

# VOLKO AUDIO ALATURKA DRUM

## Creative Percussion Synthesizer



When we bump into a familiar person in an unexpected place we use to say that our world is really small. We know that this "small world" is actually quite a large spot but the invention of the airplane first and, many years later, the digital technology, have shortened the distances in an amazing way. Besides, products once available only locally, are now available everywhere. For example you can find sushi in Milano, macaroni in Hong Kong, Prada bags in Nairobi and Persian carpets in Sydney etc..., a confused mix of items and peoples that makes every single nation similar one to another and makes it lose its special characteristics and identity.

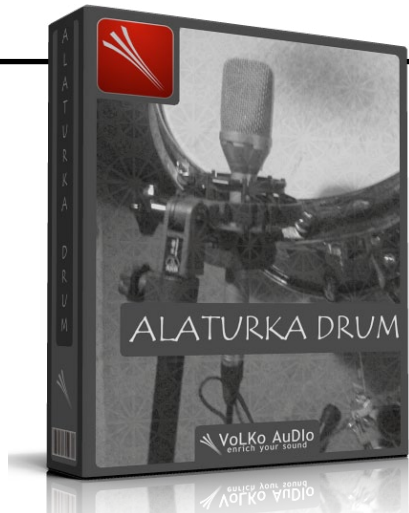
This is mainly because of the so-called globalization, an event organized by multinational corporations and international monetary institutions to make the rich (those just mentioned above) even richer and the poor (the rest of us) even poorer, a process which, on the whole, is nothing more than a colossal fraud. Now, although our world is as dense and concentrated as an espresso coffe, the most popular and promoted virtual instruments always come from the same countries: United States, Germany, Canada and Great Britain, plus France and Italy, and little else.

Therefore it is with great pleasure that we discovered and quickly tested a very promising plugin that originates from a country of enormous cultural and historical importance, famous for its natu-

ral beauty, and which has always played a vital role as a bridge between east and west: Turkey. Volko Audio ([www.volkoaudio.com](http://www.volkoaudio.com)) is the name of the production house born in the heart of Istanbul and Alaturka Drum is the name of the plugin, which is dedicated to traditional rhythms of the middle east. It is available in VST and AU format for Windows and MAC, is rich in content, and requires a small amount of memory (1 GB of RAM).

### THE STRUCTURE OF ALATURKA DRUM

Alaturka Drum can be loaded and tested for one month with full functionality. Do not get surprised



and think that something is wrong with your eyes when you see the blurred opening screen. This is the notification screen (Figure 1): After clicking the "Continue Evaluation" button, the notification section disappears and you

