

# WIZOO Darbuka and Latigo

**Mike Hillier** chills out with two virtual percussionists, bringing Latin American, Arabic and Middle Eastern grooves to your next software jam session.

Despite being played dreadfully by stoned hippies at festivals for decades, hand drums such as the darbuka (also known as a tabla) have fired the imaginations of musicians all over the world. Wizoo's new instruments, Darbuka and Latigo, bring not only excellently sampled percussion to your arsenal, but also percussionists capable of teasing the best from them.

## Darbuka

The first of the two virtual percussionists we are looking at is Darbuka. With around 2GB of sampled instruments, Darbuka is the larger of the two packages, although it has only eight instruments. Making up much of the rest of the space are a number of Arabic and Middle Eastern rhythms as played by Suat Borazan and Mohamed Zaki, two of North Africa's best percussionists.

After opening Darbuka in your sequencer, the first thing you need to decide on is which style to use. Previewing styles is simply a matter of engaging Auto mode and clicking and holding on the name of the style you wish to preview. Once you have decided on your style, double-click to load the sounds into RAM.

The keyboard at the bottom of the screen is colour coordinated to highlight which keys play which rhythms. The blue keys are for the normal rhythm grooves, with the lighter keys being simple grooves and the dark keys being more complex. Green keys play fills, yellow keys mute a track and the red key on MIDI C1 stops the instrument from playing.

Switching between these different grooves by either playing the key on a MIDI controller or by clicking with the mouse provides a simple means of keeping a flowing

rhythm, with Darbuka's engine switching between grooves without missing a beat.

Using the Mix and Edit windows, parameters for each instrument can be edited separately, including surround sound panning (when enabled). The Stage view in the Mix window is an intuitive means of placing your virtual percussion around a room. The instruments appear on a graph and movement from left to right and up and down changes settings depending on what each axis is set to. In Room mode, the horizontal axis acts as a left/right pan control, and the vertical axis as a front/rear pan control. As you move an instrument to the top right, so the instrument is panned in front of you to the right.

Room mode also controls the ambience send and gain levels, with instruments becoming slightly quieter with more ambience as they move away from you. Obviously, if you're not listening in surround, moving the instrument from top to bottom will have no effect on front/rear panning, but it will have an effect on the ambience send and gain levels.

## Latigo

In use, Latigo is exactly the same as Darbuka, but instead of Arabic and Middle Eastern rhythms and instruments, Latigo uses Latin American instruments played by Edwin Bonilla and Olbin Burgos, of the Miami Sound Machine. The instrument library in Latigo is larger than Darbuka, with 33 instruments.

There is nothing to stop you mixing and matching instruments from both packages. In fact, we found that mixing elements of both Darbuka and Latigo produced some fascinating poly-rhythms. Why not take this a step further by subtly blending percussion from either or both of these instruments with a



Each style in Latigo and Darbuka loads up its own set of instruments, as shown in the lower panel.

more traditional acoustic drum or electronic drum kit? We experimented with this idea using FXpansion's BFD with Latigo. By tightening up the groove in BFD and leaving Latigo loose, we were up and running in seconds. With BFD's impulse responses, we were able to remove the ambience from Latigo and place our virtual percussionist in the same room as our virtual drummer using Logic 7's Space Designer. **MTM**

## DARBUKA AND LATIGO

Manufacturer **Wizoo**

Price **£179 each**

Contact **M-Audio**  
**01442 416590**

Web **www.wizoo.com**

## MAC & PC

## SUMMARY

### MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- PC Pentium III 500MHz, Windows XP, 256MB RAM, 2GB free hard disk space
- Mac G3 500MHz, Mac OS X 10.3.2, 256MB RAM, 2GB free hard disk space

### KEY FEATURES

- Styles can be played back at any tempo
- Real-time performance controls
- Easy-to-use mixing controls
- Pattern editor

### WHY BUY

- Steady learning curve
- Works well as the solo rhythm part or as part of a larger rhythm ensemble
- Stereo/surround/individual output modes

### WALK ON BY

- Edit only on a pattern-by-pattern basis

## VERDICT

Programming percussion isn't an easy task, so if you're not up to the job just yet, these plug-ins should provide everything you need to get started.



## METHOD SPOT

### Getting the best

The high-quality samples used in Darbuka and Latigo require a lot of RAM to load. To improve loading times and reduce the load on the host computer, Wizoo has compressed the files using a lossless encoder. To access the uncompressed files, simply engage XXL mode - but be ready for a distinct difference in performance. The best way to use these two modes is by using Normal mode while composing and then switching to XXL mode ready for mixdown.