



Review: East West Drumkit from Hell 2 by Rick Paul - 4th November 2004 -



I don't know about you, but I've found myself absolutely swimming in options for building drum tracks in my wholly software-based (i.e. other than vocals) setup. I mean we're talking audio loops, MIDI loops, multiple dedicated drum softsynths and sample players, general purpose softsynth sample players, and even synth-oriented softsynths that can be used for generating percussive sounds. Sometimes my biggest delay in starting up a new production project ends up being just figuring out how I'm going to approach the drum and percussion tracks to go for the basic feel I'm seeking -- i.e. if I know what that is ahead of time.

I've general been pretty satisfied with the options I've had at my disposal, but each has also had its tradeoffs. For example, audio drum loops will often get the most realistic acoustic drum sounds, and can often be pieced together quite quickly, but the tradeoff tends to be in flexibility. It's often tough getting the exact beat I want, not just what I can find that's in the ballpark among the loops at my disposal.

MIDI loops have more flexibility, due to the ability to easily edit each note, add and delete notes, and so on. They work great for synthesized drums, where the need for the sound of a real drum set recorded in a good sounding drum room isn't a factor. However, when it comes to getting real acoustic drum sounds, even some of my favorite samples don't quite have that "something extra" that tells me I'm hearing real drums recorded in a real room. One of the key differences between well-sampled drum sounds and well-recorded drumming is that, in the latter case, sounds bleed between mics, adding to the sense of space. The sound modules that have come out that attempt to address this need have been pretty high end, too, not only in their cost, but also in the amount of disk space they consume for the myriad samples involved in addressing this challenge.

Enter Drumkit From Hell 2, a combination sample set and sample player that attempts to address the need for realistic sounding acoustic drums played via MIDI. Perhaps most significantly, it attempts to do this while keeping cost down and disk space consumption at a fraction of what the higher end alternatives require. How successful is it at addressing this challenge? Let's find out.

Background

Drumkit From Hell 2 (DFH2), from [East West Sounds'](#) Pro Samples Platinum Series, is one of the new breed of products that combines a high quality sample set with a highly functional sample player. In this case, the sample set was produced by [Toontrack Music](#) with Tomas Haake ([Meshuggah](#)), the same team responsible for the critically acclaimed, and highly popular, Drumkit from Hell sample set. The DFH2 sample set is a subset of the library

portion of Toontrack's Drumkit From Hell Superior, augmented with a special version of [Native Instruments' KOMPACT](#) sample player.

Whereas DFH Superior, one of the high end choices alluded to above (and the subject of a future CakewalkNet review), weighs in with a huge (35 GB) library with multiple drum kits plus percussion, DFH2 focuses on a single [Sonor](#) drum kit. To that kit, DFH2 adds three snare options (Sonor cast bronze, [Pearl](#) birch, and Pearl brass) plus [Sabian](#) hi-hats and a healthy selection of, primarily Sabian, cymbals (also one each [Zildjian](#), [Meinl](#), and [Istanbul](#), as well as one custom cymbal). Instruments in the kit include: 5 toms (3 rack, 2 floor) 2 kick drums (left, right) with changeable felt or wood mallet beaters, 3 ride cymbals, 1 china ride cymbal, 2 china cymbals, 1 spock cymbal (like a cross between a china and crash cymbal), 5 crash cymbals, 2 splash cymbals, 3 snares (including removable bottom snares on the Sonor snare, which, if chosen, also affects the sound of the kick and toms), 2 hi-hats, and a cowbell. The resulting sample set comes in just under 2.4 GB.



The sounds are unprocessed, multiple mic drum sounds, with programming and instrument assignment conventions that interact with the KOMPACT sample player in ways that provide an interface to the digital audio work station that is very similar to what you'd get from actual mic inputs from a multi-mic drum setup. There are also humanization-oriented instrument customizations such as left- and right-handed drum and cymbal hits. The KOMPACT player provides up to 8 stereo outputs plus a main mix output, any of which can be used as inputs into the DAW. It also provides several sound tweaking capabilities and a limited slate of audio effects. We'll get into more detail on the programming and instrument features below.

