: simply set up your favourite kit in the first Kit page and use the extra slots in the second page for the percussion pieces. However, purchasing BFD Percussion for such limited use is almost inexcusable, and having such incredibly detailed samples at your disposal will almost certainly have you experimenting with more complex percussion parts. The bundled MIDI library is a good starting point for discovering more advanced percussion rhythms and voicings, but sooner or later you're going to want to create your own rhythms and kits. When you do, carefully consider which slot type each instrument is assigned to, since some kit pieces have up to five hit types and should, therefore, be loaded into a Snare slot rather than a Percussion slot.

## Sink and saw

African and Latin percussion instruments are well represented, with Eastern instruments, such as the tabla, notable by their absence. FXpansion has discussed the possibility of a second Percussion expansion pack, but confesses that the complex tunings of Indian percussion such as the tabla make it difficult to fit into the BFD engine.

Alongside the more familiar percussion instruments are a selection of one-shot effect sounds such as flexatones, waterphones and bowed gongs, as well as unusual household objects such as a saw blade and the ubiquitous kitchen sink. We're not convinced that users will have as much fun creating compositions out of household objects as the team at Omega Studios had recording them, but they certainly inspire experimentation – and that, in our book, is always a good thing. **MTM**

## SUMMARY

### WHY BUY

- Superb-quality samples
- Fills a major hole in the BFD sample library
- Capable of incredibly realistic percussion rhythms

### WALK ON BY

- Requires a considerable amount of hard disk space
- Some instruments overlooked

## VERDICT

BFD Percussion significantly expands the sonic possibilities of its host, enabling the creation of unique and interesting rhythms.



## MEASURING UP

As far as detailed percussion samples go, there is no library that quite matches the sheer scope of BFD Percussion. Toontrack's Latin Percussion EZX expansion (£49) for EZ Drummer is arguably a more focused library, containing the vast majority of commonly used instruments.

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