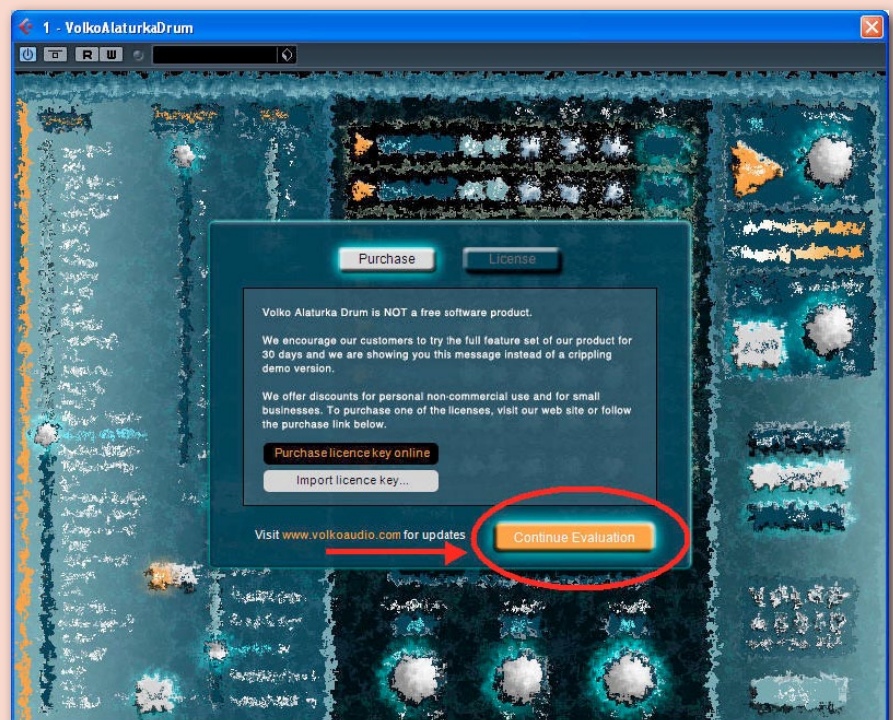


Fig. 01 - Click on the yellow "Continue Evaluation" button...

can clearly see it in front of you (Figure 2).

On the left side you will see 36 exotic rhythms:

- Ayoub-Zar
- Baio
- Chiftetelli
- Churchuna
- Dabkkah
- Darig
- Daza
- Dishka
- Fallahi
- Fazani
- Jirk
- Karachi
- Laz Havasi
- Libi
- Maghrebi
- Maksum
- Malfuf
- Mambo Sudani
- Masmoudy Kebir
- Nubian Reggae
- Nubian Samba
- Rai
- Rhumba Khaligi
- Rhumba Masri
- Roman Havasi
- Saidi
- Samai Thakil
- Sudasi
- Sufi
- Tom Tom
- Uncle Fallahi
- Wahda
- Wahrani
- Wals
- Zafa
- Zorofat

Even though rhythms like Reggea, Samba and Rumba etc. are well known, they may be difficult to figure out by reading. These can be listened using the vertical slider from top to down (Figure 3).

Each of these styles include twenty-four variations and twenty-four fills (Figure 4); they can be selected separately or can be linked together with "Link" button, in which case the Fills slider will follow the Variations slider and vice versa (Figure 5).



Fig. 02 - ... and burring disappears showing Alaturka Drum in clear.



Fig. 03  
The thirty-six styles of Alaturka Drum selectable via the vertical slider.



Fig. 04  
"Variations and Fills" can be selected independently of each other ...

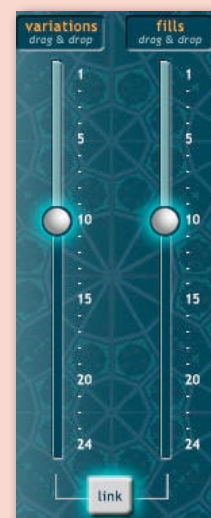


Fig. 05  
... or can be linked together with "Link" button, in which case the Fills slider will follow the Variations slider and vice versa.



Fig. 06 - Three drum kits selectable in the Instrument Setup field: two sets of Gretsch and one set of Istanbul drums.



Alaturka Drum has three drum kits that can be played, selectable in the Instrument Setup field: two sets of Gretsch and one set of Istanbul drums (Şekil 6).

Each set has two different options: normal and wide, the later is marked by a + sign and indicates the presence of a greater number of samples sensitive to velocity (up to ten dynamic levels).

Also in Figure 6 there is a Link button to connect a specific style with a drum set if desired.

In the middle there are mutually exclusive N and P buttons where N is for Natural to select unprocessed samples, and P is for Processed to select processed samples. The specifications, instrument by instrument, of the three drumkits are shown in Figure 7. Grouping mixer is in the center (Figure 8) in which you can adjust some parameters (mute, solo, velocity, volume, reverb) of the eight instruments (kick, snare, toms, hi-hat, ride, crash and two percussion). You can also listen to the sample by clicking on the orange arrow beside the name of each instrument.

Below the mixer, a box shows:

- BPM Range: Metronome range most suitable for the execution of the selected style;
- Active BPM: Active metronome value;
- Memory Usage: RAM used by the loaded samples;
- Time Signature: Time signature of the selected style (Figure 9).