DFH2 lists for \$129.95, but street price typically comes in around \$99. For that money, you get the sample library, the custom KOMPACT player for a variety of Windows and Macintosh formats, an operation manual for the KOMPACT player, and an Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format reference for the DFH2 instruments. Note that DFH2 is available only on DVD media. This isn't as big an issue as it might have been even a few months ago given how inexpensive DVD writers have become very recently, and how useful they can be for backing up large audio projects.

For purposes of this review, I installed the DXi2, VST, and standalone versions of the KOMPACT player on Windows XP Home. Since this is CakewalkNet, most actual hands-on testing was carried out in SONAR 4.0 Producer Edition using the DXi2 plug-in. Installation was fairly straightforward, with Native Instruments' normal challenge-response-style authorization required for the KOMPACT player. Some software and sample library updates were also available via the NI web site, and these were installed prior to starting the review. The version of the DFH2 KOMPACT player reviewed was 1.0.3.010, with DFD (Direct From Disk) Extension 1.2.9.

Sounds, Programming, and Kits

At its most basic level, DFH2 is designed for getting natural acoustic drum sounds, especially of the harder-edged variety such as might be found in rock, metal, punk, and other relatively aggressive forms of music. This isn't to say you won't be able to use it elsewhere, but, if you're looking for something to use for a light swing tune that requires

brushes, for example, you won't find it here. You also won't find Latin percussion instruments, or even hand claps or a tambourine, though there is a cowbell in addition to the drum kit-type sounds.

To put it another way, DFH2 focuses on doing one thing, and doing it well. What you will find in DFH2 is a selection of high quality drum and cymbal samples for a single kit, but with a few well-thought out options for greater flexibility in sculpting your drum sound. For example, there is only one kick drum, but you get to choose between a felt or wood mallet beater. For the felt mallet option, there are two options relating to your choice of snare (i.e. "wires" or "no wires") for greater realism that recognizes the way drum sounds interact. There are three snare drums, and one of those has a choice of being used with or without the snare wires engaged. You also get both top and bottom mics on the snares, so you can blend them to taste. Due to limitations on the number of outputs in the KOMPAKT player, tom mics are blended into either a single stereo pair or two stereo pairs, though you can also get separate toms if you don't need to cover all of them. For the tom mic blends, you would also select whether they are to be used with a snare that does or doesn't have the snare wires engaged. There is also a choice of two hi-hats. For overhead mics, which primarily cover the blend of cymbals, but can also include bleed from the drums and hi-hats, you choose between two combinations of main crash and ride cymbals. Once you've done that, you would match individual sample programs to the other choices you've made (i.e. for kick, snare, etc.) to incorporate mic bleed considerations. Finally, for room (or "ambience") mics, the main choice is whether you want to use these mics or not, and, if you do, you would choose the specific program to use based on your previous choices (i.e. since the ambience component of the signal needs to match the instrument choices).

If you've followed the above discussion of choices, you may have a couple of things on your mind. If you're a pessimist by nature, you may be thinking building a drum kit with DFH2 sounds awfully complex. We'll get to this consideration in a moment. If, on the other hand, you're naturally an optimist, you may have figured out that this setup is actually pretty ingenious. For one thing it allows getting the same basic type of inter-mic interaction you get when miking an acoustic drummer under optimal recording studio conditions, where the mic considerations have already been taken care of for you. In addition, the multiple outputs provides a good deal of flexibility in sound sculpting come mix time, while intelligent limitations on choices allow keeping the sample library's size manageable.

