

DIALED IN

ORCHESTRA
AT YOUR
FINGERTIPS

Spitfire Audio eDNA Earth

By Norman Weinberg

Spitfire Audio is a British company that, at first glance, might seem to offer nothing more than standard sample libraries. But that's only scratching the surface. The engineers take extra care, not only in recording and editing their samples, but presenting them in a manner that offers fresh new interfaces and totally new sounds.

Like many sample-based plugins, eDNA is a software sound module that uses Native Instruments' Kontakt as its primary engine. An amazing software instrument, Kontakt has become the standard way to deliver many of the newest soundware libraries. If you don't own a copy of Kontakt, you can use the free version called "Kontakt player."

eDNA is the result of nearly ten years of sample gathering from many sources — ranging from full symphony orchestras to classic synths. There are seven large banks of sounds included in eDNA: Apocalypz, Disphoria, Discoman, Moviedrone, Analognat, Sound Swamp, and Wheelspin. And each bank contains scores of individual sounds. In fact, Spitfire states that there are over 37 hours of samples in the package. Sounds have names, but also classifications such as bass, lead, atmos, drone, FX, pads, drums & perc, and drops and rises. With so many sounds to choose from, having them divided into musical genres and usage type really helps the workflow.

There are several features that make this plugin unique, and one of the primary ones is an oscillate mixer that oscillates between the A and B sounds (most patches are

a mixture of two different sounds). The oscillation speed ranges from 256x (ultra slow) to .5 (pretty fast) and is sync-locked to your DAW. For real-time morphing and crossfading between two different sounds, the oscillate mixer is the way to go. The presets in this package are extremely dramatic with sounds that seem to hang you by your heels over the edge of a musical abyss.

This program, more than most, has the ability to automate a number of different aspects of the sound. From the outset, most of these sounds have variations and movement assigned to the modulation wheel, but you can tweak these preset routings however you wish. While most users will find the presets interesting enough, if you're adventurous (and brave), you can get under the hood and mangle the sounds further.

It's not that unusual that each preset is made up of two different sound sources. What makes eDNA a little more clever is the fact that each has its own unique modulators, effects, and auxiliary effects, and once both sounds are finally mixed together, universal effects and modulators.

At the "first stage" of controls, each sound source has an independent oscillator (wobble) for volume, pitch, and filter; followed by tuning, pan, key offset, and trim. Next are lowpass and highpass filters, ADSR envelope controls, glide, and clone (essentially a duplicate for making thicker sounds). And this is just the first level of editing controls!

There is a huge number of FX options included in eDNA. You'll



find typical selections such as a three-band EQ, tape saturator, delay, and chorus. And you'll also find a few new ones including a stereo modeler, a "jump" effect that simulates classic British guitar amps, as well as formant, vowel, and ladder effects. If you didn't think that was enough, there are two "motor" engines that offer further rhythmic identity along with a gate sequencer. And the gate sequencer has a separate channel for each of the two individual sounds. Sounds like fun, doesn't it?

Overall, the factory sounds in eDNA will keep you busy for months. There's a ton of them and they're all very, very good. If you create music in any contemporary style, and you're trying to find sounds that are provocative and dangerous, then eDNA is for you.

While not their intended use, some of the drops and rises make perfect drum and percussion sounds without any modification. With some creative programming, I was able to turn several bass and lead patches into some truly original kick and snare sounds. Since eDNA's oscillate mixer is tied to the main tempo of your DAW, the sound's character can change depending upon where in the measure you play. For example, more high-end on beat 2 than on beat 4. Get it? Try doing that with your "regular" drum brain. 🎧

PRICE £149.00 (c. \$227.00)



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