The central part contains Humanizer, Limiter and Reverb knobs for rhythmic controls (Figure 10).

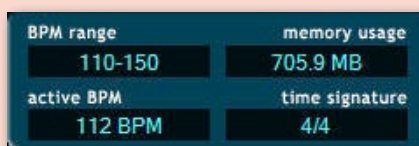
Finally, from top to bottom on the right is an arrow button to play different styles and a knob to adjust the overall volume output with level indicators, a button to control the tempo synchronization with the internal project opened in the sequencer (Figure 11), and some other buttons to for choos-



**Fig. 07 - The specification of three drumsets in instrumental detail.**



**Fig. 08 - Grouping Mixer.**



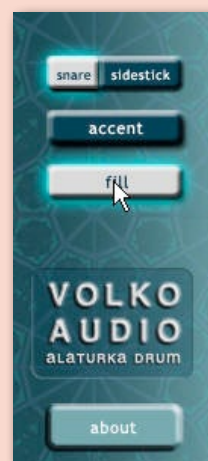
**Fig. 09 - Box below mixer, containing information on metronomic time, the time signature of the selected style and RAM used.**



**Fig. 10 - Humanizer, limiter and reverb buttons.**



**Fig. 11 - Button to play the styles, knobs to control the volume level and internal BPM and a button to control the tempo synchronization with sequencer.**



**Fig. 12 - Snare-sidestick, accent and fill buttons.**

ing between full sidestick snare shot, to give an accent and trigger the fill selected (Figure 12).

## RHYTHMIC TESTS

It may be necessary to wait for the samples of the desired set to load. This process may be slow and should be followed patiently from the Memory Usage area. Then, Alaturka Drum will become active and the interface may be so straightforward that you may not need to read the manual. Though it does not have the sophistication of Steinberg software or any other similar products, as a product inspired from Groove Agent, which I personally think is one of the best virtual tools of its kind, Alaturka Drum is a complete plugin equipped with various styles, colors, imagination and music taste which is able to introduce us many new ideas. It contains styles not only from Turkey but also from the Mediterranean and Middle eastern regions, including north Africa. It clearly has something both exotic and different - with its attractive rhythms – and in this way gets separated from what we usually think of as world music. Time signatures are mostly 4/4 but there are also rhythms in 2/4, 3/4, 10/4, 13/4, 16/4, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, 10/8 and 12/8. Listening to all 24 variations and 24 fills may take a long time to complete. But this can only be a starting point: direct recording in real time is not possible in the MIDI track but you can drag & drop (Figure 13) from the Variations and Fills section to the sequencer in MIDI format. Thus making possible the creation of a complete track quickly with reference numbers from 1 to 24 and from 25 to 48 (Figure 14). The samples of Alaturka Drum generally occupy 1 GB of space obtained by a chain of microphones, amplifiers, similar to digital converters of famous brands (Neumann, AKG, Millenia, Lynx etc...). They are pretty good brands but if you are not 100%