As for the consideration whether building a kit may be too complex, the DFH2 programming address it in two ways. First, for those who really don't want to deal with building kits at all, there are four pre-configured kits ("DFH2", "Hard", "Metal", and "NoWires") that are likely to satisfy even many who normally have the itch to tweak most everything. This is partly because the factor that has the biggest effect on drum kit sound is the choice of snare, and the remaining components of each pre-configured kit are selected, based on stylistic considerations, to match the choice of snare. Also, for each pre-configured kit, there are actually three options: "All", "No Ambience", and "Dry". These choices relate to how mic bleed is handled. In the "All" configuration, all instruments bleed through the overhead and ambience mics, and the drums (i.e. toms, snare, and kick) bleed through the snare bottom mic. In the "No Ambience" configuration, there is no room mic, so instruments bleed through the overhead mics, while the drums bleed through the snare bottom mic. In the "Dry" configuration, there is no ambience mic, nor any bleed into the overhead mics; the only bleed is from the drums into the snare bottom mic. Remember, too, that you can use separate outputs for each of the up to 8 mics or mic sets, so there is additional flexibility come mix time, not only for balancing the levels between mics, but for separate processing of each mic or mixed mic set. Thus, a single kit can still generate a nearly infinite variety of sounds.

The second way the DFH2 programming addresses the complexity of building a kit borrows from paint-by-numbers, do-it-yourself building instructions, and other similar techniques. In particular, first the components are organized into discrete steps and numbered accordingly. So, for example, step 1 is to pick the kick drum, and you are intended to put this in the first of the eight instrument slots available in the KOMPAKT player. Step 2 is the snare top, then the snare bottom at step 3, and so on through step 8, which is the ambience selection. In steps where there is a choice, each of the choices is numbered uniquely. For example, at the kick drum stage, choice number 1 is for a felt mallet (with wires engaged on the snare drum), choice 2 is for a wood mallet, and choice 3 is for a felt mallet with no wires on the snare drum. At certain later stages in the kit building process there will be choices that depend upon your choice at the kick drum stage. Where that is the case, the names of those choices will provide a clue as to the interaction. For example, if you choose choice 3 at the kick drum stage, you will want to choose snare drum options

with "no wires" in the name. Then for overhead and ambience mics, you would need to limit your choices to options that include the number 3 (i.e. based on your kick drum choice).

If this still sounds complex, or even sounds more complex, I guess you'll just have to trust me that, once you do it a time or two, this scheme is actually quite easy to use. The ability to reference the instrument names you've already chosen, simply by looking at the slots already occupied in the KOMPAKT player, while choosing later instrument names, really helps. About the only improvement that I could envision would be if later menus of choices were limited based on your earlier choices, but, besides the obvious need for the KOMPAKT player to know more about DFH2's naming schemes to even make this possible, there would be downsides to doing this. The most significant is that you might not want to make your choices in the order DFH2 suggests. For example, you might want to choose the snare first, but there might already be an old kick choice in there, and you wouldn't then want the choice of snares limited by the kick from the kit you'll be modifying. The other is that there is nothing saying you actually have to match components, and it's at least conceivable someone might want to mismatch them for creative reasons. In any event, those who want to build their own kits might find it slow going the first time or two, but should be able to get the hang of it really quickly. I might add that this is an area where having read the PDF-file-only component of the documentation is absolutely critical. Without that, all the numbers and such would probably make things look utterly confusing. (I know this through personal experience as I initially didn't realize there even was a PDF file included.)

The sounds themselves are superb, with plenty of velocity levels to provide for playable dynamics. There are also extra sounds, beyond the typical General MIDI (GM) note maps, which provide for subtleties such as left-handed and right-handed hits. Therein lies one of the tougher issues in coming up to speed with DFH2, though. While GM-mapped kits are provided as options, to take full advantage of DFH2's capabilities for creating realistic drum tracks, you will want to take advantage of these extra features. However, this makes it tough plugging DFH2 into existing projects and using it with canned MIDI drum loops set for GM note mapping. Also, DFH2 does not ship with SONAR Drum Maps, nor are any DFH2 maps provided in SONAR itself, so using DFH2's custom sound layout has a bit of a startup curve associated with it. We'll talk more about dealing with that in the "Playing Around" section below. For now, though, it is enough to realize the GM kits can get you up and running faster, but to take full advantage of DFH2's capabilities, the startup curve in the note mapping area may be a bit steeper than with many other software- and sample-based drum modules.

