

behind the sound pt.1: drums on OP-1 field

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the samples in any synthesizer have to come from somewhere. when creating the cherry and lubowa drum samples for OP-1 field, we worked with our friends at red pipe studios, recording with sound designers tobias norman and filip sjögren.

having recording experience dating back to the 80s, tobias has seen the sampling process go from complex floppy disk storage to OP-1 field. recently, while he was living in uganda, we saw the opportunity for him to record percussion instruments with local artists. here we welcomed muwanguzi james and serugo joseph, who created the sounds that would become the lubowa drum kit.



MUWANGUZI JAMES AND SERUGO JOSEPH

tobias: it was really cool because there was instruments that i've never seen before. so i had the artists play them, to feel the rhythm and how they were arranging things... it was so much about understanding the instruments.

understanding these new percussion instruments also meant figuring out how they would be arranged on the OP-1 keyboard, compared to a standard rock drum kit.

filip: what would be the bass drum? what would be the tom? where do you put the equivalent of a kick or the snare drum so you can switch between drum kits with the same sequencer?

tobias: with these percussion instruments, they make the different tonalities depending on where and how they play on the actual drum... so it is a challenge to capture that in only twenty four notes... but i think we got the essence of it.



RECORDING THE 'LUBOWA' PERCUSSION SAMPLES FOR OP-1 FIELD

when it came to the cherry drum sound, the team went to urban robertsson's studio in stockholm to record a classic yamaha recording drum kit.

filip: david [möllerstedt] said "you can't ask someone who loves to make drum 'n' bass to do something they don't like, so just do whatever you feel is you and we take it from there." that was really powerful for me... i wanted to make an indie rock kit and i felt very comfortable doing that because i could express my own creativity.



RECORDING THE 'CHERRY' DRUM KIT SAMPLES FOR OP-1 FIELD

due to its compact size, the OP-1 field's keyboard only has one sample recorded per key, compared to a large contemporary synthesizer that would have over 100 samples per key to account for velocity changes. but with limitations comes a lot of possibilities.

filip: with old amiga or casio samplers, you had one shot samples. so in that way, the OP-1 is kind of similar to that, going back to the roots. but other modern samplers are way more complicated... they're sampled in a way that it's ultra realistic. so to have 24 samples [for OP-1 field] and to put all your energy into each sample, it's amazing actually.

tobias: when i did the recordings in uganda, i could really focus on capturing the sounds as good as possible. so i brought this handmade swedish microphone (made by jörgen thuresson)... and would walk around the room trying to capture it... when you only need one really good sample, you can move the microphone around and try different things and really try to maximize the feeling of the instrument more, rather than the realism.



recording samples for OP-1 field felt fitting for the studio, having previously worked with the original OP-1 for sound design projects from games to movies and tv.

filip: [OP-1] has always been a really creative tool for anyone, but now the noise floor is super low, the stereo functionality, and the usb-c is amazing actually. tobias: I want to find tools that are a bit different, that give something new – it has to be fun... i don't need to have the best kind of tool, i want the most fun kind of tool. [OP-1 field] has a massive engine to create sounds in.

explore [OP-1 field](#), and find out more about [red pipe](#) here.