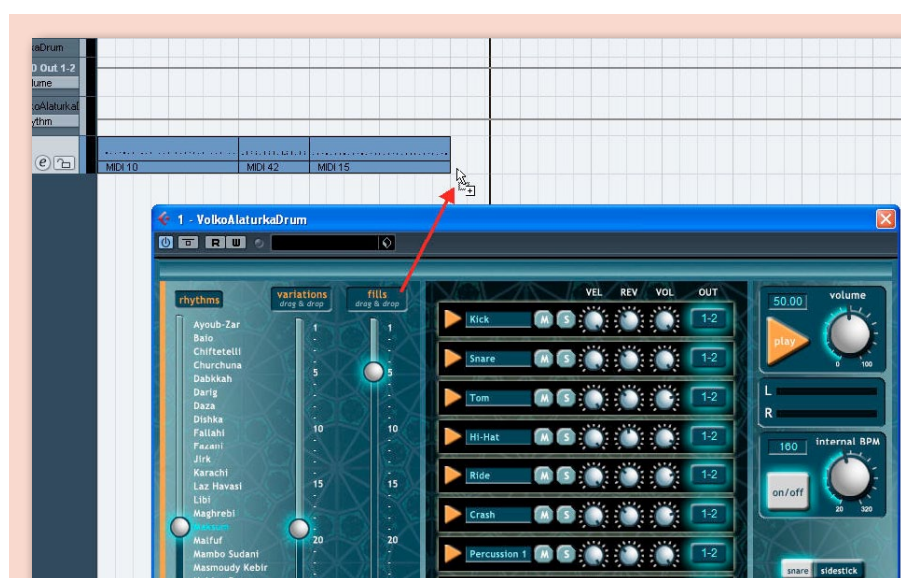


Fig. 13 - Mouse drag and drop from Variations and Fills section to sequencer area...

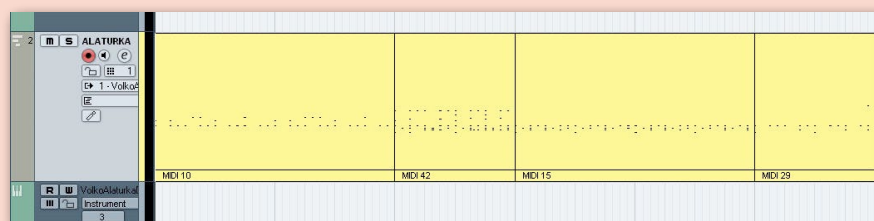


Fig. 14 - ... and quickly MIDI is created.

satisfied you may want to try some other brands but keep in mind that many other brands such as Steinberg Groove Agent or Toontrack Superior Drummer or FxPansion BFD prefer to convert all those styles into MIDI format. Thus you can edit the rhythms using the editing window from sequencer easily. You may see the types of MIDI format in Figure 15. Cubase Key Edit shows all the details of MIDI styles, variety of the dynamics, timing, the characteristic properties, and live and authentic structure (Figure 16). Alaturka Drum is an easy to use plugin where complicating details are reduced to minimum.

Key	Number	Name of the Drum Part
D <sub>23</sub>	63	Alternate Crash 4
D <sub>3</sub>	62	Splash 2
C <sub>23</sub>	61	Splash 1
C <sub>3</sub>	60	Alternate Crash 3
B <sub>3</sub>	59	Ride 4
A <sub>23</sub>	58	Alternate Crash 2
A <sub>2</sub>	57	Alternate Crash 1
G <sub>23</sub>	56	Cowbell
G <sub>2</sub>	55	Crash 3
F <sub>23</sub>	54	Ride 3
F <sub>2</sub>	53	Ride 2
E <sub>23</sub>	52	Crash 2
D <sub>23</sub>	51	Ride 1
D <sub>2</sub>	50	Tom 3
C <sub>23</sub>	49	Crash 1
C <sub>2</sub>	48	Tom 3
B <sub>1</sub>	47	Tom 2
A <sub>21</sub>	46	Open Hi-Hat
A <sub>1</sub>	45	Tom 2
G <sub>21</sub>	44	Pedal Hi-Hat
G <sub>1</sub>	43	Tom 1
F <sub>21</sub>	42	Closed Hi-Hat
F <sub>1</sub>	41	Tom 1
E <sub>1</sub>	40	Snare 2
D <sub>21</sub>	39	Snare 1
D <sub>1</sub>	38	Snare 1
C <sub>21</sub>	37	Side-Stick
C <sub>1</sub>	36	Kick 1
B <sub>0</sub>	35	Kick 2
A <sub>20</sub>	34	Kick 3
A <sub>0</sub>	33	Snare 3

