

Product Guide 1.3

Groove Agent 3

Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH
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Groove Agent 3

Tagline

“Your unbeatable virtual drummer”

What is Groove Agent 3?

Groove Agent 3 is the third incarnation of Steinberg's phenomenally successful Groove Agent virtual drummer VST instrument, and is a major step up from previous versions. It combines a huge library of drum and percussion sounds with a range of player technologies to give you dynamic, ready-to-go drums, beats, rhythms and percussion in only a few mouse clicks. Top-quality drum samples and live recorded drum performances in a massive number of variations cover 123 different styles from over 50 years of music history, automatically synced to the song tempo.

Groove Agent 3 adds two new agents to the Classic Agent seen in previous versions: Special Agent and Percussion Agent. While the top-notch Special Agent adds an astoundingly realistic studio drummer complete with new acoustic drum kits to Groove Agent 3's arsenal, the Percussion Agent is specialized in red-hot percussive grooves and beats. And the new Dual Mode puts any two of the three agents together in the recording studio for scorching virtual drum and percussion sessions – all within one single VST instrument.

While Groove Agent 3 breathes new life into any production with its inspiring and inventive drum performances, it's also an ideal sparring partner for practice or jam sessions. And Groove Agent 3 also features more kits and sounds, including 3 new top-rate acoustic drum kits, as well as the ability to import user samples in wav and AIFF format for even more flexibility.

Groove Agent 3 puts not just one but three top studio drummers at your fingertips, with more sounds, more groove and more creativity.

Groove Agent 3 really is your unbeatable virtual drummer.

NEW - 3 Modules full of inspiration

Unlike previous versions, Groove Agent 3 now consists of 3 Modules, two of which are all new:

- 1) **“Classic” Groove agent**
- 2) **NEW - Special Agent**
- 3) **NEW - Percussion agent**

See below for an explanation of all three modules:

“Classic” Groove Agent module

This is the “classic” Groove Agent concept as we know and love it from Version 1 and Version 2. In technical terms, the “classic” module employs thousands of MIDI sequences tracked by top musicians specifically for this application. These sequences access samples recorded especially for the respective instruments.

In Groove Agent 3 we feature 3 new, high-quality acoustic drum kits with alternative support, plus an 80's digital drum machine (see below in Sounds for all new Kits) to get even better sounding Grooves and new styles from the Classic Groove Agent.

NEW - Special Agent module

Special Agent is an all new module in Groove Agent 3 which adds live drum styles. It does not rely on MIDI sequences and triggered drum samples but rather on drum and percussion audio loops played live and recorded especially for this application..Although these are live drum recordings, the same variation and flexibility found in the classic mode styles are attained.

We recorded a total of 15 new styles, each with 25 levels plus 25 fills and 25 unique half tempo feel renditions, all made accessible in a Module inside Groove Agent 3. And as if that weren't enough, we also took the time to record a bagful of percussion instruments. Again, these are live grooves that can be arranged into traditional or complex patterns.

The best thing about having recordings of a live drummer inside a drum machine is the FEEL. The Groove Agent approach of using MIDI-controlled samples is great, because you can compose and edit patterns any way you want. Patterns recorded live, on the other hand, are not as flexible, but they FEEL great.



NEW - Percussion Agent module

The second great innovation in Groove Agent 3 is the all new Percussion Agent. As with the live drumming in Special Agent, it features an exciting variety of audio material played and recorded live.. Congas, Bongos, Claves, Bells and much more are available, all in superb quality

Percussion Agent can be seen as an ensemble consisting of up to eight percussionists (one per channel) playing together. Each player has an instrument playing a particular groove, or rather five variations of a groove. For each player you can adjust the shuffle factor, tuning, amount of ambience plus pan and volume. Each channel can also be assigned to any audio output.

When arranging the percussion part(s) for a song, users can add some inner dynamics by moving the Groove Offset for one or several percussion channels around. The results can be very rewarding.



NEW - Dual Mode

Another big step forward in Groove Agent 3 is undoubtedly Dual Mode. It allows users to work with two modules simultaneously in any combination. Users can combine “classic-style” Groove Agent drumming with Special Agent, the new live drummer module. Or base one drum track on Special agent and add a Percussion Agent.

