



Review

Arturia Hip Hop Producer

Arturia

HIP HOP PRODUCER

Knowing what's best to use for a given style can be daunting. Liam O'Mullane checks out Arturia's one-box hip hop solution.

KEY FEATURES

- 1,200+ quality drum sounds
- Great sounds from the ARP 2600 V, CS-80V, MiniMoog V & Modular V
- Groove function for classic drum machine timing
- Good selection of audio and MIDI effects

HIP HOP PRODUCER

Manufacturer **Arturia**
 Price **£129 (€115 approx)**
 Contact **2twenty2 0845 299 4222**
 Web **www.arturia.com**
 Minimum system requirements
PC 2GHz processor, Windows XP, 1GB RAM
Mac 2GHz processor, Mac OSX 10.4, 1GB RAM

Known for its virtual instruments, Arturia now introduces Hip Hop Producer, a suite designed to provide the beginner with all they need to start producing. The Modern Beats drum samples collection forms the heart of the package, alongside special-edition Analog Factory and Lounge Lizard instruments and a Lite version of Ableton Live.

Modern Beats includes various drum and beatbox hits/loops plus a small pack of musical passages from various instruments to satisfy your sampling desires. Analog Factory provides 250 presets from classic Arp and Moog synths, while the physically modelled Lounge Lizard SE covers any need for classic Wurliizer or Rhode parts and the Arturia-edition Ableton Live Lite is a great introduction to one of the most flexible DAWs out there.

Installation is straightforward, with all files supplied on one DVD. The manual we were supplied wasn't as helpful as it could have been, although in recent discussions Arturia assures us that the omissions we noted are being rectified. We'd also have liked to see some kind of overall tutorial/introduction included.

Live Lite allows a maximum of eight tracks per project, which can be any balance of audio or built-in instrument tracks. External instruments, however, have a four-instance limit. Depending on your viewpoint, these factors could be limiting or could usefully serve to impose a certain discipline on your use of the environment – most classic hip hop was recorded on much less! Most audio and MIDI effects from the full version are included, but you are limited to a maximum of six instances.

Sounds for your pounds

Modern Drums Vintage Machinez gives you a good selection of clean, well-sampled classic drum hits for tight and defined drum sounds. The more stylised and gritty drum sounds are categorised by names like Dre-mendous and Neptunian, and cover both electronic and acoustic sounds very well. Beatbox, scratches and claps form the focus of the remaining categories.

The loops include multiple versions for varied drum rolls and so on. Instrumental loops are also included. You can access all drum hits as pre-prepared drum racks or raw audio, with the latter enabling you to create customised drum kits using Live's Impulse drum machine. A clips library is also included, offering more organised drum racks and MIDI patterns, as is the Groove feature set, which gives you access to timing styles from plenty of classic hardware units.

Bass, lead and pad sounds are covered using Analog Factory. The analogue characteristics of low rumble energy and soft, non-fatiguing higher frequencies make this instrument sound huge on its own, while being smooth enough to sit in the mix without too much EQ work. Although ADSR, LFO, filter and four parameters are accessible per preset, synth heads will probably find they crave the ability to tweak under the hood a little more.

Finally, Lounge Lizard is a great source for the smooth tones of a classic electric piano. It has enough controls to vary the small number of presets and the hall reverb is particularly useful.

A good start?

Hip Hop Producer does an OK job as an entry-level package, then. There's a range of quality drum sounds covering a broad spectrum of styles, plus the incredible character of Analog Factory (the Lounge Lizard is a quality addition, but won't be for everyone due to its very specific use). Thankfully, having Ableton and its groove options makes this a more rounded suite.

More experienced users, however, will find the 'special edition' limitations of the suite frustrating, while having just 250 preset sounds will soon become limiting even for beginners. It keeps things simple and focused for newbies, but that strength could quite quickly become a weakness. **MAM**

SUMMARY

WHY BUY

- Good range of quality drum samples
- Analog Factory sounds on tap

WALK ON BY

- Small preset list and basic controls
- Documentation not that helpful

VERDICT

A great package for newcomers, but you could soon find it quite limiting.



MEASURING UP

In standalone or virtual instrument form, Ekoloopz Hip Hop Planet (£128) or the SONVOX Playa (£102) offer large samples packs and a workstation-style of interaction. Rob Papen's SubBoomBass (£89) and Spectrasonics' Trilian (£215) can easily take care of most bass requirements. Digital Village offers a bundle containing SubBoomBass and the SONVOX Playa at a discount rate.