

How to create a drum kit from scratch – using samples

Creating a brand new drum kit from scratch with the WERSI OAS system.

I am starting a new series of articles for the user club website. Hopefully the articles will not only be informative, but also of great help for everyone in finding out more information about their WERSI OAS instruments. After a recent discussion about one of my current projects and how the WERSI Abacus specifically enabled me to sample the vintage Roland TR808 drum machine and live drum kit and create a new drum kit within the ABACUS itself.

Although I think the factory drum kits and drum sounds that WERSI instruments come with are fantastic, sometimes I, like many others I am sure require something different or something new. Of course you can buy additional drum kits from WERSI, which are also top notch, the flexibility of the OAS system means that you can easily create your drum kits with the choice of mix and matching any of the onboard drum sounds, 3rd party drum sounds or newly created drum sample sounds.

First of all, Lets get to basics with the drum sounds. Basically, the WERSI Drumset editor uses ‘Wave’ files as a drum sound. A WAVE file is an audio recording – and when they are very short, like a drum sound (approx 1-5 seconds), then they are usually referred to as samples.

The WERSI Drumset editor will only accept WAVE files in 44.1 16 bit quality (CD quality) as a rule. Anything below this format will not load. Anyway, enough of the technical talk for now.

How do we record new drum sounds??

To record new drum or any percussive sound is relatively easy. For the best results, it helps to have a bit of audio recording knowledge, but however this is not entirely essential, as I’ll teach you as we continue in this article.

Ideally we would have a recording studio with top quality condenser microphones and lots of high quality studio outboard gear, but as we simply have our all singing and all dancing OAS instruments, we can do away with all of that and achieve a very good recording direct on the keyboard / organ.

Using the DIGI Record (OAS7) / Easy Record (OAS 4,5,6) to record a sample.

The easiest way would be to connect a microphone to the microphone 1 input on the back of your instrument. Say for example we are going to record a real ‘hand clap’ and ‘finger snap’ sound to put into our OAS drum library and use in a new drum kit.

So, now that the microphone is connected to the microphone 1 input, press on the ‘DIGI Record’ (Also called ‘Easy Record’ in previous OAS VERSIONS 4, 5 & 6).

Using the audio level meter on the DIGI Record display, position your microphone and microphone volume until sound level of your hand claps or finger snaps are registering a strong green signal (its ok, if it peaks into the yellow area of the level meter, but not if it hits the red. Reduce the microphone volume if you are hitting the red).

When you are ready, simply press the ‘Record’ button on the screen and record your handclap or finger snap. Immediately, after the sound has dissipated, press the stop button on the screen. Save the Wave file (name it with a name your sure to remember), and make a note of the sound slot it is saved into.

Next, go to the drum set editor and select the first drum kit ‘Standard 1 XG’.

Now we can get to work on importing your real handclap into the existing drum kit. First of all, we need to find what note the handclap is allocated to.

The note that the handclap is allocated to is Eb 1. In the drum set editor, you will need to press the octave button (which has an arrow pointing down). Press it twice. Then simply play the keyboard until you located the Eb note that plays the handclap sound.

Once you have located the note, simply press 'Load Drum Sound'.

The WERSI Explorer will open and you can now locate the handclap sample that we created using the DIGI / EASY record function. (For quick reference, the sample will be stored in the accompaniment section / Wave file folder).

Once you have located the file, press 'LOAD / OK' and then you can edit the volume, reverb or attack settings until you are happy with the sound. Why not experiment with some of the other settings such as filter, tune and stereo pan?

Once you are happy with your new real 'handclap' sound, press the 'save button'. The Save list will be displayed. Scroll down until you see an empty save slot. Then open the virtual typewriter and name the kit, then press 'Enter' and 'Save'. The drum kit will now be saved. Simply exit the drum set editor and then choose a style such as disco – which uses the handclap sound.

Go to the style editor and change the drum kit to the newly saved drum kit. You will now hear your new 'real hand clap'.

You can repeat this process for any of the drum sounds – thus you can create your new drum kit from scratch. It does take a bit of time, but the end result is very worthwhile.

Of course you don't have to just record drum sounds, anything that is percussive can be recorded – from vocal sounds to spoons!

Simply experiment, the WERSI will allow you to do things no other arranger instrument can do.

[A sneaky tip, if you had access to the latest Roland or Yamaha keyboard, you could sample every drum sound from its drum kits and perfectly recreate the drum kits in the WERSI]. Can any other keyboard allow its owner to sample a WERSI? The answer is NO. So we are lucky and in a very fortunate position. Of course, you could mix and match many sound – from WERSI, Roland, Yamaha as well as original samples to create the perfect drum kit.

I'll be uploading a drum library of real drum sounds, electronic samples and a few samples from a some famous drum machines for everyone to experiment with very soon – complete with installation instructions.

**A note on copyright, an interesting article popped up in a recent professional industry publication about musical copyrights (inclusive of one hit samples such as drum sounds). Under international law, the sampled drum hits are not subject to copyright. So the Yamaha artists at the UK festivals who start chirping about copyright and about how its illegal for users to sample their instruments, are completely wrong and would do well to brush up on current copyright law policy.

More articles to come soon!