It's also possible to work solely with percussion, building up exciting, slowly evolving grooves (with help from the Random button) and add Groove Agent kick and snare at a later stage. Or make two Groove Agent drummers compete.

While the screen layout is different from Classic view, all the same controls are still there. Groove Agent behaves like before, but the control surface has been slightly modified to accommodate two modules in one screen. The central Control Strip allows two units to be controlled with very little mouse movement and the transport buttons are split into three sections – Upper, Lower and upper & Lower – for super-fast access.

When using two drummers, it's easy to make only one of them play a fill, or to pause the lower drummer only. Creative use of these buttons will make any drum track sound more dynamic. To find the ideal mix or to create a dramatic fade from one kind of rhythm to another we've included a Balance fader as well.

Complete Dual Mode setups with all corresponding settings can be saved and later used in another song .



NEW - FX section

One more great innovation in Groove Agent 3 is the new FX section with major enhancements: at last, multiple built in effects.

First there's an Equaliser – or EQ. Nine bands that cover the entire audio spectrum allow you to make minor adjustments or go wild in the name of creativity.

The Compressor intelligently compresses the sound without adding distortion. The harder the Compressor works, the “louder” and more compressed the sound will be.



NEW - FX preset handling

We've made life a lot easier for users by providing preset effects. These are suitable for individual instruments (such as kick, snare, hihat etc) as well as entire drum kits. These presets can be used as-is or as a starting point for further tweaking.

Users can also save and load their own presets and easily copy the entire FX settings from one output to another. The total bypass button allows fast a/b comparing the sound of an output channel with and without effects.

NEW – User Sample Import

Many users have asked for a sample import utility, so that you can use your own samples inside Groove Agent. Well, that's now possible. Any user sample can be imported and custom Drum kits can be created. It is also possible to load separate dry and ambient versions for every drum piece.



NEW - Alternating Hits

Groove Agent 3 now offers "Alternating Hits" for the most important acoustic instruments in the new kits, namely: snare, hihat, toms, kick and cymbals. Much like a real drummer, this feature eliminates the "machine-gun" effect by alternating hits for each drum on every note. Realistic rolls and paradiddles are therefore now very easy to achieve.

NEW - Auto Fill functionality

This is another tool to make life easier. It can automate the way fills are triggered and makes it easier than ever to setup Groove Agent as a live drummer for jamming along and practicing without static beats.

More Improvements in V3

Other feature refinements include added output busses, with up to 10 stereo outputs now available within the virtual mixer of the host application such as Steinberg's Cubase 4.

The GUI has also been overhauled, with added scales and easier access to vital controls.

See below for the excellent new Styles and Kits we added in Groove Agent 3:

The Styles

Groove Agent 3 features 123 dynamic and spirited ready-to-go drum styles from the past 50 years - each including up to 25 variations and its own drum kit assigned to it.

Up to 25 complexity levels serve to select different variations of the given style. In addition to variations on the basic rhythmic pattern, fills and halftime grooves suitable for each style are also available. Random and auto fill functions liven up the proceedings, while the Shuffle and Humanize knobs add a dash of swing and natural feel to the rhythm recipe.

Groove Agent 3 suits almost any musical style from classical to contemporary, capturing the full sonic palette of several high-quality drum kits and digital drum machines. This makes it a rich and versatile instrument and style library. one that sounds just as powerful and emotive in the context of a heavy rock song as it does in a dance music production.

All of the carefully created Styles provide inspiration throughout the musical creation process, and aid all musicians in creation of fully-fledged drum tracks. Offering new combinations of styles and drum kits, Groove Agent 3 grants you unparalleled creative freedom.

See below in the “Style Reference” for the entire exhaustive list of Styles.

NEW Styles in Groove Agent 3

With Groove Agent 3 we wanted to add new dimensions to our drum tool concept, so we hired, at great expense, a highly-talented session drummer capable of delivering live drumming performances ranging “from very sparse to very hot”.

