

#### DRUM MENU

The drop-down menu that reveals alternative drum options

#### LIBRARY

Select your chosen Library or SDX package from this drop-down

#### PRESETS

Toontrack's usual comprehensive set of production-ready presets

#### MEMORY

Check your RAM allocation vs your computer's memory capacity

#### SETTINGS

Subtle alterations can be made at the individual drum level

#### BLEED CONTROL

Total control over bleed from one instrument's mic, to another

#### THE KIT

Select any drum or cymbal within the kit, to change or swap settings

#### CHANNEL MIXER

The mixer page reveals every audio channel that is in play

#### MIDI

Create complete drum tracks from MIDI templates, within the plugin

#### SYNC

Control transport onboard, or sync perfectly with your DAW

COMPUTER  
MUSIC  
PERFORMANCE  
Award

# Toontrack Stockholm & Stories SDX Expansions

€179 per pack **PC** **MAC**

In its quest to create the most flexible drum suite on the planet, Toontrack hit the road. **Roland Schmidt** is hot on its tail

> Ever since Toontrack premiered EZDrummer nearly 25 years ago, it's carved a unique path. The upgrade provided by the next-level Superior Drummer suite has extended drum sampling to new heights, with ever-more packed in via their SDX expansion packs. Let's look at two of the more recent of these additions...

### From Sweden...

The first of the SDX releases we have for review was forged at Riksmixningsverket studios, in Stockholm, Sweden. Originally an old naval

warehouse, RMV was lovingly developed – and equipped – by ABBA's Benny Andersson. And it was there that Toontrack undertook the task of sampling five different drum kits, across 12 snares, nine kicks and three sets of cymbals.

There's an enormous variance across the different kits. While the influence of Stockholm steers toward the poppier side, there is a ton of acoustic colour to choose from. Extensive use has also been made of the live room; it's not the largest room that Toontrack has ever used, which means that in some instances the

acoustics can sound ambiently boxy, but with their usual attention to detail, the ambient mics can be blended to suit your production style. The most distant combo is a pair of Neumann KM 184 mics, with the closest mic placed right behind the drummer, in the form of an AKG C24.

Sample capture has been engineered by Linn Fijal, who also provides a host of production-ready mixes. The channel-split content across these mixes does vary, as does the acoustic sound of each of the five kits. Our preference was firmly for the tighter-sounding kits,

Both impressive, in different ways; Stockholm pledges unique pop... Stories punch and depth

provided by the 'Tight' and 'Punchy' kit options, while the 'Rock' kit, hosting up to 24" of kick, provided a looser feel. As is always the case with SD3, if a drum isn't to your liking, you only have to swap it out for another kit element, or visit the mixer page to vary the channel blend. With 42GB of sample content, Stockholm feels extensive, but acutely manageable.

The end result is an extensive package of very useable drum content, accompanied by a stylish set of MIDI grooves, providing rhythmic makeup with four different mid-to-up tempo song styles. The playing from drummer Josephine Forsman is forensically stylish, but while the MIDI is great, a larger number of groove options would have been useful.

### ...to New England

The second release crosses the pond to the USA, and New England's legendary Power Station studio complex. Guest engineer Frank Filipetti has worked with artists from Kiss and Foreigner, to Madonna and George Michael. The Stories SDX sampling philosophy goes deep, capturing a full 160GB of content, which provides all ambiances and 'bleeds' between drum mics.

The SDX includes six different drum kits, alongside a host of percussion instruments, which also offer significant variance in room ambience. The Main room provides incredible depth in overall sound, with an ambient brightness provided by the room's wooden panelling. The output is immediately impressive, but if you require something a little more intimate, the tightness provided by the acoustics of the two isolation rooms is altogether more cohesive. In the setting of Isolation Room B, the kick offers incredible depth, along with the identifiable high-end snap.

Regular Toontrack drummer Norman Garschke provides an impressive array of MIDI groove content, marrying beautifully with a



Toontrack's reimagining of the historic pop venue of Riksmixningsverket studios, in Stockholm

### Mix and match the Toontrack way

**Both of these products require an existing host plugin or standalone application in the shape of Superior Drummer 3 - the big brother to Toontrack's EZDrummer 3. The additional elements that accompany SD3 revolve around deeper sampling and ambient miking. This means more control at the mixer page level, where you can engineer just about every nuance you'd care to tweak. If that's not enough, the Toontrack philosophy dictates that you can swap individual**

**drum or percussion items in and out, so if you want a crisper/tighter snare, instead of the fuller tone within a specific kit, you can do it. The versatility doesn't end there though, as you also have the option to create entire drum tracks, from amazingly musical MIDI grooves, right within the package. Both EZDrummer and Superior Drummer have revolutionised how we can use real drums, within a DAW. Toontrack remain the leaders of the pack in a plugin of this kind.**

sizeable set of production-ready mixes, provided by Filipetti and Toontrack.

These packages are both highly impressive, but in different ways; Stockholm pledges unique pop with a degree of helpful limitation. Stories, on the other hand, is nearly three times the size in sample quota, and captures punch and depth in equal measure. They're both exemplary, within their own criteria, providing subtle but extensive choice across the kit spectrum. **cm**

**Web** [toontrack.com](http://toontrack.com)



Poignantly for Benny and co, Riksmixningsverket's visitors have included Eurovision winner Loreen

### Alternatively

**Toontrack Superior Drummer 3 €399 (upgrade pricing available)**  
The wealth of sample and MIDI content as part of the host package sweeten the purchase agreeably

**Native Instruments Studio Drummer £129**  
A complete suite, it includes three beautifully recorded kits, from Pearl, Yamaha and Sonor

### Verdict

**For** Exceptional level of drum sampling  
Stockholm presents perfect pop drums  
Stories goes deep, layers-wise  
The MIDI groove templates in both SDXs are amazingly versatile and usable

**Against** The Stockholm SDX could use a little more MIDI groove content  
You'll need Superior Drummer 3

If you regularly need acoustic drums, these SDX packs are best in class

**Stockholm SDX 9/10**

**Stories SDX 10/10**