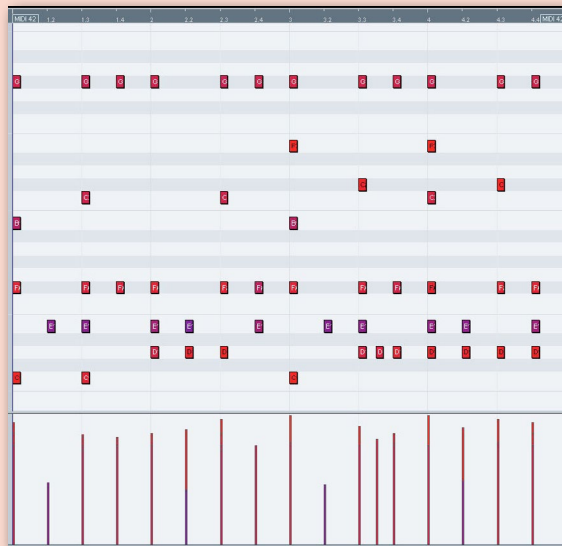
Fig. 15 MIDI mapping table of Alaturka drum instruments.

## CONCLUSION

The Turkish team of Volko Audio (made up of 5 people) starting from drummer Turgut Alp is shown in Figure 17. Alaturka Drum is a little gem, very easy to use even for people who are unfamiliar with virtual instruments,

since everything in the package is straightforward and easy to understand. It is priced at 119 dollars, which is about 90 Euros, but if you do not earn more than 24.000 dollars a year – and I wonder who, other than a few rock or pop stars, can raise these days such an amount of money by working as a musician! - you will be granted a license for only 39 dollars, which, honestly, is a real and unmissable bargain, in my view. You can see it with your very eyes at [www.volkoaudio.com/?page=shop](http://www.volkoaudio.com/?page=shop) address. All in all you will get an immediately ready-to-use drumbox that is extremely effective in creating, in a very short span of time, complete and high-quality, simple, or intricate, drum tracks with a pleasant Middle Eastern flavour. It was a great pleasure to run this test, after which Volko Audio has earned a new user; running a discount licence, of course, since the writer of this article is not, and probably never will be, a pop/rock star yet...

**AV&M**



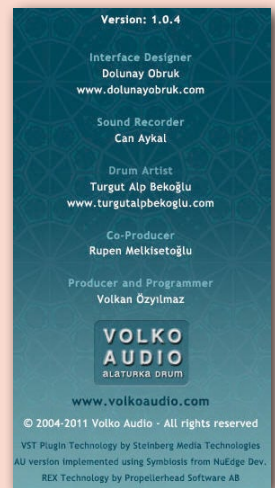
**Fig. 16**  
Portion of a MIDI track obtained from Alaturka Drum and opened in Cubase Key Edit.

#### Web Site

- [www.volkoaudio.com](http://www.volkoaudio.com)

#### Price

- \$119 / \$39 (discounted)



**Fig. 17 - The Turkish team of Volko Audio.**

### Author: Paolo Tonelli

Our author graduated from Pisa University with Pharmacy degree in 1965, and was more interested in Greek history than chemistry. At the same time he studied music theory, solfège, history, piano and composition at Spezia University. Inspired from many electronic keyboards and software in the music store volume of Midi Songs magazine, Paolo Tonelli focused on synthesizers while collecting all volumes of MS.

In 1998 he won the MIDI software competition and became an author.

Since then he wrote many articles and reviews in various magazines of the music sector (Midi Songs, Cubase magazine, CM2, Strumenti Musicali, Now Making Music, Computer Music & Project Studio) and became an expert on virtual music software.

He won many prizes and gave many seminars (such as i Maestri Renato Serio ve Peppe Vessicchio seminars). He is interested in a wide variety of music, and he performed in gospel choir for many years and in many live concerts with two-album work. He is also teaching

for conducting. He published a book about audio-digital sound usage theory and practice for Rugginenti.

- Header: Audio Editing. Fundamentals of Theory and Practice. With CD-ROM.
- Author: Paolo Tonelli
- Year: 2007
- Pages: 695
- Editor: [www.rugginenti.it](http://www.rugginenti.it)