He sat behind his drum kit and we recorded him playing over 1,000 unique grooves plus hundreds of percussion patterns. Each style was played in 25 variations, plus fills and half tempo feels; all in all, we added 42 Styles to the Groove Agent Arsenal of styles .

The sounds of Groove Agents 3

The sound library of Groove Agent 3 was created to cover as many musical bases as possible. Authenticity was also a key issue: the idea was to tailor drum kits and percussion instruments to a perfect fit for each musical style, as well as to capture natural room ambience for every sound.

What’s more, special stylistic devices were employed during the recording of drum sounds to invoke the spirit of the given era and lend these sounds authenticity. Case in point: ‘50s-style kits were played with brushes and mallets, while ‘80s-style kits featuring additional piccolo snare drums were thumped with rods.

Rather than falling back on a sample library to prep the contents of Groove Agent, every drum sound was recorded in a pro studio in Sweden using high-quality analog equipment. All sounds were recorded with multiple microphones to capture the room’s natural sound, which can be added to the VST instrument using the Ambience control. Contemporary electronic sounds feature standard studio effects such as reverb and echo.

Acoustic Drum Kits in GA3

These exquisite drum kits are included in Groove agent 3:

- **'50s Jazz Kit**

A slightly dampened, sounding relatively open and loose drum kit.

- **'60s Pop Kit**

A heavily dampened kit, recalling a time when towels were draped over toms.

- **'70s Rock Kit**

Loud, deep and resonant, this kit sounds enormous.

- **'80s Studio Kit**

Retro, hip sound as featured on contemporary CDs

- **Studio Kit**

A top of the line set with some of the best drums and cymbals around. We wanted to achieve a sound that would fit a variety of styles that demand punchy, clean, modern drumming. There are three high quality snares included, each with a different size and composition, carefully tuned to bring out the individual characteristics of each instrument.

- **Heavy Kit**

This drum-set is intended to fit many of today's Metal and Rock styles, where busy bass drumming is a vital ingredient. The dry character of the ride-cymbal and the great sound from the crashes will cut through any wall of guitars.

- **Noisy Kit**

We wanted to create a modern drum sound using traditional drums. These instruments are very small but along with the boom-box effect they sound much bigger than they really are. The snares are a thin, high pitched piccolo and a small 10" mini-snare. Some of the cymbals are rare vintage instruments that are almost impossible to find anywhere today, while others are modern, noisy sounding instruments that have seen better days...

Also includes vintage drums such as a Red Slingerland "Radio King" (the world's most recorded snare drum), a black handmade snare drum from Hanus & Hert in Prague and a Slingerland copper snare.

NEW - these are the all-new Kits in Groove Agent 3:

Providing the fuel for the explosive new styles are 3 new acoustic and several digital drum kits, such as the Linn LM-1 Drum Computer. The all-new top-quality studio kits offer a highly polished, refined sound and can be widely used in many modern pop and rock productions. Real highlights are also the all-percussive sounds.

- **Gula**

It looks a bit odd with its extended bass drum (two kick drums mounted head-to-head), but the sound is easily recognised as the very popular sound found on many hit songs recorded at Gula. This kit is referred to as “Gula”.

- **Clean Adult Fun** (Premier Gen-X)

The second kit was a Premier Gen-X set with pinstripe heads. It’s tuned to produce a dry, clean, elegant and widely-useful sound, hence the name “Clean Adult Fun”.

- **Fula** (Ludwig)

For the third set of recordings, we moved into the reverberant Stone Room and used an old, precious Ludwig kit from the early sixties, nick-named “Fula”. Think “Ringo Starr”, and you’ll know what sort of drum set we’re talking about. Mother-of-pearl finish, white heads and almost no damping gives a very dynamic jazz-to-pop sound that can be used in a wide variety of situations.

Vintage drum machine Kits in GA3

Some of these beauties are over thirty years old. We think we’ve managed to capture and re-package the better part of the magic of these drum machines of yesteryear. These vintage drum machines get their ambience from a vintage EMT plate reverb unit.

In Groove Agent 3 we also spiced up the sonic palette with some very well known digital drum machines from the eighties, such as the Linn LM-1 Drum Computer.