The Player

The inclusion of a custom version of NI's KOMPAKT sample player in DFH2 means you don't have to worry about any compatibility issues between the samples and whatever sample players you might have available. It also means you get a level of functional extras that provide some extra bells and whistles beyond what the sample set itself provides. It is worth noting, though, that KOMPAKT is not a sample editor. If you want to actually edit the programming of the DFH2 samples, or would like to get additional player-level processing capabilities beyond what KOMPAKT includes, you can use NI's KONTAKT sampler for that purpose. (Beware, though, if you edit a DFH2 program in KONTAKT, you will not be able to load it back in the DFH2 KOMPAKT player, so will need to use KONTAKT with it thereafter.) Let's look at what KOMPAKT brings to the table, though.

Perhaps most important is the multiple output capability, which can be used to direct DFH2's individual mic or mic sets to separate audio tracks in SONAR (or any other DAW supporting a plug-in format for which KOMPAKT is available). KOMPAKT is limited to 8 stereo tracks, which works nicely with DFH2's multi-mic configuration as outlined above. Of course, if you'd prefer not to use so many audio tracks at the DAW level, you can also let KOMPAKT do the mixing by sending multiple KOMPAKT instruments to a single stereo output or to a lesser number of stereo outputs than the full eight. KOMPAKT provides volume and panning controls should you want to submix the DFH2 mics prior to reaching the DAW's track level.

This isn't a review of KOMPAKT, so we won't get into too much depth on that. However, it is worth noting that KOMPAKT does include instrument-level multi-mode (1-/2-/4-pole low pass, high pass, band-reject, band pass) filtering, mixing (volume, pan, tuning), modulation envelopes (volume, filter, free), LFOs (volume, pan, tuning, and filtering), and effects (reverb, chorus, delay). It also includes a "Master Filter", which can serve as either a 3-band

parametric EQ or as one of several types of filters (4-pole low pass, resonant high pass, resonant band pass). All these capabilities can be used for tweaking your DFH2 sounds. While my general tendency is to do this sort of processing at the DAW level, using plug-in effects, if KOMPAKT's capabilities in this area suit you, it might provide lower CPU impact than doing the processing at the DAW level. Furthermore, doing the processing at this level means you could save your DFH2 kit customizations for later recall if those customizations are ones you would use frequently (or even just more than once).

One other KOMPAKT feature that is worth mentioning is DFD, or "Direct From Disk" streaming of samples. The DFH2 kits that use ambience can be very large, requiring at least 1 GB of RAM. Using DFD can cut down on the memory requirements while still providing good performance on modern systems with fast disks. Just make sure the disk you use for the DFD samples is not the same one you use for streaming audio tracks in SONAR.

One minor niggle with the DFH2 version of KOMPAKT reviewed is that there is a bug in the DXi2 version that does not allow the Bounce button to stick. This button forces SONAR to slow down and wait for DFD data to arrive when bouncing or Freezing tracks. This can be important in the likely case that the disk can't keep up with the CPU when bouncing tracks since the CPU will just go as fast as it can by default. There are two possible solutions to this, beyond East West's updating to the newer version of KOMPAKT that resolves this problem. One is using the VST instrument version of DFH2 KOMPAKT, which does not have this bug. The other is turning off SONAR's "Fast Bounce" mode, which slows its bounces down to happening in real time, meaning, if you can play the track without audio degradation, the bounced track should be okay, too. Unfortunately, turning Fast Bounce off slows bounces down more than using KOMPAKT's Bounce button, but, if you won't be bouncing DFH2 tracks too frequently, it may be preferable to using the VST instrument version in the SONAR environment. On the other hand, the VST instrument version works just fine in SONAR, too.

Playing Around

My first step, after getting DFH2 installed, was to just bring DFH2 up in SONAR, using the DXi2 version of the custom KOMPAKT player, with the idea of running some MIDI drum loops through it to get a feel for how it sounded. I've long used MIDI loops from [DrumTrax](#) in my recordings, and I'd modified those to work with SONAR's Session Drummer, so going right to Session Drummer seemed like the ideal starting point.