Percussion Sounds in GA3

Groove Agent 3 offers a wealth of various percussion instruments in its sound library’s treasure-trove. Alongside standard GM sounds, a battery of intriguing instruments, including African drums, rain stick, tambourine, cascabeles, and many more are included. We included lots more Percussion sounds in Groove Agent 3 which play hand in hand with the all new Percussion Agent.

RealAmbience Technology

The Real Ambience feature offers true recorded ambience that can be perfectly blended into any mix or production. Using no artificial reverb, Real Ambience builds an extraordinarily convincing drum room environment with fully adjustable wet/dry balance for each individual drum kit piece.

All the acoustic drums and percussion instruments were recorded using a mix of several techniques:

- Every instrument close miked, giving a very dry sound.
- Every instrument recorded through the overhead microphones, giving a rather dry sound but with a sweet stereo image.
- Every instrument recorded through the ambience microphones, positioned approximately 2 metres from the source. This gave us a warm, roomy sound with a controlled amount of “air”.
- Every instrument recorded through a pair of distant mikes, placed over 7 metres away. These recordings give a definite impression of space. Roomy? Yes, definitely.
- The analogue and digital drums sounds have electronic and electro-mechanical reverb added to them.

Now, while editing the sound archive for Groove Agent, we carefully chose the ambience recording that should go with every dry source. For the 50's kit, we used the close-up microphones for drums and hihat and the overheads for the cymbals. We then added the distant recordings for ambience. This gave us a chance to create old sounding, roomy, acoustic kits for that vintage sound.

For other kits we used different combinations, and for the analogue and digital sounds we added normal studio effects units such as digital reverbs and delays.

All in all, the very natural sounding ambience is there for you to use. We've preset a lot of different kits to go with the different musical styles, but if you want to change the overall ambience, use this dial to your heart's content.

Record and edit any single hit

One of the most useful features in Groove Agent 3 is the ability to record any combination of Groove Agent beats to a MIDI track with Cubase and Nuendo as it allows Users editing each single hit in the Groove or adding custom made fills or beat segments.

Groove Agent 3 also offers a “Save to MIDI file” feature, which stores Groove Agent 3's rhythm output to a MIDI file for detailed editing, regardless of the DAW application used .

More Features in GA 3

The **Memory locations** which allows for quickly storing each and any setting in the whole Groove Agent 3 instance for a/b comparisons or to make creative use of.

There is also tremendous flexibility and numerous editing options: Freely configurable user kits, humanize function for randomness, shuffle feature for triplet feels, and much more.

GA 3 connects to everything

Groove Agent 3 supports all major plug-in formats such as VST, DXi, and AU. ReWire support offers easy integration into Pro Tools®¹. Also included is a multi-out capable standalone version in order to use Groove Agent 3 without a host application.

Groove Agent 3 also offers the “Save to MIDI file” feature, which stores its rhythm output to a MIDI file for detailed editing, regardless of the DAW application hosting Groove Agent 3.

Who is it made for?

Groove Agent 3 was developed to meet the demands of musicians who need realistic, quick-to-setup drum tracks when using computer-based composition and production techniques. It can do a lot of things, but first of all it's a fine helper for anyone saying:

- **“I can't program drums”**
- **“I don't have the time to program drums”**
- **“I can program drums and have the time to do so, but I need high quality drum sounds for playing them back.”**
- **“Inspire me.”**

A typical user of Groove Agent 3 is:

- a composer sketching up his song ideas in need for a quick-to-setup but real sounding drum track
- a studio arranger who is short in time but in need of fresh, up-to-the minute drum and percussion solutions
- a guitarist or bassist looking for the ideal sparring partner for jamming
- a student wanting to practise with a expressive drummer
- any musician looking for high quality drum and percussion sounds in order to play back their own beats

¹ Pro Tools® is a registered trade mark of AVID Technology, Inc.

Key Features - Groove Agent 3

- **Add inspiring live drum patterns and percussion performances** in real-time to your song and quickly record the result.
- **Covers almost any style: 123 styles total** - 108 Groove Agent and 15 Special Agent drum styles plus hundreds of percussion performances played by professional studio drummers - automatically synced up to song tempo.
- **Variations with 25 complexity levels** in each style, including fills, intros, endings and half tempo feel variations.
- **Huge audio library:** 10 richly detailed acoustic kits and 9 drum machines plus a vast array of acoustic and electric percussion sounds in outstanding quality.
- **Classic Groove Agent** module offers fully editable drum styles with corresponding kits and FX.
- **NEW - Special Agent** module features 15 complete live drumming styles, each containing 75 different performances.
- **NEW - Percussion Agent** module with 8 groups of red-hot recorded percussion grooves with hundreds of percussion performances.
- **NEW – Dual Mode combines the breathtaking creative power of two Agents** playing side by side within the same VSTi.
- **NEW – flexible User Import Sample feature (wav/AIFF)** - Create your own kits.
- **NEW - Realistic rolls and paradiddles thanks to Alternating hits** for each drum on every note. This means no more machine gun effect.
- **NEW - Auto Fill functionality** and useful Speed control for jamming and practicing.
- **RealAmbience technology** offers true recorded ambience for drum kits to perfectly blend into any mix.
- **NEW - 9-band EQ and compressor** for each of the 12 stereo outputs, useful Presets included.
- **Record Groove Agent beats to a MIDI track** with Cubase and Nuendo or export Groove combinations to a MIDI file for further editing in any host.
- **Supports all major formats:** VST, DXi, AU + Rewire for easy Pro Tools® integration.
- **Standalone version** with multiple-output support included.

Top Reasons to upgrade from GA2 to GA3

- **42 all new Groove Agent styles** including odd time signatures.
- **3 new acoustic drum kits** plus an assortment of digital drum machines and percussion.
- **Special Agent** module features 15 complete live drummed styles each containing 75 different performances.
- **Percussion Agent** module with 8 groups of red-hot recorded percussion grooves with hundreds of percussion performances.
- **Dual Mode combines the breathtaking creative power of two Agents** playing side by side within the same VSTi.
- **Flexible User Import Sample feature (wav/AIFF)** - Create your own kits.
- **Realistic rolls and paradiddles thanks to Alternating** hits for each drum on every note. This means no more machine gun effect.
- **Auto Fill functionality** and useful Speed control for jamming and practicing.
- **9-band EQ and compressor** for each of the 12 stereo outputs, useful Presets included.
- **FX presets for individual drums and entire kits** can be used as-is or tweaked.
- **Total number of audio outputs increased** from 8 to 12 stereo outputs.
- **Improved style handling** with genre categorisation for better overview.

Top Reasons to upgrade from GA1 to GA3

- **Now includes 123 Groove Agent drum styles plus hundreds of percussion Loops.**
- **6 new acoustic drum kits** plus an assortment of digital drum machines and percussion.
- **Special Agent** module features 15 complete live drummed styles each containing 75 different performances.
- **Percussion Agent** module with 8 groups of red-hot recorded percussion grooves with hundreds of percussion performances.
- **Dual Mode combines the breathtaking creative power of two Agents** playing side by side within the same VSTi.
- **Flexible User Import Sample feature (wav / AIFFF)** - Create your own kits.
- **Realistic rolls and paradiddles thanks to Alternating** hits for each drum on every note. This means no more machine gun effect.
- **Auto Fill functionality** and useful Speed control for jamming and practicing.
- **9-band EQ and compressor** for each of the 12 stereo outputs, useful Presets included.
- **FX presets for individual drums and entire kits** can be used as-is or tweaked.
- **Total number of audio outputs increased** from 8 to 12 stereo outputs.
- **MIDI-out can be saved as MIDI File.** This feature works in all non-Steinberg hosts.
- **Improved style handling** with genre categorisation for better overview.
- **Solo button for every group** - now it's easier than ever to quickly focus on one group of sound while tweaking and mixing.
- **Sample Engine Bypass** – Groove Agent is able to bypass its internal Sound Engine to save computer performance. Perfect for those who use GA as a MIDI player that triggers external samples.
- **Supports all major formats:** VST, DXi, AU + Rewire for easy Pro Tools® Integration.
- **Standalone version** with multiple-out support included.