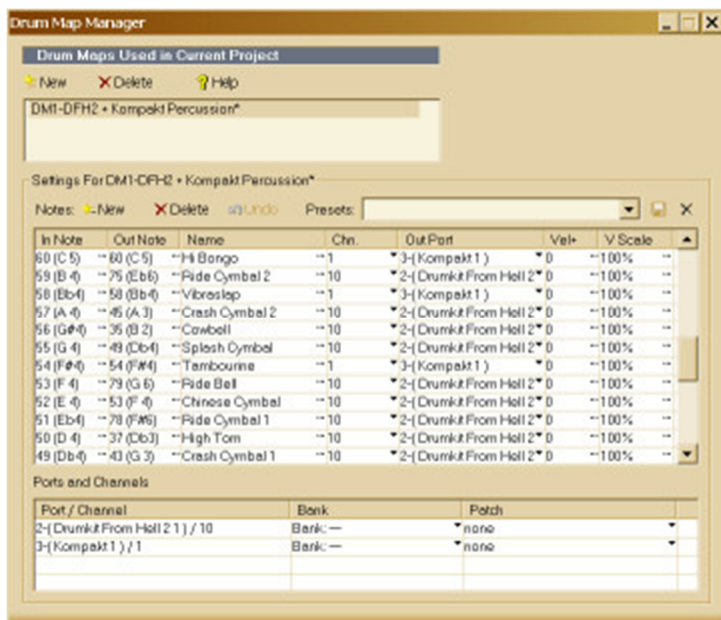
Now, at this point, I had not yet noticed the on-line-only DFH2 reference document, and was already familiar with KOMPAKT, so I was diving right in, without benefit of documentation. Loading the kit, with multiple outputs assigned, was straightforward -- really just like loading any multi-output softsynth in SONAR. I did get an error message from KOMPAKT, indicating that the output configuration of KOMPAKT didn't match the configuration in the multi-sample I'd loaded. This seemed a bit strange because the custom version of KOMPAKT provided with DFH2 does not provide a configurable number of outputs, and all 8 individual outputs, plus the main mix output, were available in SONAR. The only thing I can think of here is that perhaps the multi-sample program was saved in a DAW other than SONAR, and perhaps that DAW had a different KOMPAKT output configuration. What this meant was that, when I loaded the multi-sample into KOMPAKT, all of its instruments ended up assigned to the first individual output, but it was a simple matter to reassign the individual instrument outputs, then resave the program so it would load appropriately thereafter.

With Session Drummer on a MIDI track, I loaded up sequences from one of the alternative rock beats, and hit SONAR's Play button. Now, those of you who have been paying close attention thus far can probably guess what happened next if I add the detail that the DrumTrax patterns are mapped to a GM layout. Yep, you guessed it, the patterns played, through DFH2's nice multi-out configuration, but what I heard really didn't resemble the sounds I'd have expected to hear because the drum sound note mappings DFH2 uses are not the same ones GM uses.

It was at this point that I decided I should revert to my normal mode of operation, which is to read the documentation before proceeding further. The only reason I hadn't previously was the KOMPAKT manual provided didn't look like it had any information on the sample set side of DFH2, and I confirmed this was indeed the case. However, I decided I'd look at what might be there on the on-line side, and found the PDF file, which did indeed have the sort of information I needed. Reviewing that information told me there were some GM compatible kits, but

it also told me they were only of the dry variety. I wanted to hear DFH2 in its full glory (i.e. with the ambience mics and the mic bleed into the overheads), so I decided making my own mapping to the DFH2 layout would be the way to go.

I initially decided I'd just quickly change the mappings in Session Drummer, and, once I found where the relevant notes were in the DFH2 mapping section, that was pretty quick to do, and I was on my way. Okay, so it took awhile to get to "instant gratification", but now we were rocking. It felt a lot like having a real drummer in the room with me, only one with a volume control so my neighbors wouldn't complain. I must have spent an hour or so just playing around with different Session Drummer patterns, both ones that would seemingly fit the type of drum sounds DFH2 provided and ones that didn't seem like a good fit. Even in the questionable fit cases (e.g. hip-hop), though, things sounded real good, with one key caveat: Any beats that depended on anything other than a drum set plus cowbell were missing components. This obviously meant, for example, that Latin beats using shakers, congas, and such didn't quite come across, but, less obviously, even rock beats could be missing components if, for example, they used a tambourine.



At that point I decided the next step should be to augment DFH2 with the rest of the percussion sounds needed to support a full GM mapping. Since KOMPAKT doesn't provide sample editing, and I really didn't want to get into that anyway, the most straightforward way to proceed was to use SONAR's Drum Map feature. This would allow me to combine DFH2 for all the acoustic drum set bits and pieces, plus cowbell, with one or more softsynths to fill in the rest. Quite conveniently, NI's vanilla version of KOMPAKT happened to include a Latin percussion set to augment a GM drum set, so I loaded up an instance of KOMPAKT, set up a drum map to use DFH2 and KOMPAKT to provide the combined GM-compatible set, and was back on my way.

Back in Session Drummer, all the patterns were now complete. I must have spent another hour or two playing around, listening to patterns, just trying to decide how many songs I would now feel compelled to remix to replace whatever drum sounds I'd used previously in them with DFH2. Reality intervened, though, as I had a song critique session coming up in a day or so, and the particular song I wanted to bring to that session needed complete replacement of the instrumentation in its tracks to try and get better sounds. It wasn't really a style of song suited to rock-oriented acoustic drums, but the moment I plugged in DFH2 (it had previously been using drums from SONAR 4's TTS-1 GM-and-then-some module) the sound quality went way up.

After finding the right sort of individual instruments for the rest of the instrumental tracks, I decided that, since DFH2 sounded so good already, even though it wasn't the right sort of sound, maybe the best way to go might be to process the DFH2 sounds. (The alternative was starting from scratch in a more electronic-oriented drum module.) In this context, the individual outputs for each virtual mic on the DFH2 set became very useful, because I could process kick, snare, toms, hi-hats, and overheads separately, giving me a huge benefit in sculpting the processed sound over using full set loops, be they electronic or acoustic. When using DFH2 this way, the dry kits tend to end up being more useful due to the drum leakage into overhead mics in the other types of kits. It may also be advisable to take the snare bottom out of the mix. This avoids having the dry tom and kick sounds bleed into the snare bottom mic in the likely case you are using different processing on toms and kick than on the snare. DFH2 is far more useful than you might expect in this context. In particular, you can apply creative processing to make anywhere from subtle to massive changes, yet the dynamics of the DFH2 kits provide a level of response that goes beyond what you'd get out of most more electronically-oriented drum modules.

With one deadline met, I started looking at more mainstream possibilities for DFH2. My next project was a remix of a country rock song I'd wanted to take in a more pop/rock direction. My initial thought was to just replace the drum module I'd been using on the song with DFH2 and see what happened. That made a great improvement in the drum sound, but I wasn't fond of what I'd had there beat-wise, and wanted something a bit more modern sounding. I decided I'd construct the beats from the ground up using MIDI loops, in this case some of the Rock loops from [Groove Monkee](#). Here DFH2 was at home right from the get go, and about the only thing I needed to do beyond picking which loop to use where was to play around with some of the fill areas to customize those to my song a bit. Getting to the mixing stage, being able to adjust the relative levels of the various mic setups was very useful, and I could also use the multiple outputs to process the individual tracks differently, such as with different amounts of reverb, compression, etc. Honestly, I didn't end up doing much, though, because being able to play with the ambience balance and snare bottom balance gave me some of the control I might have normally had to try and get via reverb and EQ, respectively. I did end up using some plug-in reverb, but that was more about putting DFH2 in the same room with the rest of the mix than it was about adding effects. The result of the initial rough mix was one of the best mixes I've achieved to date, and colleagues who I ran it by for feedback were very complimentary toward the drum sound. (You can hear the final mix of the song, which is called "I Can't Say Goodbye", at www.soundclick.com/bands/4/rickpaulmusic.htm.)

Thus far what I've done with DFH2 really hasn't even taken advantage of the extra subtleties it can achieve through the incorporation of the extra sounds that can't be shoehorned into a GM-compatible mapping. From the hands-on perspective, I think this whole area is the only area where I have some reservations about DFH2, not with its capabilities, but, rather, with how it fits into my workflow.

As good as DFH2 sounds right now, I know I can make it sound even better if I take advantage of the extended note mappings. If I had a percussion-oriented MIDI controller to create my drum parts, especially one of the sophistication of something like Roland's V-Drums, I could play around with the controller's mapping capabilities to make the fairly unintuitive DFH2 mapping be easily playable for creating drum parts. Short of that, though, I am either using MIDI loops, generally mapped to GM, having to play drum parts from a keyboard, or, on rare occasions, manually programming parts. In the last scenario, DFH2's mapping would be no big deal, especially if used in conjunction with a SONAR Drum Map that rearranges the note layouts in a more logical order for visual editing. In the first two scenarios, though, the odd layouts cause some road bumps.

When playing the parts from a keyboard, there is both the issue of what I am used to (which is a GM layout), and how intuitive the layout is after getting past any learning curve. My general sense is that the DFH2 layout is too all over the place in that respect. There are a few patterns, such as mirroring the tom layouts for left and right hands on the black keys, and a similar thing for some of other sound layouts on the white keys. Still there are too many bits and pieces that seem to be somewhat randomly placed. Not that a GM layout is intuitive, but, because so many modules use it, you tend to get used to it after awhile, and don't have to worry about switching mappings from one module to the next. Also, other modules with non-GM layouts tend to be dedicated to a smaller number of instruments than a full drum set includes -- e.g. a set of congas.

Starting from GM-authored loops, the process will likely be to get something mocked up with a GM mapping, then shift to the full mapping and add in the subtleties manually. That means having to get something compatible enough with GM in the first place, then switch midstream to add the subtleties. This would require using two different drum maps, unless the extra notes from DFH2 are just placed outside the GM note range, using SONAR's Drum Maps to rearrange the visible locations with SONAR's Drum Grid Editor pane of the Piano Roll View. Either way, there are downsides, such as how compatible the layout will be with doing some parts with loops while overdubbing some parts manually.

The net is that, after creating a basic GM-compatible drum map, DFH2 becomes extremely usable, and provides a big step up in acoustic drum sound quality from the softsynth or soft sampler drum alternatives I've tried to date. However, there is potential for even greater improvement, but that potential seems constrained, at least somewhat, by the workflow issues surrounding accessing those extras if you aren't either using a capable MIDI drum controller or programming the parts manually.

Closing Notes

The bottom line for me is that DFH2 sounds great when what is needed is acoustic drums for rock and related styles. To get something better or more flexible will likely require spending significantly more money, and significantly more disk space, with alternatives like Drumkit From Hell Superior or [FXpansion's BFD](#). For \$99, though, not only is DFH2 a bargain, but it will satisfy way beyond what its price point would suggest.

Even if what you need isn't acoustic rock drums, it may be worth considering DFH2 as a starting point for processed drum sounds. The excellent dynamics of the programming, the processing potential of the KOMPAKT player, and the individual outputs, which provide extreme flexibility for plug-in-based processing, all add up to DFH2's providing a strong starting point for creating processed drum sounds.

Of course, these same capabilities allow you to process DFH2 just like you would actual multi-miked acoustic drum tracks, and the fact that DFH2's sounds are not pre- or post-processed means you can treat DFH2 tracks just like acoustic drum tracks. While you won't likely be using DFH2 for your soft jazz ballads, the rocking side of your music will almost certainly benefit.

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